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How Do Large Employers Engage with Apprenticeships in Scotland

PAUL QUIGLEY

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Research Overview



This project seeks to consider all relevant external and internal factors which impact the decision-making process on apprenticeship engagement.



This includes the Apprenticeship Levy as well as more recently introduced incentive schemes.



The project will seek to understand what impacts the decision to engage, as well as the level of engagement.

Apprenticeship Levy

The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in 2017 to increase recruitment and training of apprentices (Gambin et al, 2016).

The levy applies to employers with an annual salary costs of more than £3m and amounts to 0.5% of their yearly wage bill.

This money can then be reclaimed in order to pay for apprenticeship training (Department for Education, 2018).

The scheme has been criticised as recruitment fell during the first two years (Chapman, 2019) and for leading to creation of 'fake apprenticeships' (EDSK, 2020)

The Levy is applied in Scotland, though is managed by the Scottish Government

Apprenticeship Policies in Scotland

The Coronavirus
Job Retention
Scheme (UK)

Apprenticeship
Employer Grant
(Scotland)

Adopt an
Apprentice
(Scotland)

Gap In Literature

- ▶ There exists literature which discusses apprenticeships in Scotland (Canning & Lang, 2007; Bajgar & Criscuolo, 2016; Thomson, 2016).
- ▶ There is also a growing literature which evaluates the impact of the Apprenticeship Levy (CIPD, 2018; Richmond, 2018; EDSK, 2020).
- ▶ There is very limited literature of note which considers the decision making process of employers when considering engaging with apprenticeships (Gambin & Hogarth, 2016. Federation of Small Businesses, 2018).
- ▶ There is some literature which evaluates the impact of covid upon apprenticeships (Muehlemann et al, 2020. Shah & Nazir, 2020) however little of note within the Scottish context.
- ▶ There is a clear gap in current understanding of what motivates employers when considering apprenticeship engagement in Scotland, particularly in light of the pandemic.

Research Questions

- What are the key motivating factors which influence large employers when considering engaging with apprenticeships?

How influential have recent government policies been in impacting these decisions within organisations?

- For those employers who do engage with apprenticeships, what factors determine the level of that engagement?

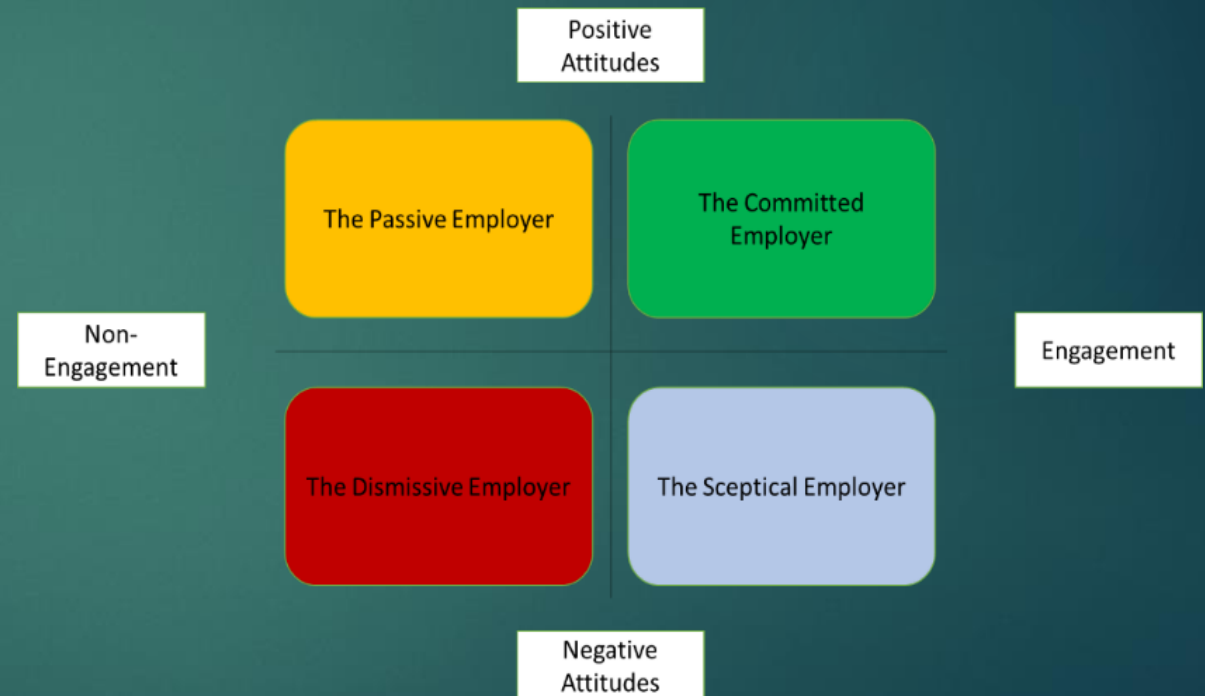
What policy changes would be effective in increasing the apprenticeship engagement of such employers?

