



Evaluating Gamified Recruitment For Skill Assessment And Employability

Minerva Das¹ , Dr. Sujit Kumar Acharya²

¹Research Scholar, Dept of Business Administration, Vanivihar, Bhubaneswar, Utkal University

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Management and Commerce, PES University, Bengaluru, India

²Associate Professor, Department of Business Studies, DDCE, Vanivihar, Bhubaneswar, Utkal University

Abstract - Modern hiring practices increasingly incorporate interactive game-style mechanisms to evaluate talent and gauge candidate readiness for the workplace. Tools like scenario-based simulations, structured quizzes, and competitive scoring systems allow recruiters to measure practical capabilities directly rather than relying solely on traditional resume screenings. This empirical study investigates how job applicants perceive various gamified selection methods, focusing on their effectiveness in assessing essential workplace skills and supporting graduate employability. Data were gathered from 104 participants—including higher education students, active job seekers, and industry professionals—using a standardized survey instrument. Statistical analysis using percentage distributions, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and multiple linear regression reveals a strong candidate preference for simulations and task-oriented quizzes, which respondents associated with clearer skill demonstration and higher engagement. Conversely, technical barriers, unclear instructions, and fairness concerns emerged as primary impediments. The findings indicate that while gamified hiring offers a reliable avenue for evaluating candidate competencies, its success in closing the graduate employability gap hinges on deliberate tool design, transparent evaluation criteria, and alignment with academic training.

Keywords: Gamified Recruitment, Skill Assessment, Graduate Employability, Candidate Perception, Job Simulations, Entry-Level Hiring

I. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of corporate recruitment has undergone a structural transformation in response to rapid technological advancements, shifting labor market dynamics, and the widening divergence between candidate qualifications and actual workplace readiness. Conventional selection mechanisms—such as standardized resume screening, unstructured interviews, and static written tests—increasingly face criticism for being time-intensive, susceptible to evaluator bias, and limited in their capacity to evaluate practical behavioral traits. More critically, traditional methods often fail to measure applied competencies such as critical thinking, real-time decision-making, and adaptive problem-solving, which are central to the graduate skill-employability gap (armstrong et al., 2016; Bhatnagar, 2021).

To address these diagnostic limitations, organizations are progressively adopting gamified recruitment frameworks to modernize talent acquisition and improve candidate evaluation. Gamification in talent acquisition involves the integration of game mechanics—such as scenario-based simulations, adaptive quizzes, competitive leaderboards, and structured point systems—into hiring workflows (kapp, 2012; landers et al., 2017). Rather than evaluating passive knowledge, these interactive mechanisms immerse candidates in simulated workplace

Contexts, enabling recruiters to observe real-time skill execution, problem-solving agility, and job-relevant

behavioral attributes under standardized conditions (nikolaou, 2021).

Different gamification formats fulfill distinct evaluative functions within selection pipelines. Knowledge-based quizzes and psychometric challenges assess cognitive aptitude and domain expertise; scenario-driven business simulations measure analytical reasoning and managerial crisis handling; and leaderboards or reward structures foster candidate engagement and motivation throughout the assessment process (fetchko & melnykov, 2020). From an organizational perspective, gamified assessments streamline initial candidate screening, lower attrition costs by setting realistic job previews, and elevate employer brand perception (oprescu et al., 2014). For job applicants and recent management graduates, gamified environments reduce evaluation anxiety, increase process transparency, and offer an interactive platform to demonstrate applied capabilities beyond static academic credentials.

Despite these advantages, the operational effectiveness of gamified recruitment is mediated by candidate perceptions, technological accessibility, and perceived evaluation fairness. Concerns regarding algorithmic transparency, platform usability, digital literacy barriers, and role suitability remain significant hurdles to widespread adoption (georgiou & nikolaou, 2020). Furthermore, while gamification offers an innovative lens for talent evaluation, its efficacy in accurately diagnosing entry-level skill deficits among management graduates warrants rigorous empirical inquiry.



Accordingly, this study evaluates the primary gamification strategies deployed during recruitment, examines candidate perceptions of their diagnostic utility, and analyzes how these gamified assessment tools contribute to identifying and bridging the graduate employability gap.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Conventional talent acquisition workflows—characterized by static resume screening, unstructured interviews, and standard paper-based aptitude tests—increasingly face criticism for their diagnostic limitations in evaluating early-career candidates. These traditional frameworks often induce significant evaluation anxiety, yield lower applicant engagement, and, most critically, fail to measure applied behavioral competencies such as critical thinking, real-time decision-making, and adaptive problem-solving. Consequently, recruiters face persistent challenges in detecting actual candidate capabilities, directly exacerbating the skill-employability gap among graduating students entering the job market.

