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Adaptive HRM Selection Practices in Pune IT Firms: Skill-Based and Technology-Enabled Recruitment Insights

Lavakush Singh¹, Roopa Sangan²

¹Head of Department-Faculty of Business Analytics & In-Charge Director International Institute of Management & Human Resource Development for Women, Pune, Mah India. ORCID: 0000-0002-5506-8227

²Assistant Professor -HRM, International Institute of Management Studies Pune. ORCID: 0009-0003-1538-2590.

Abstract

Human Resource Management (HRM) selection processes critically influence organizational performance in knowledge-intensive sectors such as Information Technology (IT). This study examines the selection practices of large IT firms operating in Pune, including TCS, Infosys, Wipro, and HCL Technologies, against the backdrop of a recent industry-wide hiring slowdown. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through structured surveys of HR professionals and secondary industry reports. The study employs descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to analyze multi-stage selection processes encompassing resume screening, online assessments, technical and behavioral interviews, and final evaluation. Results indicate that firms rely heavily on technology-enabled recruitment and emphasize skill-based evaluation, particularly in emerging domains such as AI, cloud computing, and cybersecurity. EFA identifies four latent dimensions of selection effectiveness: technology adoption, technical competency assessment, behavioral and cultural evaluation, and strategic talent potential, while CFA confirms the construct validity of this four-factor model. Despite minimal net hiring in FY 2025–26, campus recruitment remains a significant source of talent. The study underscores the importance of adaptive, data-driven selection strategies that balance quality with efficiency, aligning HR practices with organizational goals. These findings provide actionable insights for HR managers aiming to enhance recruitment effectiveness and contribute to theoretical understanding of HRM selection frameworks in IT firms under evolving workforce dynamics.

Keywords: Human Resource Management; Employee Selection; IT Recruitment; Pune; Skill-Based Hiring; Technology Adoption; Talent Acquisition

1. Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) has increasingly evolved from an administrative support function into a strategic function that contributes to organizational competitiveness, innovation and workforce sustainability. This transformation is particularly significant in knowledge-intensive industries such as Information Technology (IT), where organizational performance depends heavily on the availability of employees with relevant technical, analytical and interpersonal capabilities. The changing skill requirements of the technology sector have consequently increased the strategic importance of recruitment and selection. The *Future of Jobs Report 2025* identifies technological literacy, AI and big data, networks and cybersecurity, analytical thinking, creative thinking, resilience and adaptability among the capabilities gaining importance in the changing labour market (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2025).

Employee selection is therefore no longer confined to assessing conventional educational qualifications or basic technical knowledge. Contemporary IT recruitment increasingly requires organizations to evaluate a combination of technical proficiency, analytical ability, problem-solving capacity, adaptability and behavioural competencies. Evidence from India's technology industry indicates that campus-hiring skill requirements have shifted during the past three years from basic coding and cloud fundamentals towards more advanced capabilities in **data analytics, artificial intelligence/machine learning (AI/ML) and DevOps**. Strategic thinking and analytical skills have also emerged as important requirements in technology-sector employment (NASSCOM, 2025).

The changing skill environment is also reflected in broader employer expectations. The WEF (2025), based on responses from more than 1,000 employers representing over 14 million workers across 55 economies, reported that approximately **39% of workers' existing skill sets are expected to be transformed or become outdated between 2025 and 2030**. Analytical thinking was identified as the most widely regarded core skill, with **69% of surveyed employers** considering it essential, followed by resilience, flexibility and agility (67%) and leadership and social influence (61%). AI and big data were identified among the fastest-growing technical skill areas.

These developments are particularly relevant to the Indian IT industry. According to NASSCOM's *Technology Sector in India: Strategic Review 2025*, India's technology industry recorded **126,000 net additions to employment in FY2025**, taking the industry's total employee base to approximately **5.80 million**, representing 2.2% year-on-year growth. The same assessment identified AI-led delivery, cloud-

native technologies, cybersecurity, enterprise AI and generative AI adoption as important themes shaping the industry, while emphasizing skill-focused talent development and management. (NASSCOM, 2025). The implications for selection are significant. As organizations adopt AI, automation, cloud technologies and data-driven business models, recruitment systems must increasingly identify candidates who can work effectively in technologically dynamic environments. The WEF (2025) reported that **77% of employers plan to pursue upskilling and reskilling in response to AI-related transformation**, while 41% anticipate some workforce reduction resulting from AI-driven automation. These findings suggest that organizations are simultaneously seeking technological capabilities and employees who demonstrate adaptability and capacity for continuous learning.

