

NON-TECHNICAL HUMAN SKILLS GAP OF FRESH SOFTWARE ENGINEERS IN SRI LANKA

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There is a long standing debate for the employability of the local graduates. The main reason brought out by the industry was that they are not sufficiently equipped with the skills set required by the industry. Surveys conducted by SLASSCOM and ICTA on hot skills and national IT-BPM workforce shows that potential employees experiencing employability issue. Literature shows ICT industry in most nations around the world faces this issue. Objective of the research to find out the exact nature of the skills gap related to the Software Engineers in Sri Lanka and propose how to overcome the issue. The researcher conducted a survey with 50 Software Engineering Undergraduates of the University of Kelaniya in order to identify the student's perceptions on the skills required. At the same time, the researcher conducted a survey with the industry key decision makers to find out the Non-Technical Human Skills (NTHS) they expect from a fresh graduate. Findings show that there is a difference between what industries expect and what undergraduates think they would require at the time they enter to the industry. Further, the researcher conducted semi structured interviews with open ended questions, with 10 key decision makers in the Software Engineering Industry in Sri Lanka. The selected companies ranged from small scale to large companies and selection was based on the number of employees belonging to each company. This further confirmed the findings of the study and also shed light into reasons behind this gap. Rapid curriculum change has identified as a crucial need, and industry collaboration is essential in that process. Moreover, the researcher studied the relevant curriculums of tertiary education providers on their websites and observed considerable gap in developing NTHS in their curriculum. Since the curriculum alone will not address the issue, the researcher has extended its research work to develop a pedagogical framework to enhance required NTHS the Sri Lanka context.

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