Design Thinking : A Creative Approach to Develop an Employee Experience Scale

Rajeshwari Patil [1]
Priyanka Pandita [2]
Ganesh Waghmare [3]

Abstract

The study aimed to develop and empirically validate the construct of employee experience, representing an organization's ability to manage the employee experience. Organizations that build and work on employee experience develop expertise in deploying resources and routines to understand, evaluate, and improve how they interact with their workforce across all contact points. A rigorous process was employed to identify, operationally define, evaluate, and validate various dimensions reflecting employee experience. The dimensions were developed and validated using design thinking as an approach — focusing on empathy to identify the gains and pains of employees in the education sector. The empirically validated 29-item measurement scale provided practitioners with an approach to evaluate and improve their organization's employee experience quotient. It permits comparisons of individuals and organizations, enabling competitive benchmarking within and across industry sectors. Developing valid and reliable measurement scales is an essential first step in measuring the experience in an organization. The paper recommended a theoretical foundation for the employee experience construct and authenticated an equivalent measurement scale. The scale was developed prudently to accomplish the specificity required to undertake the meaningful expert-centric valuation. The developed scale permits future intellectual investigation through employee experience evaluations both inside and amongst organizations or sectors.

Keywords : **employee experience, scale development, competitive gain, organization culture, design thinking, touchpoints, pain points, gain points**

JEl Classification Codes : M10, M59, O15

Paper Submission Date : June 1, 2022 ; Paper sent back for Revision : December 15, 2022 ; Paper Acceptance Date : January 25, 2023 ; Paper Published Online : February 15, 2023

"In a world where money is no longer the primary motivating factor for employees, focusing on the employee experience is the most promising competitive advantage that organizations can create." - **Jacob Morgan**

In the new normal, organizations' utmost requirement is to reconstruct their HR management practices and work practices to meet the business's new demands and encourage the performance of a cross-generational

[1] *Associate Professor,* Balaji Institute of Management and Human Resource Development, Sri Balaji University Pune, Survey No. 55/2-7, Tathawade, Opp. Wakad Police Station, Off Pune-Mumbai, Highway, Imm Road, Tathawade, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Pune - 411 033, Maharashtra. (Email : rajvpatil1980@gmail.com)
ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5386-588X
[2] *Assistant Professor,* Balaji Institute of Management and Human Resource Development, Sri Balaji University Pune, Survey No. 55/2-7, Tathawade, Opp. Wakad Police Station, Off Pune-Mumbai, Highway, Imm Road, Tathawade, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Pune - 411 033, Maharashtra. (Email : pandita.priyanka10@gmail.com)
[3] *Associate Professor,* Lexicon Management Institute of Leadership and Excellence Pune - 412 207, Maharashtra. (Email : gntilu@gmail.com) ; ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9396-3225

DOI : https://doi.org/10.17010/pijom/2023/v16i2/172730

workforce. A geographically dispersed workforce demands that employees quickly adapt to new collaborative tools like video chats and work alone in their home environment. This change in working style has brought along with it the fatigue of working remotely and a need for more communication with colleagues and friends at the workplace. With the pandemic and changing nature of work practices, the psychological contract has also seen a shift from traditional expectations to new employee expectations. In the early industrial decades, pay and incentives motivated employees, but the expectations of the employees have now changed. Employees are now looking at mentors and leaders who do not instruct them what to do, but look for a manager who coaches them, provides ongoing feedback on ways to develop strengths, and provides opportunities to develop and grow — a situation too costly to be ignored. Employees today are consumers of the workplace; similar to customers, employees as workplace consumers follow a similar journey and consider work opportunities, evaluate them, and commit to an organization that earns the trust and loyalty of the employees; if not, then they seek other opportunities (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This changing talent perception has encouraged organizations to look beyond employee satisfaction and engagement.

Over the years, research has established the importance of happy and engaged employees and their positive impact on the organization's bottom line. Companies that adopt such practices have reaped the benefits of employer attractiveness and brand, and retention increases discretionary effort and innovation (Jnaneswar, 2019), resulting in higher average profits, higher average revenues, lower turnover rates, and greater customer satisfaction (Maurer, 2019). Designing new HR practices requires understanding the employees to ensure policies and practices address the pain points in the employees' experience journey. Such a situation will be a double-edged sword that will not only impact employee happiness and engagement but also reflect in attrition and customer satisfaction. Hence, to ensure employee engagement, it is imperative to know your employees well, study their experiences, and create a workplace that fosters positive employee experiences (Banerjee et al., 2020).

For years now, organizations have been conducting employee satisfaction surveys and employee engagement surveys. Employee experience was considered similar to employee engagement. Researchers have identified that organizations have attempted to measure employee experience. However, the issue faced is that combining multiple concepts to measure experience and its quantification will provide a composite score. Employees will experience only some touchpoints, positively or negatively. The experience will be a combination of positive, not-so-positive, and negative experiences at different touchpoints. The scale developed so far does not differentiate between individual touchpoints' influence and their contribution to employee experience scores (Randhawa, 2020). By not differentiating between the individual touchpoint scores, the score obtained explains the average experience of the employees but fails to predict which touchpoints affect employee experience the most. Predicting the influence of components is of utmost importance when organizations require insights to improve the employee experience (EX).

The primary purpose of this paper is to define and validate the construct of "employee experience" (EX) in the current HR setting and recognize its potential drivers and necessary consequences. We have attempted to use design thinking to identify touchpoints and use the insights to develop a scale to measure the employee experience.

