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**ASSESSING THE LEGAL COMPLIANCE LITERACY
GAP IN SRI LANKAN IT PROFESSIONALS**

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This Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.
Degree of Master of Business Administration in Management of Technology.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work, and this thesis/dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any other University or Institute of higher learning, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgment is made in the text. I retain the right to use this content in whole or part in future works (such as articles or books).

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The above candidate has carried out research for the Master's Dissertation under my supervision. I confirm that the declaration made above by the student is true and correct.

Name of Supervisor: Mr. Shalika Siriwardhana

Signature of the Supervisor:

Date: 24.08.2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have supported and guided me throughout the course of this thesis.

First and foremost, I am deeply thankful to my supervisor, Mr. Shalika Siriwardhana, whose unwavering support, expert guidance, and insightful feedback were instrumental in shaping this work. Your encouragement and wisdom have been invaluable, and I am sincerely grateful for your dedication and patience throughout this journey.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my friends, for their continuous encouragement and for being a constant source of motivation and positivity. Your support has been a great comfort during the challenging moments of this research.

Finally, I am profoundly grateful to my family, for their unconditional love, understanding, and belief in me. Your unwavering support has been my greatest strength, and I could not have completed this thesis without you.

Thank you all for your contributions and for being there every step of the way. Your support has been the foundation upon which this work was built.

ABSTRACT

In the rapidly changing digital landscape, legal compliance has become an essential skill for Information Technology (IT) professionals, especially in developing economies like Sri Lanka. This thesis explores the legal compliance literacy of IT professionals in Sri Lanka, focusing on their knowledge and application of laws concerning data protection, intellectual property, and cybersecurity. The research uncovers a notable gap between the increasing need for legal adherence in the IT sector and the current level of legal awareness among professionals.

Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative survey data with qualitative insights from interviews to evaluate the state of legal compliance literacy. The results show that factors such as educational background, work experience, access to legal resources, and participation in specialized training programs play a significant role in shaping legal compliance literacy. The analysis indicates that while awareness of legal standards is growing, the practical implementation of these standards remains a challenge, particularly as technological advancements often outpace the development of corresponding legal frameworks.

This thesis emphasizes the urgent need for strategic actions to improve legal compliance literacy among IT professionals in Sri Lanka. Recommendations include enhancing access to comprehensive legal resources, instituting mandatory and role-specific training programs, and incorporating legal education into IT curricula. These initiatives are vital for developing a more legally informed and ethically responsible IT workforce, which is crucial for minimizing legal risks and promoting the sustainable growth of Sri Lanka's IT industry.

Key Words; Legal compliance, Information Technology (IT) Professionals, Data Protection, Legal Frameworks, Ethically Responsible

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
IV1	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
IV2	WORKING EXPERIENCE
IV3	TRAINING IN LEGAL COMPLIANCE
IV4	AVAILABILITY OF LRGAL RESOURCES
DV	LEGAL COMPLIANCE LITERACY

CHAPTER 01: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In the digital age, information technology (IT) is foundational to modern society, impacting almost every aspect of daily life. IT professionals are essential for managing, developing, and securing digital infrastructure. However, as reliance on digital systems grows, there is an increasing need to ensure that technology development and usage comply with legal regulations and ethical standards (Ranasinghe & Perera, 2023).

Legal compliance in IT requires understanding and following laws and regulations related to data protection, intellectual property, cybersecurity, and other relevant areas. In many countries, including Sri Lanka, the fast pace of technological advancement has outstripped the development of corresponding legal frameworks, creating challenges in ensuring compliance. IT professionals, in particular, must navigate this complex and ever-changing legal landscape to ensure that their work does not unintentionally breach laws or ethical standards (Fenwick, et al., 2017).

Despite the critical importance of legal compliance, there is evidence of a significant knowledge gap among IT professionals in understanding and applying legal principles in their work. A study by (Nagahawatta, et al., 2020) highlights that many IT professionals are insufficiently trained in legal and regulatory compliance, which can lead to potential risks for organizations. In Sri Lanka, this gap may be further widened due to specific challenges faced by the local IT industry, such as limited access to specialized legal education and resources, as well as the country's unique regulatory environment.

Moreover, the global nature of the IT industry means that Sri Lankan professionals frequently work with international clients and systems, necessitating an understanding and adherence to foreign laws and regulations (Ariyadasa, 2019). This adds another layer of complexity, as professionals must navigate both local and international legal standards. The repercussions of non-compliance can be severe, including financial penalties, legal action, and damage to both professional reputation and organizational trust.

Therefore, it is essential to assess and address the legal compliance literacy gap among Sri Lankan IT professionals to elevate the industry's overall legal and ethical standards. This research aims to explore the scope of this literacy gap, identify the contributing factors, and propose strategies to enhance legal compliance education and awareness among IT professionals in Sri Lanka.

1.2. Research Problem Identification and Question

As per (Ranasinghe & Perera, 2023), the Sri Lankan IT industry has seen substantial growth due to a skilled workforce and favorable business conditions. However, this expansion has heightened scrutiny and expectations for legal compliance, especially as local firms enter international markets. Adhering to legal standards is essential for avoiding penalties, ensuring ethical practices, protecting customer data, and maintaining a trustworthy business environment. Despite this, there are concerns that many IT professionals in Sri Lanka may lack adequate legal compliance literacy, which could have serious repercussions for both individuals and their organizations.

This legal compliance literacy gap among IT professionals may stem from several factors. One key factor is the educational background of IT professionals. IT curricula in Sri Lanka, as in many other countries, may focus heavily on technical skills, with insufficient emphasis on the legal aspects of technology (Nagahawatta, et al., 2020). As a result, IT professionals may enter the workforce without a strong foundation in legal compliance, and opportunities for ongoing professional development in this area may be limited.

Additionally, the rapid evolution of legal and technological standards presents a significant challenge. Laws governing IT practices, especially in areas such as data protection and cybersecurity, are changing quickly. Keeping up with these developments necessitates ongoing learning and access to resources that may not be available to all IT professionals. Smaller companies, in particular, may lack the resources or training programs needed to support their employees in staying informed about these complex issues, leaving professionals to manage these challenges independently (Ariyadasa, 2019).

The implications of this compliance literacy gap are substantial. For IT professionals, insufficient legal knowledge can lead to unintentional violations, legal liabilities, and damage to their reputation, which may hinder career progression. For organizations, the risks are even greater.

Non-compliance can lead to financial penalties, legal disputes, and a loss of customer trust, all of which can significantly affect business operations and long-term success.

On a broader scale, a widespread gap in legal compliance literacy within the IT sector could compromise the industry's overall integrity and growth potential in Sri Lanka (Nagahawatta, et al., 2020). As the country seeks to establish itself as a leading IT services provider, it is crucial to ensure that its workforce is both legally compliant and ethically sound. Neglecting this issue could undermine international client and partner trust, potentially impeding the sector's growth and reducing Sri Lanka's competitiveness in the global market.

Therefore, this study mainly questions the following aspects.

- What is the current level of legal compliance literacy among IT professionals in Sri Lanka?
- What are the primary factors contributing to the gap in legal compliance literacy?
- How does the legal compliance literacy gap impact the IT sector's growth and legal risk exposure in Sri Lanka?
- What strategies can be implemented to improve legal compliance literacy among Sri Lankan IT professionals?

By examining this issue, the research aims to shed light on the compliance literacy gap and provide recommendations to improve legal education and awareness within the IT sector. This will help develop a more legally knowledgeable and compliant IT workforce in Sri Lanka, thereby supporting the sector's sustainable growth and enhancing its global competitiveness.

1.3.Objectives of the study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the legal compliance literacy gap among IT practitioners in Sri Lanka. To achieve this, the research is guided by the following specific objectives:

- Assessing the current state of legal compliance literacy among IT personnel.

This objective aims to assess the legal knowledge and understanding of IT professionals in Sri Lanka, focusing on their awareness of legal standards, regulations, and practices, especially in data protection and cybersecurity. It seeks to identify both strengths and gaps in their compliance literacy.

- Identifying the primary factors driving the legal compliance literacy gap.

The second objective aims to identify the main factors contributing to the current compliance literacy gap. This involves examining educational backgrounds, training opportunities, and resources available to IT professionals, as well as exploring how rapid legal and technological changes affect compliance. Additionally, it considers the challenges faced by smaller organizations in offering sufficient legal training and support.

- Providing recommendations to address and fill the gap.

The objective aims to propose actionable strategies and interventions to boost legal compliance literacy among IT professionals in Sri Lanka. This includes recommending enhancements to educational curricula, creating specialized training programs, and advising organizations on how to better support their employees in keeping up with legal requirements.

By addressing these objectives, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the legal compliance literacy landscape and offer solutions to strengthen compliance practices within the Sri Lankan IT industry.

1.4. Significance of the study

The study addresses a vital concern in the Information Technology (IT) sector, where legal compliance is becoming as essential as technical skills. This research offers substantial value to a diverse group of stakeholders, such as IT professionals, organizations, policymakers, and academic institutions. It plays a key role in improving professional standards, mitigating legal risks, and broadening the understanding of the relationship between IT and legal regulations (Ariyadasa, 2019).

Legal compliance is a critical aspect of professional competency in the IT sector. Studies enumerate that IT professionals frequently lack sufficient training in key legal areas, including data protection, intellectual property rights, and cybersecurity (Nagahawatta, et al., 2020). By assessing the extent of this gap in Sri Lanka, the study offers empirical evidence that can guide the development of targeted educational programs and training modules. These initiatives aim to enhance the legal literacy of IT professionals, better equipping them to navigate the legal challenges in their field (Ranasinghe & Perera, 2023). In an increasingly globalized economy, where legal compliance serves not only as a local requirement but also as a competitive advantage, this is particularly important.

Organizations within the IT sector face growing legal risks due to an increasingly complex regulatory environment. Research demonstrates that failure to comply with legal standards can lead to substantial financial losses, damage to reputation, and operational disruptions (Fenwick, et al., 2017). This study's findings can assist organizations in Sri Lanka in evaluating the legal literacy of their employees, enabling the development of more effective risk management strategies. Empirical evidence suggests that companies with higher levels of legal literacy among their workforce are more successful in mitigating risks associated with data breaches and intellectual property violations (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the insights gained from this study can play a crucial role in bolstering internal compliance mechanisms, ultimately reducing organizations' exposure to legal risks.

This research holds important implications for policymakers and regulatory bodies in Sri Lanka. The existing literature underscores the necessity for legal frameworks that are not only robust but also easily understandable by those who need to adhere to them (Nagahawatta, et al., 2020). The empirical data collected in this study can provide valuable insights to policymakers regarding the current level of legal literacy within the IT sector, aiding in the development of policies aimed at bridging these gaps. For example, the study may highlight the need for more comprehensive legal education within technical degree programs or ongoing professional development courses. Such policy interventions are crucial for ensuring that the IT workforce is not only technically proficient but also well-versed in legal matters, thus promoting a culture of compliance within the industry (Fenwick, et al., 2017).

Although there is substantial research on the technical skills needed in the IT industry, the intersection of legal knowledge and IT practices is still relatively underexplored, especially in the context of emerging economies like Sri Lanka (Ranasinghe & Perera, 2023). This study helps to address this gap by offering empirical data on the legal compliance literacy of IT professionals in Sri Lanka. The findings can lay the groundwork for future research, inspiring further studies on the impact of legal literacy across different sectors and regions.

Legal compliance is intrinsically linked to ethical business practices. As (Fenwick, et al., 2017). highlights, legal literacy plays a crucial role in cultivating an ethical culture within the IT sector. Professionals who are not only aware of legal requirements but also understand their ethical ramifications are better equipped to make sound decisions. Empirical research supports this view, demonstrating a positive correlation between legal literacy and ethical decision-making, which contributes to sustainable business practices (Creswell, 2014). The study advocates for a more integrated approach to legal and ethical education in the IT industry, aiming to foster responsible practices that benefit both the sector and society at large.

Moreover, legal compliance literacy serves multiple purposes, aiding in risk management, promoting ethical standards, and unlocking Sri Lanka's potential to become a leading IT hub. This research ultimately seeks to drive societal change through digital transformation, demonstrating that Sri Lanka can uphold high legal standards while fostering innovation (Ranasinghe & Perera, 2023).

1.5.Limitations of the study

This study explores an essential aspect of the IT industry—legal compliance literacy. However, like any research, it has several limitations that must be acknowledged. A significant limitation is the potential lack of sample size and diversity, which may not accurately reflect the broader IT professional population in Sri Lanka. This raises concerns about generalizability, as results from a non-representative sample may not extend to the entire IT community (Creswell, 2014). For example, a sample skewed towards urban IT professionals might overlook the challenges faced by those in rural areas or smaller companies.

Another limitation of the study is its specific focus on Sri Lanka, where the unique legal framework, cultural context, and industry practices may not translate directly to other regions. This limits the broader applicability of the findings (Nagahawatta, et al., 2020), highlighting the need for similar research in different cultural and legal contexts for better comparative analysis.

Moreover, if the study predominantly used self-reported data from surveys or interviews, there's a risk of response bias, where participants might portray themselves more favorably or lack self-awareness about their true level of legal literacy. This can result in data inaccuracies and potentially skew the study's findings (Bamberger & Mulligan, 2015). For example, IT professionals may overestimate their legal knowledge, leading to an underestimation of the actual literacy gap.

