

**METRICS-DRIVEN TALENT ACQUISITION IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FIRMS:  
IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS**

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**ABSTRACT:**

This paper examines how talent acquisition metrics can enhance recruitment processes, improve candidate experience, and support strategic decision-making. It argues that failing to utilise these metrics leads to missed opportunities for optimising efficiency, reducing hiring costs, and improving hire quality. Using purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews with HR professionals, the study identifies themes related to employer branding and highlights the benefits of a metrics-driven approach. Findings indicate that such an approach boosts workforce productivity, retention rates, and organisational growth. The research offers actionable insights for HR professionals and business leaders, emphasising the strategic advantage of integrating advanced analytics into recruitment practices. The benefits of a metrics-driven approach are clear, from improving candidate experience to supporting strategic decision-making, and these advantages should be noticed.

**Key-words:** Talent Acquisition Metrics; Talent analytics; Time to hire; cost of hire; quality of hire metric; human capital.

**INTRODUCTION:**

In today's competitive business environment, acquiring talented employees is crucial to the organisation's success. Many organisations face challenges attracting and retaining top talent due to increased demand for candidates with specific skills and cultural fit (Mohapatra and Sahu, 2017; Schiemann, 2014). To overcome these challenges, talent acquisition metrics have become indispensable tools for human resource professionals to evaluate and enhance the effectiveness of their recruitment processes (Charlwood et al., 2017; Dulebohn and Johnson, 2013). These metrics provide valuable insights into various aspects of hiring, from the efficiency of sourcing strategies to the retention of quality talents (Pessach et al., 2020; Slowinski et al., 2009). The importance of talent acquisition metrics lies in their capacity to provide a data-driven approach to recruitment by systematically measuring and analysing critical indicators such as time-to-fill, cost-per-hire, source of hire, quality of hire (QoH), and candidate satisfaction, where organisations can identify strengths and weaknesses in their hiring processes. This, in turn, enables human resource professionals to make informed decisions that can improve the overall effectiveness of recruitment strategies. Additionally, talent acquisition metrics are essential to align recruitment efforts with organisational goals. For instance, metrics focusing on employee retention and performance can guide initiatives to reduce turnover and enhance productivity (Hongal and Kinange, 2020), ultimately resulting in the organisation's competitive advantage. Despite the clear benefits of talent acquisition metrics, several organisations need help implementing and utilising them effectively. Challenges, such as unclear data (Black and van Esch, 2020), resistance to adopting new methods, and lack of expertise (Melanthiou et al., 2015) Interpreting results may hinder the complete comprehension of these tools' potential. HR departments must maximise the return on investment in talent acquisition and foster a more strategic approach to human capital management. This paper aims to fill this gap by studying the impact of measuring talent acquisition metrics and following a qualitative thematic analysis of the process to present shared values related to talent acquisition metrics, thereby significantly contributing to the reader's understanding of this critical research area. Through an in-depth analysis of existing literature, case studies and empirical research, this paper aims to shed light on the role of talent acquisition metrics in hiring quality talents and their impact on organisational performance. Hence, this research paper addresses the above content by asking the following Research Questions (RQ):

RQ1: What are the primary talent acquisition metrics tracked by Information Technology (IT) firms during the hiring process?

RQ2: What challenges do IT firms face in using talent acquisition metrics, and how can they overcome to improve them?

RQ3: How do talent acquisition metrics impact decision-making and enhance hiring effectiveness in IT firms?

These questions are structured around the recommended future research proposed by Sahu.(2017). The initial question aims to comprehend the specific metrics that IT firms prioritise when evaluating candidates during talent acquisition. By examining the primary metrics of IT firms, the study can provide valuable insights and determine the most crucial metrics for successful talent acquisition in the IT industry. The second question focuses on the practical difficulties and challenges IT firms face when implementing talent acquisition metrics into their hiring process. The study envisions enhancing IT companies' talent acquisition practices and outcomes by identifying these challenges and proposing potential solutions.