- Can the typology of Bredgaard be used as a useful tool to categorise employers in terms of apprenticeship engagement?

Can Bredgaard's typology be developed in such a way as to provide a framework for how apprenticeship engagement may be increased?

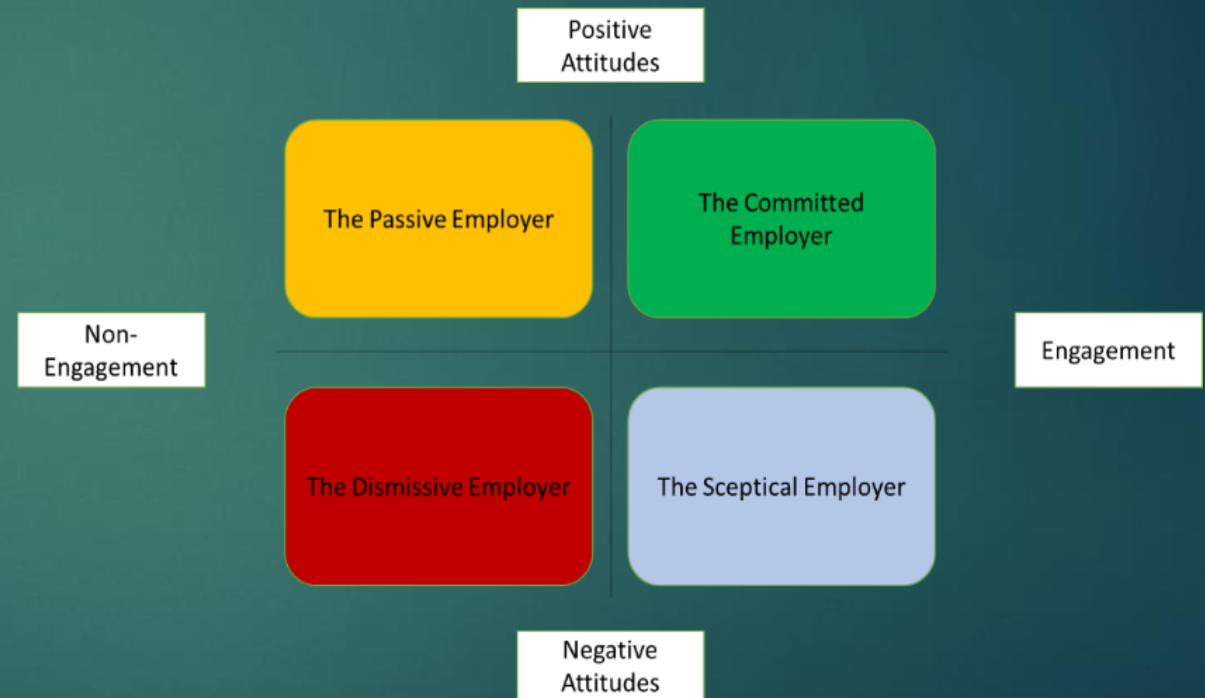
Bredgaard's Typology

- ▶ A typology framework has been created by Thomas Bredgaard to explain the types of employers when it comes to ALMP engagement (2017).
- ▶ It serves to broaden understanding how employer's attitudes and participation interact.