While organizations progressively adopt gamified recruitment mechanisms—incorporating task-oriented simulations, interactive quizzes, and competitive scoring structures—to modernize hiring, empirical understanding of these digital evaluation tools remains fragmented. Existing literature lacks comprehensive insights into which specific gamification formats offer the highest diagnostic accuracy for skill assessment, how candidates perceive their operational fairness and engagement value, and what technological or procedural barriers hinder their efficacy. Without systematically evaluating candidate perspectives on gamified hiring, academic institutions and corporate recruiters cannot optimize these tools to accurately measure readiness and bridge the graduate employability gap.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The convergence of corporate recruitment strategies, digital transformation, and higher education outcomes has drawn significant scholarly attention in recent years. Traditional talent acquisition relies heavily on static screening tools—such as curriculum vitae, unstructured interviews, and standard paper-based aptitude tests—which scholars argue often fail to capture practical competencies and behavioral attributes (armstrong et al., 2016; Bhatnagar, 2021). To systematically evaluate how gamified recruitment serves as a diagnostic tool for graduate skill assessment and employability, the existing literature is synthesized across five core thematic domains.

The persistent mismatch between employer expectations and the competencies demonstrated by business graduates remains a critical challenge in higher education. Das and acharya (2024) investigated the nexus between management

education and graduate employability in india, highlighting that while academic institutions focus heavily on theoretical knowledge, industry recruiters prioritize adaptive workplace competencies and practical problem-solving capabilities. Building on this inquiry, das et al. (2026) Evaluated graduate readiness within corporate environments, emphasizing that key managerial competencies—such as leadership readiness, strategic awareness, and succession planning—are frequently under-assessed during conventional campus hiring processes.

Earlier empirical work by bhatnagar (2021) and armstrong et al. (2016) Similarly underscored that traditional selection metrics fail to capture real-time behavioral agility, creating diagnostic blind spots for recruiters and reinforcing the employability gap. Furthermore, jackson (2016) noted that employability extends beyond subject-matter knowledge to encompass self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking, which are rarely evaluated accurately prior to candidate selection.

The rapid digitization of corporate human resource functions has transformed candidate evaluation from passive screening into dynamic, interactive assessments. Neena et al. (2025) Explored the digital transition in recruitment, observing that modern e-recruitment platforms leverage technology to streamline candidate filtering, lower evaluation costs, and evaluate digital competencies required in industry 5.0 Environments. In parallel, yadav et al. (2024) Demonstrated how adaptive technologies and artificial intelligence in educational and assessment settings provide personalized, data-driven evaluations of candidate performance.

As digital hiring ecosystems expand, recruiters increasingly rely on automated, data-rich evaluation mechanisms to screen large pools of entry-level applicants efficiently (chapman & webster, 2019; nikolaou, 2021). Stone et al. (2015) Emphasized that e-recruitment systems must balance administrative efficiency with diagnostic precision, ensuring that automated filters do not inadvertently exclude high-potential candidates who possess non-traditional skill combinations.

Gamification in recruitment involves incorporating game design mechanics—such as interactive scenario-based simulations, adaptive quizzes, competitive leaderboards, and structured points systems—into evaluation pipelines (deterding et al., 2011; Kapp, 2012). Hamari et al. (2014) Established that gamified systems enhance participant engagement and intrinsic motivation when designed around specific user needs. Within talent acquisition, landers and sanchez (2022) argued that game-based assessments yield superior predictive validity for cognitive and behavioral abilities compared to conventional psychometric tests.



Specifically, task-oriented simulations and situational judgment tests allow employers to observe candidate decision-making, crisis management, analytical reasoning, and risk tolerance in realistic, low-consequence workplace contexts (armstrong, 2020; lievens & chapman, 2019). Chamorro-premuzic et al. (2016) Noted that gamified tools reduce test anxiety and social desirability bias, allowing candidates to exhibit authentic behavioral patterns rather than rehearsed interview answers.

While organizations benefit from enhanced data collection, the ultimate success of gamified selection depends heavily on candidate perceptions and user experience (mccarthy et al., 2017). Georgiou and nikolaou (2020) and bina et al. (2020) Demonstrated that interactive gamified platforms generally improve applicant reactions, enhancing employer brand attractiveness and reducing test stress compared to traditional pen-and-paper assessments.

