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A Study on Skill Based Hiring Over Degrees Focuses on Technology and IT Sector in Bangalore

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ABSTRACT

The worldwide job market is changing dramatically, with a noticeable shift away from traditional degree-based hiring and toward skill-based recruitment. This shift is especially noticeable in the technology and IT sectors, where rapid innovation, agile processes, and a results-oriented atmosphere necessitate a workforce with practical, job-ready skills. This study report examines changing employment trends in Bangalore, India's major technology hub, where firms are prioritizing technical expertise, hands-on experience, and role-specific competencies over conventional academic qualifications.

The study uses a mixed-methods approach, which includes interviews with hiring managers, HR professionals, and tech recruiters, as well as content analysis of job postings and survey data from job seekers and industry stakeholders. It analyzes the reasons behind this trend, including the limits of traditional degree programs in fulfilling industry requirements, the impact of global IT practices, and the rise of alternative education platforms such as coding boot camps, online certifications, and micro credentials.

KEY WORDS: Skill Based Hiring, Technology Sector Recruitment, IT Jobs in Bangalore, Alternative Credentials, Degree vs. Skills Debate.

INTRODUCTION

The old hiring strategy, which places a high value on academic degrees, is being challenged in the modern workforce. This trend is most visible in the technology and IT sectors, particularly in Bangalore, India's digital hub. As the demands of the technology industry change rapidly, businesses are beginning to prioritize skills, competencies, and real-world performance over formal college credentials.

Bangalore, called the "Silicon Valley of India," is home to hundreds of technology companies, global corporations, and innovation hubs. These firms are continually looking for individuals who can adapt rapidly, solve complicated problems, and contribute to projects with immediate impact. As a result, the conventional emphasis on degrees is giving way to a more dynamic hiring approach that prioritizes coding skills, technical certifications, portfolios, and hands-on project experience.

This article investigates the expanding trend of skill-based hiring in Bangalore's IT industry, looking at the drivers driving the shift, the ramifications for job seekers and educational institutions, and how it affects the larger employment ecosystem. This study intends to highlight Bangalore's future-focused, inclusive, and performance-driven recruitment procedures by studying hiring patterns, employer expectations, and skill development platforms.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend in the IT industry—particularly in innovation hotspots like Bangalore—where employers value talents over traditional academic degrees. The proliferation of coding boot camps, online certificates, hackathons, and freelance platforms has altered how companies assess candidates.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What influence does skill-based recruiting have on the employability of IT applicants without formal degrees?

What are the primary hurdles that organizations face when implementing skill-based hiring processes in Bangalore's technology industry?

What is the difference in employee performance and retention between degree-holders and skill-certified individuals in IT roles?

How do alternative credentials such as coding boot camps and online courses influence skill-based hiring decisions?

How is the transition to skill-based employment affecting educational institutions and traditional degree programs in Bangalore?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Competency-Based Education: The State of the Scene - Allen A Schmieder (1973) : The Competency Based Education (CBE) movement in the US is described in this document. After providing background information, this outline discusses the origins of the CBE movement, its distinctive features, the extent of involvement by states, higher education, educators, administrators, and the community, current resources, a list of important publications, key issues, and a CBE glossary. Included are a list of commonly used acronyms and a profile of CBE by state

Excellence, not competence: Why competency-based training is inappropriate for higher education - David Penington (1993) : Over the last three years, the competency-based education and training (CBET) movement has gained a lot of traction. Concerns about declining educational standards have been voiced recently by the US, Australia, and other English-speaking countries. CBET is seen by many industrialists as a way to establish and raise standards.

Using competencies to connect the workplace and postsecondary education- Karen Paulson(2001) : Postsecondary institutions must prepare their graduates for the performance-driven work market of today in order to remain viable. In addition to summarizing skill and competency resources that educational institutions might utilize to prepare their students for a smooth transition into the workforce, this chapter looks at how competencies are used in business.

Competency-based education: Changing the traditional college degree power, policy, and practice - Bonnie Ordonez (2014) : Higher education is undergoing a period of transformation. With rising student debt and continuously rising college tuition costs to unaffordable ranges, the U.S. federal government and its Department of Education are demanding reform. Over the next ten years, seventy percent of all new occupations will require a college degree.