Pune provides an important context for examining these developments. The city has developed into one of India's major technology and knowledge-service centres, supported by a large higher-education ecosystem, engineering and management institutions, a substantial skilled workforce and the presence of major Indian and multinational technology companies. Consequently, the recruitment environment in Pune provides an appropriate setting for examining how IT organizations translate changing industry skill requirements into actual employee-selection practices.

The changing recruitment environment also makes the **quality and structure of selection mechanisms** increasingly important. Selection procedures may include application screening, aptitude assessments, technical tests, coding or analytical assessments, interviews, behavioural assessments and evaluation of communication and problem-solving capabilities. The increasing emphasis on advanced technical skills and analytical capabilities suggests that organizations may be moving from qualification-based recruitment towards more **competency- and skill-oriented selection** (NASSCOM, 2025; WEF, 2025).

At the same time, the changing technology environment creates an important HRM challenge. Selection systems must identify candidates who possess current technical skills while also assessing their potential to learn emerging technologies. This is particularly relevant because the WEF (2025) estimates that 59 out of every 100 workers may require reskilling or upskilling by 2030. Thus, organizations may increasingly need to distinguish between **skills that candidates already possess and their capacity for continuous skill development**.

Against this background, the present study focuses on **HRM selection practices in large IT organizations in Pune**. It seeks to examine how selection processes are structured, which criteria are emphasized during candidate evaluation, the role of technical and behavioural competencies, and the factors that influence the effectiveness of employee selection. The study further examines whether contemporary selection practices are aligned with the rapidly changing skill requirements of India's IT industry. By combining empirical evidence from IT organizations in Pune with current industry-level evidence, the study aims to provide a systematic assessment of the relationship between **selection practices, competency requirements and organizational recruitment outcomes**.

This focus is particularly relevant in the present period because India's technology industry is simultaneously expanding its workforce and changing the composition of skills it requires. The evidence indicates that the issue is not simply whether IT companies are hiring, but **what capabilities they are seeking, how those capabilities are assessed, and whether existing selection systems are capable of identifying employees who can remain productive as technology continues to change**. This provides the central rationale for investigating HRM selection practices in Pune's IT sector.

Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Employee Selection in HRM

Employee selection is the process of identifying candidates whose knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes (KSAOs) best fit the requirements of the organization (Breaugh, 2017; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). Effective selection systems reduce turnover, enhance job performance, and improve organizational competitiveness (Huselid, 1995). In IT firms, where rapid technological change demands continuous learning, selection decisions have a direct impact on project success and client satisfaction (Gomathy, Ramesh, & Prasad, 2022).

2.2 Technology-Enabled Recruitment and Selection

Digital transformation in HR has led to widespread adoption of Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), online coding assessments, and AI-powered resume screening (Naiymunnisa & Shaik, 2022; Deloitte, 2024). Research suggests that technology-enabled recruitment improves screening efficiency, reduces human bias, and allows firms to manage high volumes of applicants (PwC India, 2024). Virtual interviews, standardized online assessments, and automated scoring are now standard practices among leading IT firms (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

2.3 Skill-Based Hiring and Workforce Alignment

Modern IT recruitment increasingly emphasizes domain expertise in areas such as AI, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and data analytics. Skill-based hiring ensures alignment between candidate capabilities and organizational objectives, improving performance and retention (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). Studies indicate that focusing on skill-specific assessments rather than generic qualifications enhances the predictive validity of selection decisions (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998).

2.4 Industry Hiring Trends in India

Reports from NASSCOM (2024) and ET Jobs (2025) highlight a significant slowdown in net hiring among India's top IT firms during FY 2025–26, with only 17 net additions recorded across the top five companies. This contrasts with over 17,700 additions in the previous year, reflecting softer global demand and increased automation. Despite this slowdown, campus recruitment remains an important strategy for sustaining entry-level talent pipelines (PCCOE, 2025).

2.5 Pune-Specific Recruitment Context

Pune, a major IT hub in Maharashtra, has a strong educational ecosystem that feeds skilled talent into IT firms (Savitribai Phule Pune University, 2024). Large firms such as TCS, Infosys, and Cognizant continue to engage in campus drives, while lateral hiring addresses experienced talent needs. Recent studies emphasize the importance of aligning HRM selection processes with local talent availability and emerging skill requirements (NASSCOM, 2024; Deloitte, 2024).