**LITERATURE REVIEW:**

**Significance of Talent Acquisition Metrics:**

Recruiting metrics are crucial in delivering data-driven insights for decision-making. The experts suggest that the future of talent acquisition will be highly competitive, regardless of the size of talent acquisition teams, given that an employer's hiring practices significantly impact business outcomes.(Pillai and Sivathanu, 2021; Srivastava and Bhatnagar, 2008). Therefore, talent acquisition leaders must focus on Talent acquisition metrics. Talent Acquisition Metrics are quantitative measures employed to evaluate various aspects of the hiring process. A recent study observed that researchers and practitioners focus only on efficiency-oriented metrics such as cost per hire, time to hire, and source of hire instead of effectiveness-oriented metrics such as Quality of hire (Dutta and Vedak, 2023). Fitz-enz (2000) introduced the "Recruiting Efficiency Ratio" concept to measure the effectiveness of talent acquisition efforts in terms of cost and time. Additionally, Phillips (2000) proposed the "Quality of Hire Index" to evaluate the performance and contribution of new hires to organisational objectives. Several studies have examined the connection between TA metrics and critical business outcomes such as productivity, profitability, and innovation. Huselid and Becker (2000) observed a significant correlation between quality of hire and organisational performance indicators, suggesting that hiring high-quality talent leads to increased business outcomes. Table 1 shows the literature review on the importance and need of TA metrics.

Table 1: Review of Literature

<b>Authors</b>	<b>The objectives of the study</b>	<b>Findings/Outcomes</b>
(McAfee et al., 2012)	To explore whether data-driven companies perform functionally and objectively better than their counterparts.	The study revealed that companies identifying as data-driven companies demonstrated superior performance in both financial and operational metrics.
(Brenner and Mcguire, 2013)	To identify the challenges and opportunities in measuring the quality of hire metrics and their impact on business results.	Companies need strategies for improving the quality of hire, implementing standardised measurement tools and utilising data-driven approaches.
(R. Srivastava, Palshikar, and Pawar, 2015)	The study objective is to statistically analyse past talent acquisition data to identify areas of improvement.	Opportunities exist to leverage data analytics and performance metrics to assess the effectiveness of hiring processes and evaluate outcomes.

(Charlwood et al., 2017)	To identify the use and challenges of human capital metrics and analytics.	This study found a need for more quality case study evidence on adopting and implementing Human capital metrics and analytics.
(Dulebohn and Johnson, (2013).)	This article explores how Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) and analytics have altered HR's role.	This study proposes a framework that outlines specific data needs, emphasising the importance of effectively integrating metrics and Decision Support Systems (DSS) into HR activities.
(Anger et al., 2021)	To review the literature on staffing metrics and analytics.	This conceptual study finds limited rigorous research on the practice and challenges of HR staffing metrics and analytics in the healthcare sector.

**Research Gaps :**

Talent acquisition in the IT sector is a significant obstacle to the advancement and effectiveness of talent acquisition practices. These include the absence of industry-specific research, limited exploration of talent acquisition metric efficacy, and challenges in metric implementation within practical HRM contexts.

**Problem statement :**

Despite growing awareness of the role of talent acquisition metrics in improving organisational performance, many organisations need more clarity on the most impactful metrics and their practical use. This study investigates which metrics are most relevant and how they can be implemented to enhance recruitment processes. This paper will address organisations' challenges in applying these metrics and offer practical solutions. Additionally, the research will explore the significance and impact of talent acquisition metrics across various industries and organisational contexts, providing a comprehensive overview of their role in effective talent management.

The objective of the study is:

- To explore talent acquisition metrics commonly used in Information Technology (IT) firms.
- To examine potential challenges in talent acquisition practices and strategies to overcome them.
- To identify optimal talent acquisition practices by evaluating various metrics.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

