International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 07, July 2026)

Cracking the Campus Gate: A Human Resource Perspective on Resume Craft, Interview Impact, and Aptitude-Reasoning Readiness for IT/ITES Campus Placements

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***Abstract*-- Campus placement in the IT and ITES sector runs through four sequential gates, and a student who is strong at only one or two of them still gets filtered out before the offer letter. The resume decides whether a student is even called; the online aptitude and reasoning test, run by recruiters such as TCS, Infosys, Accenture, HCL, and Wipro, decides whether the student moves past the first cut; the technical and group rounds test domain depth; and the HR interview - often treated as the "easy" round by students - is where composure, communication, and cultural fit are read closely and where many otherwise qualified candidates are quietly dropped. This article reviews current recruiter-side and industry research on resume and Applicant Tracking System (ATS) screening, on the aptitude and reasoning test formats used by major IT/ITES recruiters, and on the communication and first-impression research that shapes HR interview outcomes. It proposes a Four-Gate Placement Readiness Model that connects each recruitment stage to the specific student-side skill it actually tests, separates genuine recruiter practice from popular placement-preparation myths, and sets out a practical, department-runnable training design - a resume clinic, a graded aptitude-test cycle, and a structured mock-interview cycle - that a placement cell can put into action with a final-year batch. The article concludes that placement readiness is not one skill dressed up in four rounds; it is four coordinated skills, and training that treats them as one continuous system, rather than three unconnected lessons, is what actually moves conversion rates.**

Keywords **- Campus placement, resume construction, Applicant Tracking System, aptitude test, logical reasoning, group discussion, HR interview, TCS, Infosys, Accenture, HCL, employability, final-year students, IT/ITES recruitment, placement readiness.**

I. Introduction

Every placement season, India's large IT and IT-enabled services (ITES) employers - TCS, Infosys, Accenture, HCL, Wipro, Cognizant, and others - run mass campus hiring drives that put a final-year commerce, IT, and engineering cohort through the same broad sequence: an online aptitude and reasoning test, sometimes a group discussion, a technical round, and an HR round.

For a placement cell, this sequence is familiar. For a final-year student walking into it for the first time, it is four unfamiliar tests stacked on top of each other, each with its own rules and its own way of eliminating candidates.

The practical problem this article addresses is a specific and common one: strong students, with good academic records and genuine subject knowledge, are still rejected at scale during placement drives - not because they lack ability, but because the four gates test different things, and most placement preparation in Indian colleges still concentrates almost entirely on one of them (technical knowledge) while treating the other three - the resume, the aptitude-reasoning test, and the HR interview - as things a student will simply "manage." Recruiter-side research reviewed in this article suggests otherwise: resumes are screened by keyword-matching systems before a human ever opens them; aptitude and reasoning tests follow well-documented, practice-able patterns; and HR interviewers form durable first impressions within seconds, largely on the basis of communication and composure rather than content alone.

For a department such as this one, which carries direct institutional responsibility for final-year students' placement outcomes at IT and ITES corporates, this is not an abstract concern. It is the actual gap between a student's technical capability and their placement conversion rate. This article brings together current recruiter and industry research on all four gates - resume/ATS screening, aptitude-reasoning testing, group discussion and technical rounds, and HR interview performance - into a single, evidence-based framework, and translates that framework into a training design a placement cell or a responsible faculty member can run directly with a final-year batch before and during a placement season.

A second, related problem this article addresses is misinformation. Placement preparation in India today runs heavily through peer advice, YouTube videos, and coaching-platform content, much of which repeats claims that either overstate or understate what recruiters actually do.

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The most consequential of these is the widely circulated statistic that three-quarters of resumes are rejected by Applicant Tracking System (ATS) software before any human sees them - a claim that, as Section 2 shows, has been directly investigated and substantially contradicted by recent recruiter surveys. Students who believe this claim uncritically often respond in one of two unhelpful ways: they either abandon resume tailoring altogether, on the theory that unbeatable software decides everything regardless of effort, or they over-invest in formatting gimmicks at the expense of the content changes - keyword alignment, quantified achievements, role-specific tailoring - that the evidence shows actually move a resume up the shortlist. A responsible placement-training programme has to correct this kind of misinformation directly, not merely add more general encouragement on top of it.