The study's scope of legal literacy could be a limitation. If it concentrated on specific legal compliance areas relevant to the IT industry, it might have missed other important legal domains, leading to a partial assessment of the legal knowledge required in the field (Bamberger & Mulligan, 2015). Additionally, the evolving nature of legal regulations and ethical standards in IT presents another challenge. Legal issues relevant today might change quickly due to new laws or technological advances, making the study's findings potentially time-sensitive (Fenwick, et al., 2017). Therefore, examining these limitations is essential to navigate research boundaries and apply its insights judiciously within a specific context.

1.6.Chapter Outline

The preceding chapter provided a brief introduction and background on assessing the Legal Compliance Literacy Gap among IT professionals in Sri Lanka. The rest of this research is structured as follows. Chapter 2 explores both the theoretical and empirical aspects of the Legal Compliance Literacy Gap in Sri Lankan IT professionals, beginning with a discussion of the theoretical background, followed by an in-depth empirical analysis. Chapter 3 covers the data, including its validity and reliability, and outlines the conceptual framework, model, and hypothesis development. Chapter 4 is devoted to analyzing the results and discussing the findings. Finally, Chapter 5 offers the study's conclusions and recommendations, providing a concise summary of the efforts made to assess the legal compliance literacy gap among Sri Lankan IT professionals.

CHAPTER 02 - CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

As the information technology (IT) sector continues to evolve rapidly, the integration of ethical considerations into legal compliance practices has become increasingly vital. The swift pace of technological advancements often surpasses the capacity of regulatory frameworks to keep up, creating significant challenges for IT professionals and organizations in ensuring that their activities are both legally compliant and ethically sound. This chapter explores the theoretical and empirical foundations that inform our understanding of the interplay between legal compliance and ethical governance within the IT industry. By examining ethical frameworks and governance models, along with reviewing pertinent empirical studies, this chapter seeks to provide a thorough understanding of how IT professionals can effectively navigate the complex legal and ethical landscape. The insights derived from this analysis are essential for addressing gaps in legal compliance literacy, particularly in the context of Sri Lanka's growing IT sector, and for promoting practices that adhere to both legal obligations and ethical principles.

2.2. Theoretical Background

In the fast-paced world of information technology, integrating ethical considerations into legal compliance practices has become increasingly crucial. As technology advances more rapidly than regulatory frameworks can adapt, IT professionals and organizations face significant challenges in ensuring that their activities are both legally compliant and ethically sound. This section explores the theoretical foundations of ethical frameworks and governance models that shape IT practices. By examining these theoretical perspectives, this section seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how ethical principles can be woven into governance and decision-making processes within the IT sector, ensuring that technological developments benefit society while protecting the rights and interests of all stakeholders.

2.2.1. Ethical Dimensions of Legal Compliance Framework

(Himma & Tavani, 2008) have developed a critical ethical framework that is highly applicable to understanding the ethical considerations related to adopting legal compliance practices in the IT industry. Their contributions are especially pertinent to IT, as they highlight the importance of moral responsibility and accountability in technological environments, where the swift pace of innovation frequently surpasses the creation of adequate regulatory frameworks (Himma & Tavani, 2008).

This framework asserts that IT professionals and organizations must go beyond merely adhering to legal requirements and consider the broader ethical implications of their actions. While legal compliance is essential, it is not enough; organizations should be guided by ethical principles to ensure their operations positively impact society and avoid harm to stakeholders.

(Himma & Tavani, 2008) highlight the protection of user privacy and data security as a key ethical concern in IT, which aligns with legal frameworks like Europe's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) or the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the U.S. However, they argue that ethical responsibilities should surpass compliance, advocating for proactive measures to safeguard user data, even when not legally required.

This framework also emphasizes the significance of governance models in promoting ethical conduct within IT practices. They suggest that organizations should implement governance frameworks that integrate ethical oversight and decision-making processes. These models should be crafted to prevent harm, ensure fairness, and promote transparency in the application of technology. By embedding ethical considerations into their governance structures, organizations can more effectively navigate the challenges of legal compliance while maintaining elevated ethical standards.

Moreover, (Tavani, 2013) offers key foundational insights that reinforce the argument that IT professionals and organizations should transcend mere legal compliance and integrate ethical considerations into their practices and governance frameworks.

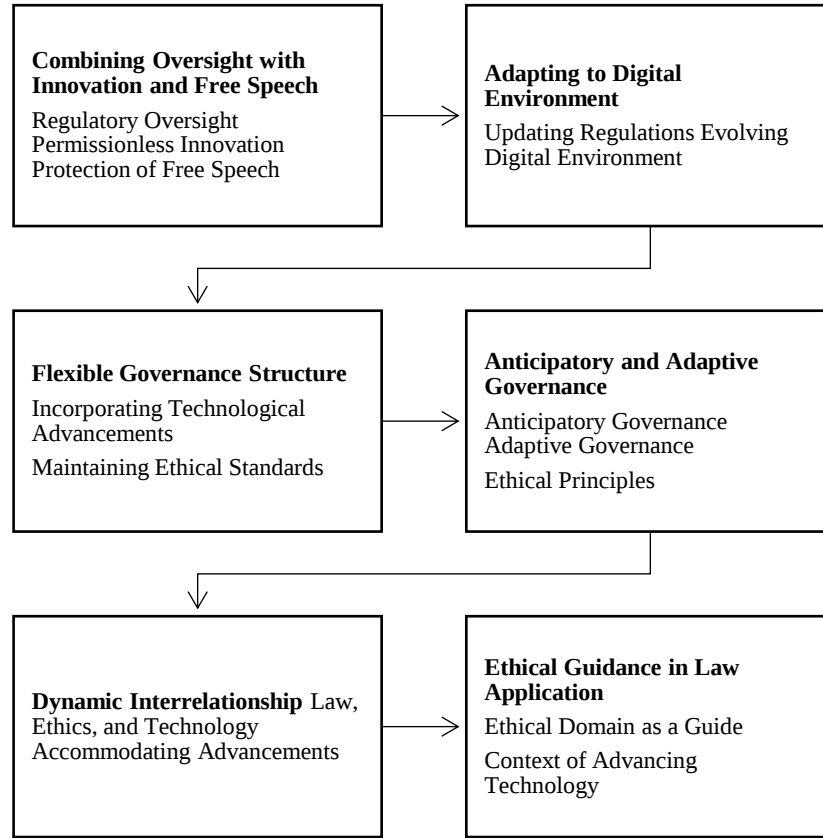
(Tavani, 2013) 's work offers a strong foundation for understanding the ethical responsibilities of IT professionals and the importance of governance models that go beyond legal compliance. He explores ethical theories like utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics, highlighting the need for ethical decision-making that considers stakeholder well-being. Tavani argues that while laws like GDPR and CCPA provide a baseline, ethical computing demands proactive protection of user privacy. He also underscores the need for governance models with ethical oversight to ensure technology is used fairly and responsibly, preventing harm and promoting fairness.

2.2.2. Governance Model for Online Intermediaries

The governance model developed by (Gasser & Schulz, 2015) aims to navigate the intricate regulatory landscape that digital platforms, functioning as intermediaries in online interactions, must operate within. This model's primary goal is to establish a framework capable of effectively addressing the numerous challenges these platforms encounter, such as those related to privacy, data security, and content regulation.

This governance model emphasizes several key aspects essential for effectively managing the regulatory challenges of digital platforms. First, the model stresses the importance of regulatory flexibility, recognizing the rapid evolution of digital platforms and advocating for governance frameworks that can adapt to technological advancements, ensuring that regulations remain relevant and effective over time. Additionally, the model underscores the need for transparency and accountability in the operations of online intermediaries, proposing mechanisms that hold platforms accountable to both users and the broader public, particularly in areas such as content moderation and data handling. The model also supports the principle of proportionality, arguing that regulatory interventions should be aligned with the potential risks or harms associated with an intermediary's activities, thereby avoiding overly burdensome regulations that could hinder innovation. Finally, the model highlights the importance of inclusivity, advocating for the involvement of diverse stakeholders in the regulatory process to create a balanced approach that considers the interests of all parties affected by the operations of online intermediaries (Gasser & Schulz, 2015).

Figure 1: Governance Model for Online Intermediaries



Source: Author Compiled

2.3. Empirical Background

To understand the legal compliance literacy of IT professionals, it is essential to examine empirical studies that shed light on the current level of knowledge in this area, as well as identify existing gaps. The following studies offer valuable insights into the significance of legal literacy within the IT sector and the various factors that influence it.

2.3.1 Legal Compliance Literacy in the Global IT Sector

Legal compliance literacy encompasses the knowledge and understanding IT professionals possess regarding the legal requirements pertinent to their work, such as data protection laws, intellectual property rights, and cybersecurity regulations. Studies from different regions have identified significant gaps in this area. For example, (Gupta & Dihillion, 2019) discovered that only 45% of IT professionals in India fully understood their legal obligations under the Information Technology

Act of 2000. This finding underscores the necessity for ongoing legal education and awareness programs within the IT sector to close this knowledge gap.

Similarly, research by (Wong, et al., 2020) in Malaysia revealed a link between an organization's size and the level of legal compliance literacy among IT professionals. It was found that larger organizations with greater resources provided better access to legal training, leading to higher compliance literacy among their employees. This study highlights the critical role of organizational support in promoting legal awareness and compliance.

2.3.2 Legal Compliance Literacy in the Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's IT industry has been rapidly expanding, playing a significant role in the national economy. However, there has been limited research into the legal compliance literacy of IT professionals within this context. (Nagahawatta, et al., 2020) conducted one of the few studies in this field, surveying IT professionals to evaluate their understanding of local cybersecurity laws. The findings revealed that while 60% of professionals were aware of the legal requirements, only 30% could confidently apply this knowledge in their work. The results showed that while the majority were aware of these laws, only a small percentage could effectively apply this knowledge in their work. This indicates a gap between awareness and practical application, emphasizing the need for more targeted and practical training programs (Nagahawatta, et al., 2020).

2.3.3. International Perspectives and Their Relevance to Sri Lanka

Given the global nature of IT operations, it is crucial to incorporate international perspectives when assessing legal compliance literacy in Sri Lanka. Research by (Fenwick, et al., 2017) on global cybersecurity indices provides a comparative analysis of how various countries approach cybersecurity and legal compliance. Their findings can serve as a benchmark for Sri Lanka, offering insights into best practices that could be adapted locally.

Furthermore, the work (Nagahawatta, et al., 2020) highlights the importance of learning from international experiences to enhance local strategies. They argue that integrating global perspectives into Sri Lanka's cybersecurity strategy is essential for addressing the country's unique challenges effectively.

2.3.4. Factors Influencing Legal Compliance Literacy

Smith and Tan (2018) explored the role of education and professional development in enhancing legal literacy among IT professionals. Their research indicated that professionals with formal education in IT law or those who had attended specialized legal training were more likely to have a higher level of legal compliance literacy. The study suggests that incorporating legal education into IT curricula could significantly improve compliance literacy in the sector (Smith & Tan, 2018).

Furthermore, Ahmed et al. (2022) conducted research on IT professionals in the Middle East, emphasizing the impact of continuous professional development on legal compliance literacy. They found that ongoing training and updates on legal changes were essential for maintaining high levels of compliance literacy. Additionally, the study noted that IT professionals who regularly participated in training sessions were more confident in navigating legal challenges in their work (Ahmed et al., 2022).

2.3.5. Implications for the Sri Lanka IT Industry

As Sri Lanka's IT sector continues to grow, the importance of legal compliance literacy and ethical considerations becomes more pronounced. The following key areas highlight the essential steps and considerations needed to ensure that the sector's development is aligned with both legal and ethical standards.

-Proactive Legal and Educational Initiatives

In response to the rapidly evolving digital landscape, Sri Lanka must take proactive steps to address the ethical and governance challenges within the IT sector. Developing initiatives that educate IT professionals on these challenges is crucial. These initiatives should extend beyond legal aspects to include a strong ethical component. This dual focus will better prepare IT professionals to navigate the complex issues that emerge in the digital world, enhancing their compliance with existing laws while empowering them to anticipate and address future ethical dilemmas.

-Legal Compliance Consciousness

A thorough understanding of legal requirements is vital for IT professionals. However, it is equally important to cultivate awareness of the ethical implications of IT practices. Legal compliance should not be viewed in isolation but rather integrated with ethical considerations to form a holistic approach to IT governance. By promoting a legal compliance consciousness that includes ethical implications, IT professionals can ensure that their practices align with both the letter and the spirit of the law.

-Culture of Ethical Compliance

Establishing a culture of ethical compliance within the IT sector is essential for fostering innovation while adhering to ethical principles. Ethical compliance should be regarded as a cornerstone of professional practice in the IT industry. By embedding ethical values into the core of organizational culture, IT companies in Sri Lanka can enhance their reputation, attract more business, and promote innovation that is both responsible and sustainable. A culture of ethical compliance also ensures that IT professionals remain vigilant and committed to upholding high standards of conduct in their work.

-Ethical Deliberations in Decision-Making

Integrating ethical deliberations into decision-making processes is crucial for ensuring that IT practices are both legally and ethically sound. Scholars like Himma and Tavani, as well as Gasser and Schulz, emphasize the importance of considering ethical implications in all aspects of IT decision-making. By adopting these theoretical insights, Sri Lankan IT professionals can make more informed decisions that take into account the broader impact of their actions on society and the environment.

-Broader Influential Culture

Incorporating ethical deliberations into the broader culture of the IT sector can significantly enhance legal compliance literacy among professionals. A culture that values ethical considerations naturally leads to a deeper understanding of the legal frameworks governing IT practices. This, in turn, helps IT professionals in Sri Lanka not only comply with existing laws but

also contribute to the development of more effective and comprehensive legal standards in the future.