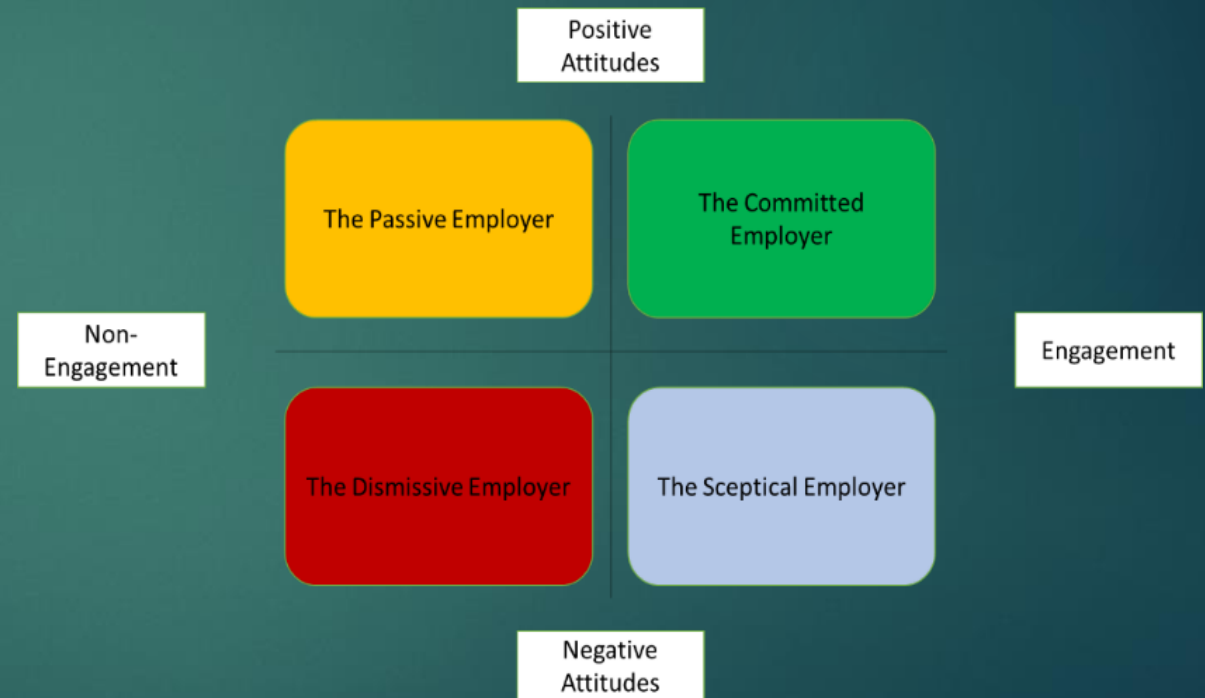
Bredgaard's Typology

- ▶ The utility of this framework was tested by Bredgaard on the engagement of Danish employers with ALMPs introduced by the Danish government.
- ▶ This project will seek to apply it to apprenticeship engagement more broadly to review its utility.