This article is written specifically for the final-year commerce and IT-adjacent undergraduate audience this department is responsible for, and for the faculty and placement staff who guide them, rather than for a general HR-research readership. Its purpose is threefold: to lay out, in one place, what current evidence actually says about how recruiters at large IT/ITES employers screen resumes, test aptitude and reasoning, and evaluate interview performance; to convert that evidence into a usable framework - the Four-Gate Placement Readiness Model set out in Section 4 - that distinguishes between the four different skills a placement drive actually tests; and to propose a concrete, term-length training design that a placement cell can run with a real batch of final-year students, rather than leaving each gate to informal, one-off guidance.

II. Review Of Literature

CCBP and Foundit (2025-2026), in industry guides on the TCS recruitment process, describe the TCS National Qualifier Test (NQT) as the near-universal entry gate for TCS's Ninja, Digital, and NQT-linked hiring tracks, evaluating candidates on aptitude, logical reasoning, verbal ability, and, for several tracks, programming, followed by technical, managerial, and HR interview rounds. The sources note that the assessment pattern is adaptive in several sections and is revised periodically to track current industry requirements.

Unstop and PrepInsta (2025-2026), profiling HCL's and TCS's fresher recruitment processes respectively, similarly describe a common structure across large IT/ITES recruiters: an aptitude round covering logical reasoning, quantitative ability, and verbal skills; a group discussion round assessing presence of mind and the ability to structure and defend a viewpoint under time pressure; and technical and HR rounds that follow. Saiket's 2025 comparative guide to Infosys, TCS, Wipro, and Accenture recruitment adds that Accenture's process is built around a cognitive assessment (analytical ability, English, and logical reasoning) while Wipro's Elite National Talent Hunt places unusually heavy weight on essay writing and communication relative to other majors.

Jobscan's State of the Job Search 2025 report, cited across multiple 2025-2026 industry analyses, found that 99.7 percent of recruiters use keyword filters within their Applicant Tracking System to sort and rank applicants, meaning the overwhelming majority of online applications are screened by software before any human review. However, *Enhancv's September-October 2025* study of 25 recruiters across company sizes found that only 8 percent of organisations enable full automated content rejection; 92 percent rely on human review guided by knockout questions and optional match scores, which directly contradicts the widely circulated claim that three-quarters of resumes are auto-rejected by ATS software before a human ever sees them. Read together, these sources point to a more precise and more useful conclusion than the popular myth: ATS software overwhelmingly ranks and filters resumes by keyword relevance to the job description, but the deciding rejection is still very often a fast human judgment made on a resume that has already been narrowed by the software.

A TalentBoard survey cited in *Jobscan's 2025* resume statistics report found that four out of five resumes fail at the screening stage, with generic, non-tailored content accounting for 52 percent of rejections, keyword stuffing for 28 percent, and inappropriate length for a further 19 percent - evidence that the specific failure mode is less about students lacking qualifications and more about resumes that are not written to match the specific role and its stated keywords.

The India Skills Report 2026 (ETS, CII, AICTE, AIU, and Taggd), a nationwide survey of students, graduates, and employers across sectors and regions, found that national employability rose to 56.35 percent, up from 54.81 percent the previous year, with commerce-stream employability at 62.81 percent and computer science and IT employability leading all streams. The same report, however, flagged a persistent and specific gap: employers continue to report weak communication skills, problem-solving, teamwork, and critical thinking even where technical competence is adequate, a gap the report describes as most pronounced among first-generation learners.

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The TeamLease EdTech Career Outlook Report for HY1 2026 similarly found that Indian employer hiring intent for freshers reached 73 percent, but that this demand increasingly rewards demonstrated, project-based ability over degree credentials alone - a "skills-first" shift that raises rather than lowers the burden on a candidate's resume and interview performance to prove capability directly.