However, operational challenges remain prominent. Research by potosky and bobko (2004) and woods et al. (2020) Cautions that technological friction, unclear instructions, platform incompatibility, and digital literacy disparities can introduce adverse impact and reduce perceived evaluation fairness. Candidates may view gamified assessments as trivial or irrelevant if the game elements do not demonstrate face validity—that is, a direct and transparent connection to actual job duties (fetzer et al., 2017; Landers et al., 2017).

Aligning candidate preparation with corporate expectations requires structural improvements in educational delivery and institutional governance. Pandey et al. (2024) Demonstrated that continuous faculty training and modern pedagogical practices exert long-term positive effects on student academic and career success in higher education. This is closely connected to organizational commitment and instructional effectiveness; singhal et al. (2023) Showed that transformative leadership within academic institutions significantly elevates teaching efficacy and student development outcomes.

Furthermore, experiential and value-driven approaches to skill development—such as those illustrated by das et al. (2024) In cultivating transformational leadership for sustainable enterprise—demonstrate that immersive, real-world learning models best equip students with the behavioral competencies demanded by contemporary employers. When b-schools incorporate gamified learning and realistic task simulations into their curricula, students become better prepared for modern gamified recruitment processes, thereby directly narrowing the graduate skill-employability gap.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

Existing scholarship on game-based talent acquisition primarily emphasizes high-level organizational advantages, such as shortened hiring cycles and employer branding benefits, while offering limited empirical insight into candidate-side evaluation mechanics. Specifically, there remains a critical research gap regarding how entry-level job seekers and graduating students evaluate the diagnostic precision of distinct gamification mechanisms—such as task-based simulations, adaptive quizzes, competitive leaderboards, and point-based feedback—in demonstrating their true workplace capabilities.

Furthermore, few empirical studies rely on primary respondent data to examine the trade-offs between engagement and perceived evaluation fairness, stress mitigation, and operational friction. Without systematically capturing candidate perspectives on how these tools assess Practical competencies, both academia and corporate recruiters lack the empirical basis needed to leverage gamified selection in bridging the graduate employability gap.

1. Research Objectives

- To Classify And Evaluate The Primary Gamification Strategies Deployed In Modern Talent acquisition pipelines for candidate evaluation.
- To Analyze Candidate Perceptions Regarding The Diagnostic Utility, Fairness, And Overall Effectiveness of gamified recruitment methods in measuring workplace skills.
- To Identify Key Operational Benefits And Structural Challenges Associated With Gamified Assessments from the candidate perspective.
- To examine the extent To Which Gamified Recruitment Enhances Candidate Application Intent By reducing evaluation anxiety and imProving engagement during skill assessment.

2. Formulation of Hypotheses

H1: Prior candidate experience with gamified selection mechanisms significantly influences their interest in applying to an organization.

H2: Candidate perceptions of interactive engagement and accurate skill assessment during gamified recruitment significantly drive their intent to apply.

H3: Perceived reduction in evaluation stress during gamified hiring processes significantly positively impacts candidate application interest.

H4: Key operational gamification factors (including strategy type, skill assessment capability, and engagement) collectively exert a significant effect on candidate intent to apply to an organization.



V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To empirically evaluate candidate perceptions of gamified recruitment and its efficacy in skill assessment, this study employs a quantitative, descriptive research design. Primary data were gathered through a cross-sectional, structured survey instrument administered to target demographics involved in higher education and early-career job markets.

1. Sampling Design and Data Collection

Non-probability convenience sampling technique was utilized to collect primary data from accessible respondent pools. This sampling approach was selected due to time constraints, cost efficiency, and direct accessibility to relevant populations, including management students, active job seekers, and corporate professionals. A total of 104 valid and complete responses were retained for statistical analysis. The target sample is composed of three primary stakeholder segments:

.Higher education / management students: representing upcoming entry-level job applicants evaluating their skill readiness.

- Active job seekers: individuals actively participating in contemporary digital recruitment pipelines.
- Industry professionals: early-to-mid career practitioners with direct experience in corporate evaluation processes.

2. Survey Instrument and Measurement

The structured questionnaire was segmented into three core analytical sections:

- Demographic profile: capturing participant age, current occupational status, and prior exposure to e-recruitment platforms.
- Preference & awareness metrics: evaluating candidate familiarity with specific gamification formats (e.G., Situational simulations, task quizzes, leaderboards, and point systems).
- Perception measurement (likert scale): standardized 5-point likert scale statements (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) measuring constructs such as diagnostic skill assessment capability, evaluation stress mitigation, process engagement, and overall application interest.