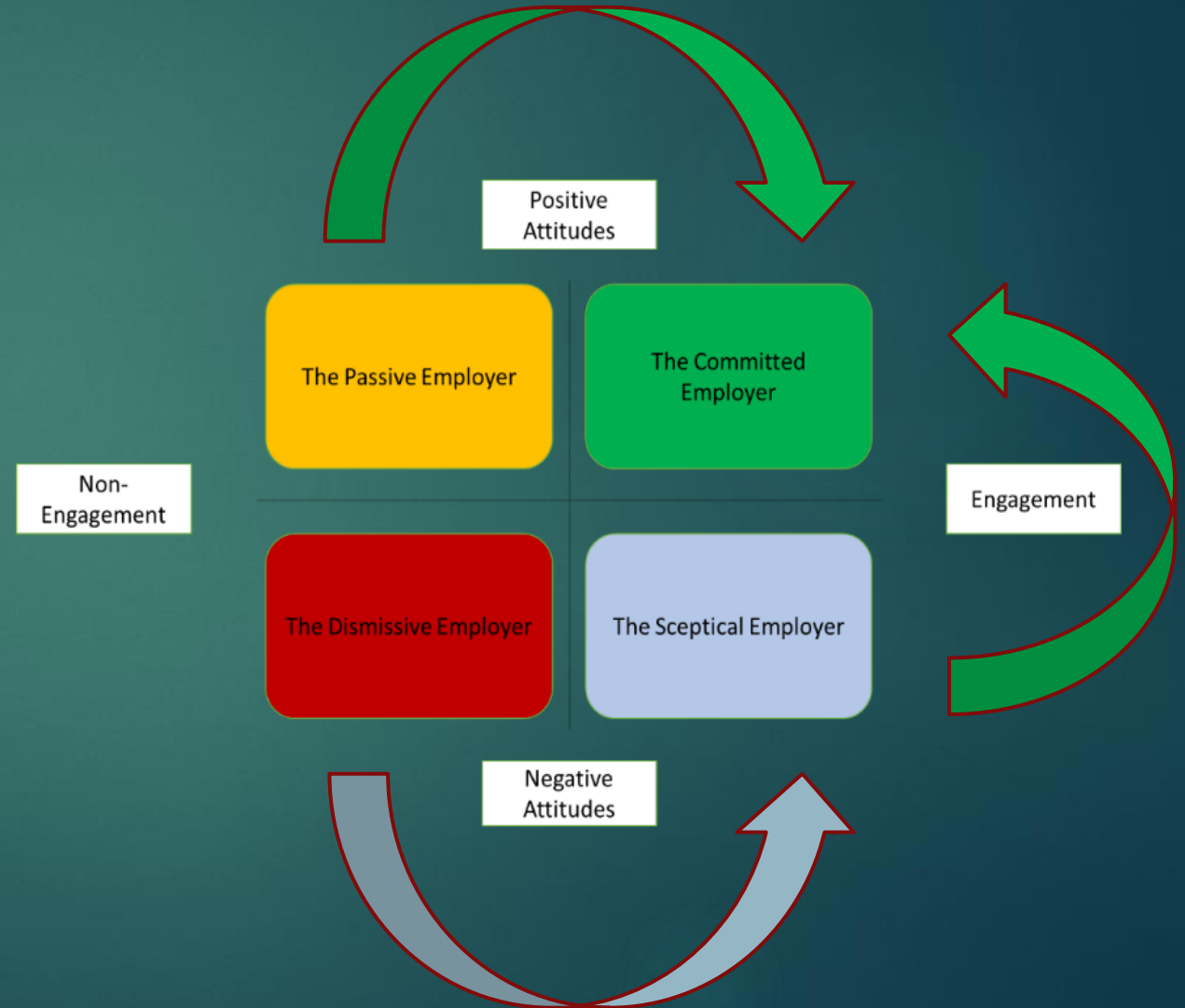
Bredgaard's Typology

- ▶ Bredgaard's study was quantitative, completed using surveys
- ▶ It intended to simply categorise employers and broaden understanding of employer attitudes.



Bredgaard's Typology

- ▶ This project will seek to explore whether the typology can be pushed further.
- ▶ Can this framework be used to provide a model for policy makers to successfully shift employers from one category to another?



Research Methods

Qualitative Study

Aiming to conduct up to 20 case studies of levy-paying employers.

These will each involve between 3-5 semi-structured interviews with people in senior and HR roles and analysis of relevant material for each organisation.

Ethical approval has been granted by the University of Glasgow

Research Methods

These organisations will be chosen from a range of sectors to ensure that there is a broad range and a mix of “old, traditional” apprenticeship industries and “new, modern” apprenticeship sectors.

This will be undertaken from a critical realist perspective (Leca & Naccache, 2006).

Geographically this will focus on employers across Scotland, from the urban central belt to rural and remote communities in the highlands and borders.

This is being done in conjunction with Skills Development Scotland.



ANY
QUESTIONS?