-First Step Towards an Informed IT System

Implementing these theoretical insights and practical measures is crucial for creating an IT system in Sri Lanka that is both ethically and legally informed. Taking these steps allows the IT sector to build a foundation that supports responsible innovation and growth. An informed IT system balances the demands of technological advancement with the need for ethical and legal oversight.

-Growth and Sustainability

Ultimately, an ethically and legally informed IT system is key to driving growth and sustainability in the digital world. As Sri Lanka's IT sector continues to expand, ensuring that this growth is grounded in strong ethical and legal principles will be critical for long-term success. By prioritizing these values, the IT sector in Sri Lanka can achieve sustainable growth that benefits not only the industry but also the wider society.

2.4. Addressing the Gaps and Moving Forward

While the legal compliance of the IT industry has been extensively studied in the literature, application-oriented research remains an underdeveloped area, particularly in emerging economies like Sri Lanka. Current discourse highlights the urgent need for research-based studies in this field, which would not only provide a clear understanding of the current state of legal literacy but also allow for a deeper exploration of the effectiveness and outcomes of existing strategies (Ali Sabry, 2021; Rajapaksha, Guruge, & Yasakethu, 2023). This identified gap underscores the necessity for further research that extends beyond theoretical frameworks to include practical applications, where the impact of legal literacy improvement strategies can be evaluated in real-world settings to determine whether these strategies truly enhance the competencies of IT professionals in practice (Rotimi, 2023; Ana, 2021).

Prominent scholars such as Ali Sabry (2021) and Rajapaksha, Guruge, and Yasakethu (2023) advocate for a multidisciplinary approach to addressing these challenges, aligning with other authorities in the field (Rotimi, 2023; Ana, 2021). They emphasize the need for a combined

approach that integrates legal statutes, technological goals, and the impartation of legal knowledge through the training of IT personnel who are equipped to manage the complexities of digital governance. This holistic perspective is essential for developing a comprehensive system that not only captures but also disseminates legal literacy in the complex realm of digital technology.

To advance and ensure heightened compliance within Sri Lanka's IT sector, an integrated approach is essential. This approach involves the incorporation of international insights and best practices, the conduction of original empirical research to address existing knowledge gaps, and the use of interdisciplinary methods resulting from the fusion of legal expertise and technological acumen. Such a comprehensive approach is critical for equipping IT professionals in Sri Lanka with the skills needed to navigate the ever-evolving legal landscape of the digital era. It also fosters the development of a strong, innovative, and ethically grounded IT sector, positioning Sri Lanka for success in the global digital economy.

2.5. Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this chapter has thoroughly examined the theoretical and empirical foundations necessary to understand the interplay between legal compliance and ethical considerations in the IT sector. The analysis of ethical dimensions within legal compliance frameworks and governance models highlights the essential role that both legal and ethical oversight play in promoting responsible IT practices. The reviewed empirical studies reveal significant gaps in legal compliance literacy among IT professionals, particularly within the Sri Lankan context. As Sri Lanka's IT sector continues to expand, it is imperative to address these gaps through proactive legal and educational initiatives, the cultivation of a culture of ethical compliance, and the integration of ethical considerations into decision-making processes. These efforts will not only strengthen legal compliance but also support the sustainable growth of the IT industry, ensuring that technological advancements benefit society while protecting the interests of all stakeholders.

CHAPTER 03 - METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The methodology chapter of this thesis outlines the research design and methodological approach adopted to assess the legal compliance literacy gap among IT professionals in Sri Lanka. Given the complex nature of legal compliance within the rapidly evolving IT industry, this chapter presents a structured framework for understanding how data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted to address the research objectives.

This chapter starts by outlining the mixed-methods approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative data to thoroughly examine the legal compliance literacy gap. The rationale for choosing this approach is provided, along with an explanation of how various data types will be integrated throughout the study. The chapter then details the specific data collection methods utilized in this research. These include quantitative methods, such as surveys aimed at assessing the knowledge and practices of IT professionals, and qualitative methods, such as interviews, case studies, and focus groups, which offer deeper insights into the contextual factors affecting legal compliance literacy. Additionally, the chapter discusses the sampling techniques used to ensure that the data collected accurately represents the broader population of Sri Lankan IT professionals, while also allowing for detailed exploration of cases. The methods of data analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, are also outlined, with an emphasis on how these methods will be used to identify patterns, relationships, and key themes. Lastly, the chapter addresses the ethical considerations that are fundamental to this research, ensuring that the study is carried out with integrity and respect for all participants. This section underscores the importance of informed consent, confidentiality, and adherence to ethical guidelines, all of which are vital for maintaining the research's credibility and trustworthiness.

In summary, this chapter provides a comprehensive plan for conducting the research, ensuring that the chosen methods are aligned with the study's objectives and are capable of yielding reliable and valid results.

3.2. Research Design

The study's objective is to assess the legal compliance literacy gap in Sri Lankan IT Professionals. The research design refers to the structured plan of a study that systematically integrates its different elements. This design is crafted to tackle the research problem and direct the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. Onion's research, referenced by (Sidali, et al., 2007), categorized the research design into six distinct categories namely, research philosophy, research approach, research method, research strategy, time horizon, techniques, and procedures.

3.2.1. Research Philosophy

Research philosophy provides the foundational framework for understanding the origins, nature, and progression of knowledge, shaping how we acquire, evaluate, and apply information about a given phenomenon. As described by (Collis & Hussey, 2014), positivism, a philosophy common in natural sciences, focuses on scientific hypothesis testing and uncovering logical or mathematical evidence through statistical analysis. Positivists aim to produce precise, objective, and quantitative data, often using large sample sizes. Therefore, this study will adopt a positivist approach, utilizing questionnaires and rigorous data analysis to ensure a scientifically sound evaluation (See appendix for more details).

3.2.2. Research Approach

When deciding on a research approach for a mixed-methods study, it is crucial to consider options, limitations, and goals. Mixed methods research integrates both inductive and deductive approaches. The inductive approach involves observing and analyzing situations to develop a theory, while the deductive method starts with a theory and tests it through hypothesis-driven data collection. Combining these methodologies allows for a comprehensive understanding by leveraging both qualitative insights and quantitative evidence, ensuring a well-rounded analysis that addresses the research objectives.

The decision to utilize a mixed-methods approach is driven by the need to thoroughly explore the complex nature of legal compliance literacy. This complexity encompasses both quantifiable knowledge and practices (quantitative data) as well as the attitudes, experiences, and contextual influences (qualitative data) that shape these practices. By integrating these data types, the research seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the literacy

gap and to propose more effective interventions (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This approach ensures that the study captures the richness of the subject matter, aligning with best practices in mixed-methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

3.2.3. Research Method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to assess the legal compliance literacy gap among Sri Lankan IT professionals. The primary data collection tools include a carefully designed questionnaire to gather quantifiable numerical data and semi-structured interviews to capture qualitative insights. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Quantitative data will be analyzed statistically, while qualitative data will be thematically analyzed, ensuring a robust examination of the research objectives. Hence, the chosen method for this inquiry is a mixed-method approach, leveraging the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

Moreover, this study benefits from a mixed-methods design, which facilitates an in-depth examination of both quantitative and qualitative data, offering a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the issue at hand.

3.2.4. Time Horizon

In this study, data is gathered at a specific point in time through questionnaires, enabling the efficient collection of a significant volume of information. The analysis incorporates a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to comprehensively examine the data within that particular time frame, in line with the principles outlined by (Flick, 2011).

3.2.5. Techniques and Procedures

Considering the study's objectives and features, primary data was collected from Sri Lankan IT professionals through electronic questionnaires distributed via Google Forms across various digital platforms. Additionally, secondary data was analyzed to assess existing legal compliance frameworks and identify literacy gaps, thereby supporting a comprehensive mixed-methods analysis of the legal compliance literacy levels within the IT sector.

3.2.6. Target Population and Sample Selection

The exploration of legal compliance literacy within Sri Lankan IT professionals represents a crucial area of investigation in both academic and professional contexts, with significant implications for improving regulatory adherence and ethical practices in the industry. As the demand for IT professionals to meet stringent legal and compliance standards grows, it becomes increasingly important to understand the factors influencing their literacy levels. Consequently, a key area of focus in this study is defining the target population—Sri Lankan IT professionals—and developing robust strategies for sample selection to effectively assess the legal compliance literacy gap within this group.

3.2.6.1. Target Population

The target population for this research on assessing the legal compliance literacy gap focuses on Sri Lankan IT professionals working across various sectors and organizational settings. This includes IT managers, software developers, network administrators, and compliance officers who are responsible for ensuring adherence to legal and regulatory standards. Understanding the perspectives and real-world experiences of these professionals is crucial for identifying the knowledge gaps, challenges, and opportunities related to legal compliance literacy within the IT industry in Sri Lanka.

3.2.6.2. Sample Selection

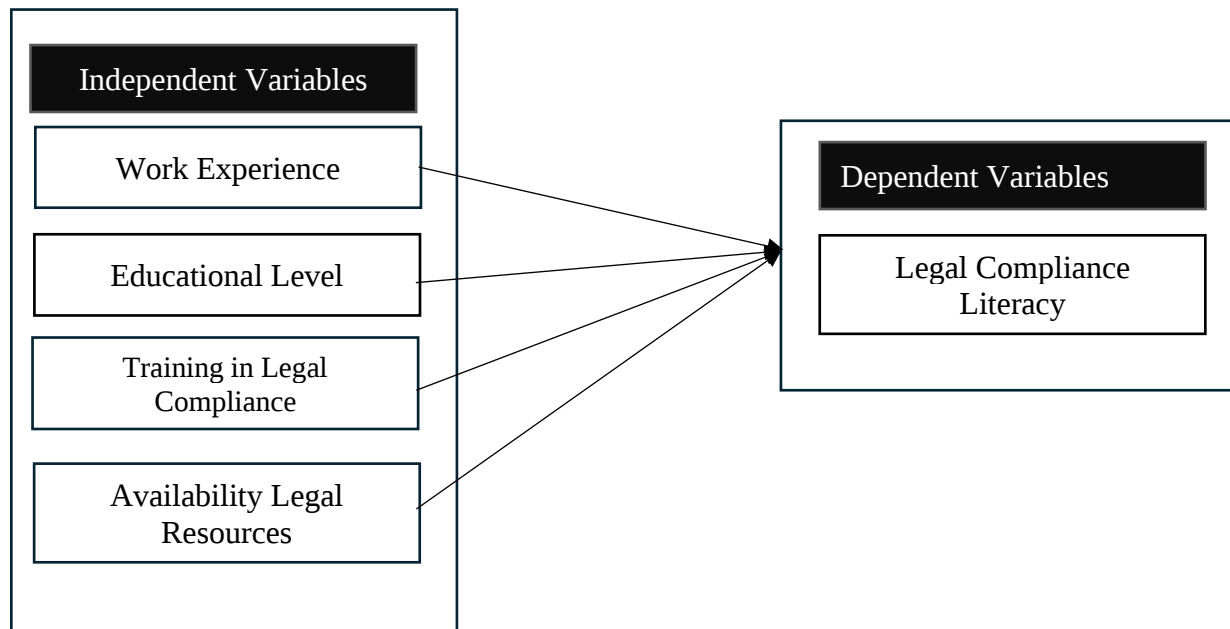
To ensure the validity and relevance of findings in the research on assessing the legal compliance literacy gap among Sri Lankan IT professionals, careful consideration was given to sample selection. This study involved 150 IT professionals aged 25 years and older, selected from an estimated total IT workforce of 150,000, as reported by SLASSCOM. A convenience sampling method was employed to gather perspectives from professionals across various roles and organizational levels, thereby capturing a wide range of viewpoints and experiences related to legal compliance literacy.

3.3. Research Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model for this research was developed based on a quantitative approach, utilizing three independent variables: work experience, educational level, training in legal compliance, and

availability of legal resources. These variables are hypothesized to influence the dependent variable, which is legal compliance literacy among Sri Lankan IT professionals. The author has designed this conceptual framework, as shown in the provided figure, to explore the relationships between these independent variables and the dependent variable. This model was constructed based on a thorough review of the relevant literature to effectively assess the factors contributing to the legal compliance literacy gap. The conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework



3.4. Hypothesis Development

These hypotheses will be evaluated using quantitative analysis to assess the influence of each independent variable on legal compliance literacy within Sri Lanka's IT sector. The findings will shed light on the key factors that are essential for improving legal compliance literacy among IT professionals, thereby guiding the development of effective strategies to enhance compliance practices within the industry.

H1: Educational Level has a Significance Relationship with Legal Compliance Literacy

It is hypothesized that higher educational levels among IT professionals will positively impact their legal compliance literacy. This hypothesis is grounded in the assumption that formal

education provides individuals with the foundational knowledge and cognitive skills necessary to understand and comply with legal standards relevant to their field.

H2: Work Experience has a Significance Relationship with Legal Compliance Literacy

This hypothesis suggests that IT professionals with more work experience are likely to have higher legal compliance literacy. The underlying premise is that increased exposure to real-world scenarios and organizational practices over time enhances an individual's familiarity and compliance with legal requirements.

H3: Training in Legal Compliance has a Significance Relationship with Legal Compliance Literacy

Training in legal compliance is expected to directly improve the legal compliance literacy of IT professionals. This hypothesis is based on the notion that targeted training programs are effective in educating employees about specific legal standards, procedures, and best practices, thereby increasing their ability to comply with relevant laws and regulations.