Competency-Based Learning: Definitions, Policies, and Implementation - Aubrey Scheopner Torres, Jessica Brett, Joshua Cox (2015) : In order to better understand the obstacles and enablers to the implementation of competencybased learning (CBL), this study looked at how the term is defined in the several states in the Northeast and Islands region of the Regional Educational Laboratory. Competency-based learning is being considered and implemented in many states in the region as a secondary school eform to boost graduation rates and guarantee that students have the knowledge and abilities necessary for success in postsecondary education. Instead of earning credit based on attendance, competency- based systems allow students to demonstrate mastery of a predetermined set of standards or competencies in order to receive credit toward graduation.

Employer Perspectives on Competency-Based education , AEI Series on Competency-Based Higher Education - Chip Franklin, Robert Lytle (2015)

:There is increasing enthusiasm regarding competency-based education's (CBE) potential to revolutionize higher education. Few attempts have been made to comprehend the viewpoints and requirements of the firms who must hire graduates with CBE credentials, despite the fact that a large portion of the attention given to the constantly growing CBE activities is focused on student and institutional interests.

Competency-based education : The employer's perspective of higher education – Joy Henrich (2016) :This article examines employers' perceptions of degrees earned through competency-based education (CBE) programs, with a focus on hiring practices. A recent two-phase, sequential mixed methods study was conducted to assess whether employers value CBE degrees. The study also explored whether they believe graduates of CBE programs are as academically prepared for the workplace as those from traditional, credit-hour-based programs. Human resource professionals and recruiting managers participated in both phases of the study. These participants came from diverse industries, company types, and employee backgrounds. The findings offer valuable insights into how CBE credentials are regarded in today's job market.

Implementing competency-based business curricula in higher education- AmieDragoo, Richard Barrows (2016) :Three colleges implemented competency-based education (CBE) in their business courses, showing varied approaches and outcomes. Curriculum skills were based on either traditional objectives or employer input and were taught once or multiple times. Assessments ranged from original evaluations to standard exams. Faculty roles were either unbundled into separate functions or kept traditional. Key trade-offs emerged around faculty interaction, program structure, and student needs. Major concerns included compatibility with faculty culture and competition with traditional programs.

Competency-based education: Multiple approaches-a single institution - Michelle Hagan-Short, Paul Addison(2019) :This article discusses the development of two competency-based education (CBE) programs at the largest community college, serving 160,000 students annually. The programs were designed with industry partners to align with workforce needs and followed CBE principles like flexibility and mastery-based learning. Despite using different approaches, both programs successfully reflected CBE values. Collaboration with industries and other institutions played a key role in development.

Skill based hiring is on the rise –Joseph Fuller,Christina Langer , matt Singelman (2022) :Even though the jobs themselves hadn't changed, many employers started adding degree requirements to the job descriptions of positions that hadn't previously required degrees in the early 2000s. After the Great Recession of 2008–2009, the trend sometimes referred to as "degree inflation" became especially noticeable, and leaders in business, government, and community-based groups realized that a change was necessary. Soon after, a number of big businesses declared they would no longer require a degree.

Charting a future with skills :The need for a skill based education and hiring eco system-Sarah DeMark , Darin Hobbs , Kacey Thorne , Kristian

Young (2022) :In uncertain times, achieving educational and career goals can be challenging due to failing systems and tools. To address this, innovation and personalized solutions are essential. The Diamond of Interoperability offers a framework with four key elements: open skills, open achievements, open records, and open pathways. These components promote transparency, flexibility, and lifelong learning. By adopting this model, individuals can better navigate their personal and professional growth. It also supports workforce development for the future of work.

Skills or degree? The rise of skill-based hiring for AI and green jobs – Eugenia Gonzalez Ehlinger , Fabian Stephany (2024) :With rising demand in fields like AI and sustainability, labor shortages have become a concern. This research explores whether hiring managers now prioritize personal skills over formal qualifications. Analyzing over eleven million UK job postings from 2018 to mid-2024, the study draws on technological and labor market research. Findings show that employers are increasingly adopting skill-based hiring for AI roles. They are also relaxing traditional hiring practices to attract a wider range of candidates.