Review of Literature

Employee experience, talent management, and engagement are often used interchangeably in the business community. The foundation of HR practices before COVID was that employees were looking for opportunities to work, and organizations were at war to attract and retain the brightest minds. Talent management was the logical approach that the organizations took, but COVID and post - covid has changed how we view talent. The challenge of understanding the employees along the lines of understanding the customers has taken priority for the

organization as employees have changed their expectations from the organization. An attempt to understand the employee journey can be made successfully by drawing insights from approaches used in designing customer experience. Design thinking is the right approach as it focuses less on the pillars of HR foundations and more on the emotions attached to the pillars. Design thinking focuses on "how employees are made to feel in the organization," and people remember how they felt. This matters the most while developing workplace practices and policies, thereby improving the employee experience.

Employee Experience

Employee experience is the perceptions employees have about the organization. An employee experiences and develops perceptions right from the first contact with the organization, as early as during the pre-hiring stage. He/she applies to a position with certain expectations in mind created by employers' brands and by all that he/she has heard about the culture through family, friends, and social media. Such experiences will continue throughout his/her journey in the organization from entry to exit (Qualtrics.xm, n.d.). The EX is based on the perception of the employees of what is going on, which is not necessarily based on the realities as they occur. Employee experience is a better approach to employee engagement (Pandita & Bedarkar, 2015). It is a methodology for creating a positive experience at all stages of the employee lifecycle. It is the most appropriate method in the planning stage as it focuses on identifying touchpoints that employees identify themselves with, either pains or gains (Ludike, 2018). We identified employee learning, interacting with HR, and onboarding for new hires as touchpoints (Table 1). These are considered moments that matter the most, as expressed by employees in their interaction with us. Organizations develop personas based on the insights derived from in-depth interviews and observations. Personas (Table 2, 3) explain how different employee cohorts experience touchpoints. Design thinking provides an approach to improve the touchpoints. As provided by various authors, employee experience is a construct, the meaning of which is shown in Table 1.

Employee experience is defined as experiences that employees have concerning all aspects of working life, from a physical work environment, relationship with the management, and personal aspirations. These aspects have a tremendous impact on the well-being of the employees. Employee experience has become a key differentiator in talent acquisition and retention (Ludike, 2018). Organizations today spend time and money to improve the employee experience exponentially. The starting point for any organization to embark on this journey is to ponder upon and find answers to some elementary questions about the organization's culture, leadership support, and career aspirations that will create a positive experience for the employees. It is found that employees with a positive experience recommend their organization to others.

Table 1. *Employee Experience Constructs*

Jacob Morgan	Technology, physical spaces, and organizational culture
Itam & Ghosh (2020)	Workplace practices integrated with meaningful work, supportive management, positive work environment, growth opportunity, and technology; leadership and management behaviors and actions are second factors
Deloitte University Press (2017)	Employee engagement and cultural diversity
Foresee.com (2014)	Career growth, compensation, teamwork, empowerment, environment, job nature, and managerial abilities
IBM and Globoforce (2017)	Leaders and managers play a vital role in establishing a positive work environment
Foresee's Employee Experience (Foresee.com, 2014)	Job, workload, work environment, manager, teamwork, compensation, career advancements, leadership, work support through training, corporate culture

Employee experience is the new buzzword, which is here to stay for a long time. The organization's focus has shifted from understanding employee satisfaction and engagement levels to understanding and capturing employees' experiences (Lemon, 2019). The proposition that employees are highly engaged when their experiences are positive is here to stay and brings about a paradigm shift in talent management and employee engagement (Durai & King, 2018). The quality of employee experience directly impacts employee satisfaction, employee involvement, commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance (Plaskoff, 2017). Thus, the need to measure the employee experience.

Need to Measure Employee Experience

Top management and HR experts have invested budgets in employee engagement, diversity and inclusion, performance management, and leadership and exit programs for employees (Kaur & Batra, 2018). So far, the focus of these programs has been specific to their objectives. The job, the meaningfulness of work, progress, doing and getting the work done drives employees to perform; engagement activities are hygiene factors than motivators (IBM & Globoforce, 2017). Employee experience is a concept, more of the mindset, that includes all the above aspects with one objective. Organizations have been trying to measure employee experience through satisfaction surveys or engagement surveys for some time. The result of these surveys is that data that measures satisfaction is a superficial understanding of the employee. These surveys have been criticized for being a time-consuming and cumbersome process that only talks about "are you engaged?".

A new approach to understanding employee experience is to create an employee journey map (Table 2,3) that captures every milestone and interaction that employees have at every stage of the employee life cycle. This provides insights into employees' perceptions while interacting with the organization during the employment contract (Ludike, 2018). It is imperative to say that every employee's experience will be different. It depends more or less on their expectations from the workplace. While some might value career paths and monetary growth, their experiences will be influenced by their perception of it. Another set of employees would value technology, the physical work environment, etc. The organization will be able to provide a positive experience to its employees if they study and understand what matters the most to them. However, with the multi-generation workforce, diversity concerning gender, religion, culture, and beliefs, what employees will value will differ. One strategy will only be a solution for some employees (Yohn, 2016).

Hence, there is a need to develop a scale to measure employee experience, as there needs to be more clarity on measuring EX. However, it is crucial to understand how to measure the employee experience. In doing so, an approach is needed to understand the EX. Design thinking as an approach has been successful in customer experience. It does so by considering all the aspects of customer journey maps. Similarly, this approach considers all the aspects of the employee journey map (Maurer, 2019).