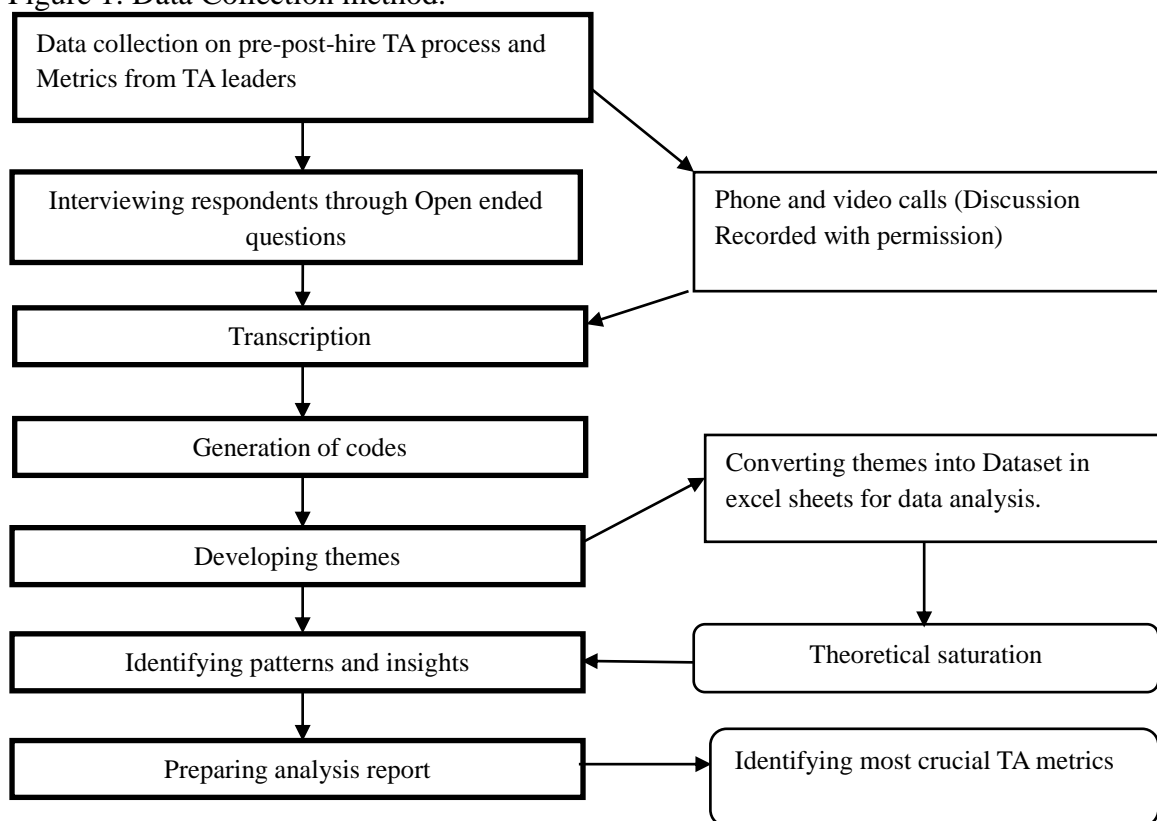
This study uses thematic data analysis to examine and interpret insights gathered from in-depth interviews with Talent Acquisition leaders. It examines their perspectives, experiences, and practices regarding talent acquisition. The research involves systematically coding and categorising data to identify recurring themes and patterns of significance.

**Data collection:**

A comprehensive literature review analysed the significance of the talent acquisition metrics. The pilot study determined the respondents based on their job titles, experience levels, and professional domains. IT employees in managerial and leadership roles in the talent acquisition sector are chosen as respondents. Additionally, a questionnaire was distributed to the panel comprising eight talent acquisition professionals to assess the overall quality and relevance. The experts' opinions were examined before drafting the final questionnaire for subsequent implementation. The instrument was finalised for implementation in the pilot study after minor modifications in the questionnaire, including repositioning and restructuring a few questions. In addition, the revised questionnaire was

shared with 78 respondents working in IT companies through emails and LinkedIn connections to get an interview appointment. Among them, 52 responded and were considered for further analysis. The pilot study lasted 7 weeks (January 2024- February 2024). The survey data is analysed using appropriate tools such as Microsoft Excel and Power BI to assess and visualise the responses effectively. Interviews were conducted through phone and video calls, which lasted 25 minutes with each respondent. The questions were analysed based on three different aspects. Based on initial inquiries, talent acquisition process and practices and measuring talent acquisition metrics. With the permission of the respondents’ calls were recorded for future reference. As questions were open-ended, respondents felt free to express their thoughts and experiences. It has enabled researchers to gain a wide range of information, capture diverse viewpoints, promote critical thinking, and facilitate qualitative data collection. Details of data collection are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Data Collection method.