H4: Availability of Legal Resources has a Significance Relationship with Legal Compliance Literacy

It is hypothesized that the availability of legal resources within an organization, such as access to legal guidelines, compliance tools, and expert consultations, positively impacts the legal compliance literacy of IT professionals. This hypothesis assumes that readily available resources facilitate better understanding and application of legal requirements in professional practice.

3.5. Operationalization of Variables

3.5.1. Operational Definitions for the Variables

Educational Level: The highest level of formal education attained by the IT professional. This can be categorized into different levels such as diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or higher. It reflects the theoretical knowledge and understanding of legal frameworks acquired through formal education.

Work Experience: The number of years an IT professional has spent in the industry. It includes the duration and variety of roles undertaken in the IT sector, which contributes to practical knowledge of legal compliance.

Training in Legal Compliance: Formal and informal training programs or certifications that IT professionals have completed, specifically related to legal compliance. This includes workshops, seminars, online courses, or any other form of education aimed at improving knowledge and application of legal standards in IT practices.

Availability of Legal Resources: The accessibility and availability of resources that support legal compliance within the organization. This includes the presence of legal advisors, compliance tools, guidelines, and reference materials that professionals can utilize to ensure adherence to legal standards.

Legal Compliance Literacy: The knowledge, awareness, and understanding of legal obligations and compliance requirements among IT professionals. It includes the ability to interpret and apply legal standards effectively within their professional roles.

3.5.2. Operational Table

This operational table aligns with the conceptual framework and provides a clear definition and measurement approach for each variable, allowing for accurate and consistent data collection and analysis.

Table 1: Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Definition	Measurement	Scale
Educational Level	The highest level of formal education attained	Questionnaire items measuring educational qualifications	5-point Likert scale
Work Experience	The number of years in the IT industry	The number of years in the IT industry	5-point Likert scale
Training in Legal Compliance	Training or certifications in legal compliance	Type of training	5-point Likert scale

Availability of Legal Resources	Access to resources supporting legal compliance	Availability and frequency of resource usage	5-point Likert scale
Legal Compliance Literacy	Knowledge and application of legal standards in IT practices	Questionnaire items measuring knowledge and understanding	5-point Likert scale

3.6. Data Collection Methods

This study utilizes tailored data collection methods to thoroughly evaluate the legal compliance literacy of IT professionals in Sri Lanka. A mixed-methods approach combines quantitative surveys, targeting key variables like education, work experience, compliance training, and resource access, with qualitative in-depth interviews. The surveys, distributed online, reach a diverse IT professional sample, while the interviews explore challenges and experiences in greater detail. This approach ensures a comprehensive analysis by integrating both measurable data and contextual insights.

3.6.1. Quantitative Methods

Survey

The survey instrument for this study will assess legal compliance literacy, focusing on knowledge of laws, adherence to standards, and the perceived importance of compliance. It will feature sections targeting different compliance dimensions, using multiple-choice questions to test knowledge, Likert scales to measure attitudes and behaviors, and demographic questions to categorize respondents by experience, education, and IT roles.

A stratified random sampling method will be employed, ensuring representation across job roles, experience levels, and geographical locations among Sri Lankan IT professionals. The survey will be distributed online via Google Forms and SurveyMonkey to reach a wide audience, including remote workers. A pilot test with a small group will refine the survey, and after distribution, respondents will have two weeks to complete it, with reminders sent to boost participation.

3.6.2. Qualitative Methods

Interviews

The interview guide will be developed based on key themes from the literature review and survey results, focusing on participants' experiences with legal compliance in the IT industry, the challenges they encounter, and their perceptions of legal compliance literacy. The interviews will primarily consist of open-ended questions to facilitate detailed discussions and uncover insights not captured in the survey. Participants will be selected through purposive sampling, targeting those with substantial knowledge or experience in IT legal compliance to ensure the relevance and depth of the data. Interviews will be conducted in person, by phone, or via video calls, lasting 45 minutes to an hour, based on participants' availability.

3.7. Data Analysis

The data analysis will employ both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative survey data will be analyzed using SPSS, focusing on descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression analysis to uncover patterns and relationships. Qualitative data from interviews, case studies, and focus groups will be thematically analyzed using Nvivo 15 software, employing coding techniques to identify key themes and insights. The integration of these datasets will involve comparing and contrasting the findings to derive comprehensive conclusions.

3.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter covers the development of the model, including conceptualization, hypothesis formulation, operationalization of variables and indicators, and research design, all of which are rooted in existing literature. The conceptual model, hypotheses, and operationalization are informed by a comprehensive literature review. Data collection will be carried out using a survey approach with a structured questionnaire. The data analysis will be conducted using SPSS and Nvivo 15 software.

CHAPTER 04 – ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This analysis chapter employs a mixed-method approach to thoroughly explore the research topic. By combining qualitative and quantitative data, it provides a detailed examination that addresses the complexity of the research problem. The quantitative analysis identifies key trends and patterns, while the qualitative data adds depth and context to these findings. Together, these methods enable a comprehensive exploration of the research questions, ensuring that the results are both statistically valid and reflective of real-world experiences.

4.2. Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data analysis in this study explores the intricacies of legal compliance literacy within the country's IT sector. By analyzing data from interviews, focus groups, and other qualitative sources, the study uncovers key themes such as awareness of legal requirements, the integration of compliance in daily tasks, and the influence of training and resources on legal literacy. Through systematic coding and interpretation, this analysis offers detailed insights into how Sri Lankan IT professionals perceive and interact with legal compliance, pinpointing areas where improvements are necessary to enhance their comprehension and adherence to legal standards.

4.2.1. Characteristics of the Collected Data

To start the data analysis, we first explore the characteristics of the survey participants using descriptive statistics. The questionnaire was distributed to approximately 150 IT professionals. In the following sections, we will analyze the demographic factors identified among the survey respondents.

4.2.1.1. Gender

Based on the gender data provided by the respondents in the questionnaire, Figure 4.2.1 illustrates the distribution of male and female participants in the survey. Out of a total of 150 respondents, 103 were male and 46 were female, accounting for 68.7% and 30.7% of the sample, respectively.

Additionally, 1 respondent preferred not to disclose their gender, representing 0.7% of the total sample.

Table 2: Respondent's Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	46	30.7%
Male	103	68.7%
Prefer not to Say	1	0.7%

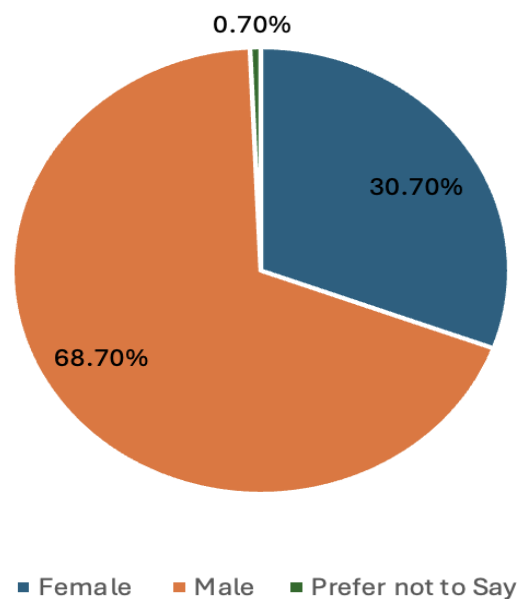


Figure 3: Respondent's Gender Categorization

4.2.1.2. Age Group

Each participant was asked to identify their age within one of four specified brackets, ranging from 18 years to 45 years and above. Table 4.2.2 shows the distribution of respondents across these age categories. The largest proportion of participants were within the 26-35 years age group, representing 83.3% of the total respondents. Conversely, the age group of 45 years and above had the smallest representation, accounting for only 0.7% of the respondents.

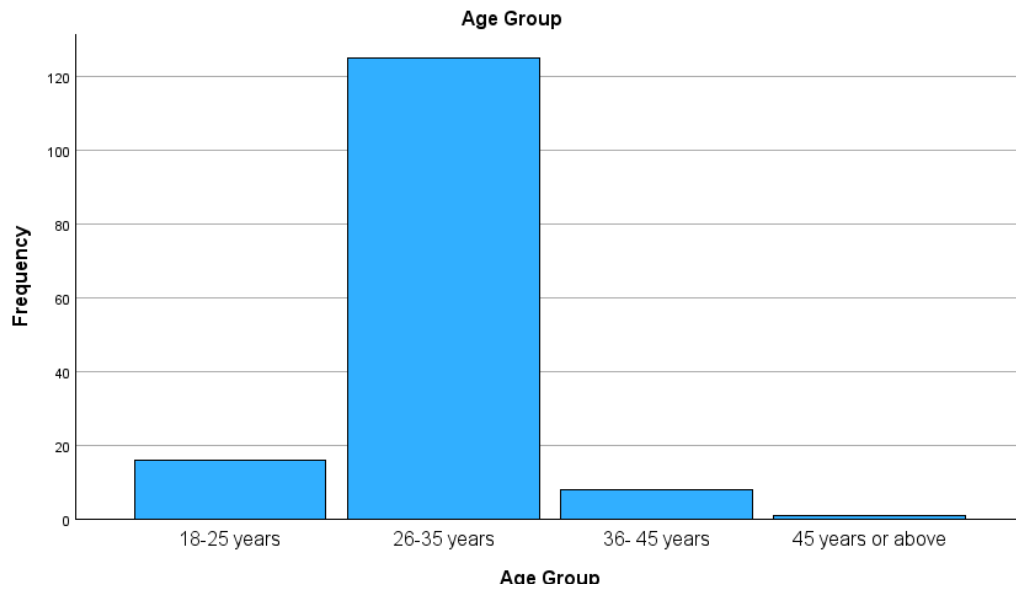


Figure 4: Respondent's Age categorization

4.2.1.3. Educational Background

Participants were asked to specify their highest level of education, with the questionnaire offering four distinct categories. As shown in Table 4.2.3, the majority of respondents (76%) held a bachelor's degree, while 17.3% had obtained a master's or PhD degree. A smaller portion, 4.7%, reported holding a diploma, and 2% fell into the "Other" category. This data reveals that 93.3% of respondents possessed at least a university-level education, underscoring the highly educated nature of the participant group.

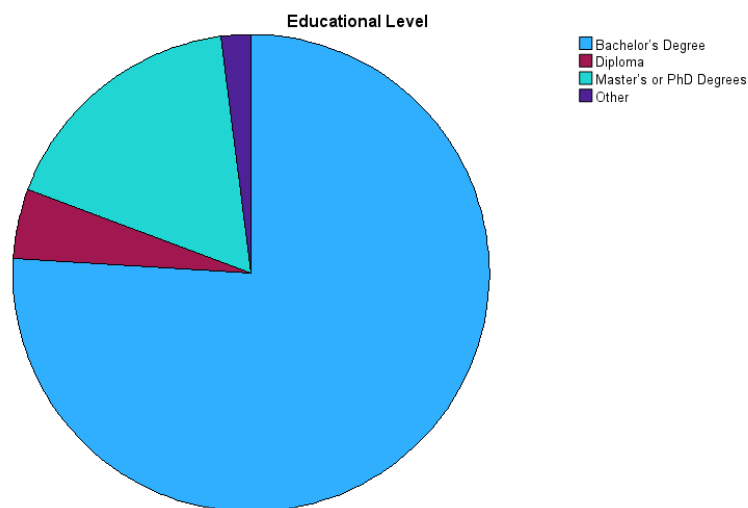


Figure 5: Educational Background of Respondent

4.2.1.4. Years of Working Experience

Figure 4.4. shows the distribution of the working experience of respondents. "Moderate Experience" is the most prevalent level of working experience, representing 30.7% of the sample. A combined 68% of respondents fall into the moderate to extensive experience categories, while only 11.3% have very limited experience. The data highlights that the majority (88.7%) possess at least some experience, with the cumulative percentage reaching 100% when including those with very limited experience. This reflects a diverse range of working experience levels, with a notable proportion having moderate to extensive experience.

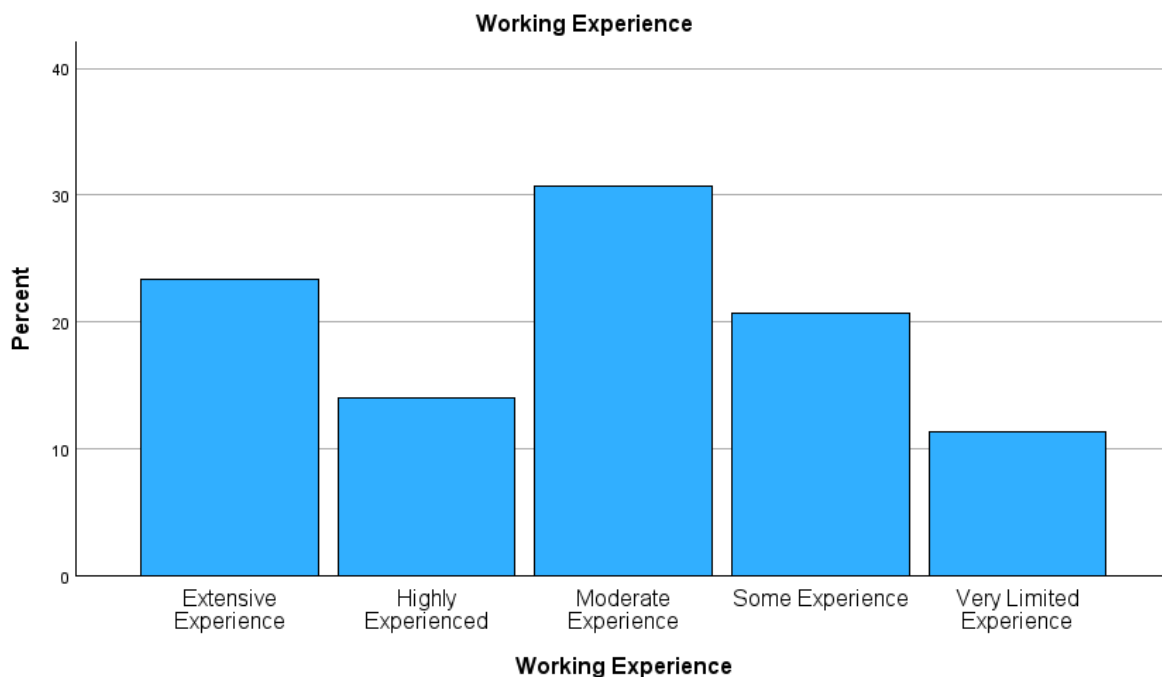


Figure 6: Working Experience of Respondents

4.3.1.5. Respondents Sector of Employment

Figure 4.5 shows the distribution of survey participants by sector of employment. Most respondents, 87.3%, are employed in the private sector, highlighting a significant representation from this area. The public sector represents 8.7% of respondents, while the academic sector is the least represented, with just 4% of participants. This distribution indicates that the findings from this survey are primarily reflective of individuals in the private sector, with relatively fewer contributions from those in academia and the public sector.