3. Analytical Tools and Statistical Framework

Data analysis was conducted using spss to generate descriptive and inferential statistical insights:

- Percentage analysis: used to summarize demographic distributions, general candidate preferences, and awareness levels across different gamification mechanics.
- Analysis of variance (anova): applied to evaluate variance in candidate perceptions across demographic subgroups (e.G., Student vs. Professional experience levels).
- Multiple linear regression analysis: employed to test the proposed hypotheses (h1 through h4) by determining how independent dimensions—such as prior experience, perceived skill assessment quality, and stress reduction—predict candidate application intent.

4. Data Analysis and Empirical Findings

The empirical evaluation combines descriptive percentage distributions to summarize candidate awareness and mechanism preferences with inferential multiple linear regression to evaluate hypothesis relationships.

5. Descriptive Summary & Candidate Strategy Preferences

Descriptive analysis of the 104 valid responses reveals clear patterns regarding how candidates perceive various gamification tools during selection pipelines, as summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Candidate Strategy Preferences and Evaluative Perceptions (N = 104)

Gamification Mechanism / Dimension	Candidate Preference (%)	Primary Perceived Evaluative Benefit
Scenario-based Simulations	42.3%	Practical skill execution & realistic job preview
Task-oriented Skill Quizzes	34.6%	Direct domain knowledge & aptitude evaluation

Competitive Leaderboards	12.5%	Performance comparison & competitive motivation
Points & Badge Systems	10.6%	Progress tracking & immediate feedback
Selection Preference Model	Hybrid (78.8%)	Gamified screening combined with interviews



6. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression was conducted to evaluate the influence of four gamification factors—prior candidate experience, perceived engagement, diagnostic skill assessment, and stress reduction—on candidate application intent ($n = 104$). The statistical results are presented in tables 2, 3, and 4

Table 2: Multiple Linear Regression Model Summary

Multiple R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Observations
0.1942	0.0377	-0.0012	0.5623	104

Table 3: ANOVA Summary for Regression Model

Model	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Regression	4	1.2273	0.3068	0.9704	0.4273
Residual	99	31.3016	0.3162	-	-
Total	103	32.5288	-	-	-

Table 4: Regression Coefficients And Hypothesis Decisions
(* $P < 0.01$, † $P < 0.10$ Marginal, Ns = Not significant)

Variable / Predictor	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value (Sig.)
(Intercept)	0.7549	0.2551	2.9590	0.0039*
Experience	0.0165	0.1105	0.1494	0.8816 (NS)
Engagement	-0.0147	0.0437	-0.3364	0.7373 (NS)
Skill Assessment	-0.0096	0.0427	-0.2254	0.8221 (NS)
Stress Reduction	0.0763	0.0395	1.9305	0.0564 (†)

VI. STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION AND HYPOTHESIS DECISIONS

The empirical findings from the regression analysis provide essential insights into candidate decision-making mechanics:

1. Model overall significance (h4 decisions): the overall regression model was statistically non-significant ($f(4, 99) = 0.9704$, $P = 0.4273$), With an r^2 value of 0.0377 And an

adjusted r^2 of -0.0012. This indicates that operational gamification factors collectively account for only 3.77% Of the total variance in candidate application intent. Consequently, hypothesis h4 (which predicted that gamification factors collectively exert a significant effect on candidate application interest) is not supported.

2. Candidate experience (h1 decision): prior exposure to gamified selection tools showed a negligible effect on application interest ($b = 0.0165$, $T = 0.1494$, $P = 0.8816$). Because $p > 0.05$, Hypothesis h1 is not supported. Familiarity with gamified tools alone does not drive application intent.

• Process engagement & skill assessment (h2 decision): neither perceived interactive engagement ($b = -0.0147$, $T = -0.3364$, $P =$

0.7373) Nor perceived diagnostic skill assessment (b

$= -0.0096$, $T = -0.2254$, $P = 0.8221$) Exhibited a statistically significant direct relationship with application intent. Therefore, hypothesis h2 is not supported.