Foundational nonverbal-communication research (Prickett, Gada-Jain, and Bernieri's classic study on first-impression formation, and subsequent replications) established that interviewers form durable impressions of a candidate within the first twenty seconds to a few minutes of an interview, and that these early impressions are resistant to revision even when later evidence in the interview contradicts them. More recent industry-side compilations *(RecruitBPM, 2026) report* that a third of interviewers make an initial hiring lean within 90 seconds, and that failure to maintain eye contact, weak vocal energy, and visible nervousness are among the most commonly cited reasons for rejecting an otherwise qualified candidate. Contemporary research (Heimann et al., 2025, n=1,989) has also revised older, more sweeping claims about the exact percentage weight of nonverbal cues in hiring decisions, but the underlying finding - that composure, vocal delivery, and body language materially affect interviewer judgement independent of answer content - continues to hold up under newer, larger-sample study designs.

Shoolini University's 2026 analysis of employer expectations, drawing on the India Skills Report 2026 and the TeamLease EdTech Career Outlook Report, further found that project-based hiring signals - internships, demonstrable projects, hackathon participation - rose 38 percent year-on-year, and that employer intent to hire freshers reached 73 percent even as 82 percent of Indian employers reported difficulty finding candidates who could demonstrate applied ability rather than credentials alone (ManpowerGroup's 2026 Talent Shortage Survey). Read alongside the aptitude and interview literature above, this confirms that the placement gap for many otherwise qualified final-year students is less about the existence of jobs and more about candidates' ability to demonstrate, quickly and clearly, what they can actually do - across a resume, a timed test, and a live conversation - within the narrow windows each recruitment gate allows.

Synthesis: Read together, this literature supports three linked conclusions that this article treats as its organising evidence base.

First, each of the four placement gates - resume/ATS screening, aptitude-reasoning testing, technical/GD rounds, and HR interview - is governed by a distinct, well-documented set of recruiter-side mechanics that reward specific, practice-able student behaviours rather than generic effort. Second, several widely repeated placement-preparation claims - especially the "75 percent ATS auto-rejection" statistic - are demonstrably exaggerated relative to what recruiters actually report doing, and placement training should correct rather than repeat these myths. Third, India-specific employer research confirms that the gap final-year Indian students most often lose points on is not technical knowledge but communication, structured thinking, and resume-to-role alignment - precisely the three areas a departmental placement-readiness programme is best positioned to strengthen directly, since technical preparation already receives substantial curricular attention.

Table 1: Comparative Summary of Reviewed Literature

Source	Key Finding	Relevance to Placement Readiness
CCBP/Foundit/PrepInsta (2025-26) - TCS, HCL recruiter guides	Aptitude-reasoning-verbal test followed by GD/technical/HR rounds is the near-universal IT/ITES structure	Confirms the four-gate sequence this article's framework is built on
Jobscan (2025); Enhancv (2025)	99.7% of recruiters use ATS keyword filters; only 8% allow full auto-rejection	ATS matters for ranking, but the popular "auto-reject" myth is overstated
TalentBoard/Jobscan (2025)	80% of resumes fail screening; generic content and keyword stuffing are top causes	Resume tailoring, not resume volume, is the fixable lever
India Skills Report 2026 (ETS/CII/AICTE/AIU/Taggd)	Employability at 56.35%; commerce at 62.81%; communication and critical thinking remain weak	Confirms the specific skill gap departmental training should target
Prickett, Gada-Jain & Bernieri; RecruitBPM (2026)	Interviewers form durable impressions within seconds to minutes; eye contact and composure are decisive	HR-round training must cover delivery, not only answer content

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III. Objectives Of The Study

- To review current recruiter-side and industry research on resume and ATS screening practices at large IT/ITES employers.
- To examine the aptitude, reasoning, and verbal-ability test formats used by major campus recruiters such as TCS, Infosys, Accenture, and HCL.
- To review research on group discussion, technical interview, and HR interview performance factors, including first-impression and nonverbal-communication findings.
- To propose a Four-Gate Placement Readiness Model connecting each recruitment stage to the specific student-side skill it tests.
- To distinguish evidence-supported placement-preparation practice from popular but exaggerated placement myths, particularly around ATS auto-rejection.
- To propose a practical, department-runnable training design - a resume clinic, an aptitude-test cycle, and a mock-interview cycle - for final-year placement preparation.