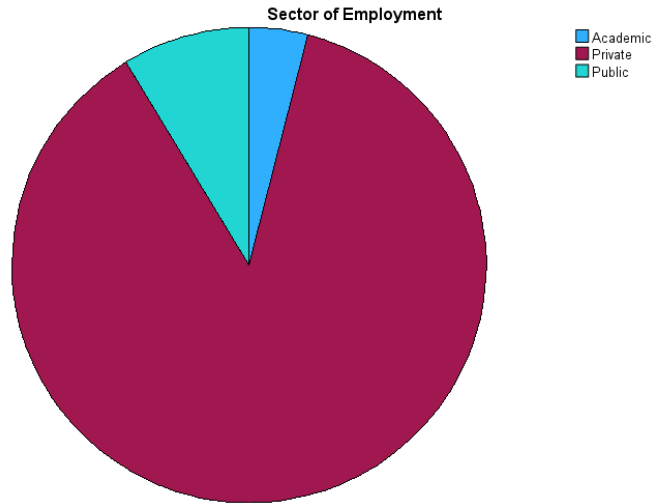


Figure 7: Respondent's Sector of Employment

4.2.1.6. Respondents Industry of Employment

The table displays the distribution of survey participants across different industries. A significant majority, 63.3%, are employed in the Software Development sector, making it the most represented industry in the survey. Following this, 10.7% of respondents work in IT Consulting and Services, while 9.3% are in Networking and Infrastructure. Information Security and Data Science and Analytics are represented by 7.3% and 6.0% of participants, respectively. The "Other" category, encompassing industries not specifically listed, accounts for 3.3% of respondents. This distribution indicates that the survey findings are predominantly shaped by perspectives from the Software Development sector, with additional contributions from other IT-related fields like IT Consulting, Networking, and Information Security.

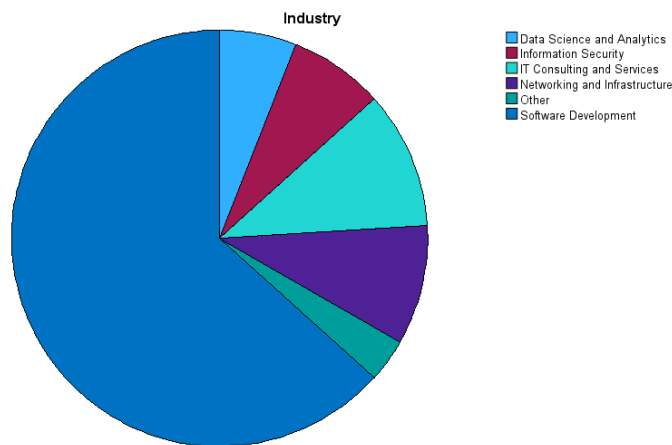


Figure 8: Respondent's Industry of Working

4.2.2. Validity and Reliability of Data

To evaluate the reliability of the instrument, we started by calculating Cronbach's alpha, which indicates the extent to which the measurement is free from random error. Each of the five constructs, along with the moderator and dependent variables, was thoroughly analyzed for item consistency within the constructs, following the guidelines (Zikmund, et al., 2009). The coefficient alpha was calculated for each dimension, and the need for item deletion was considered to improve the alpha values.

In the initial phase of this analysis, Cronbach's Alpha was employed to assess internal consistency, complemented by factor analysis to evaluate the validity and reliability of the data collected (Sekaran, 2008). This chapter will review each factor individually to assess their stability and reliability. If any values are below the acceptable threshold, further investigation will be conducted.

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Corrected Item Total Correlation
Educational Level	0.837	0.737
Working Experience	0.811	0.751
Training in Legal Compliance	0.748	0.827
Availability Legal Resources	0.838	0.722
Legal Compliance Literacy	0.801	0.715

Educational Level

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.837 signifies a strong internal consistency, indicating that the items designed to assess Educational Level are effectively measuring the same underlying concept. This consistency suggests that respondents have uniformly answered these items. Additionally, the corrected item-total correlation of 0.737 is robust, showing that each item within this variable is well-correlated with the overall Educational Level score. This implies that every item significantly contributes to the overall reliability of the scale.

Working Experience

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.811 signifies good internal consistency. The items used to measure Working Experience are reliably measuring the same underlying concept, meaning that respondents' answers are consistent across these items. The corrected item-total correlation of 0.751 indicates that the individual items are highly correlated with the total score of the Working Experience variable. This high correlation confirms that each item is a strong contributor to the overall reliability of this construct.

Training in Legal Compliance

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.748 is acceptable, though slightly lower than the other variables. This suggests that while the items measuring Training in Legal Compliance are generally consistent, there might be slight variability in how they capture the underlying construct. Despite the slightly lower Cronbach's Alpha, the corrected item-total correlation is quite high at 0.827. This indicates that each item within the Training in Legal Compliance variable is strongly related to the total score, making a significant contribution to the overall reliability.

Availability of Legal Resources

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.838 indicates a high level of internal consistency. This suggests that the items related to the Availability of Legal Resources are reliably measuring the same concept, and respondents are consistent in their answers across these items. With a corrected item-total correlation of 0.722, the items within this variable show a strong correlation with the overall score. This high correlation confirms that each item is positively contributing to the overall reliability of the Availability of Legal Resources scale.

Legal Compliance Literacy

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.801 reflects good internal consistency, indicating that the items used to measure Legal Compliance Literacy reliably capture the same underlying concept, with respondents providing consistent answers across these items. The corrected item-total correlation of 0.715 shows that the items within the Legal Compliance Literacy variable are well correlated

with the total score. This suggests that each item is contributing effectively to the overall reliability of the scale.

4.2.3. Suitability Factor Analysis

The appropriateness of a dataset for factor analysis is determined by assessing its suitability for identifying underlying relationships among measured variables. Factor analysis assumes these variables are related to a smaller set of latent factors. The suitability of the data can be evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, which measures sampling adequacy by checking if partial correlations between variables are low, and Bartlett's test of sphericity, which tests if the correlation matrix is close to an identity matrix, implying no significant correlations among variables. A high KMO value (near 1) and significant results from Bartlett's test suggest that the data is fit for factor analysis.

In this study, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used to determine whether the sample was appropriate for factor analysis. The KMO value of 0.820, as shown in the table, exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.6, indicating that the sampling adequacy is very satisfactory. Furthermore, Bartlett's test resulted in a Chi-Square value of approximately 319.775 with 28 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.001. This extremely low significance level leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. This finding confirms the presence of significant correlations among the variables, thereby validating the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett Test for all Variables

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.820
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	319.775
	d.f	28
	Sig.	0.001

4.2.4. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a statistical method used to identify the underlying structure within a set of correlated variables by extracting key factors. The goal of EFA is to simplify complex data by reducing the number of variables into a smaller set of factors that can be compared with existing literature. Principal Component Analysis (PCA), often used with Varimax rotation, extracts these factors, retaining those with factor loadings above 0.5. Items that load significantly on multiple factors are removed, requiring further refinement (Zikmund et al., 2009).

4.2.5. Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis illustrates the relationships among the model's constructs, as detailed in Table 4.4, which includes correlations between all constructs, and dependent variables. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), it is unnecessary to validate measures again if they are based on previously validated studies. This research employs measurement scales for the independent, and dependent variables that are widely recognized in existing literature.

The bivariate correlation procedure was conducted with a two-tailed test, yielding statistically significant results at a highly significant level ($p < 0.01$). The population correlation coefficient, denoted by ρ , ranges from -1 to 1, indicating the strength and direction of the relationship between variables. A value of $\rho = 0$ signifies no correlation, $\rho = 1$ indicates a perfect positive correlation, and $\rho = -1$ reflects a perfect negative correlation. If ρ is between 0 and 0.5, it suggests a weak positive correlation; between 0.5 and 0.75, it indicates a moderate positive correlation; and between 0.75 and 1.0, it represents a strong positive relationship between variables.

The correlation matrix provided offers insight into the relationships between four independent variables namely, educational level (IV-1), work experience (IV-2), training in legal compliance (IV-3), availability of legal resource (IV-4), and a dependent variable, legal compliance literacy (DV-1). The Pearson correlation coefficients measure the strength and direction of these relationships, while the p-values (Sig. 2-tailed) indicate whether the observed correlations are statistically significant.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix

		IV-1	IV-2	IV-3	IV-4	DV-1
IV-1	Pearson Correlation	1	.286	.0430	.048	.823
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.048	.024	.038	.043
	N	150	150	150	150	150
IV-2	Pearson Correlation	.643	1	.354	.154	.569
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023		.032	.010	.034
	N	150	150	150	150	150
IV-3	Pearson Correlation	.613	.572	1	.116	.361
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.028		.044	.018
	N	150	150	150	150	150
IV-4	Pearson Correlation	.210	.111	.418	1	.526
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.011	.248		.046
	N	150	150	150	150	150
DV-1	Pearson Correlation	.524	.769	.560	.476	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.003	.028	.016	
	N	150	150	150	150	150

Correlation with Dependent Variable

IV-1 and DV-1

The correlation coefficient between IV-1 and DV-1 is 0.823, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that as IV-1 increases, DV-1 tends to increase as well. The p-value of 0.043 indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, meaning it is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

IV-2 and DV-1:

IV-2 has a moderate positive correlation with DV-1, with a coefficient of 0.569. This implies that increases in IV-2 are associated with increases in DV-1. The p-value of 0.034 further supports that this relationship is statistically significant.

IV-3 and DV-1:

The relationship between IV-3 and DV-1 is weakly positive, with a correlation coefficient of 0.061. Despite the weak correlation, the p-value of 0.018 suggests that this relationship is statistically significant, indicating that even small changes in IV-3 could still have a meaningful impact on DV-1.

IV-4 and DV-1:

IV-4 also shows a moderate positive correlation with DV-1, with a coefficient of 0.526. The p-value of 0.046 suggests that this relationship is statistically significant, indicating that changes in IV-4 are associated with changes in DV-1.

Moreover, the relationships among the independent variables are generally weak to moderate, with only IV-1 and IV-3 showing a moderate correlation. These findings suggest that multicollinearity may not be a severe issue.

4.2.6. Test of Linearity and Normality of the Data

Normality assumes that data is distributed in a bell-shaped curve, where the mean, median, and mode are equal. This assumption is crucial for tests that require a symmetric, non-skewed data distribution. In this study, normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, with the results provided in Annexure B. Linearity refers to a direct, straight-line relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable, which is essential for understanding how changes in one variable impact the other.

4.2.7. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Central tendency and dispersion are key descriptive statistics used to characterize the dataset, captured through measures like mean, standard deviation, and variance, values for various indicators. These include independent variables and dependent variables. Descriptive statistics for all variables, as shown in Table 4.5, assess legal compliance literacy in IT Professionals. A five-point Likert scale was used, with a sample of 150 respondents.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of constructs, and dependent variables

	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Educational Level (IV-1)	150	3.09	0.54	.29	-.70	.198	3.77	.20
Working experience (IV-2)	150	3.08	1.46	1.46	-.06	.198	-.85	.20
Training in Legal Compliance (IV-3)	150	2.43	.61	.85	.59	.198	-.79	.20
Availability of Legal Resource (IV-4)	150	2.13	1.04	1.01	1.11	.198	1.03	.20
Legal Compliance Literacy (DV-1)	150	2.33	.93	.96	.58	.198	0.48	.20
Valid N listwise	150							

The descriptive statistics table provides an overview of the central tendency, variability, and distribution shape of the independent variables (IV-1, IV-2, IV-3, IV-4) and the dependent variable (DV-1). Here's an interpretation of each of the key statistical measures provided.

For all variables (IV-1, IV-2, IV-3, IV-4, DV-1), the sample size is 150. This indicates that the data for each variable was collected from 150 observations or participants.

The mean represents the average value of each variable. IV-1 and IV-2 have similar average scores, both around 3.09 and 3.08, indicating that these variables tend to have higher average values compared to IV-3, IV-4, and DV-1.

The standard deviation measures the amount of variation or dispersion in the data. IV-2 has the highest standard deviation (1.46), indicating that it has the most variability among the participants, while IV-1 has the lowest standard deviation (0.54), indicating more consistency or less variability in responses.