Design Thinking

New challenges require a fresh perspective. A multidisciplinary, non-linear approach like design thinking provides the much-needed fresh perspective to address the challenges in creating a human-centric workplace. Companies invest in workplace research but must consider the employees' perspective in developing workplace practices (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). Design thinking avoids these mistakes. The principles of designing thinking — empathy, define, ideate, prototype, and test bring immense value by understanding the employees in-depth and involving them in designing a solution that best suits their needs and aspiration, thereby creating workplace experiences. Creating and delivering differentiated and satisfying employee experiences is the new source of competitive advantage (SHRM, 2022). It is an integrated tool kit that focuses on the needs of the people, the technology, and the drivers of business success.

The design thinking process is contextual; it considers the context of the problem to arrive at a solution involving those who experience the problem themselves (Kummitha, 2018). It shifts the perspective from an organization-centric policy to employee-centric (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). The five stages followed in design thinking begin with empathy – designing a human-centered workplace: a philosophy that assumes innovative workplace solutions start by getting to know the user and observing their activities. The stage of empathy begins with understanding people, their experiences, and their motivation to gain a deeper understanding of the expectations that employees have from the workplace, the gains they enjoy, and the pains they experience (Table 2, 3). The new perspective emphasizes, "What jobs do our employees need to get done, and how do we help them?," "What relationship do our employees expect us to establish with them," or "For what value are employees willing to contribute to common goals?" The deep insights gathered through observation; in-depth interviews contribute immensely to answering these questions. Defining the problem provides the designer with ideas to develop HR practices that will help solve the problem (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

Design thinking is based on the principle of providing solutions that match the employees' needs, aspirations, and expectations. At the empathize stage, the designer understands the user's aspiration and analyses the data that will lead to the problem statement. Out-of-box ideas are generated at the ideation stages. Brainstorming and the worst idea possible are some techniques used to generate many ideas (Chug & Vibhuti, 2017). A prototype is an experimental stage where alternates are limited, and a prototype solution is designed and tested within the team or with a department. This stage will provide helpful insights and identify any barriers employees may experience. In the final testing stage, the team vigorously tests the solutions to redefine the problem (Brooks, 2016; Dam, 2021).

Objective of the Study

The crux of designing employee experience lies in the principle of "listening to the employees about what makes work difficult." The study's objective is to develop a scale that can be used to listen to the employees (Liley et al., 2017). The study aims to identify the final construct of employee experience to improve EX by achieving goodness of fit and conducting content validity and reliability (Ninan et al., 2019).

The scale (Table 4) developed will contribute immensely to existing knowledge and provide organizations with a scale that not only identifies pain points (Table 2 and Table 3) but also study the impact of those pain points on engagement, thereby providing organization insights on the potential change in workforce practices.

Methodology

The type of research is descriptive and exploratory. A design thinking approach is used in the study. In the empathy stage, insights were derived based on the personal interviews of employees from the education sector. Employee journey maps (Tables 2, 3) were created. The critical moments of an employee's journey are identified and mapped (Vantage Circle, 2022). As the purpose of the paper is to develop a scale that could measure employee experience at all touchpoints, only the empathy stage- empathy map is used.

We identified academicians as the segment, and demographic characteristics such as years of experience and gender were identified. Personas and employee empathy maps were created. Designation and years of experience in the organization were used as reference points to create personas. The empathy (Yohn, 2016) maps identified the touch points, pains, and gains. Personal interviews and observations of five academicians were used to create the empathy map. The pains and gains were identified from the personas (refer to Table 2 and Table 3).

After an extensive literature review on employee experience, using design thinking, the following drivers were identified as sub-variables (for pain and gain points, please refer to Tables 2&3) that drive employee experience (Raj, 2021).

Table 2. ***Empathy Map (Female)***

Work Life

Profession : Associate Prof

Years of Experience: 4 years

Goals: Professor

Personal Life

Dependents : Parents

Family Support : Yes

Goals: Retirement fund; upscale life style

Phases

Candidate	Hire	Onboarding	First 100 days	First Year	Ongoing	Exit
Touchpoints:	I hear from the Recruiter Candidate Steps	HOD, Team	Meetings Workload Made friends	Opportunity to share ideas	Contribution not recognized, Unfair bias Treatment	
See	Advt.on job portal	Limited comm,	Pressure	Support	Bad boss/poor infrastructure	Expectation Alignment Dysfunction.
Hear	Not so positive reviews	Not so positive review	You will get used to it	Praises ,Recognition	Appreciations and encourage	Growth of friends in other workplace
Say & Do		Busy & Reserved	Helpful	Settled ,Team member	Demotivated avoidance	Active job search
Think & Feel	Work Culture	Adjustment	Aspiration to grow-unsure of goals	Aspire to grow	Challenge stressor	Career Languishing
Expectations	Get placed	Formal Onboarding /Buddy/work culture	Training, Leader support/Career Plan	Training, FDP, Challenging sub/Career plan	Leader Support, Career Plan, Empathy	New enriching culture and higher pay package
Emotions	Excited	Confused	Happy	Motivated	Frustrated	Highly Disengaged

SEE	HEAR	SAY & DO	THINK & FEEL
What the employee see in her environment	What her friends, family and influencer say	What the employee say and Behave	What are the worries & aspiration

Pains	Gains
Fears, Frustration, Obstacles Flexibility at workplace, Workplace design, Involvement at work, and technology, Internal, Communication system	Wants/needs Measure of Success Growth, Learning, Rewards and recognitions, Ethical practices, Meaningful work,