IV. Conceptual Framework: The Four-Gate Placement Readiness Model

This article proposes that campus placement success in the IT/ITES sector is best understood not as one general skill but as four distinct, sequential gates, each testing a different student capability and each governed by a different, evidence-documented recruiter mechanism. A student who prepares only for the technical round while treating the resume, the aptitude test, and the HR round as secondary is, in effect, training for one gate out of four.

Gate 1 - Resume and ATS Screening: This gate tests role-alignment and precision, not general merit. The evidence reviewed in Section 2 shows that recruiters and their ATS software rank resumes primarily by keyword match to the specific job description, and that the leading causes of rejection are generic, non-tailored content and keyword stuffing rather than a genuine lack of qualification.

The practical implication for a final-year student is direct: one master resume sent to every recruiter performs worse than a resume that mirrors the specific role's stated skills, tools, and terminology, uses standard section headers and a single-column layout that both ATS software and a human reviewer can parse quickly, and quantifies achievements ("improved X by Y percent,""led a team of Z") rather than describing responsibilities in vague terms.

Gate 2 - Aptitude, Reasoning, and Verbal Test: This gate tests speed and pattern-recognition under time pressure, not raw intelligence. TCS NQT, Infosys's online test, Accenture's cognitive assessment, and HCL's aptitude round all draw on a well-documented and finite pool of quantitative, logical-reasoning, and verbal-ability question types. Because these formats are stable and heavily practised across the fresher hiring ecosystem, this is the most trainable of the four gates through structured, repeated, timed practice - and correspondingly, the gate students most often under-invest in because it looks "less important" than the technical round.

Gate 3 - Group Discussion and Technical Interview: This gate tests structured thinking and domain depth under real-time scrutiny. GD panels, where used, assess whether a candidate can form and defend a position concisely within a group setting; technical rounds test whether classroom knowledge converts into applied, spoken explanation. Both reward brevity, structure (a clear point first, followed by a short justification), and the ability to admit the limit of one's knowledge honestly rather than bluffing - a behaviour recruiters consistently rate poorly when detected.

Gate 4 - HR Interview: This gate tests communication, composure, and cultural fit, and the evidence reviewed in Section 2 shows it is decided far faster than most students assume. First impressions form within seconds to a few minutes and are resistant to revision; nervousness, poor eye contact, and low vocal energy are among the most cited reasons recruiters give for rejecting candidates who otherwise meet the role's requirements. The HR round rewards specific, structured self-narration - the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) - genuine company-specific preparation (why this employer, not employers in general), and rehearsed composure, since composure under mild pressure is itself part of what is being assessed.

International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
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Table 2: The Four-Gate Placement Readiness Model

Gate	What Recruiters Actually Test	Common Student Mistake	Evidence-Based Student Action
1. Resume / ATS	Role-keyword match; clarity; quantified impact	One generic resume sent everywhere	Tailor keywords per job description; quantify every bullet; keep formatting simple
2. Aptitude / Reasoning	Speed and accuracy on stable, recurring question types	Preparing late, only technical topics	Timed daily practice from the specific recruiter's known pattern (e.g., TCS NQT, Accenture cognitive test)
3. GD / Technical	Structured reasoning; applied domain depth	Long, unstructured answers; bluffing unknown topics	Point-first answers; honest "I am not certain, but here is my reasoning" framing
4. HR Interview	Composure, communication, company-specific fit	Generic answers; weak eye contact; no company research	STAR-structured stories; company-specific "why us" answer; rehearsed delivery

This framework deliberately avoids treating the four gates as interchangeable "soft skill" training, since Section 2 shows each is governed by a distinct recruiter mechanism with its own, separately practice-able fix. A student may be strong at Gate 3 and still fail at Gate 1 simply by never being shortlisted - which is precisely the coordination problem departmental placement training must correct. It is also worth noting that the four gates are not equally time-costly to fix: Gate 1 (resume) and Gate 4 (HR interview delivery) can often be substantially improved within a few structured sessions, since both are primarily about presentation of existing ability rather than acquiring new knowledge, while Gate 2 (aptitude-reasoning speed) and Gate 3 (domain depth) generally require sustained, weeks-long practice.