Variance is the square of the standard deviation and also indicates the degree of spread in the data. The higher the variance, the greater the dispersion. IV-2 has the highest variance (1.46), confirming the significant spread in its data.

Skewness measures the asymmetry of the distribution. Negative Skewness: IV-1 (-0.70) and IV-2 (-0.06) have negative skewness, indicating that their distributions have a longer left tail.

Positive Skewness: IV-3 (0.59), IV-4 (1.11), and DV-1 (0.58) have positive skewness, indicating that their distributions have a longer right tail. IV-4 has the highest positive skewness, suggesting a more pronounced right tail.

Kurtosis measures the "tailedness" of the distribution: High Kurtosis: IV-1 (3.77) has a high kurtosis, indicating a distribution with heavy tails (leptokurtic). This suggests more extreme values or outliers. Low Kurtosis: IV-2 (-0.85) and IV-3 (-0.79) have low kurtosis (platykurtic), indicating flatter distributions with fewer outliers. Moderate Kurtosis: IV-4 (1.03) and DV-1 (0.48) have moderate kurtosis, indicating distributions that are closer to normal.

4.2.8. Inferential Statistical Analysis of the Data

After data collection is complete, inferential analysis is applied to identify relationships between variables, assess differences within a variable across different subgroups, and explore how several independent variables might explain variations in a dependent variable (Sekaran, 2008). Therefore, inferential analysis techniques are employed to draw conclusions that extend beyond the immediate data set. This section highlights two main approaches: hypothesis testing through correlation analysis and regression analysis, which include both simple linear regression and multiple regression models (Sekaran, 2008).

4.2.9. Regression Analysis

This section presents a regression analysis to investigate the relationship between different factors and the legal compliance literacy of Sri Lankan IT professionals. Through statistical modeling, we assess the impact of variables like educational background, professional experience, and knowledge of legal frameworks on the literacy gap. The findings from this analysis provide empirical insights, deepening our understanding of the key elements influencing legal compliance literacy in the IT sector.

The Model Summary section of the output is crucial in multiple regression analyses. The Multiple Correlation Coefficient, represented as 'R', shows the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable and the combined independent variables. In a simple bivariate analysis, 'R' is equivalent to the absolute value of the correlation coefficient 'r'. The 'R-squared' value, or the coefficient of determination, is particularly valuable as it indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable(s).

The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) section of the output evaluates whether the regression model significantly accounts for the variation in the dependent variable based on the variation of the independent variables.

Table 7: Model Summary for Independent Variables with Dependent Variable

Variable	R	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Educational Level (IV1)	0.534	0.464	0.6291
Working Experience (IV2)	0.698	0.365	0.5513
Training in legal compliance (IV3)	0.789	0.345	0.5745
Availability of legal resources (IV4)	0.723	0.578	0.6414
Legal Compliance Literacy (MO1)	0.676	0.587	0.5812

This table provides the results of separate simple regression analyses for four different independent variables—Educational level, working experience, Training in legal compliance, and Availability of legal resources —each predicting the dependent variable Legal compliance literacy.

Educational Level

The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.534 suggests a moderate positive relationship between the educational level of Sri Lankan IT professionals and their legal compliance literacy. This implies that as education levels rise, legal compliance literacy tends to increase, although the relationship is not particularly strong.

The R-squared value of 0.464 indicates that about 46.4% of the variance in legal compliance literacy is attributable to educational level. This highlights the importance of educational background as a significant factor, though it also suggests that other factors contribute to the remaining variance in legal compliance literacy.

The standard error of the estimate (0.6291) reflects the average distance between the observed values and the regression line. A smaller standard error would imply greater precision in predictions; therefore, a value of 0.6291 indicates a moderate level of prediction accuracy.

Working experience

The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.698 reflects a stronger positive relationship between working experience and legal compliance literacy compared to educational level. This indicates that IT professionals with more working experience generally possess higher legal compliance literacy.

The R-squared value of 0.365 suggests that 36.5% of the variance in legal compliance literacy can be attributed to working experience. Although this represents a significant proportion, it indicates that working experience alone does not fully account for all the factors influencing legal compliance literacy.

The standard error of the estimate (0.5513) indicates that predictions based on working experience are slightly more accurate than those based on educational level, but there is still room for improvement in the prediction accuracy.

Training in Legal Compliance

The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.789 demonstrates a strong positive relationship between training in legal compliance and legal compliance literacy. This suggests that IT professionals who have received training in legal compliance generally have significantly higher legal compliance literacy.

The R-squared value of 0.345 indicates that 34.5% of the variance in legal compliance literacy can be explained by training in legal compliance. Although this accounts for a substantial portion, it also implies that other factors contribute to the determination of legal compliance literacy.

The standard error of the estimate (0.5745) suggests that the model's predictions based on training in legal compliance are relatively accurate, though there is still some room for improvement.

Availability of Legal Resources

The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.723 suggests a strong positive relationship between the availability of legal resources and legal compliance literacy. IT professionals with greater access to legal resources generally have higher levels of legal compliance literacy.

The R-squared value of 0.578, the highest among the independent variables, indicates that 57.8% of the variance in legal compliance literacy can be explained by the availability of legal resources. This highlights that access to legal resources is a highly significant factor in predicting legal compliance literacy.

The standard error of the estimate (0.6414) indicates that predictions based on the availability of legal resources are fairly accurate, though some variability still exists.

Legal Compliance Literacy

The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.676 reflects a moderate to strong positive relationship between legal compliance literacy and the combination of all independent variables (educational level, working experience, training in legal compliance, and availability of legal resources).

The R-squared value of 0.587 indicates that 58.7% of the variance in legal compliance literacy is explained by the combined model. This suggests that while the model captures a significant portion of the variance, other unmeasured factors may also contribute to legal compliance literacy.

The standard error of the estimate (0.5812) suggests a moderate level of accuracy in the model's predictions when all independent variables are considered together.

In conclusion, the ANOVA table results indicate that both Training in Legal Compliance (IV3) and Availability of Legal Resources (IV4) are key predictors of legal compliance literacy. Among these, Availability of Legal Resources (IV4) is identified as the most significant factor, explaining the greatest proportion of variance in legal compliance literacy for IT professionals in Sri Lanka.

To elaborate:

- Training in Legal Compliance (IV3) shows a strong positive correlation with legal compliance literacy, suggesting that more extensive training leads to better compliance knowledge. While this factor is important, it accounts for a smaller portion of the variability compared to the Availability of Legal Resources.
- Availability of Legal Resources (IV4) emerges as the most crucial predictor, as it explains the largest share of variability in legal compliance literacy. This underscores the critical

role of having access to comprehensive legal resources in improving compliance literacy. The high explanatory value of this variable highlights its fundamental importance in enhancing legal knowledge and adherence.

In summary, although both training and resources are essential for boosting legal compliance literacy, the availability of legal resources is particularly vital. This finding stresses the necessity for IT professionals in Sri Lanka to have ready access to legal resources, which could be a pivotal strategy for improving legal compliance literacy in the industry.

Table 8:ANOVA Table for Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

Variable	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Educational Level			
Regression	9.548	51.21	0.000
Residual	0.452		
Working Experience			
Regression	9.4864	19.57	0.000
Residual	0.5136		
Training in Legal Compliance			
Regression	5.904	19.94	0.000
Residual	. 0.571		
Availability of Legal Resources			
Regression	4.536	12.6347	0.000
Residual	0.37		
Legal Compliance Literacy			
Regression	5.428	45.4154	0.000
Residual	0.47		

The table displays the ANOVA results for simple regression analyses, where various independent variables—educational level, working experience, training in legal compliance, and availability of

legal resources—are assessed for their predictive power on a specific dependent variable legal compliance literacy.

Educational level

The substantial regression mean square of 9.548 and the F-statistic of 51.21 reveal a robust and statistically significant relationship between Educational Level and Legal Compliance Literacy. This indicates that an increase in educational attainment is strongly linked to enhanced legal compliance literacy. The significance value of 0.000 confirms the reliability of this relationship, ruling out the possibility of random chance. In conclusion, a higher level of education is positively correlated with improved legal compliance literacy.

Working Experience

The regression mean square of 9.4864 and the F-statistic of 19.57 demonstrate a significant relationship between Working Experience and Legal Compliance Literacy. This suggests that greater working experience is positively associated with improved legal compliance literacy. The p-value of 0.000 confirms the statistical significance of this relationship, indicating that increased working experience enhances an individual's comprehension and adherence to legal compliance requirements.

Training in Legal Compliance

Training in Legal Compliance demonstrates a regression mean square of 5.904 and an F-statistic of 19.94, indicating a strong and significant influence on Legal Compliance Literacy. The significance level of 0.000 confirms that this relationship is statistically reliable. Improved training in legal compliance leads to better literacy in legal matters, highlighting the importance of targeted training programs for enhancing compliance.

Availability of Legal Resources

The regression mean square of 4.536 and the F-statistic of 12.6347 indicate a significant relationship between the Availability of Legal Resources and Legal Compliance Literacy. The p-value of 0.000 confirms the statistical significance of this relationship. Increased availability of

legal resources enhances legal compliance literacy, underscoring the importance of accessible and comprehensive legal materials.

4.2.10. Hypothesis Testing

The significance level and confidence interval are fundamental for statistically evaluating hypotheses. If statistical evidence is insufficient to reject a hypothesis, it leads to the hypothesis being accepted. In this study, a significance level of 0.05 was used as the threshold, and a 95% confidence interval was applied. The model's paths represent potential relationships between constructs, and these relationships can be tested for significance. As outlined in Chapter Three, five hypotheses were formulated for this study, and their validity was assessed through regression analysis as follows.

H1: Educational Level has a Significance Relationship with Legal Compliance Literacy

According to Table 4.6, the significance value for the relationship between Educational Level and Legal Compliance Literacy is 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This allows us to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis with 95% confidence. Additionally, Table 4.8.1 shows a correlation coefficient of 0.534 for this relationship, indicating a strong and statistically moderate positive correlation between Educational Level and Legal Compliance Literacy. Thus, we can conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between educational level and legal compliance literacy.

H2: Work Experience has a Significance Relationship with Legal Compliance Literacy

According to Table 4.6., the significance value for the relationship between Educational Level and Legal Compliance Literacy is 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This allows us to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis with 95% confidence. Additionally, Table 4.8.1 shows a correlation coefficient of 0.698 for this relationship, indicating a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between working experience and Legal Compliance Literacy. Thus, we can conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between working experience and legal compliance literacy.

H3: Training in Legal Compliance has a Significance Relationship with Legal Compliance Literacy

According to Table 4.6., the significance value for the relationship between Educational Level and Legal Compliance Literacy is 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This allows us to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis with 95% confidence. Additionally, Table 4.8.1 shows a correlation coefficient of 0.789 for this relationship, indicating a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between training in legal compliance and Legal Compliance Literacy. Thus, we can conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between Training in legal compliance and legal compliance literacy.

H4: Availability of Legal Resources has a Significance Relationship with Legal Compliance Literacy

According to Table 4.6., the significance value for the relationship between Educational Level and Legal Compliance Literacy is 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This allows us to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis with 95% confidence. Additionally, Table 4.8.1 shows a correlation coefficient of 0.723 for this relationship, indicating a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between the availability of legal resources and legal compliance literacy. Thus, we can conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between Training in legal compliance and legal compliance literacy.

Table 9: Hypotheses Tested in the Study

Hypothesis	Accepted/Rejected
Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between educational level and legal compliance literacy	Accepted
Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between working experience and legal compliance literacy	Accepted
Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between training in legal compliance and legal compliance literacy	Accepted

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant relationship between availability of legal resources and legal compliance literacy.	Accepted
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4.3. Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis is a methodological approach designed to delve into and interpret complex data collected through methods like interviews, focus groups, and observations. It is essential for uncovering underlying patterns, themes, and insights that may not be apparent from quantitative data alone. In this study, qualitative analysis focused on exploring legal compliance literacy among IT professionals in Sri Lanka. The analysis was conducted using a systematic and rigorous approach to ensure the findings were accurate and reliable.

4.3.1. Overall Analysis Across Roles

Based on the analysis results obtained from NVivo 15 software, the following outputs can be generated.

4.3.1.1. High-Frequency Nodes

Compliance (C): This category consistently shows high frequencies across most roles, indicating that compliance is a significant theme in the discussions. The IT Compliance Engineer, as expected, has the highest frequency (12 mentions), which suggests a strong focus on compliance within this role.

Legal Compliance (N): Similar to compliance, this node is also prominent across various roles, with high frequencies for the Software Tech Lead (8 mentions) and IT Compliance Engineer (12 mentions). This highlights that legal compliance is a crucial concern across different levels of responsibility.

Training (X): The node for training is mentioned across all roles but with varying frequencies. For example, the Junior Software Engineer has a higher frequency (7 mentions), indicating that training is a critical area of focus for less experienced professionals.

4.3.1.2. Lower-Frequency Nodes

Educational Programs (G): This node has relatively low mentions across all roles, suggesting that educational programs are not a major topic of discussion or may not be as directly relevant to the participants' current roles.

Formal Training (I): Also low across most roles, which may indicate that formal training is less emphasized or less discussed compared to other types of training or development activities.

4.3.1.3. Role-Specific Insights

Senior Software Engineer: Shows a balanced distribution of mentions across various nodes, with significant mentions in areas like compliance (6 mentions), data (5 mentions), and legal requirements (5 mentions). This suggests a broad concern with multiple aspects of the role, including both technical and regulatory responsibilities.

Software Project Manager: Has high mentions in compliance (7 mentions), legal requirements (5 mentions), and programs (4 mentions). This indicates a focus on ensuring compliance within project management, aligning with the responsibilities of overseeing projects that meet legal and operational standards.