Source: Author's work

**Data sampling and analysis:**

Overall, 52 responded to the study who are in the role of CHROs, Talent acquisition Directors, and Managers and recruiters; details are shared in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Details of the Respondents

Demographic	Details	Number of respondents	Percentage
Designation	CHRO of Talent Acquisition (TA),	4	8
	Talent acquisition Directors	4	8
	Talent acquisition Managers	21	40
	Recruiters	23	46
Gender	Male	32	62

	Female	20	38
Nature of the industry	IT	47	90
	IT enabled services	5	10
Interview methods	Phone calls.	41	79
	Video calls, Connecting online	11	21
	(zoom, teams)		
Total		52	100

**Thematic Data Analysis:**

Thematic data analysis was used to categorise and examine the data (Itam, 2019). Data was organised into themes and sub-themes, as outlined in Table 4, based on a proposed theoretical framework. Interviews were conducted personally by the researcher, with participant consent obtained for recording and verbatim transcription (Koch et al., 2018). Manual coding of relevant words was cross-checked with discussion notes to ensure validity (Sivathanu & Pillai, 2020). Transcribed data was reviewed to develop preliminary ideas, with codes used to describe specific responses. The analysis identified 62 keywords, forming themes and sub-themes for better understanding. Data collection continued until saturation was achieved.

The thematic data analysis was chosen using the 6-step thematic analysis process provided by Braun and Clarke (Braun, 2012) was followed. This model is described step by step in Table 3.

*Table 3: Thematic Data Analysis*

<b>Stages of data analysis</b>	<b>Description of the stages</b>
Familiarity with the data	Transcribed data were familiarised by taking notes of interviews and creating preliminary ideas.
Creating primary codes	A code is a brief description of the interviewee's responses or words.
Searching for themes	Identifying themes and subthemes, gathering data relating to each potential theme
Revising themes	Examining if the themes work with the code extracts and the entire data set generating the thematic map of analysis
Describing and naming themes	Analysing specific themes, generating clear definitions, and naming the themes
Preparing the report	Analysing between research questions and extracts, connecting with literature, and producing a scholarly report of the analysis

Source: (Braun, 2012).

Word clouds are exploratory tools that describe key themes from literature reviews and survey responses. They can be used to obtain an overview of the text data, guiding a more detailed and focused analysis.

*Table 4: Themes and subthemes*

<b>Main theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Talent Acquisition Metrics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define hiring needs.</li> <li>Create a positive employer brand.</li> <li>Utilize talent acquisition marketing.</li> <li>Leverage networking and referrals.</li> <li>Partnerships with</li> </ul>	Job Analysis, Skill Assessment, education background, Experience and Qualifications, Culture Fit, Performance Metrics, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), employer branding, social media,	Hiring Manager Satisfaction, Skill Gap Analysis, Performance Review Scores, Time to Productivity, Cost per Hire, candidate satisfaction rate, Diversity Metrics, Source Effectiveness,