2.6 Research Gap

Although prior research examines IT recruitment practices, few studies focus on **regional hubs like Pune**, and even fewer employ **statistical validation techniques such as EFA and CFA** to explore multidimensional aspects of selection effectiveness. This study addresses this gap by integrating empirical data with factor analysis to validate HRM selection frameworks in large Pune-based IT firms.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the HRM selection processes followed by large IT companies in Pune city.
2. To analyze the role of technology adoption in enhancing selection effectiveness.
3. To assess the importance of skill-based evaluation in IT recruitment.
4. To identify and validate key factors influencing selection effectiveness using EFA and CFA.

3.2 Research Design

A **mixed-methods research design** was adopted, integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative insights from HR professionals. This approach enables comprehensive understanding of both measurable outcomes and contextual practices.

3.3 Sample Design

The study sampled **52 HR professionals** working in large IT firms operating in Pune, including multinational corporations and leading Indian IT companies. Respondents included HR managers, talent acquisition specialists, and senior recruiters directly involved in selection decisions.

3.4 Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered digitally. The questionnaire captured perceptions related to:

- Effectiveness of selection stages
- Technology usage in recruitment
- Skill-based evaluation practices
- Overall selection outcomes

Secondary data were obtained from industry reports, company annual reports, and placement records from Pune-based educational institutions.

3.5 Measurement of Variables

All items were measured using a **five-point Likert scale**, ranging from 1 (Very Low) to 5 (Very High). The constructs measured included:

- Selection Effectiveness
- Technology Adoption
- Skill-Based Evaluation
- Behavioral and Cultural Fit

3.6 Data Analysis Plan

Data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS-style statistical procedures:

- Descriptive statistics to summarize responses
- Reliability analysis to test internal consistency
- Correlation and regression to examine relationships
- Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify underlying dimensions
- Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement model

These analyses form the basis for the results presented in the subsequent section.

4. Results And Data Analysis

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of HRM Selection Process

This section presents descriptive statistics related to the **structure and effectiveness of selection stages** followed by large IT companies in Pune.

Table 1: Multi-Stage Selection Process Followed by Large IT Firms in Pune

Selection Stage	Description	Tools Used	Objectives
Job Posting & Sourcing	Announcement of vacancies	Company portals, LinkedIn, campus drives	Talent attraction
Resume Screening	Qualification-based filtering	ATS, keyword screening	Initial shortlisting
Online Assessments	Aptitude & technical evaluation	HackerRank, Codility	Skill assessment
Technical Interview	Role-specific evaluation	MS Teams / On-site	Technical competency
HR Interview	Behavioural & cultural evaluation	Structured HR questions	Cultural alignment
Final Selection	Offer & onboarding	Scorecards, background checks	Hiring decision

Source: Primary HR survey, 2025–26

Analysis:

Table 1 indicates that **all surveyed firms follow a standardized, multi-stage selection framework**. Automated resume screening and online assessments significantly reduce recruiter workload. HR respondents reported that approximately **60–65% of candidates are filtered out before technical interviews**, emphasizing efficiency and quality control.

4.2 Hiring Trends in Large IT Companies (India & Pune Focus): This section analyzes workforce data and recruitment trends.

Table 2: Hiring Trends of Large IT Firms with Pune Recruitment Focus (FY 2025–26)

Company	Total Employees (Mid-2025)	Net Hiring (Jan–Sep 2025)	Pune Campus Offers	Primary Hiring Channel
TCS	613,069	+17	640 / 4500	Campus + Lateral
Infosys	323,788	Marginal	392 / 2000	Campus + LinkedIn
Wipro	233,232	Stable	320 / 1800	Campus + Referrals
HCLTech	223,151	Stable	210 / 1500	Campus + Referrals

Source: Industry reports, HR interviews, PCCOE Pune

Analysis

Despite large workforce sizes, net hiring has remained **nearly stagnant**, confirming a **shift from expansion hiring to replacement and skill-based hiring**. However, Pune campus recruitment data shows continued intake of entry-level talent, indicating **long-term workforce planning despite short-term slowdown**.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Selection Effectiveness Variables

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Resume Screening Effectiveness	52	4.21	0.62
Online Assessment Accuracy	52	4.08	0.71
Technical Interview Reliability	52	4.35	0.58
HR Interview Effectiveness	52	4.12	0.65
Cultural Fit Evaluation	52	3.94	0.73

Digital Tool Usage	52	4.40	0.55
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Analysis

The highest mean score is observed for **digital tool usage (Mean = 4.40)**, indicating strong adoption of recruitment technology. Technical interviews are perceived as the **most reliable selection stage**, while cultural fit evaluation shows comparatively lower scores, suggesting scope for standardization.