Junior Software Engineer: Higher focus on training (7 mentions) and development (2 mentions), which reflects the early stage of their career where gaining knowledge and skills is paramount.

Intern: Similar to the Junior Software Engineer, the intern's focus is on training (7 mentions) and compliance (5 mentions), indicating a learning phase with an emphasis on understanding compliance requirements.

QA Engineer: High mentions in compliance (7 mentions), awareness (5 mentions), and legal requirements (3 mentions) reflect the QA role's critical function in ensuring products meet regulatory and compliance standards.

IT Compliance Engineer: As expected, this role has the highest mentions in compliance (12 mentions) and legal compliance (12 mentions), reflecting the specialized focus of this role on ensuring adherence to legal and regulatory requirements.

Software Tech Lead: High mentions in compliance (8 mentions), legal requirements (5 mentions), and frameworks (3 mentions), suggesting a leadership role that is heavily involved in maintaining and overseeing compliance within a technical team.

4.3.1.4. Comparative Insights

Training vs. Compliance: While compliance is a major theme across all roles, training is more emphasized in junior roles like the Junior Software Engineer and Intern. This suggests that while all roles are concerned with compliance, those in early career stages are particularly focused on building the necessary skills and knowledge through training.

Focus on Legal Aspects: Senior roles like the IT Compliance Engineer and Software Tech Lead have a stronger focus on legal aspects such as compliance, legal requirements, and frameworks. This reflects their responsibility in ensuring that the team's work aligns with legal standards and industry regulations.

4.3.1.5. Key Takeaways

This analysis offers a comprehensive view of how different roles within an organization prioritize and engage with key themes such as compliance, legal requirements, and training. It reflects the varying responsibilities and focuses across career stages and roles, providing valuable insights for understanding the dynamics within the professional environment.

Compliance and Legal Requirements: These are the dominant themes across most roles, especially in more senior or specialized roles like IT Compliance Engineer and Software Tech Lead.

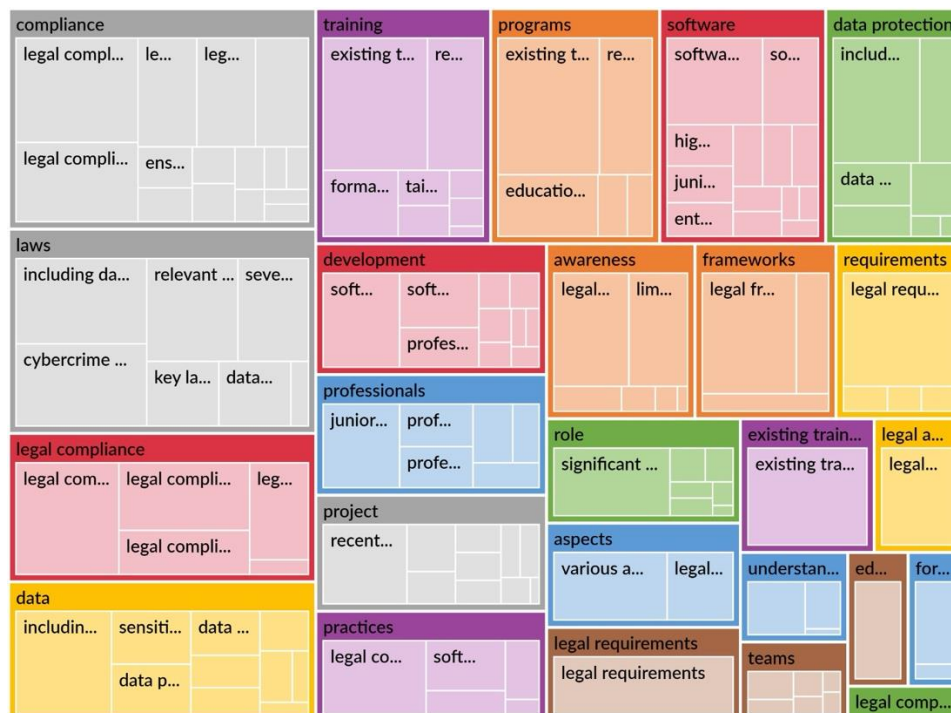
Training and Development: More prominent in junior roles, highlighting the importance of skill-building and education at the early stages of a professional career.

Role-Specific Focus: Different roles emphasize different aspects, with senior roles focusing more on compliance and legal frameworks, while junior roles focus on learning and development.

This section presents a qualitative analysis of legal compliance literacy among IT professionals in Sri Lanka, utilizing NVivo 15 software to identify key themes across various roles. The findings

highlight that compliance and legal compliance are significant themes across most roles, especially for IT Compliance Engineers and Software Tech Leads, while training is more emphasized in junior roles, underscoring its importance in early career development. Senior roles, such as Software Project Managers and Tech Leads, prioritize compliance and legal requirements, reflecting their responsibility for ensuring adherence to legal standards, whereas junior roles, including interns, focus more on training and skill development. The analysis reveals that while compliance is a universal concern, training is particularly emphasized in early career stages, with senior roles giving more attention to legal aspects to ensure alignment with industry regulations. Overall, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how different roles within the professional environment engage with key themes, highlighting the dominance of compliance and legal requirements in senior roles and the critical importance of training and development in junior roles.

Figure 9: Keyword Distribution in Legal Compliance Literacy Research Among IT Professionals in Sri Lanka



Source: NANVIO SOFTWARE

4.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzes and discusses the research findings, using a mixed-method approach that integrates both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative analysis examines the demographic characteristics of survey respondents, including their gender, age, educational background, years of work experience, employment sector, and industry. It also evaluates the reliability and validity of the data through methods such as Cronbach's Alpha and factor analysis.

Inferential statistical methods, including correlation and regression analyses, are applied to investigate the relationships between independent variables (educational level, work experience, training in legal compliance, and availability of legal resources) and the dependent variable (legal compliance literacy). The results demonstrate that all independent variables positively correlate with legal compliance literacy, with the availability of legal resources emerging as the most influential factor.

The qualitative analysis, performed using NVivo software, uncovers key themes across various roles within Sri Lanka's IT sector. The findings show that compliance and legal requirements are prominent themes, especially in senior roles like IT Compliance Engineers and Software Tech Leads, while training is more prominently emphasized in junior roles. Overall, this chapter underscores the crucial role of both training and resource availability in improving legal compliance literacy among IT professionals in Sri Lanka.

CHAPTER 05– FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

In this study, the quantitative analysis provides key insights that align with the primary objective of examining the legal compliance literacy gap among IT practitioners in Sri Lanka. To accomplish this, the research is driven by the following specific objectives.

- Assessing the current state of legal compliance literacy among IT personnel.
- Identifying the primary factors driving the legal compliance literacy gap.
- Providing recommendations to address and fill the gap.

5.2. Objective 1: Assessing the current state of legal compliance literacy among IT personnel.

The analysis provides compelling evidence that supports the achievement of Objective 1, which sought to assess the current state of legal compliance literacy among IT personnel. The quantitative data analysis reveals robust positive correlations between several key independent variables—namely educational level, work experience, training in legal compliance, and the availability of legal resources—and the dependent variable, legal compliance literacy. Among these, the availability of legal resources stands out as the most influential factor, evidenced by a significant R-value of 0.723 and an R^2 value of 0.578. This suggests that 57.8% of the variability in legal compliance literacy can be directly attributed to the accessibility of comprehensive legal resources, highlighting the critical role these resources play in enhancing compliance knowledge.

Additionally, the analysis shows that training in legal compliance is also a vital contributor, with an R-value of 0.789 and an R^2 value of 0.345, demonstrating the effectiveness of targeted training programs in improving legal compliance literacy among IT professionals. These findings emphasize that ongoing education and professional development are essential for maintaining high standards of legal literacy in the IT sector.

The qualitative analysis further enriches these insights by illustrating how different roles within the IT industry prioritize various aspects of legal compliance. Senior roles, such as IT Compliance Engineers and Software Tech Leads, tend to focus more heavily on compliance and legal

requirements, reflecting their responsibility for ensuring adherence to legal standards. In contrast, junior roles place a greater emphasis on training and skill development, which is crucial for building a solid foundation in legal compliance literacy early in their careers.

Together, these quantitative and qualitative findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing legal compliance literacy among IT personnel. They underscore the importance of a multifaceted approach that includes access to legal resources, targeted training, and continuous education to enhance compliance literacy across the sector. The results validate the research objective by clearly demonstrating that legal compliance literacy in the IT industry is significantly shaped by education, experience, and resource availability, with a strong indication that further improvements in these areas are necessary to bolster compliance literacy among IT professionals.

5.3. Objective 2: Identifying the primary factors driving the legal compliance literacy gap.

This study provides a comprehensive analysis that thoroughly addresses Objective 2, which aims to identify the primary factors contributing to the legal compliance literacy gap among IT personnel. The quantitative analysis highlights several key independent variables that significantly influence legal compliance literacy, including educational level, work experience, training in legal compliance, and the availability of legal resources. Among these, the availability of legal resources stands out as the most critical factor, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.723 and an R^2 value of 0.578. This finding indicates that 57.8% of the variance in legal compliance literacy can be attributed to the accessibility of legal resources, underscoring their pivotal role in mitigating the literacy gap.

In addition to legal resources, the analysis demonstrates that training in legal compliance is another essential driver, as evidenced by a strong positive correlation ($R = 0.789$) and an R^2 value of 0.345. This suggests that well-structured and targeted training programs are crucial in enhancing legal compliance literacy among IT professionals. Educational level and work experience also play important roles, with respective R -values of 0.534 and 0.698, although their impact is somewhat less pronounced compared to the availability of legal resources and training.

The qualitative analysis adds depth to these findings by exploring the nuanced perspectives of IT professionals across different roles. It reveals that compliance and legal requirements are especially emphasized in senior roles, such as IT Compliance Engineers and Software Tech Leads. These roles frequently mention legal compliance as a core aspect of their responsibilities, reflecting a strong focus on adhering to legal standards within their professional duties. This emphasis on legal compliance in senior positions suggests that these roles are critical in setting the tone for organizational adherence to legal frameworks.

In contrast, the qualitative analysis shows that junior roles, such as those of Junior Software Engineers and Interns, tend to prioritize training and development. This focus is indicative of the early career stages, where building the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve legal compliance literacy is a primary concern. The findings suggest that while compliance is a universal priority across all roles, the path to achieving it varies depending on the professional level, with senior roles concentrating on maintaining compliance and junior roles on acquiring the foundational knowledge required for compliance.

Overall, the chapter effectively illustrates that the primary factors driving the legal compliance literacy gap among IT personnel are multifaceted, with the availability of legal resources and training in legal compliance emerging as the most influential. The educational background and work experience of IT professionals also contribute to their literacy levels, albeit to a lesser extent. The findings emphasize the importance of ensuring that IT professionals have access to comprehensive legal resources and are provided with robust training programs to bridge the compliance literacy gap. Additionally, the qualitative insights highlight the varying emphasis on compliance and training across different roles, suggesting that tailored strategies may be necessary to address the literacy needs at different career stages within the IT sector.

5.4. Objective 3: Providing recommendations to address and fill the gap

Based on the comprehensive analysis presented in Chapter 04, Objective 3, which aims to provide actionable recommendations to address and fill the gaps in legal compliance literacy among IT professionals in Sri Lanka, has been effectively achieved. The statistical analysis highlights a strong positive relationship between the availability of legal resources and legal compliance literacy, as evidenced by an R-squared value of 0.578. This statistic indicates that nearly 58% of

the variation in legal compliance literacy can be explained by the availability of these resources, underscoring their critical role in enhancing compliance knowledge.

Moreover, the impact of training in legal compliance is also significant, with a strong positive correlation and an R-squared value of 0.345. This finding emphasizes that training is a vital component in boosting legal compliance literacy, especially in ensuring that IT professionals are well-equipped to navigate the complex legal landscape in their field.

The qualitative analysis further enriches these findings by revealing that compliance and legal requirements are central concerns across various roles within the IT sector, particularly in senior positions such as IT Compliance Engineers and Software Tech Leads. These roles exhibit a pronounced focus on ensuring adherence to legal standards, reflecting the critical importance of legal literacy at higher levels of responsibility. In contrast, the qualitative data also shows that training is more prominently emphasized in junior roles, such as those of Junior Software Engineers and interns. This trend suggests that early career stages are crucial periods for building the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for legal compliance.

The combination of these quantitative and qualitative insights not only validates the identified gaps in legal compliance literacy but also points to specific areas where interventions can be most effective. For instance, the data suggests that increasing the availability of legal resources and enhancing targeted training programs would be highly beneficial. These interventions are especially crucial in the early stages of an IT professional's career, where foundational training can significantly impact long-term legal compliance literacy.

Therefore, the recommendations derived from this analysis are both robust and well-substantiated, addressing the core issues in legal compliance literacy among Sri Lankan IT professionals. By focusing on improving access to legal resources and strengthening training programs, these recommendations provide a clear pathway to bridging the identified gaps and enhancing the overall legal compliance landscape within the sector.

5.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter methodically addresses the study's three primary objectives: evaluating the current level of legal compliance literacy, pinpointing the key factors contributing to the literacy gap, and offering recommendations to bridge these gaps among IT professionals in Sri Lanka. The analysis highlights that access to legal resources and targeted training programs are the most influential factors affecting legal compliance literacy. Quantitative data demonstrates strong correlations between these factors and literacy levels, while qualitative insights reveal the different emphases on compliance and training across various roles. The chapter concludes by discussing the achievement of the study objectives successfully.