Table 3. ***Empathy Map (Male)***

Work Life

Profession : Assistant Prof with PhD

Years of Experience: **6 years**

Goals: Associate Prof/ Director

Personal Life

Dependents : Spouse, Children

Family Support : Yes

Goals: Children Education & settlement

Retirement fund; upscale life style

Phases

Candidate	Hire	Onboarding	First 100 days	First Year	Ongoing	Exit
Touchpoints:	Naukri.com	HR, Director	Workload	Responsibility & Authority	Responsibility Increased No Leader support	
See	Infrastructure	Casual Discussion about Personal Life	Attrition in the dept.	Discipline Responsibility and Teaching	Monotonous Rigid System,	EAD
Hear	Not Heard	Encouragement	Push factor, Director Motivation +Promises	Concern, Helpful atmosphere from peers	Good College continue till find. Change important	Growth of friends in other workplace
Say & Do	Applied with Hesitation	Discouragement – Negative feedback by Peers	Going with flow, Goa Trip	Not happy- Anxiety and WL Imbalance Motivated salary inc.	Active job Seeker, but expectation not matching	Active job search
Think & Feel	Selection-Performance	Not Sure of Continuing	PhD, Post PhD thinks will be fine	Health Issues, Due to long distance on bike	Loan, Salary, Position, over Qualified for assistant prof	Career Languishing
Expectations	Good Salary & Growth	Leave Policy, Salary Adjustment	Good Salary & Growth	Leader Empathy and support	Job in City Limits with Salary and designation	New enriching culture and higher pay package
Emotions	Not Excited(ENA)	Confused	Neutral	Motivated	Frustrated	Highly Disengaged

SEE	HEAR	SAY & DO	THINK & FEEL
What the employee see in his environment	What her friends, family and influencer say	What the employee say and Behave	What are the worries & aspiration

Pains	Gains
Fears, Frustration, Obstacles No Leave Policy, Odd timing s, Flexibility at workplace, Workplace design, Involvement at work, and technology, Internal, Communication system	Wants/needs Measure of Success Growth, Learning, Time for PhD Rewards and recognitions, Ethical practices, Meaningful work,

- HR Practices: Learning & development, career growth opportunities, rewards and recognition, flexible working practices, and ethical practices.
- Physical spaces-depicting values.
- Technology needs of the employees.
- Leadership and manager role in setting expectations and goals, performance feedback, understanding employee needs, mentoring, facilitating and supporting employees, and removing obstacles.
- Employee engagement practices like employee well-being and team collaboration.

Table 4. *Content Validity*

Variables	Statement	(I-CVI) (6)
Training	My organization suggests new skills to develop and provide personalized learning recommendations that align with upcoming business needs.	1
Diversity Main Inclusion	My organization involves me in identifying the business needs or department, which helps me better serve my consumers.	1
Performance Appraisal and Feedback	My manager gives feedback on my performance.	1
Purpose	My work gives me a sense of purpose.	1
Treatment	My leader treats me fairly.	1
Teamwork	My organization encourages team collaboration.	1
Wellbeing	My organization invests in employees' well-being (physical and mental health).	1
Opportunities	My organization provides me with new opportunities to implement my skills and grow.	0.83
Rewards	My organization recognizes and rewards my performance.	0.83
Flexible Work Options	My organization offers flexible work options (such as the ability to work your own hours wherever you want) and encourages autonomy.	0.83
Ethical	My organization follows ethical practices while dealing with its stakeholders, including employees.	0.83
Values	My organization's values are reflected through physical space (e.g., if the values are collaboration, openness, transparency, and fun, then you wouldn't expect to see a dull environment with nothing but cubicles!).	0.83
Meaningful Work	My work is meaningful and gives me a sense of "having done something" day-to-day experience.	0.83
Employee Needs	My manager understands what employees like me need and want.	0.83
Expectations	My manager sets clear expectations.	0.83
Mentor	My manager coaches and mentors me.	0.83
Information	My manager shares information that might impact me or anything that concerns the organization.	0.83
Empathy	My manager cares about me as a person and empathizes with me.	0.83
Obstacles	My manager removes the obstacles from my job.	0.83
Clear Communication	My organization/manager has no unstated, unspoken expectations that are difficult to recognize.	0.83
Brand	My organization has a strong, positive brand perception.	0.83
Technical Needs	In my organization, the leader ensures that the technology used is focused on the needs of the employees instead of just on the technical requirements and specifications of the organization.	0.83

Statements were drafted (Table 4) for all variables and presented before a panel of six subject matter experts for further deliberation and to understand the relevance of these variables to study the employee experience. The experts were asked to provide their responses on the degree of relevancy of each item. The scale used is as follows:

1 = the item is *not relevant* to the measured domain.

2 = the item is *somewhat relevant* to the measured domain.

3 = the item is *quite relevant* to the measured domain.

4 = the item is *highly relevant* to the measured domain.

The content validity index for items and scales was calculated on the responses received. Out of the 29 identified items from the literature review, seven items with an item-level content validity index (I-CVI) <0.83 were dropped from the scale. The remaining 22 items had an I-CVI of 0.83 and 1. An item-level content validity index (I-CVI) of at least 0.83 with six experts should be retained for scale development.

Generation of Scale Items

Of the 29 items that identify pain and gain points (Table 2, 3) to study the employees' experience, 22 items were retained based on the I-CVI of the original scale. The items (Table 4) indicating the employee expectations consist of statements regarding expectations concerning growth, learning, rewards and recognition, flexibility at the workplace, ethical practices, workplace design, involvement at work, meaningful work, and technology.

Sampling and Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire. It was circulated among academicians in the region of Maharashtra. The structured questionnaire was circulated to 400 academicians in 2022 with work experience of more than one year. Out of 400 academicians, 201 responses were considered for the study. A 5-point Likert scaling was used to collect data ranging from *strongly agree to strongly disagree* (From 5 to 1, respectively).