The Growth of Skills-Based Hiring : An Exploration of Evidence from Six States - Eliza K Peterson, Daniel Douglas, Michelle Van Noy (2024) :Skills-based hiring (SBH) and Learning and Employment Records (LERs) are gaining attention from governments, educators, and businesses. Factors like post-pandemic shifts, labor shortages, and rising student debt are prompting a reevaluation of traditional degree requirements. Major companies like Google and IBM are leading this trend by removing degree criteria. It remains unclear if this benefits candidates with non-traditional qualifications (STARs).

The new era of HR Management : Prioritizing competence over degrees – Yoesoep Edhie Rachmad (2025) :As digital disruption transforms industries, the demand for practical skills is challenging the traditional emphasis on academic degrees. The shift toward skill-based hiring highlights the rising value of certifications, micro-credentials, and hands-on experience. The book HR Management's New Era: Prioritizing Competence Over Degrees serves as a guide for adapting to this shift. It addresses how technological change, workforce diversity, and flexible hiring needs are reshaping HR practices. Employers now prioritize candidates with real-world skills over formal qualifications.

The Future of Gen Z Careers : Competence and Certification Replacing Degrees - Yoesoep Edhie Rachmad (2025) :Replacing Degrees explores how a competency-based model is overtaking traditional academic credentials in today's workforce. The book highlights the rise of skills-based hiring, the growing importance of certifications, and how Gen Z can thrive in this evolving job market. Through expert insights and case studies, it serves as a guide for employers, policymakers, and youth. It explains why degrees are becoming less relevant in a skills-driven economy.

RESEARCH GAP

Citations	Author/Year	Research Design	Objective	Findings
Schmieder (1973)	Allen A. Schmieder	Descriptive study	To describe the competency-based education (CBE) movement in the U.S.	Provided background on CBE growth; lacked focus on employer hiring preferences or job outcomes.
Penington (1993)	David Penington	Conceptual Critique	To analyze limitations of competency-based training (CBT) in higher education.	Questioned CBT's role in academia; did not link to employment readiness
Paulson (2001)	Karen Paulson	Theoretical Review	To explore how competencies align education with workplace needs.	Encouraged bridging education and work but didn't measure employer satisfaction or hiring outcomes.
Ordonez(2014)	Bonnie Ordonez	Policy Analysis	To study the effect of CBE on degree structures and affordability.	Noted pressure on traditional degrees; lacked data on hiring effectiveness of CBE graduates.
Torres et al.(2025)	Torres, Brett Cox	Regional study	To define CBL and examine its implementation across states.	Defined CBL as flexible and mastery-driven; no employer perception data included.
Franklinand Lytle (2015)	Chip Franklin, Robert Lytle	Employer perspective Study	To understand business views on CBE graduates.	Found limited employer awareness and mixed opinions on CBE,s workplace

				readiness.
Henrich (2016)	Joy Henrich	Mixed Method	To assess employers' views of CBE vs traditional graduates.	Some employers value CBE,s Concerns remain about academic rigor and consistency
Dragoo and Barrows (2016)	Amie Dragoo, Richard Barrows	Case Study	To implement CBE in business education.	Highlighted faculty and structure challenges; industry alignment varied.
Hagan-Short And Addison (2019)	Michelle Hagan-Short, Paul Addison	Institutional Case Study	To develop and evaluate two CBE programs with industry partners.	Programs aligned With workforce needs but faced operational hurdles and funding gaps.
Fuller et al.(2022)	Joseph Fuller,Christina langer, Matt Singelman	Policy and labor Market analysis	To trace the rise of skill-based hiring And "degree inflation"	Employers moving away from unnecessary degree requirements; trend toward skills growing.
DeMark et al.(2022)	Sarah DeMark et al.	Framework Analysis	To promote skills- first hiring via open credentials and pathways.	Proposed lifelong learning frameworks; real- world adoption and outcomes not studied.
Ehlinger and stephany (2024)	Eugenia Gonzalez Ehinger,Fabian stephany	Big Data analysis	To analyze skill- based hiring in AI and sustainability jobs (UK-based).	Strong shift to skill focus in AI roles; regional context limits generalization to India.
Peterson et al.(2024)	Elize Peterson et al.	Policy Review	To explore SBH and learning employment records in 6 U.S states.	State-led efforts are strong, but private sector impact and long-term outcomes unclear.
Rachmad(2025)	Yoesoep Edhie Rachmad	Book/literature review	To explore how skill-based hiring is replacing degrees-based systems.	Highlights certification and practical skill focus; lacks primary data from companies.
Rachmad(2025)	Yoesoep Edhie Rachmad	Book/case-based insights	To guide gen Z through a skill-first job market.	Emphasizes real- world skills over degrees.