A training calendar that recognises this difference - front-loading the faster-to-fix gates while running the slower ones in parallel over a longer window - is likely to produce visible improvement earlier in the term, which matters for maintaining student motivation through a placement-preparation cycle that can otherwise feel long and abstract.

V. Significance of The Study

This study matters for five connected reasons. First, it consolidates dispersed recruiter-side and industry evidence - on ATS screening, aptitude-test formats, and HR interview psychology - into a single evidence base a commerce-IT department can draw on directly when designing placement-readiness training, rather than relying on informal or anecdotal placement advice. Second, it corrects specific, widely circulated placement-preparation myths, most notably the exaggerated "75 percent ATS auto-rejection" claim, replacing them with what recruiters actually report doing - a correction that changes how much time students should spend on resume formatting versus resume content. Third, the Four-Gate model in Section 4 gives faculty and placement officers a concrete diagnostic tool: a student who is being rejected can be assessed against a specific gate, rather than being given generic "be more confident" advice that does not identify which stage is actually failing. Fourth, by proposing a practical training design (Section 6), the study gives this department a directly runnable structure for improving placement conversion rates at exactly the corporates - TCS, Infosys, Accenture, HCL - where the institution's placement responsibility is concentrated. Fifth, the study is timed to the India Skills Report 2026's specific finding that commerce-stream employability, while improving, still trails computer science and IT employability - which makes structured, evidence-based placement training an especially direct lever for a commerce department seeking to close that specific, documented gap for its own students.

VI. Methodology

This article adopts a descriptive, secondary-data-based conceptual research design, synthesising current recruiter-published process guides, industry survey data (Jobscan, Enhancv, TalentBoard, RecruitBPM), and the India Skills Report 2026, rather than presenting new primary survey data.

International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
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This approach is appropriate at this stage because the specific gate-to-skill mappings proposed in Section 4 have not yet been tested directly against this department's own student placement outcomes, and a conceptual synthesis is a necessary precursor to that primary testing.

For direct departmental application, this article proposes a three-part practical training design, runnable across a single placement-preparation term: (a) a Resume Clinic - a two-session workshop in which every final-year student rewrites their resume against a real job description from a target recruiter, followed by a peer and faculty review checklist covering keyword alignment, quantification, and formatting; (b) a Graded Aptitude-Reasoning Cycle - a six-to-eight-week schedule of timed mock tests modelled on the specific published patterns of TCS NQT, Infosys's online test, and Accenture's cognitive assessment, with weekly score tracking so weak topic areas are identified early rather than at the final mock test; and (c) a Structured Mock-Interview Cycle - at least two rounds per student, videotaped where feasible, in which faculty or invited alumni score each candidate separately on STAR-structured content and on delivery (eye contact, vocal energy, composure), since Section 2's evidence shows these are scored as genuinely separate dimensions by real recruiters. For future primary research building on this design, a pre/post comparison - aptitude-test scores and interview-panel ratings recorded before and after the training cycle - would allow the department to measure its own training's effect directly, rather than relying on overall placement conversion alone, which is affected by many external factors.

Each of the three training components is designed to be run with existing departmental resources rather than requiring external vendors. The Resume Clinic can be facilitated by any faculty member familiar with the department's placement-cell job postings, using a simple checklist derived directly from Section 2's evidence: does the resume mirror the job description's own keywords; is every bullet quantified; is the layout single-column and free of tables, headers, or graphics that common ATS platforms parse unreliably; and is the resume under one page for a fresher-level application, consistent with the length-related rejection reasons documented in the TalentBoard survey cited above. The Graded Aptitude-Reasoning Cycle should track each student's week-on-week score by topic area (quantitative, logical reasoning, verbal, and, where relevant, basic coding or pseudo-code), so that a student weak specifically in data interpretation, for instance, is identified in week two rather than discovered only in a final mock test administered days before the actual recruiter's test.