Sampling Techniques and Framework

In this research study, two-step cluster sampling is used where the entire Maharashtra state was divided into six divisions: Konkan, Nashik, Nagpur, Amravati, Aurangabad, and Pune. After that, random sampling was used to select the sample/respondents.

Details of the Respondents

Of the 201 respondents, 50.8% were female employees, while 49.2% were male. Out of the total respondents, 38.1 % had 1–2 years of experience, 27% had more than 5 years of experience, 23% had 2–3 years of work experience, and 11.9% had work experience of 3–4 years.

Analysis and Results

Reliability Test

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to check the consistency and stability of the scales used in the questionnaire. Table 5 provides the reliability score for the scale.

According to Tables 6 and 7, the convergent validity of latent variables with their indicators is evaluated. Leadership (LDR) is the first latent variable with eight indicators (Figure 1). Its average variance extracted value is 0.256 (Table 6), which is less than .05, which means that LDR does not have convergent validity with its indicators. The second latent variable, human resource practices (HRP), has seven indicators, and its average variance extracted value is 1.026, which is more than .05, which means that HRP has convergent validity with its indicators. The third latent variable, culture (CULT), has four indicators. Its average variance extracted value of 0.908, which is more than .05, means that CULT has convergent validity with its indicators. The fourth latent variable is company image (CI), which has two indicators, and its average variance extracted value is 0.8042, which is more than .05, which implies that CI has convergent validity with its indicators.

Table 5. *Reliability Test*

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	*N* of Items
.963	.963	22

Table 6. *Convergent Validity with Standardized Factor Loadings*

Indicator Variable	<---	Latent Variable	Standardized Loading	Square of the Standardized Loading	Sum of Squared Standardized Loading	Number of Indicators	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Square root of AVE/DV
Rewards	<---	LDR	0.57	0.3249	2.048225	8	0.256028125	0.5059922
Wellbeing	<---	LDR	0.475	0.225625				
Training	<---	LDR	0.517	0.267289				
Teamwork	<---	LDR	0.565	0.319225				
Flexible Work Options	<---	LDR	0.455	0.207025				
Technical Needs	<---	LDR	0.489	0.239121				
Meaningful Work	<---	LDR	0.468	0.219024				
Treatment	<---	LDR	0.496	0.246016				
Empathy	<---	HRP	1	1	7.18377	7	1.026252857	1.0130414
Expect	<---	HRP	1.064	1.132096				
Purpose	<---	HRP	1.092	1.192464				
Employee Needs	<---	HRP	0.917	0.840889				
Mentor	<---	HRP	1.159	1.343281				
Obstacles	<---	HRP	0.988	0.976144				
Information	<---	HRP	0.836	0.698896				

Performance Appraisal and Feedback	<---	CULT	1	1	3.632376	4	0.908094	0.9529397
Ethical	<---	CULT	0.814	0.662596				
Values	<---	CULT	0.938	0.879844				
Diversity Main Inclusion	<---	CULT	1.044	1.089936				
Brand	<---	CI	1	1	1.6084	2	0.8042	0.896772
Clear Communication	<---	CI	0.78	0.6084				

Table 7. ***Convergent and Discriminant Analysis Table with Standardized Factor Loadings***

			Correlation
Leadership (LDR)	<-->	Human Resource Practices (HRP)	1
Human Resource Practices (HRP)	<-->	Culture (CULT)	0.507
Culture (CULT)	<-->	Company Image (CI)	0.463
Leadership (LDR)	<-->	Culture (CULT)	0.894
Human Resource Practices (HRP)	<-->	Company Image (CI)	0.525
Leadership (LDR)	<-->	Company Image (CI)	1

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is the positive relationship between two latent variables, which indicates that the square root of the average variance extracted must be more than the latent variable's correlation.

According to Table 7, the correlation of leadership (LDR) with human resource practices (HRP) has negative discriminant validity because the square root of AVE/DV of leadership (LDR) is 0.5059922, and it is less than the latent variable's correlation (1).

The correlation of human resource practices (HRP) with culture (CULT) has positive discriminant validity because the square root of AVE/DV of human resource practices (HRP) is 1.013, and it is more than the latent variable's correlation (0.507). The correlation of culture (CULT) with company image (CI) has positive discriminant validity because the square root of AVE/DV of company image (CI) is 0.9529397, and it is more than the latent variable's correlation (0.463). The correlation of leadership (LDR) with culture (CULT) has negative discriminant validity because the square root of AVE/DV of leadership (LDR) is 0.5059922, and it is less than the latent variable's correlation (0.894). The correlation of human resource practices (HRP) with company image (CI) has positive discriminant validity because the square root of AVE/DV of human resource practices (HRP) is 1.0130414, and it is more than the latent variable's correlation (0.525). The correlation of leadership (LDR) with company image (CI) has negative discriminant validity because the square root of AVE/DV of leadership (LDR) is 0.5059922, and it is less than the latent variable's correlation (1).

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is the most common data reduction technique used in social sciences. It serves the purpose of scale development (Swamy et al., 2015). for a construct, helping reduce the large number of variables used to measure the construct. It serves the purpose of the paper to establish the underlying dimensions between measured

variables and constructs. Two common types of factor analysis are exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. For this paper, both have been used.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The KMO measure was used to check if there are linear relationships between the variables and if it is appropriate to run a principal component analysis on the current data set. Its value can range from 0 to 1, with values above 0.6 suggested as a minimum requirement for sampling adequacy. However, values above 0.8 are considered good and indicative of the principal component analysis being useful (refer to Table 8).