Table no- 01 Showing Research Gap**Research design**

For this study, a descriptive research strategy was chosen. In order to comprehend the degree of awareness, perception, and impact of skill-based recruiting techniques over traditional degree- based hiring, particularly within Bangalore's technology and IT sector, it seeks to collect and analyze primary data.

Numerical data was gathered using structured questionnaires and a quantitative research approach. Employer preferences, job-seeker awareness, and current hiring trends in relation to skill-based recruitment were all carefully studied by the researcher thanks to the design.

a Google form was distributed among IT professionals, HR managers, and job seekers in Bangalore as the main instrument for data collection in this study. The survey contained both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions to guarantee quantifiable results.

To supplement the original data, secondary data was also gathered from reputable platforms like Forbes, LinkedIn, and Business Standard through journals, publications, websites, and reports.

Conceptual Model

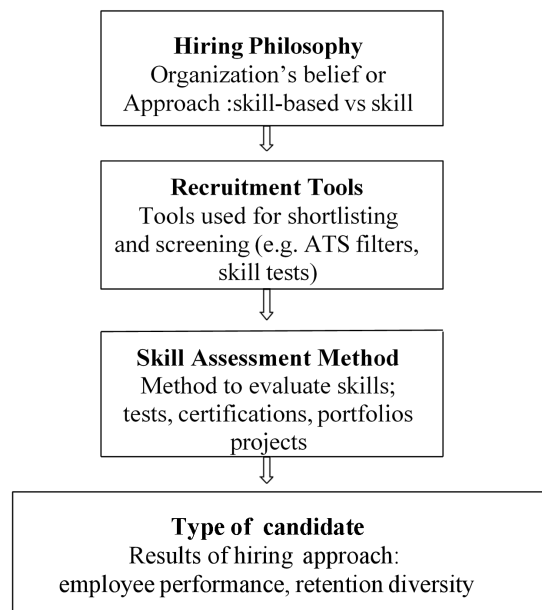


Table-02 Showing conceptual model of skill based hiring over degrees

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Academic credentials, especially college and university degrees, remain a major criterion for candidate evaluation in traditional employment methods. Degrees, however, are no longer reliable measures of a candidate's practical skills or preparedness for the workforce, according to mounting data. Due to strict recruiting standards, many skilled people without formal schooling

are shut out of career prospects, while those with degrees may lack the practical competencies that companies want. This has resulted in a growing skills gap.

Despite the fact that skill-based hiring is becoming a more popular alternative model that prioritizes demonstrated competencies above educational background, its use in various organizations is still uneven and poorly studied. Small and medium-sized businesses, as well as industries outside of technology, have been slower to implement skills-first strategies than major firms. Standardized techniques for evaluating talents are also lacking, and many HR systems continue to give preference to degree filters, erecting structural obstacles for qualified individuals without degrees.

Moreover, nothing is known about the long-term impacts of skill-based hiring on worker performance, retention, and organizational expansion from the literature now in publication. Additionally not fully examined are the function of alternative credentials, the difficulties in certifying abilities, and the geographical or cultural variations in implementing such methods. By examining how skill-based recruiting is viewed and applied in different industries, what resources and techniques are being employed for skill evaluation, and how businesses may get past obstacles to implementing a more inclusive and successful hiring model, this study seeks to close these gaps

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Bangalore's IT companies are moving away from traditional degree-based hiring and towards skill-based hiring. The methodology was created to gather valuable information from recruiters and HR professionals, analyze it with useful tools, and produce perceptive findings.