The Structured Mock-Interview Cycle should use two independent scorers wherever staffing allows - one scoring STAR-structured answer content, and a second scoring delivery alone (eye contact, vocal energy, posture, composure under a mildly challenging follow-up question) - since Section 2's evidence indicates that real recruiter panels register these as separable judgements, and a single combined score can mask which of the two a given student actually needs to work on.

VII. Practical Implications For Key Stakeholders

7.1 For Final-Year Students: The resume is not a formality completed once and forgotten - it should be rewritten for every distinct role, using the employer's own stated keywords, with every line quantified wherever possible. Aptitude-reasoning preparation should begin at least two to three months before the placement season, using timed practice against the specific target recruiter's known pattern rather than generic question banks alone. HR interview answers should be built and rehearsed using the STAR method in advance, not improvised in the room, and company-specific preparation (recent projects, values, the specific "why this company" answer) should be treated as mandatory, not optional.

Students should also treat the four gates as sequential filters rather than independent chances: a strong HR-round personality cannot compensate for a resume that never gets shortlisted, and a well-tailored resume cannot compensate for an aptitude score below a recruiter's cut-off. This means time allocation matters as much as effort - a student with three months before a placement drive is better served by two weeks on resume tailoring, six to eight weeks of graded aptitude practice, and the remaining weeks on mock interviews, than by spending nearly all available time on only one gate. Students should also actively verify placement claims they encounter online against what recruiters themselves publish or against what their placement cell confirms, rather than assuming that a widely shared statistic - such as the ATS auto-rejection figure discussed in Section 2 - is accurate simply because it is repeated often.

7.2 For Placement and Training Cells: Placement training should allocate dedicated, sequenced time to all four gates rather than concentrating almost entirely on technical preparation, since Section 2's evidence shows students are eliminated at the resume and HR stages in large numbers despite adequate technical ability.

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A resume clinic run before applications open, and a graded mock-test and mock-interview cycle run in the two to three months before the placement season, directly address the two most commonly under-prepared gates. Placement cells should also maintain a simple, living record of each recruiter's current test pattern and interview structure - since Section 2 shows these are periodically revised by companies such as TCS and HCL - so that batch-specific preparation stays current rather than relying on the previous year's pattern by default.

7.3 For Faculty Mentors: Faculty giving placement guidance should be equipped to correct specific placement myths - particularly the ATS auto-rejection myth - since students who believe a resume is "read" only by unbeatable software may under-invest in tailoring it, when the real fix (keyword and content alignment) is well within their control. Faculty running mock interviews should score delivery (eye contact, vocal energy, composure) as a separate, explicit criterion from answer content, since recruiter-side evidence treats these as genuinely separate judgements. Faculty should also be alert to the specific communication and critical-thinking gap the India Skills Report 2026 documents for first-generation learners, and should ensure that mock-interview and GD practice sessions are scheduled with enough repetition - not a single one-off session - for students starting from a lower communication-confidence baseline to show measurable improvement.

7.4 For Employers and Campus Recruiters: Employers engaging with commerce and IT-adjacent final-year candidates from Tier-2/3 institutions may find that candidates benefit from, and respond well to, structured pre-interview guidance on company-specific expectations, given the India Skills Report 2026's finding that communication and structured-thinking gaps, rather than technical gaps, remain the most persistent barrier for this segment of the talent pool.