Bartlett's test of sphericity tests the hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. This means that there is a correlation among the items. Bartlett's test of sphericity should be less than 0.05. Table 8 shows that the KMO measure of sampling adequacy is .911, so the sample size is adequate for the study. The approximate chi-square value is 4224.367, and the degree of freedom is 210. Four components were extracted (Eigenvalues > 1) using the principal component analysis, and the rotation used was varimax rotation (Table 9).

Table 9 represents that the four factors extracted together account for 57.796 % of the total variance (information contained in the selected 21 variables).

Table 8. *KMO and Bartlett's Test*

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.911
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4224.367
	Df	210
	Sig.	.000

Table 9. *Component Matrix*

	Component Matrix			
	Component			
	Leadership	Human Resource Practices	Culture	Image
Training	.789	.087	.232	.124
Rewards	.789	.116	.154	–.301
Flexible Work Options	.640	.311	.379	–.112
Ethical	–.294	.155	.623	.202
Values	–.063	–.016	.771	.197
Diversity Main Inclusion	–.410	–.138	.758	.267
Meaningful Work	.791	.310	–.362	.166
Technical Needs	.737	.341	–.310	.334
Employee Needs	–.215	.742	.119	.445
Expectations	–.354	.803	.163	.301
Performance Appraisal and Feedback	–.032	–.406	.744	.251

Mentor	–.151	.863	.181	–.158
Information	–.317	.691	–.129	–.235
Empathy	–.287	.769	–.091	–.412
Obstacles	–.163	.782	–.100	.185
Purpose	–.093	.797	–.149	.375
Treatment	.752	.450	–.056	–.225
Teamwork	.806	.204	.108	–.305
Wellbeing	.818	.073	–.067	–.105
Clear Communication	.419	.069	–.165	.667
Brand	.313	.094	–.141	.783
Eigen Value	12.137	1.214	1.133	.916
% of Variance	57.796	5.782	5.394	4.362
Cumulative	57.796	63.578	68.972	73.335

The extracted factors are as follows :

Factor 1 : Leadership. Leadership plays an essential role in creating an employee experience. Components such as treatment, meaningful work, technical needs, flexible work options, teamwork, training, well-being, and rewards loaded onto Leadership. Hence, Leadership is the first factor, accounting for 57.796% of the total variance.

Factor 2 : HR Practices. Out of the many HR practices, mentoring, information sharing, employee needs, and clear expectation stating are loaded on Factor 2. It consists of six items, including a statement such as "My manager coaches and mentors me" or "My manager shares information that might impact me or anything concerning the organization." Hence, HR Practices is the second factor, which accounts for 5.782% of the total variance.

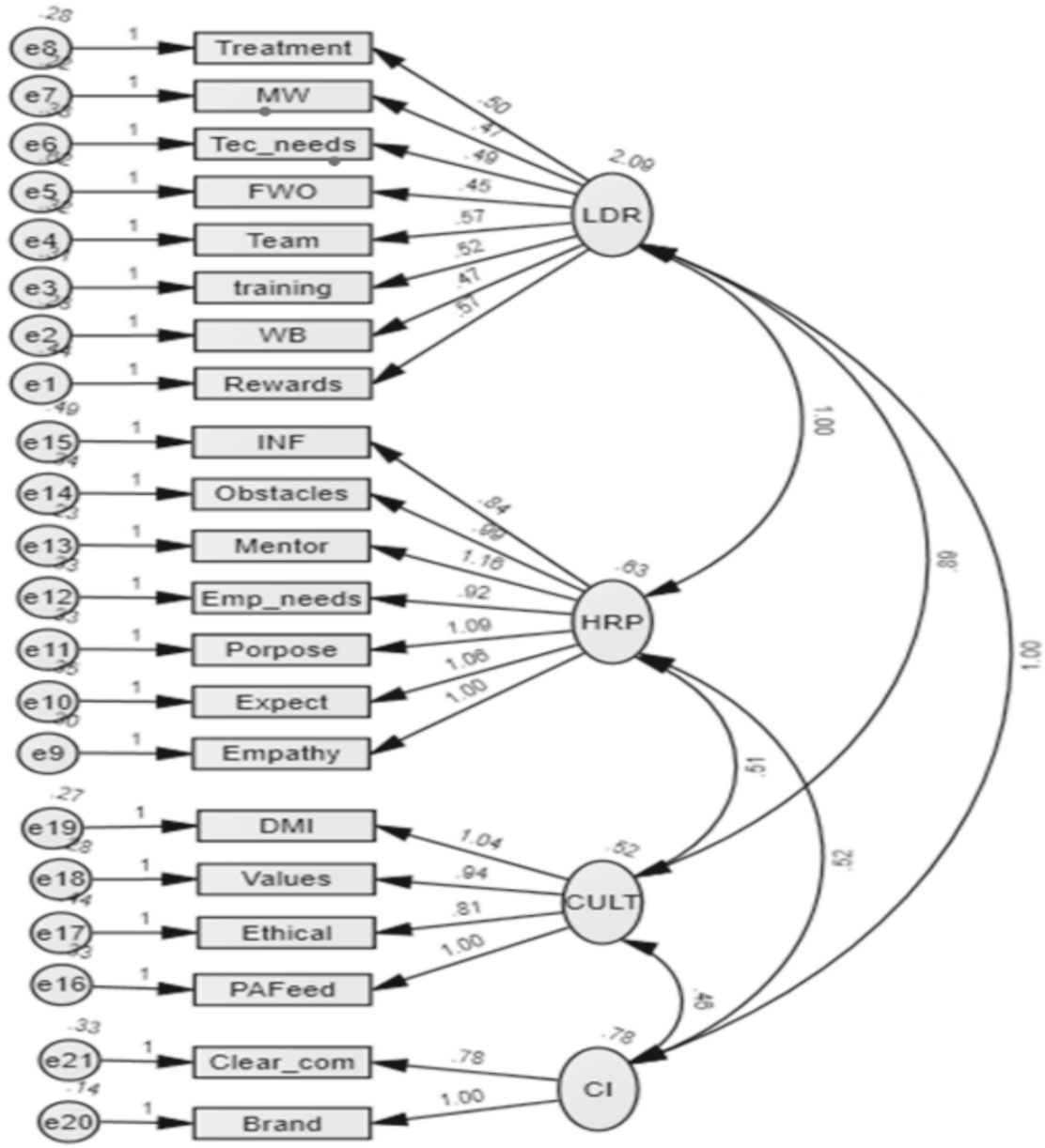
Factor 3 : Culture is one of the significant drivers of employee experience. Culture is the foundation of a strong, human-centric work environment. When employees experience a culture where they can bond with their colleagues, they are more engaged and less likely to leave the organization. It consists of the following items: professional values, diversity, inclusive culture, ethical practices, and continuous performance appraisal feedback. Hence, Culture is the third factor, accounting for 5.394% of the total variance.