<p>educational institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of social media.</li> <li>• Implementation of ATS.</li> <li>• Prioritise candidates.</li> <li>• Continuing improvement.</li> <li>• Provide a positive candidate experience.</li> </ul>	<p>technology in recruitment, Resource Allocation, Hiring Process Steps, Market Analysis Talent Availability, Demand and Supply, Cross-functional requirements, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Labor Laws, Diversity and Inclusion</p>	<p>Cost per Source, Quality of Hire by Source</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Developing a strong talent pipeline</li> <li>➤ Retaining top talent</li> <li>➤ Identifying the Quality hires</li> <li>➤ Improving candidate experience</li> </ul>	<p>Proactive talent acquisition efforts, succession planning, and talent development initiatives. Supportive work environment, competitive compensation, and opportunities for career growth. Effective screening, robust talent acquisition processes and relevant assessment tools Clear communication, personalised interactions, and feedback mechanisms.</p>	<p>Time-to-Fill, Succession Pipeline Depth Employee Retention Rate, Employee Engagement Score Quality of Hire, Interview-to-Offer Ratio, Candidate Satisfaction rate Candidate Net Promoter Score, Application Completion Rate Time-to-Hire</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lack of Data availability</li> <li>➤ Lack of tools and Technology</li> <li>➤ Lack of expertise</li> </ul>	<p>Challenges related to the data availability, delays in data collection, storage, and processing, Limited access to data management systems, insufficient analytics capabilities, Insufficient training, gaps in analytical skills, and a shortage of qualified personnel</p>	<p>Data Timeliness, Data Accuracy Technology Adoption Rate, Technology Utilization Analytical Skills Proficiency, Expertise Gap Analysis</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use of data analytics,</li> <li>➤ Implementation of ATS</li> </ul>	<p>Quality and quantity of data collected from various sources, Accuracy of data analysis techniques and algorithms, Utilization rate of data-driven decisions in HR processes, and Accuracy of predictive models for workforce planning. User satisfaction with system performance and speed, Efficiency of recruiter workflows within the ATS, ATS compliance with data privacy regulations</p>	<p>Data Quality Score, Predictive Model Accuracy, System Uptime, Candidate Satisfaction Score</p>



**DATA ANALYSIS:**

*3.2.1 An overview of understanding the talent acquisition process within the IT organisation.*

This is to understand how the talent acquisition process is practised in IT organisations from Figure 2. The talent acquisition process starts by identifying hiring needs due to expansion, turnover, or new roles. Hiring managers note that while most companies follow similar processes, targeting candidates differs with AI, chatbots, and ATS, improving efficiency. Job openings are posted on various platforms, and resumes are reviewed to match job requirements. Metrics such as conversion rates and cost per applicant are monitored to optimise hiring. Shortlisted candidates undergo screening, interviews, and reference checks. Offers are extended, followed by onboarding. Companies increasingly shift from employer-centric to employee-centric approaches, updating TA practices and leveraging technology to stay competitive (Dye et al., 2020).

**Figure 2:** Talent Acquisition Process



Source: Author’s own

*Figure3: Word Cloud*



### **Top Challenges faced by Talent Acquisition Leaders:**

In today's competitive job market, talent acquisition leaders are vital in building a solid workforce, focusing on quality hires, employer branding, and diversity. According to a survey of 52 participants, 53% identified challenges in finding quality hires, 26% cited difficulties in retaining top talent, and 21% noted challenges in improving the candidate experience. Addressing these issues can help organisations strengthen their workforce and thrive in the current market, as shown in Graph 1.

### **Importance of Talent Acquisition Metrics:**

The study reveals differing views on the importance of Talent Acquisition (TA) metrics. While 35% of respondents rated TA metrics as "very important" for analysing the process, 15% found them "unimportant." One TA leader expressed concerns that metrics can add pressure and may not capture the full complexity. These insights suggest that organisations should focus on measuring TA metrics to improve their hiring processes effectively, as shown in Graph 2. **Error! Reference source not found.**

### **Challenges to measure metrics:**

The study identifies key challenges in measuring talent acquisition metrics. 51% cited limited data availability, 40% noted a lack of expertise, and 9% pointed to insufficient tools and technology. These issues highlight the need for organisations to recruit skilled personnel and improve infrastructure to enhance data-driven talent acquisition processes as shown Graph 3

### **Most valuable metrics measured in the hiring process.**

The study reveals diverse priorities in Talent Acquisition (TA) metrics. 34% prioritised the cost of hire for financial efficiency, while 30% emphasised the quality of employment for long-term success. Only 19% viewed time to hire as crucial for cost reduction and improved candidate experience, and 17% focused on the source of hire to identify effective sourcing channels Graph 4. From the discussions with the respondents, it was learned that Quality of Hire (QoH) metrics and their impact are essential in every organisation. Hence, our further discussion on the QoH metrics is comprehensive.

### **Impact of measuring QoH metric:**

The study highlights key factors for improving the Quality of Hire (QoH). 38% of respondents prioritise enhancing the talent pipeline, suggesting that organisations should build relationships with potential candidates. 25% emphasise improving recruitment strategies using data-driven methods to streamline processes and attract top talent. Employer brand development, noted by 23%, underscores the need for companies to showcase their culture and values to improve candidate perception. Lastly, 15% focus on data-driven decision-making, stressing the role of HR analytics in optimising talent acquisition in Graph 5. These factors indicate a holistic approach to enhancing QoH(Fang et al., 2016).