4.4 Reliability Analysis

Table 4: Reliability Statistics

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Selection Effectiveness	6	0.87
Skill-Based Evaluation	5	0.84
Technology Adoption	4	0.81

Analysis

All constructs exceed the **0.70 reliability threshold**, confirming **internal consistency** of the measurement instrument and suitability for further inferential analysis.

4.5. Correlation Analysis

Table 5: Pearson's Correlation Matrix

Variables	Selection Effectiveness	Skill Evaluation	Technology Usage
Selection Effectiveness	1		
Skill Evaluation	0.68**	1	
Technology Usage	0.72**	0.65**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

Analysis

Technology usage shows the strongest correlation with selection effectiveness ($r = 0.72$), highlighting the impact of digital tools on hiring outcomes.

4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 6: Regression Results

Dependent Variable: Selection Effectiveness

Predictor	B	t-value	Sig.
Technology Adoption	0.46	4.98	0.000
Skill-Based Evaluation	0.38	4.12	0.000

Model Fit: $R^2 = 0.61$, $F = 38.6$ ($p < 0.001$)

Analysis

Technology adoption is the strongest predictor of selection effectiveness, explaining a significant portion of variance. Both hypotheses are supported.

4.7. Hypothesis Testing

Table 7. Hypotheis Testing

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Test Statistic	p-value	Decision
H1: Technology Adoption is positively associated with Selection Effectiveness.	Multiple Regression	$\beta = 0.46$; $t = 4.98$	<0.001	Supported
H2: Skill-Based Evaluation is positively associated with Selection Effectiveness.	Multiple Regression	$\beta = 0.38$; $t = 4.12$	<0.001	Supported
H3: Technology Adoption and Skill-Based Evaluation jointly significantly predict Selection Effectiveness.	Overall Regression	$R^2 = 0.61$; $F = 38.60$	<0.001	Supported

The hypotheses were tested using the correlation and multiple regression results presented in Tables 5 and 6. The results indicate that Technology Adoption is positively and significantly associated with Selection Effectiveness ($\beta = 0.46$, $t = 4.98$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Skill-Based Evaluation also demonstrates a positive and statistically significant relationship with Selection Effectiveness ($\beta = 0.38$, $t = 4.12$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2. The overall regression model is statistically significant ($F = 38.60$, $p < 0.001$) and explains 61% of the reported variation in Selection Effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.61$), supporting H3. Thus, all three hypotheses are supported by the reported primary-survey results.

4.8 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Table 8: KMO & Bartlett's Test

Test	Value
KMO	0.821
Bartlett's Chi-square	624.35
Df	105
Sig.	0.000

Analysis

The KMO value confirms sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test supports factorability.

Table 9: Total Variance Explained

Factors	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Cumulative %
1	4.62	30.80	30.80
2	3.12	20.80	51.60
3	2.05	13.70	65.30
4	1.24	8.30	73.60

4.9 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Table 10: CFA Model Fit Indices

Index	Value
CMIN/df	2.14
CFI	0.94
TLI	0.92
RMSEA	0.061

Analysis: The CFA confirms **good model fit**, validating the four-factor structure identified through EFA.

5. Discussion

The present study examined the HRM selection processes followed by large IT companies in Pune city in the context of evolving industry hiring dynamics. The empirical results provide significant insights into how structured selection frameworks, technology adoption, and skill prioritization contribute to selection effectiveness.

The descriptive analysis (**Table 1**) confirms that large IT firms in Pune follow a standardized, multi-stage selection process. This finding is consistent with prior research emphasizing the importance of structured recruitment systems in reducing selection errors and improving employee-job fit. The dominance of digital tools in resume screening and online assessments reflects the growing reliance on technology to handle high applicant volumes efficiently. These findings support the work of **Naiymunnisa and Shaik (2022)**, who argued that digital recruitment platforms enhance operational efficiency in IT recruitment.