- Primary data

HR specialists employed by mid-sized IT and service firms in Bangalore provided the primary data. Utilizing a Google Form survey, a combination of

- Multiple-choice questions
- Likert-scale enquiries (such as hiring outcomes, skill evaluation use, and preference for competence over degree)
- One open-ended inquiry to get individual opinions or suggestions on recruiting procedures

HR professionals involved in hiring across Bangalore's mid-sized enterprises were the target audience for the digital survey, which was distributed through LinkedIn and WhatsApp groups.

- Secondary data

Secondary data on skill-based recruiting processes, the adoption of alternative credentials, and hiring outcome trends was gathered from industry surveys, research papers, books and journals published by Harvard Business Review, NSSCOM, LinkedIn, and other platforms.

Variable Description

Variable	Type	Description
Age	Demographic	Respondent's age group (25-50 years)
Gender	Demographic	Gender identity of the HR participant
Hiring preference	Independent	Whether the company prefers degree-based or skill –based hiring
Use of skill tests	Independent	Frequency and types of skill assessments used during recruitment
Candidate Background	Dependent	Percentage of hired candidates without formal degree but with valid skills
Hiring Outcomes	Dependent	Retention, job performance, and team diversity of skill-Based hires
Company Size	Control	Targeting mid-sized companies (not startups or large MNCs)

Table no 03 - Showing Variable Description

- Sampling Technique

The study uses purposive sampling, targeting HR professionals, recruiters, or team leads involved in hiring decisions. Participants were selected based on their relevant roles and experience in talent acquisition.

- Sample Size

Targeted sample size: 50 respondents. This number was chosen to keep the data manageable and focused, while still offering insights into hiring behavior across sectors.

- Ethics-Related Issues

In this study, participation was completely optional. Every respondent received assurances that their answers would be kept private and was made aware of the goal of the study. No sensitive or private information was gathered, including names, email addresses, or business names. The collected data was only utilised for scholarly research. Without incurring any fees, participants were free to skip any questions or leave the research at any time. There were no material or financial incentives offered to encourage participation.

Analysis and Discussion

The information gathered from primary and secondary sources regarding the implementation of skill-based hiring methods is presented and interpreted in this part. 50 recruiters and HR experts from a variety of industries, mostly in the Bangalore area, provided the responses that served as the basis for the analysis. The goal is to comprehend how companies are moving away from traditional degree-based hiring and towards skill-based hiring, and how this change impacts hiring outcomes including diversity, hiring speed, and employee success. To give a complete picture of current hiring trends, the data is arranged into quantifiable outcomes, thematic patterns, and sector-wise comparisons. The results are then examined in light of the body of literature, emphasizing the advantages and disadvantages of using skill-first hiring practices.

Age

50 responses

Age Group	Number of Respondents	%
Below 20	2	4%
20 -25	40	80%
26 -30	3	6%
31 -40	2	4%
Above 40	3	6%
Total	50	100%

Table -04 Showing Demographic Profile of Respondents

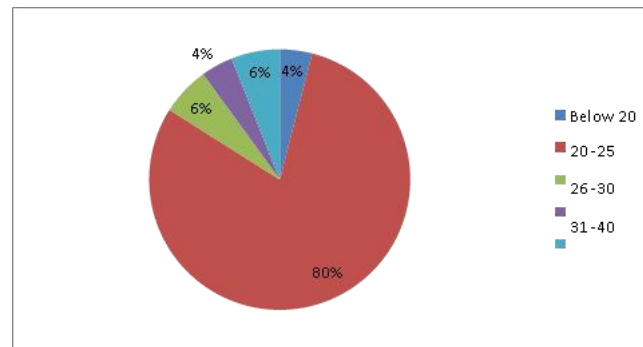


Fig no-01 Showing Demographic Profile Of Respondents Interpretation

According to the respondents' age distribution, the vast majority (80%) are between the ages of 20 and 25, suggesting that the bulk of participants are young professionals who are probably just starting their careers. The age groups of 26–30 (6%), over 40 (6%), under 20 (4%), and 31–40 (4%), have smaller percentages. This implies that the majority of the study's findings come from younger people, which is especially pertinent given that they are more likely to be familiar with or supportive of new employment practices like skill-based hiring as opposed to more conventional degree based approaches.