### **Features of Quality talents observed by respondents**

Surveys and interviews reveal that 49% of respondents identify quality talents primarily based on performance scores. Productivity Rate and Employee Engagement contribute 23% to assessing quality talents, while Employee Satisfaction plays a minor role, accounting for only 6%, as shown in Graph 6. The SHRM report and other studies suggest that TA leaders should also consider factors like hire cost, salary, culture fit, role suitability, experience, and tenure to improve the identification of quality talent (Dutta & Vedak, 2023; Shet & Nair, 2022).

### **Characteristics of QoH**

The pilot study shows that 34% of respondents use data analytics to enhance talent acquisition and retention, improving decision-making and fund allocation. 23% emphasise investing in technology to



streamline processes and boost efficiency. Additionally, 21% highlight the value of obtaining feedback from new hires within the first year to refine onboarding, address issues, and improve the overall employee experience. These practices can optimise talent acquisition metrics, attract and retain top talent, and contribute to long-term organisational success Graph 7.

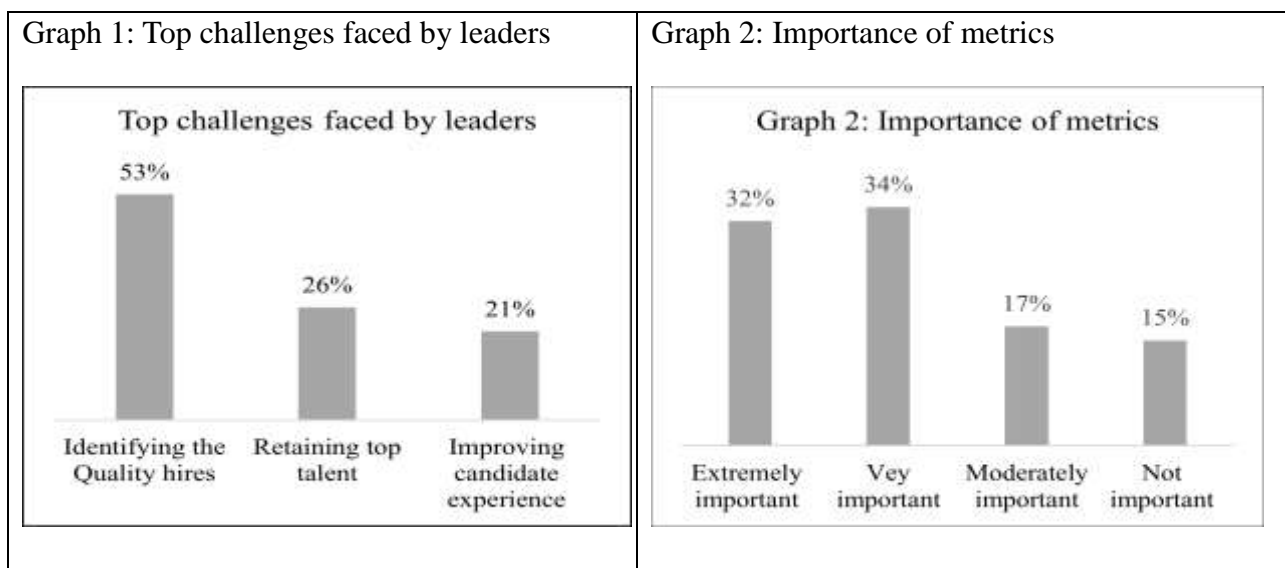
**Impact of Improving Quality of Hire**

Investing in high-quality candidates yields positive outcomes within the first year of employment. According to 38% of respondents, companies prioritising quality hires experience improved first-year performance and retention rates. They argue that well-matched candidates increase job satisfaction and engagement, reducing turnover. Additionally, 25% of respondents believe that measuring Quality of Hire (QoH) boosts first-year productivity, as quality hires need less onboarding time and contribute more effectively, as shown in Graph 8. High-quality employees are seen as motivated and capable, enhancing overall productivity within the first year (Dutta and Mishra, Sushanta Kumar, 2017; El- rayes et al., 2020).

