



Assessing Graduate Competency Fit for the Workplace: A Tracer Study Investigation in Education

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Effective curriculum programs depend on how well higher education programs prepare people for jobs and how well the job market offers employment opportunities. Unfortunately, many university graduates often work in roles that do not align with what they learned in their studies. This study aims to assess the compatibility between the competencies possessed by graduates of the Information Systems Program at Surabaya State University and the expectations of employers. **Method:** A tracer study was conducted to investigate the extent to which program graduates are absorbed into the workforce. This research was conducted on alums of the Information Systems Program at Surabaya State University who graduated in 2022. The research method was an online survey with a quantitative descriptive analysis approach. **Results:** The results revealed that 25.0% of the respondents found the relevance of the Information Systems program to their jobs to be very close, 25.0% considered it close, 37.5% found it quite close, and approximately 12.5% did not find it very close. This indicates that the learning experience provided by the Information Systems program aligns well with job requirements and can be effectively implemented. **Novelty:** This research focused on aligning the competencies acquired by the Information Systems Program graduates at Surabaya State University. This focused approach on a specific program and year of graduation adds a novel perspective to the broader discourse on the effectiveness of higher education in meeting the demands of the job market.

INTRODUCTION

Education at a high level holds an essential position as a center for developing superior human resources. As the leading providers, higher education institutions have a significant role in ensuring quality student graduation. One sign of the success of quality students, as determined by the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 754/P/2020, is their success in obtaining suitable work. The quality of university study programs, especially in producing successful graduates, is closely related. One indicator of the quality of a study program is the extent to which the study program can adapt to the needs of employment and provide the human resources needed by the industrial world. If there is a good connection between the study program and the needs of the world of work, graduates will be readily accepted into the industrial world. However, many college graduates still need help finding work that suits their competencies. This causes graduates to be unable to meet industry expectations (Rivaldo & Isabella, 2023; Sabuhari et al., 2020; Vahdat, 2022).

The mismatch between the competencies taught in the study program curriculum and the needs of the world of work may be caused by a less dynamic curriculum that does not keep up with current developments. Therefore, the curriculum must continue to be developed to keep up with developments in science and technology as well as job market dynamics (Aljohani et al., 2022; Goulart et al., 2021; Gürdür Broo et al., 2021, 2022;

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