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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE
EXISTING COMPETENCIES OF SRI LANKAN
COMPUTING BACHELOR'S DEGREE GRADUATES AND
THE INDUSTRY EXPECTATIONS**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and this thesis/dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement 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 acknowledgement 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).

Signature:

15.07.2025

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The above candidate has carried out research for the PhD/MPhil/Masters thesis/dissertation under my supervision. I confirm that the declaration made above by the student is true and correct.

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Signature of the Supervisor:

Date:

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of Sri Lanka's Information Technology (IT) sector underscores the urgent need to bridge competency gaps between computing graduates and industry requirements. This study explores the disparity between the skills imparted by academic institutions and the competencies demanded by the IT sector, emphasizing its implications for employability, economic growth, and industry competitiveness. Using qualitative research methods, the study involved structured interviews with recent graduates and industry professionals, providing a dual perspective on the challenges and opportunities for competency alignment. Findings reveal significant gaps in technical skills, such as programming proficiency and familiarity with emerging technologies, as well as deficits in soft skills like communication, teamwork, and adaptability. The absence of practical training, internships, and industry exposure within academic programs further exacerbates these challenges. The research highlights the role of higher education institutions, industry stakeholders, and policymakers in addressing these gaps through curriculum reforms, enhanced academia-industry collaboration, and the promotion of lifelong learning. The study concludes that bridging competency gaps is essential for enhancing graduate employability, reducing youth unemployment, and fostering a globally competitive IT sector. Recommendations include the integration of industry-standard tools and technologies into academic curricula, structured internships, and policy interventions to support collaborative efforts. By addressing these gaps, Sri Lanka can unlock the potential of its IT workforce, sustain its economic growth, and secure its position as a regional leader in technology innovation.

Keywords: Skill gap, Graduate employability, IT industry, Curriculum reform

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