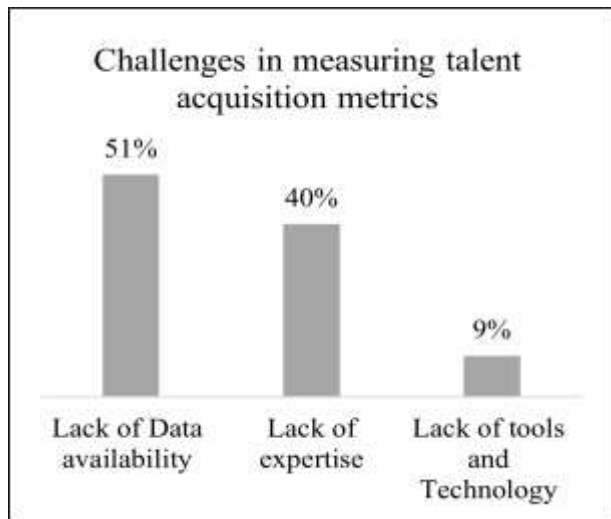
**Best practices of talent acquisition**

Every organisation follows experimentally proven work practices for better results. A few standard practices followed in the organisation are to Prioritize the requirements of the TA process, Implement application tracking software (ATS), Enhance best sourcing methods, Remote hiring ability, Engage candidates regularly, Provide good candidate experience, Develop a clear organisational vision to filter the suitable candidates, Build a social media recruiting strategy (LinkedIn ), Conduct an employee referral program, Provide an opportunity for internal mobility, Engage with passive candidates.

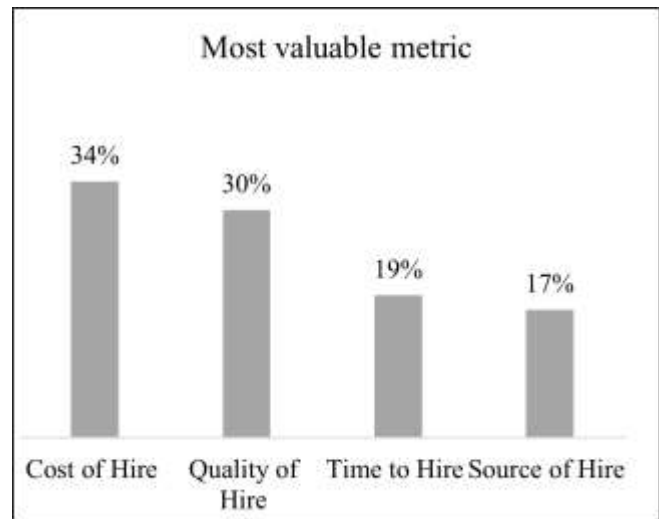
Below are the graphs referred to in the study



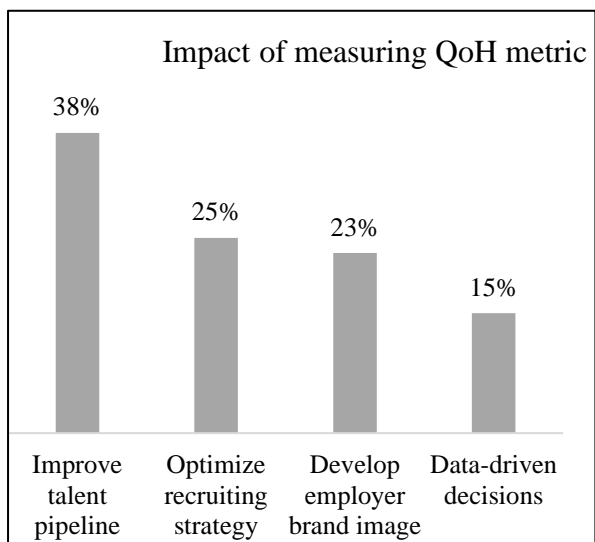
**Graph 3: Challenges to measure metrics**