More important for hiring degree VS skills

50 responses

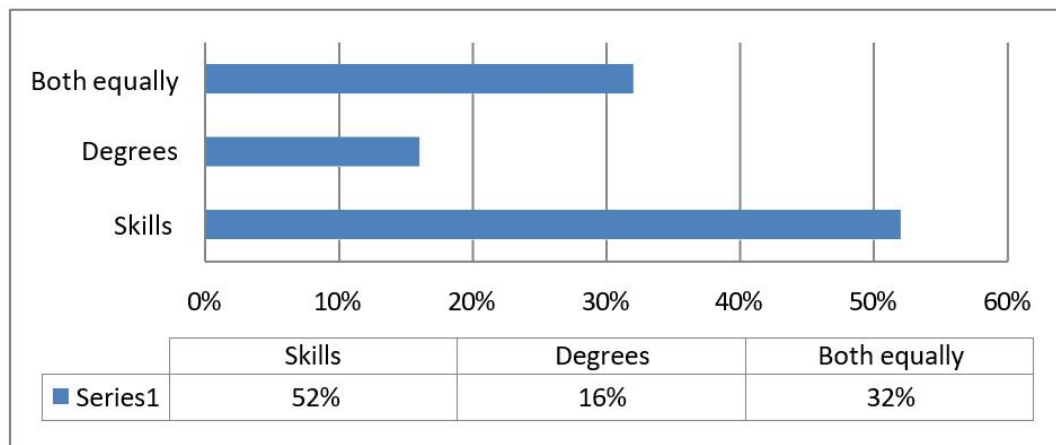


Fig No-02 Showing Most Important Option For Hiring Degree vs. Skills

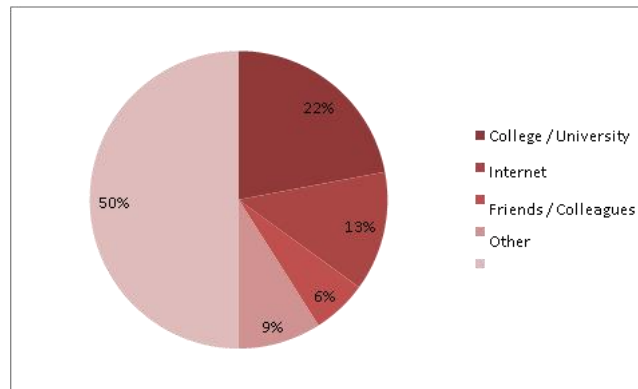
Interpretation

According to the research, over half of the respondents (52%) think that when it comes to recruiting decisions, talents are more significant than degrees. While 32% think both talents and degrees are equally significant, only 16% place a higher priority on academic degrees. This suggests that hiring preferences are significantly shifting in favour of practical competencies over formal school qualifications, particularly among younger professionals. The results are consistent with the expanding trend of skill-based hiring, in which companies place greater emphasis on a candidate's capacity to carry out duties particular to the position than just their academic background.

First time hear about skill- based hiring's

50-responses

Source	No of Respondents	%
College / University	22	44%
Internet	13	26%
Friends / Colleagues	6	12%
Other	9	18%
Total	50	100%

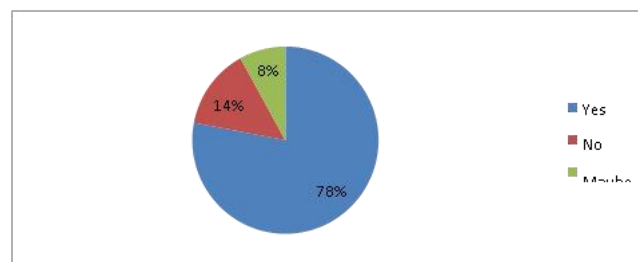
Table No -05 Showing All Sources For Respons**Fig No-04 Showing Source To First Time Hear About Skill Based Hiring****Interpretation**

According to the statistics, most respondents (44%) said that their college or university was the first place they learnt about skill-based hiring. This suggests that educational institutions are a big factor in exposing students to contemporary recruiting practices. At 26%, the internet comes in second, underscoring the significance of digital media in raising awareness. In the meantime, 12% of respondents said they found out about it from friends or coworkers, and 18% mentioned "Other" sources. This distribution shows that although educational institutions continue to have a big impact on how people learn about careers, informal networks and internet resources are also important places to learn about changing hiring practices.