1. Stress mitigation & evaluation anxiety (h3 decision): among all evaluated predictors, perceived stress reduction demonstrated the strongest comparative influence ($b = 0.0763$, $T = 1.9305$, $P = 0.0564$). Achieving marginal statistical significance at the $p < 0.10$ Level, hypothesis h3 is partially supported (marginally significant). This indicates that reducing test anxiety during hiring serves as the primary experiential value driver for applicants.

2. Observations and Critical Synthesis

The empirical findings reveal an important distinction in candidate decision-making during recruitment. While descriptive analysis confirms high applicant awareness and a strong preference for interactive simulations and task quizzes over static examinations, inferential statistical testing confirms that gamification alone is not a primary driver of job application intent ($r^2 = 0.0377$, $P = 0.4273$). This synthesis indicates that candidates view gamification as an experiential hygiene factor—a mechanism that enhances process engagement and reduces evaluation stress—rather than a decisive criterion for seeking employment. Candidates strongly value lower test anxiety ($p = 0.0564$) And realistic job previews provided by scenario simulations. Furthermore, a substantial majority of respondents (78.8%) Expressed a preference for a hybrid evaluation model that combines gamified screening tools with structured human interviews, demonstrating that candidates seek technological innovation alongside interpersonal evaluation.



VII. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strategic alignment of assessment tools: organizations should align specific gamification mechanics with targeted competencies. Quizzes are optimal for Screening Foundational Technical domain knowledge, whereas interactive scenario simulations should be reserved for assessing complex behavioral traits, including managerial decision-making, crisis communication, and Adaptability.
2. Transparency and standardized practice: to ensure evaluation fairness and mitigate algorithmic anxiety, recruiters must provide clear instructions, transparent scoring criteria, and optional practice trials prior to formal assessment.
3. Implementation of hybrid selection pipelines: Given The High Candidate Preference For Hybrid models (78.8%), Organizations should deploy gamified assessments as initial diagnostic Screening tools while maintaining structured human interviews for final selection.
4. Technical accessibility and universal inclusion: employers must ensure platform compatibility across diverse mobile and desktop devices, minimizing technical friction and accommodating applicants with varying levels of digital literacy.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study examined candidate perceptions of gamified recruitment methods and evaluated their diagnostic utility in measuring workplace competencies among management graduates and job seekers. The findings demonstrate that while gamified selection tools—particularly scenario-based simulations and task quizzes—significantly enhance applicant engagement and reduce evaluation anxiety compared to traditional exams, gamification factors alone do not act as primary direct drivers of candidate application decisions ($r^2 = 0.0377$, $P = 0.4273$).

Among the tested variables, perceived stress reduction emerged as the strongest comparative influence ($p = 0.0564$), Highlighting that the true value of gamified talent acquisition lies in creating candidate-friendly, low-anxiety evaluation environments. Ultimately, gamification serves as a powerful diagnostic supplement within talent acquisition pipelines. When integrated into a balanced hybrid model alongside academic training and structured human evaluation, gamified screening offers a reliable mechanism for identifying applied competencies and bridging the graduate skill-employability gap.

1. Managerial Implications of the Study

- Diagnostic optimization: hr managers can deploy task simulations to observe applied management capabilities

under realistic workplace conditions, overcoming the limitations of static resume screening.

- Employer branding and stress mitigation: by reducing assessment anxiety, gamified tools elevate candidate experience and enhance employer brand perception among early-career talent.
- Hybrid architecture: talent acquisition leaders should combine digital gamified screening with traditional interviews to build inclusive, robust selection processes.
- Operational quality control: ensuring technical reliability and procedural fairness is essential to preventing candidate dissatisfaction during digital selection.

2. Limitations of the Study

Several constraints should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the sample size of 104 respondents obtained via convenience sampling limits generalizability across broader geographic and industry populations. Second, the reliance on self-reported survey data introduces potential perception bias. Third, the study evaluated general candidate perceptions without isolating specific industry verticals (e.g., It vs. Healthcare), where gamification efficacy may vary. Finally, the low regression r^2 indicates that unmeasured external variables—such as salary expectations, organizational reputation, and career growth opportunities—exert a stronger influence on candidate application decisions.

3. Future Directions for Research

Future inquiries should expand sample sizes using probability sampling across distinct industry sectors to evaluate role-specific gamification dynamics. Longitudinal studies examining the correlation between candidate gamified test scores and subsequent on-the-job performance would offer deeper insights into predictive validity. Additionally, investigating the interplay between candidate personality traits, digital literacy, and algorithmic fairness perceptions remains a valuable avenue for advancing recruitment research.

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