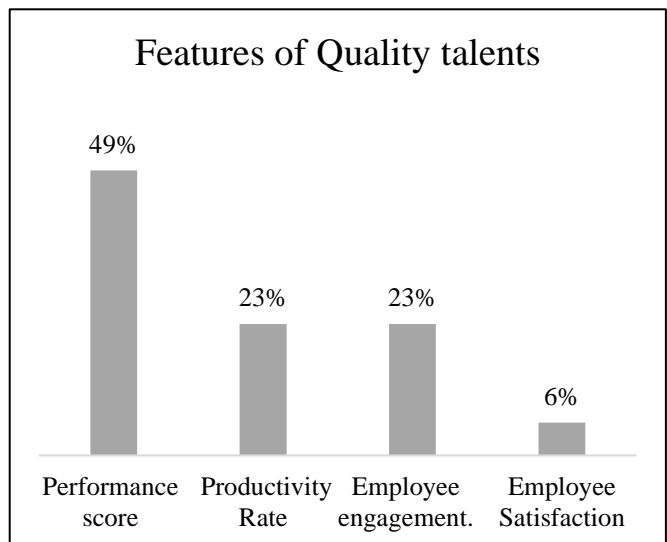
**Graph 4: Most Valuable metric**



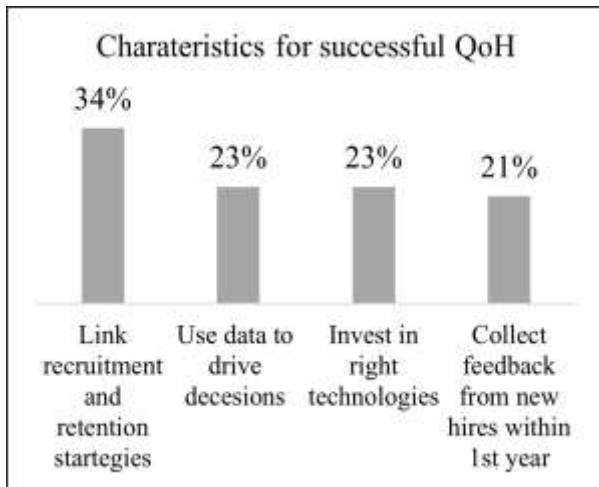
**Graph 5: Impact of measuring QoH metric**



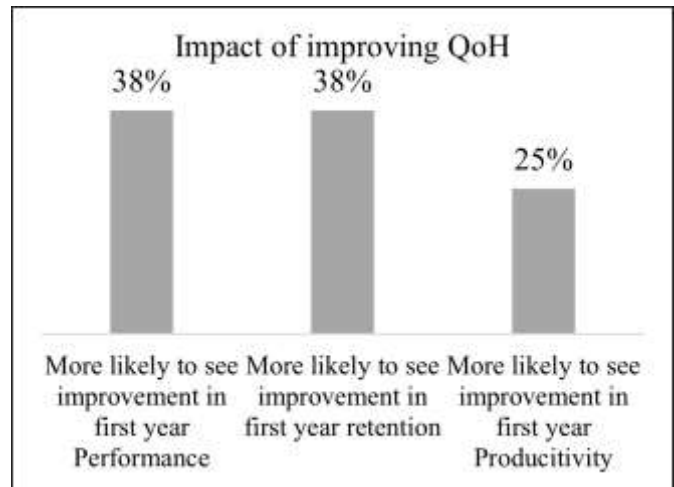
**Graph 6: Features of Quality talents**



**Graph 7: Characteristics of QoH**



**Graph 8: Impact of improving QoH**



**CONCLUSION:**

Employing talent acquisition metrics is essential for organisations to optimise their recruitment processes and ensure the strategic alignment of hiring practices with business objectives. By quantifying key performance indicators such as time-to-hire, cost-per-hire, source of hire and quality of hire, companies can identify inefficiencies, improve candidate experience, and enhance decision-making processes. The impact of these metrics extends beyond immediate hiring outcomes; they provide insights into the long-term success and retention of employees, enabling organisations to create a more capable and engaged workforce. Ultimately, a data-driven approach to talent acquisition facilitates organisations' adaptation to market changes, remaining competitive, and achieving sustainable growth.

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