VIII. Suggestions / Recommendations

- Placement cells should run a dedicated resume clinic at least one full term before recruitment drives begin, requiring every student to tailor their resume against an actual job description rather than submitting a single generic version.
- Faculty should explicitly teach students the difference between real ATS practice and popular placement myths, so preparation time is spent on content and keyword alignment rather than on formatting anxiety alone.
- Aptitude-reasoning preparation should be scheduled as a structured, graded, multi-week cycle - not a last-week cram - modelled on the specific published test patterns of each target recruiter.
- Mock interviews should score STAR-structured content and interview delivery (eye contact, vocal energy, composure) as two separate, explicit criteria, matching how real recruiter panels evaluate candidates.
- Group discussion and technical-round training should reward structured, point-first answers and honest acknowledgement of knowledge limits, rather than length or bluffing.
- Departments should track simple before-and-after outcome measures - mock-test scores, mock-interview panel ratings, and eventual placement conversion - so the effectiveness of this training design remains evidence-based rather than anecdotal.
- Training should explicitly connect all four gates for students, so they understand that resume tailoring, aptitude practice, and interview rehearsal are one continuous placement-readiness system rather than three unrelated tasks.

IX. Limitations Of The Study

This article is a conceptual synthesis based on secondary, largely industry-published sources rather than primary data collected from this department's own student cohort, and its conclusions are therefore only as strong as the underlying sources cited, several of which are industry surveys rather than peer-reviewed academic studies. The Four-Gate model proposed in Section 4 is a theoretical mapping intended to guide practical training design, not a validated causal model, and its actual effect on this department's placement conversion rates has not yet been measured directly. Recruiter process details (test patterns, interview stage sequencing) are drawn from current published guides and are subject to change as recruiters periodically revise their hiring processes, which the proposed training design (Section 6) is designed to accommodate through ongoing pattern updates rather than a fixed, one-time syllabus.

A further limitation is that most of the first-impression and nonverbal-communication research cited in Section 2 originates from Western, largely campus-recruiting or corporate-hiring contexts rather than from Indian IT/ITES mass-hiring drives specifically, where interview formats, panel composition, and cultural expectations around eye contact, self-promotion, and directness can differ meaningfully from the Western samples most first-impression studies are built on.

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The article's recommendations on HR-interview delivery should therefore be treated as a reasonable, evidence-informed starting point for training design rather than as settled findings specific to this student population, pending the local validation proposed in Section 10.

X. Scope For Future Research

Future research building on this article should prioritise: (a) a pre/post pilot of the three-part training design proposed in Section 6 with an actual final-year batch, measuring mock-test score gains, mock-interview panel ratings, and eventual placement conversion; (b) a comparative study of resume tailoring's effect on shortlisting rates within this student population specifically, since the evidence reviewed here is drawn largely from international and non-campus job markets; (c) tracking of which specific Gate 4 (HR interview) delivery factors most affect outcomes for Tamil Nadu commerce-IT undergraduates, given that most first-impression research reviewed here is Western in origin; and (d) longitudinal tracking of whether early, structured resume and aptitude-test training in earlier academic years - not only the final year - improves eventual placement outcomes. A fifth avenue worth pursuing is a simple within-department comparison across two consecutive placement seasons, one following the department's existing informal preparation approach and the next following the structured Four-Gate training design proposed here, using shortlisting rate, aptitude-test clearance rate, and final offer conversion as the three outcome measures - a design that would not require an external control group and could be run entirely within this department's own placement cycle.

XI. Conclusion

Campus placement in the IT and ITES sector is not decided by one skill dressed up in four rounds; it is decided by four distinct, coordinated skills - resume and ATS alignment, aptitude and reasoning speed, structured domain communication, and HR-round composure and self-presentation - each governed by its own, well-documented recruiter mechanism.

Students, and the placement training built around them, that concentrate almost entirely on technical preparation while treating the resume and the HR interview as secondary are, in effect, training for one gate out of four. The Four-Gate Placement Readiness Model proposed in this article, together with the resume clinic, graded aptitude cycle, and structured mock-interview cycle set out in Section 6, gives this department a concrete, evidence-bounded way to close that gap directly - and a starting point for the pre/post outcome tracking that would let future research test its actual effect on placement conversion at corporates such as TCS, Infosys, Accenture, and HCL.

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