The hiring trend analysis (**Table 2**) reveals a notable contradiction: while net hiring among large IT firms has stagnated during FY 2025–26, campus recruitment activity remains strong. This suggests that IT firms are not reducing recruitment entirely but are instead adopting a strategic approach focused on long-term workforce renewal. This aligns with industry reports indicating a shift from expansion-driven hiring to

replacement and capability-based recruitment. Pune's strong academic ecosystem appears to play a critical role in sustaining entry-level talent pipelines despite broader industry headwinds.

Descriptive statistics (**Table 3**) show that digital tool usage and technical interviews received the highest mean scores, indicating that HR professionals perceive these elements as the most effective components of the selection process. Cultural fit evaluation, while still rated positively, recorded relatively lower mean scores, suggesting the need for more standardized and measurable cultural assessment tools. This observation echoes earlier studies highlighting challenges in objectively evaluating behavioral and cultural attributes during selection.

The reliability and correlation analyses (**Tables 4 and 5**) confirm that the measurement constructs used in this study are both consistent and strongly interrelated. The strong positive correlation between technology usage and selection effectiveness underscores the strategic importance of digital recruitment tools in improving hiring outcomes. These results reinforce the view that technology is no longer a support function in HRM but a core driver of recruitment effectiveness in the IT sector.

Regression analysis (**Table 6**) further substantiates the predictive power of technology adoption and skill-based evaluation on selection effectiveness. The model explains 61 percent of variance in selection outcomes, indicating that these factors play a dominant role in shaping hiring success. This finding is particularly relevant in the context of reduced net hiring, where firms must maximize the accuracy and quality of each hiring decision.

The Exploratory Factor Analysis (**Tables 7 and 8**) identifies four underlying dimensions of HRM selection practices: technology-enabled selection, technical competency assessment, behavioral and cultural evaluation, and strategic talent potential. The high KMO value and significant Bartlett's Test confirm the robustness of the factor structure. These dimensions reflect the multifaceted nature of modern selection systems in IT organizations.

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (**Table 9**) validates the four-factor model, with acceptable model fit indices indicating strong construct validity. This empirical validation strengthens the theoretical understanding of HRM selection effectiveness and confirms that selection practices in large IT firms are not unidimensional but encompass multiple interrelated components.

6. Managerial Implications

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for HR managers and organizational leaders in the IT sector:

1. **Strengthening Digital Recruitment Infrastructure:** The strong influence of technology adoption on selection effectiveness suggests that IT firms should continue investing in advanced ATS platforms, AI-based resume screening, and online assessment tools to enhance recruitment accuracy and efficiency.
2. **Enhancing Skill-Based Assessment:** Given the importance of technical competency, organizations should design domain-specific assessments aligned with emerging technologies such as AI, cloud computing, and cybersecurity.
3. **Standardizing Cultural Fit Evaluation:** The comparatively lower scores for cultural fit assessment indicate the need for structured behavioral interviews and psychometric tools to reduce subjectivity and improve predictive validity.
4. **Strategic Campus Recruitment:** Despite reduced net hiring, campus recruitment remains vital. Firms should strengthen university partnerships to secure high-quality entry-level talent aligned with future skill requirements.

7. Theoretical Contributions: This study contributes to HRM literature by empirically validating a multidimensional model of selection effectiveness in the IT sector. By integrating EFA and CFA, the research advances theoretical understanding of how technology, skills, and behavioral factors collectively shape recruitment outcomes. The study also contextualizes HRM selection practices within the contemporary hiring slowdown, offering a nuanced perspective on strategic talent acquisition.

8. Limitations and Scope for Future Research: While the study provides valuable insights, it is subject to certain limitations. The sample size is limited to HR professionals from large IT firms in Pune, which may restrict generalizability. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to examine the long-term impact of selection practices on employee performance and retention. Additionally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) could be used to explore causal relationships among selection variables.

9. Conclusion

The study concludes that HRM selection processes in large IT companies in Pune are characterized by structured, technology-enabled, and skill-focused frameworks. Despite an overall slowdown in net hiring, firms continue to emphasize quality hiring through rigorous selection mechanisms and sustained campus recruitment. Empirical evidence confirms that technology adoption and skill-based evaluation significantly

enhance selection effectiveness. As the IT industry continues to evolve, adaptive and data-driven selection strategies will remain critical for organizational competitiveness.

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