CHAPTER 06 – CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH AREAS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter summarizes the conclusions drawn from the data analysis concerning the research objectives. It also presents recommendations for improving the legal compliance literacy of IT professionals in Sri Lanka. Additionally, the chapter addresses the limitations of the study and offers suggestions for future research.

6.2. Conclusion

The conclusion of this thesis highlights the vital importance of legal compliance literacy within the IT sector, particularly in the context of Sri Lanka's ambitions to strengthen its global standing in the digital economy. The research reveals that although awareness of legal requirements is growing among IT professionals, there remain significant gaps, especially in the practical application of this knowledge. These gaps are primarily driven by factors such as the availability of legal resources and the provision of training programs, which have emerged as the most critical influences.

The study underscores the necessity for a strategic and comprehensive approach to improving legal compliance literacy. While educational background and work experience do contribute to a professional's understanding of legal obligations, they are insufficient on their own. The research emphasizes that access to thorough legal resources and participation in focused training programs are crucial to closing the literacy gap. These resources and programs equip IT professionals with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively navigate the complex legal landscape of the industry.

Furthermore, the study highlights the ongoing need for professional development. In an industry where laws and regulations are constantly evolving, continuous education and training are imperative. IT professionals must be prepared not only with current legal knowledge but also with the ability to adapt to new legal challenges as they arise. This is especially relevant in a globalized

environment, where Sri Lankan IT professionals must increasingly comply with both local and international legal frameworks.

The thesis also emphasizes the importance of tailoring training and resources to specific roles within the IT sector. The qualitative analysis indicates that senior IT professionals, such as IT Compliance Engineers and Software Tech Leads, focus more on compliance and legal frameworks due to their responsibilities in ensuring adherence to legal standards. In contrast, junior professionals and interns prioritize training and skill development, highlighting the importance of building a strong foundation in legal compliance literacy during the early stages of their careers. Consequently, training programs and resources should be customized to address the unique needs of different roles within the IT sector.

In summary, this thesis contributes to the broader objective of enhancing legal and ethical standards within Sri Lanka's IT industry. By identifying and addressing the gaps in legal compliance literacy, the study offers a clear pathway for developing a more knowledgeable and compliant IT workforce. These efforts are essential not only for mitigating legal risks within organizations but also for fostering a culture of ethical compliance that can bolster the reputation and sustainability of Sri Lanka's IT sector. As the country continues its journey to become a leading player in the global IT services market, ensuring that its professionals are well-equipped with the necessary legal knowledge and skills will be critical to achieving long-term success and competitiveness.

6.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this thesis, several strategic recommendations have been identified to address the legal compliance literacy gap among IT professionals in Sri Lanka. These recommendations aim to elevate legal and ethical standards across the IT sector, ensuring professionals are equipped to navigate the increasingly complex legal landscape. The following actions are advised:

- **Improve Access to Legal Resources**

- **Develop Comprehensive Legal Portals:** Organizations should create and maintain user-friendly legal resource portals that provide easy access to laws, regulations, and compliance guidelines. These should include searchable databases, case studies, and practical examples to help IT professionals apply legal principles effectively in their work.
- **Increase Awareness of Legal Resources:** Efforts should be made to raise awareness about the availability of these legal resources among IT professionals. This can be achieved through regular communication campaigns, integrating resource portals within company intranets, and including resource links in compliance communications.

- **Implement Targeted Training Programs**

- **Role-Specific Training:** Training programs should be tailored to the specific needs of various roles within the IT sector. For example, junior professionals should receive foundational training on basic legal concepts, while senior professionals should be trained on advanced legal frameworks relevant to complex scenarios.
- **Mandatory Compliance Training:** Organizations should make regular legal compliance training mandatory for all IT professionals. These sessions should be ongoing and adaptive to legal changes, incorporating practical workshops, case studies, and scenario-based learning to enhance applicability.

- **Encourage Continuous Professional Development**

- **Establish CLE Programs:** Continuing Legal Education (CLE) programs should be introduced for IT professionals, keeping them updated on legal developments and compliance requirements. These programs should offer certifications recognized within the industry to incentivize participation.
- **Support Participation in Legal Events:** Organizations should encourage and support IT professionals to attend seminars, conferences, and workshops focused

on legal and compliance issues, broadening their legal knowledge and exposing them to best practices from other regions and industries.

- **Integrate Legal Compliance into Educational Curricula**

- **Include Legal Modules in IT Degrees:** Universities and institutions offering IT-related degrees should integrate legal compliance modules into their curricula, covering areas such as data protection, intellectual property, cybersecurity laws, and ethical considerations in IT.
- **Collaborate with Industry:** Educational institutions should work closely with industry stakeholders to ensure that the legal education provided is relevant and meets the current needs of the IT sector. This could include guest lectures, compliance-focused internships, and joint research initiatives.

- **Promote a Culture of Legal and Ethical Compliance**

- **Leadership Commitment:** Organizational leaders should demonstrate a strong commitment to legal and ethical compliance, embedding these values into the company culture, rewarding compliant behavior, and leading by example.
- **Develop Ethical Governance Frameworks:** Organizations should establish governance frameworks that integrate ethical oversight into decision-making processes, including clear policies on legal compliance, regular audits, and transparent mechanisms for reporting breaches.

- **Leverage Technology for Compliance Management**

- **Adopt Compliance Management Software:** Investing in compliance management software can help organizations monitor and manage compliance activities efficiently, automating processes like audits, risk assessments, and regulatory updates.
- **Utilize AI and Analytics for Proactive Compliance:** AI and data analytics should be leveraged to proactively identify potential compliance issues before they

escalate. AI tools can analyze large datasets to detect patterns, flag risks, and provide insights that help IT professionals stay ahead of legal challenges.

- **Facilitate Knowledge Sharing and Best Practices**

- **Create Compliance Forums:** Organizations should establish internal forums or communities where IT professionals can share knowledge, experiences, and best practices related to legal compliance. These can be facilitated through regular meetings, online discussion boards, or collaborative platforms.
- **Document and Disseminate Best Practices:** Successful compliance strategies and best practices should be documented and shared across the organization. This could include creating case studies, white papers, and internal newsletters that highlight effective compliance management.

Implementing these recommendations will significantly enhance the legal compliance literacy of IT professionals in Sri Lanka, reducing legal risks, promoting ethical practices, and supporting the sustainable growth of the country's IT sector. These actions will not only bridge the current literacy gap but will also position Sri Lanka's IT industry as a global leader in legal and ethical standards.

6.4. Further Research

Future research on legal compliance literacy among IT professionals in Sri Lanka presents several promising directions to deepen understanding and address this critical issue. A key area for exploration is the effectiveness of various training methodologies in shaping long-term legal compliance behavior. Researchers could conduct comparative studies to evaluate traditional training approaches against innovative, technology-driven methods such as e-learning platforms, virtual reality simulations, and AI-powered personalized learning tools. This research could assess not only the immediate impact of these training methods but also their effectiveness in promoting sustained compliance over time.

Another significant area for future investigation is the role of organizational culture in influencing legal compliance. This could involve examining how different leadership styles, communication practices, and ethical frameworks within organizations contribute to or hinder legal literacy among IT professionals. By exploring the dynamics between organizational culture and legal compliance,

researchers can identify best practices for fostering an environment where adherence to legal standards is ingrained in the workplace culture.

Furthermore, the intersection of legal compliance literacy with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cybersecurity represents a crucial area for further study. As these technologies evolve, it is essential to understand how well IT professionals grasp the legal implications associated with their use. Future research could identify gaps in current training programs and suggest targeted educational interventions to ensure that professionals are equipped to navigate the complex legal challenges posed by these advancements.

Finally, investigating the influence of regional and cultural factors on legal compliance literacy offers another valuable research direction. Comparative studies between Sri Lanka and other countries could reveal unique challenges and contextual factors that affect legal literacy. This research could lead to tailored strategies that address the specific needs of IT professionals in Sri Lanka while drawing on best practices from other regions.

By pursuing these research avenues, future studies can provide more nuanced insights and practical recommendations for improving legal compliance literacy within the IT sector. This, in turn, will contribute to the overall growth, sustainability, and global competitiveness of Sri Lanka's IT industry.

6.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter summarizes the thesis findings, emphasizing the crucial role of legal compliance literacy among IT professionals in Sri Lanka. The conclusion stresses the need for strategic initiatives to enhance legal literacy, focusing on improving access to legal resources, implementing targeted training programs, and encouraging continuous professional development. It highlights the importance of tailoring these strategies to specific roles within the IT sector for maximum effectiveness. The recommendations section proposes several key actions to address the legal compliance literacy gap, including enhancing access to legal resources, developing role-specific training, fostering ongoing learning, incorporating legal education into academic curricula, cultivating a culture of compliance, utilizing technology for compliance management, and promoting knowledge sharing. Additionally, the chapter outlines future research directions, such

as evaluating different training methodologies, examining the influence of organizational culture, exploring the impact of emerging technologies, and considering regional and cultural factors affecting legal compliance literacy. These efforts are intended to support the sustainable development and global competitiveness of Sri Lanka's IT industry.

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CHAPTER 08 APPENDIXES

8.1. Annexure A– Survey Questionnaire

8/24/24, 11:52 AM

Assessing the Legal Compliance Literacy Gap in Sri Lankan IT Professionals

Assessing the Legal Compliance Literacy Gap in Sri Lankan IT Professionals

Dear Participants,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Chamod Rathnayake, and I'm currently pursuing my Master's degree in Management of Technology at the University of Moratuwa. As a part of my academic requirement, I'm conducting a research study on "**Assessing the Legal Compliance Literacy Gap in Sri Lankan IT Professionals**".

The objective of this questionnaire is to collect valuable insights from professionals within the IT sector.

Rest assured, your responses will be kept confidential, and the compiled data will be utilized solely for academic research. Your time and input are highly appreciated, and your contribution will be significant to the advancement of knowledge in this field.

Thank you!

Best Regards
Chamod Rathnayake

* Indicates required question

Demographic Information

1. Please select your age group *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 18-25 years
☐ 26-35 years
☐ 36- 45 years
☐ 45 years or above

2. What is your gender? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

3. Which Sector of Employment you are currently employed in? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Private
- ☐ Public
- ☐ Academic

4. Which sector of the IT industry does your job role belong to? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Software Development
- ☐ Information Security
- ☐ Networking and Infrastructure
- ☐ Data Science and Analytics
- ☐ IT Consulting and Services
- ☐ Other

5. Academic Qualifications *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's or PhD Degrees
- ☐ Other

Background Information

6. Please provide a brief overview of your professional background and experience in the IT industry. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Little ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Extensive experience

7. How would you describe the current state of legal awareness and compliance within the IT sector in Sri Lanka? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Very Poor
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Very Good

General Understanding of Legal Framework

14. Can you share an example from your experience where legal compliance played a significant role in a project or decision-making process?

15. How confident do you feel in navigating legal complexities related to IT operations ^{*} in your day-to-day work?

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Extremely confident

16. What support or resources do you think would enhance IT professionals' ability to ^{*} comply with legal requirements in the industry?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Legal consultation services
☐ Online legal databases or resources
☐ Regular training programs
☐ Other: _____

Barriers and Challenges

17. From your perspective, what are the main barriers or challenges faced by IT professionals in staying legally compliant in Sri Lanka?

18. Does organizational culture and leadership influence legal compliance practices within IT companies? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Suggestions for Improvement

19. What initiatives or changes would you recommend to bridge the legal compliance literacy gap among IT professionals in Sri Lanka?

20. How can professional associations, educational institutions, and the government contribute to improving legal awareness and compliance within the IT sector?

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8.2. Annexure B– Interview Questionnaire

Section 1: Background Information

1.1. Can you please provide a brief overview of your professional background and experience in the IT industry?

1.2. How would you describe the current state of legal awareness and compliance within the IT sector in Sri Lanka?

Section 2: General Understanding of Legal Framework

2.1. To what extent do you believe IT professionals in Sri Lanka are familiar with the legal frameworks governing their industry?

2.2. What specific laws and regulations do you think are most relevant to IT professionals in Sri Lanka?

2.3. How do you stay informed about changes or updates in the legal landscape related to the IT industry?

Section 3: Training and Education

3.1. Have you received any formal training or education regarding legal aspects relevant to the IT industry in Sri Lanka?

3.2. In your opinion, how effective are the current educational programs in addressing the legal compliance needs of IT professionals?

3.3. What challenges, if any, do you perceive in the existing training programs related to legal compliance for IT professionals?

Section 4: Practical Implementation

4.1. Can you share an example from your experience where legal compliance played a significant role in a project or decision-making process?

4.2. How confident do you feel in navigating legal complexities related to IT operations in your day-to-day work?

4.3. What support or resources do you think would enhance IT professionals' ability to comply with legal requirements in the industry?

Section 5: Barriers and Challenges

5.1. From your perspective, what are the main barriers or challenges faced by IT professionals in staying legally compliant in Sri Lanka?

5.2. How do organizational culture and leadership influence legal compliance practices within IT companies?

Section 6: Suggestions for Improvement

6.1. What initiatives or changes would you recommend to bridge the legal compliance literacy gap among IT professionals in Sri Lanka?

6.2. How can professional associations, educational institutions, and the government contribute to improving legal awareness and compliance within the IT sector?

Section 7: Closing Thoughts

7.1. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the legal compliance literacy gap in the Sri Lankan IT industry?

7.2. Thank you for participating in this interview. If we have any follow-up questions, may we contact you for further clarification?