Heard about skill- based hiring

50 responses

Response Option	No of Responses	%
Yes	39	78%
No	7	14%
Maybe	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Table No -06 Showing Heard About Skill-Based Hiring**Fig no-05 Showing Respondent's Awareness About Skill Based Hiring Interpretation**

The survey reveals that a significant majority of respondents (78%) are aware of skill-based hiring, indicating strong awareness and familiarity with the concept among participants. Only 14% of the respondents stated they had not heard of it, while 8% were unsure. This suggests that skill-based hiring is becoming increasingly recognized, particularly in professional and academic circles, and may reflect a shift in hiring trends where practical skills are being valued over

traditional academic qualifications. The high percentage of "Yes" responses also supports the relevance of the topic, especially in dynamic sectors like Technology and IT in Bengaluru.

CONCLUSION LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study looked into the growing trend of hiring practices shifting from traditional degree-based hiring to skill-based hiring. The findings demonstrate that more and more companies, especially in the technology and startup sectors, prefer practical skills over academic schooling. In addition to reducing hiring time and enhancing job performance, skill-based hiring broadens the workforce by providing opportunities for candidates from non-traditional backgrounds. According to the survey, using the right skill-assessment tools helps organizations better match job demands with candidates, which boosts employee retention and satisfaction.

This study examined the growing trend of skill-based hiring in place of traditional degree-based hiring in recruiting methods. It is evident from the results that more and more companies, especially in the technology and startup sectors, value practical skills more than formal schooling. However, there are still several challenges in implementing skill-based recruiting, such as institutional bias, a lack of standardized evaluation tools, and outdated HR systems that automatically favour degrees.

To remove these barriers, organizations, lawmakers, and HR executives will need to work together. In conclusion, skill-based hiring is a more inclusive and modern approach that better meets the shifting needs of the labor market. With the right tools and mindset, organizations may shift to a more performance-based and egalitarian hiring process.

LIMITATIONS

- Limited Sample Size: The primary data may not be representative of all industries or regions because it was gathered from a limited number of companies and HR experts.
- Sector Bias: The study mostly concentrates on the technology and startup sectors due to the greater usage of skill-based recruiting in these fields. In other domains, like law or education, the same findings might not hold true.
- Lack of Long-Term Data: The study mostly looks at short-term outcomes (such performance and hiring time). Long-term impacts like job development or staff loyalty could not be fully assessed.
- Subjective Responses: Survey and interview data may contain respondent bias based on personal beliefs or company policies.
- . Geographic Limitation: Because most responses came from certain regions (such Bengaluru or big cities), the findings may not be typical of rural or international contexts.

IMPLIMENTATION

- Changing Hiring Procedures: Employers might revise job descriptions to highlight vital skills and remove unnecessary degree requirements for roles that don't require formal education.
- Using Skill-Assessment Tools: Employers can use organized skill exams, portfolios, and project-based evaluations to more precisely determine a candidate's abilities.
- HR Training & System Updates: HR personnel should be trained to recognize alternative credentials in order to avoid an over-reliance on degree filters in applicant tracking systems (ATS).
- Collaboration with EdTech Platforms: Companies should work with platforms like Coursera, Skill India, and LinkedIn Learning to accept non-degree qualifications in hiring.
- Policy and Awareness Campaigns: Government organizations and trade groups can promote skill-based employment by offering businesses policies, incentives, and awareness campaigns.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Standardized talent assessment instruments should be created by organizations so that they may fairly evaluate applicants without depending only on degrees.
- During the hiring process, HR personnel should receive training on how to identify alternative credentials such as portfolios, boot camps.
- Employers ought to update their applicant tracking systems (ATS) to eliminate pointless degree filters and concentrate on skills that are relevant to the positions.

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