Factor 4 : Company Image comprises of flexibility to work, workstations, involvement in work, healthy culture, and leadership. The factor includes items like clear communication and brand image. Hence, Company Image is the fourth factor, accounting for 4.362 % of the total variance.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run using AMOS, and maximum likelihood (Figure 1) is used in CFA. Chi-square value, goodness of fit, and approximate fit index were used to check the model's fitness. Insignificant model chi-square goodness-of-fit signifies that the model is fit. It is set at 0.05. The goodness of fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), and normed fit index (NFI) are considered for overall model fit. Tucker- Lewis fit index (TLI) above 0.9 indicates that the model is fit for approximate fit indices. Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) having a value less than 0.08 also signifies a reasonable model fit.

Figure 1. ***Confirmatory Factor Analysis***



Besides these indices, chi-square/degree of freedom (CMIN/*DF*) having a value of less than 3 would signify a reasonable model fit.

Figure 1 depicts that the CMIN/*DF* is < 3, which tells us that the model is acceptable. The absolute fit indices measure how well the specified model reproduces the observed data. The goodness of fit index (GFI) tells us if the fit statistics are sensitive to the sample size. The range of GFI is between 0 to 1, with a higher value indicating a better fit. The GFI = .692; chi-square = 994.913 with degrees of freedom = 184 and probability level = 0.000. Also, the approximate fit indices are within the permissible limit (Table 4); the chi-square/degree of freedom (CMIN/*DF*) is 1.038, root mean square residual (RMR) is 0.058, the goodness of fit index (GFI) is 0.690, adjusted

goodness of fit index (AGFI) is 0.614, normed fit index (NFI) is 0.754, Tucker-Lewis fit index (TLI) is 0.758, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 148 for the default model. Since all the goodness-of-fit indices show that the construct is fit, this is considered as the final construct of employee experience. Figure 1 consists of four factors, namely Leadership (LDR, eight items), Human Resources Practices (HRP, eight items), Culture (CULT, four items), and Company Image (CI, two items).

Extracted Impact of Indicators on Latent Variable Using the AMOS Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

Table 10 depicts the important values in terms of understating the relationships, scores, and indicators' impact on the latent variables. Explaining the indicators over the score and the impact on the latent variable is measured through the AMOS confirmatory factor analysis model.

Figure 2 explains that under the Leadership latent variable, the *t* - value of Rewards is 51.41, which is less than other companion indicators, but its impact on the latent variable is highest, which is 0.57 with regression value; it shows a strong relationship and impact on its latent variable. Under the HR Practices latent variable, the *t* - value of Mentor is 54.42, which is less than other companion indicators. However, its impact on the latent variable is highest, with a 1.16 regression value. It shows a very strong relationship and impact on its latent variable. Under the Culture latent variable, the *t* - value of DMI is 62.09, which is less than other companion indicators. However, its impact on the latent variable is highest, which is 1.04 with regression value, which shows a strong relationship

Table 10. ***Impact of Indicators on the Latent Variable***

Sr. No.	Indicators	Score	Latent Variable	Overall Impact	Impact
1	Treatment	65.935	**Leadership**	2.09	.50
2	Meaningful Work	69.706			.47
3	Technical Needs	61.197			.49
4	Flexible Work Options	53.026			.45
5	Team Work	57.224			.57
6	Training	60.016			.52
7	Wellbeing	70.504			.47
8	Rewards	51.412			.57
9	Information	57.050	**HR Practices**	.63	.84
10	Obstacles	55.711			.99
11	Mentor	54.428			1.16
12	Employee Needs	60.513			.92
13	Purpose	53.881			1.09
14	Expect	56.990			1.06
15	Empathy	62.394			1.0
16	Diversity Main Inclusion	62.096	**Culture**	.52	1.04
17	Values	67.294			.94
18	Ethical	65.434			.81
19	Performance Appraisal and Feedback	64.643			1.0
20	Clear Communication	60.513	**Company Image**	.78	.78
21	Brand	57.972			1.0

Figure 2. ***Experience Elements***

Experience Elements

Score		Impact
51.41	*Rewards*	0.57
54.42	*Mentor*	1.16
53.88	*Purpose*	1.09
62.09	*Decision Making*	1.04
57.97	*Employers Brand*	1.0

and impact on its latent variable. Under the Company Image latent variable, the *t*- value of Brand is 57.97, which is less than other companion indicators, but its impact on the latent variable is highest, with a 1.0 regression value, and it shows a very strong relationship and impact on its latent variable.

Findings

We have derived four essential factors along with their variables to seek the outcomes of the scale. Hence, the significant findings are enlisted as follows:

- Leadership plays a vital role in retaining employees of the organization. Hence, it is an essential factor in creating an employee experience.
- Subsequently, respondents revealed that HR Practices are responsible for creating good organizational value and transparent mentorship.
- Culture could be a trigger point for employees who are highly concerned about the ethical approach and values of the organization.
- Company Image is one of the crucial factors in dealing with employees and their work-life balance.

When we describe the experience of the employees, then the following factors could play a significant role :

- 'Mentor' with a 1.16 regression weightage is ranked the highest and describes the importance of mentors in guiding employees correctly for them to perform effectively in the organization.
- Purpose, with a 1.09 weightage, is ranked second and describes how essential HR practices are in an organization.
- Decision-making, with a 1.04 weightage, is ranked third and describes how HR practices influence employees' work experience in the organization.

- Employer Brand, with a 1.0 weightage, is ranked fourth, which explains a healthy work culture, leadership approach, and their contribution to making a positive employer brand.

Suggestions and Conclusion

Employee experiences provide an all-inclusive view and motivation toward accomplishments at all levels of the organization. Employees with a sense of belongingness, purpose, achievement, vigor, and happiness are more likely to achieve at advanced levels and subsidize beyond potential. Organizations that greatly invest in employee experience are registered as the finest abode to work, getting more than four times the ordinary. Several suggestions materialized in crafting the employee experience model to nurture enhanced work experience and attain optimistic results. Assessing digital and technology-assisted HR systems like gamification and artificial intelligence allows learning management systems (training and development) and digital performance management systems at workstations. These changes can undoubtedly pervade more excellent employee experience at the workplace. The efficiency and collaboration events, engagement surveys, performance management system, well-being and welfare, and many other technological outfits can add value to the existing HR live-out.

Managerial Implications

The scale of the construct of employee experience will benefit managers in measuring employee experience. The focus of the organizations earlier was on employee engagement (Rana, 2015). However, organizations now focus on providing an enriching experience to their employees, which in turn increases the engagement of the employees. Leadership style, support, and HR practices that build a fostering culture lead to better experiences. Focus on these parameters would help build an organization's sustaining culture. It will also draw attention to those factors that need improvement to improve the experience. While experience is essential for engagement, it directly links to customer experience. A happy employee puts go beyond to serve, resulting in a rewarding customer experience.

Organizations believe that employee experience is about creating a human-centric organization to work. Experience is idiosyncratic in context because employees have sentiments, and their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors shift from person to person based on the circumstances. Firms must devote time and effort to crafting exclusive feelings and cosmoses for employees to overcome employee dissimilarities. They firmly practice and should try to execute it rigorously. Employee experience is a significant key to a business differentiator, just to be left up to the circumstances. To acquire a healthy environment, firms must attempt to enhance employee experiences and contemplate upon the same as a primary concern.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Future Research

It is essential to acknowledge that this study has limitations. Nevertheless, it provides avenues for future researchers. Being exploratory, this study might yet explain the proposed relationships. Experiences are subjected to a mix of environmental factors, situations, perceptions, and the mental make of every individual. Therefore, it is crucial to consider these factors for future studies. Future studies should adopt a longitudinal approach to investigate the same model. The study was limited only to the state of Maharashtra. In the future, researchers may also employ representative samples and larger sample sizes across different states and universities. The study is based on employee perception only; it is suggested that future researchers consider the management perspective of institutes and boards of trustees. Finally, each organization has its own culture, which may have influenced the

current findings. Therefore, researchers could conduct studies to validate the proposed model in geographical areas, including other countries.

Authors' Contribution

Dr. Rajeshwari Patil conceived the idea and developed qualitative and quantitative designs to undertake the empirical study. Priyanka Pandita extracted research papers with high repute, filtered these based on keywords, and generated concepts and codes relevant to the study design. Dr. Rajeshwari Patil and Dr. Ganesh Waghmare verified the analytical methods and supervised the study. The interviews for qualitative design were conducted by Dr. Rajeshwari Patil in English, and the same were further transcripted and translated by Dr. Ganesh Waghmare. The numerical computations were done by Dr. Rajeshwari Patil using SPSS 20.0 and Dr. Ganesh Waghmare using AMOS.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter, or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Funding Acknowledgement

The authors received no financial support for this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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About the Authors

Dr. Rajeshwari Patil is Net qualified and holds a Ph.D. in management from Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, Pune, Maharashtra. With more than 15 plus years of experience in teaching, she is the Deputy Director of Balaji Institute of Management and Human Resource Development, Sri Balaji University Pune.

Priyanka Pandita is working as an Assistant Professor at Sri Balaji University Pune. She was formerly associated with Kurukshetra University, Haryana. She has 11 years of rich experience in teaching. Her subjects of expertise are HRM, OB, training and development, and management fundamentals.

Dr. Ganesh Waghmare is an Associate Professor at Lexicon Management Institute of Leadership and Excellence, Pune. He has more than 17 years of experience in teaching and research. He holds a doctorate in commerce & management and an MBA degree from Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad, Maharashtra.