

THE EFFECT OF EDUCATIONAL MISMATCH ON THE PERFORMANCE OF FRESH GRADUATES: THE ROLE OF SELF- EFFICACY MEDIATION IN HONORARY PERSONNEL IN THE TEMBILAHAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

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Abstract: This study analyzes the influence of educational mismatch on the performance of fresh graduates of honorary staff in the Regional Government of Indragiri Hilir Regency, with self-efficacy as a mediating variable. Using a quantitative method with SEM-PLS and involving 100 respondents, the results showed that educational mismatch had no direct effect on performance ($p = 0.327$), but had a significant effect on self-efficacy ($p = 0.000$), which then improved performance ($p = 0.000$). This suggests that self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship. The recommendation for local governments is to improve competency-based training and workforce placement systems.

Keywords: Educational Mismatch, Fresh Graduate Performance, Self-Efficacy, Honorary Personnel.

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization marked by technological advances and increasingly fierce labor competition, fresh *graduates* face complex challenges in entering the world of work (Allen, J, *et al*, 2001). Many fresh graduates face a gap between the skills they have and the demands of the industry, especially in the digital era (Badan Kepegawaian Negara, 2023). One of the main challenges that is often encountered is *educational mismatch*, which is a condition where a person's educational background is not in accordance with the job they are doing (Serrano, *et al*, 2021) This phenomenon does not only occur in the private sector, but also penetrates the public sector, including in local government agencies. Many graduates are forced to accept jobs outside their field of study due to limited suitable vacancies, which has a significant impact on their motivation, job satisfaction, and performance (Sapitri, Januariyansah, 2022)

The mismatch between education level and job demands or *Educational Mismatch* is an increasingly frequent phenomenon, especially among *fresh graduates* (Suminar, Tri, 2024) This phenomenon occurs when individuals work in positions that are not in accordance with their educational background, either because they have higher qualifications (*overeducation*) or lower (*undereducation*) than the existing job requirements (Whitcomb, *et al*, 2020) *Educational Mismatch* can have a negative impact on work performance, especially for honorary personnel in the government sector who are often placed in various positions with diverse educational backgrounds (Cecilia Albert, 2021)

In Indonesia, honorary personnel are still one of the backbones in the implementation of local government administration. Based on data (Badan Kepegawaian Negara, 2023) the number of honorary personnel in government agencies reaches more than 2.3 million people, with most of them working at the regional level. In Indragiri Hilir Regency, including in Tembilahan as the capital of the Regency, *fresh graduates* who are recruited as honorary personnel without strict selection related to the suitability of their educational background with the position occupied. As a result, *Educational Mismatch* has become a relevant issue to be studied further, especially in relation to its impact on the performance of honorary employees. *Fresh graduate* (Jackson, 2016) is an individual who has just completed higher education and entered the world of work for the first time. Indicators of *Fresh graduate* are the level of work experience, the level of adaptation in the world of work, competence and skills, and expectations for career (Succi, *et al*, 2020). They often face challenges in adjusting to the work environment, developing professional skills, and increasing competitiveness in the labor market (Leuven, *et al*, 2021).

2. Literature Review

According to (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2023) *Educational Mismatch* is a condition in which a person's level of education or field of study does not match the requirements of the job they are undertaking. This can happen when a person works in a position that requires less education (*overeducation*) or higher education (*undereducation*) than they have, or when their field of study is not relevant to the job (*horizontal mismatch*) (Rubb, 2003). Various studies show that *Educational Mismatch* can affect an individual's productivity and job satisfaction. Studies by (Allen, *et al*, 2001) reveal that workers who experience overeducation tend to experience stagnation in their careers and lose motivation at work, while workers who experience *undereducation* often feel overwhelmed by tasks that exceed their capacity, indicators of *Educational Mismatch* such as *Overeducation*, *Undereducation* and *Horizontal Mismatch*. Meanwhile, research by (Verhaest, *et al*, 2006) found that *educational mismatch* can also lead to higher levels of intention turnover because employees feel that their work is not in accordance with their competencies.

However, some studies also show that the negative impact of *Educational Mismatch* can be minimized by certain psychological factors, one of which is *the individual's self-efficacy* or belief in his or her ability to complete work tasks (Minhajun, 2024). Individuals with high *self-efficacy* tend to be better able to face challenges and find solutions at work (Widyawati, 2025), so that they can still work optimally despite experiencing *educational mismatches* (Pajares, *et al*, 2021). In the context of honorary personnel in local government, *self-efficacy* can be a factor that plays a role in bridging educational incompatibility with work demands, allowing individuals to remain highly motivated and improve their performance (Schwarzer, *et al*, 1995). *Indicators of self-efficacy* are level (level of difficulty that can be handled), *Strength* (strength of self-confidence) and *Generality* (linkage to other situations) (Bandura, 2021).

This study aims to analyze the influence of *educational mismatch* on the performance of *fresh graduates* who work as honorary personnel in the Indragiri Hilir Regency Regional Government, as well as explore the role of *self-efficacy* as a mediating variable in reducing the negative impact of educational mismatch on performance. The results of this research are expected to make a practical contribution to local governments in improving the quality of honorary personnel and the efficiency of public services, as well as enriching the academic literature on *educational mismatch* and *self-efficacy* in the context of local government.

3. Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with the *Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares* (SEM-PLS) method to analyze the relationship between *Educational Mismatch*, *Fresh Graduate Performance*, and *Self-Efficacy* as mediating variables. SEM-PLS was chosen because it is able to test causal relationships simultaneously in complex research models with Instrument Tests through *outer models* and *inner models*.

The population in this study is all fresh graduate honorary personnel within the Indragiri Hilir Regency Regional Government. Sampling technique uses *Purposive Sampling* (Ferdinand, 2014), with the criteria: Honorary personnel who are *fresh graduates* (a maximum of 3 years graduates), work in local government agencies in Indragiri Hilir Regency, and experience educational incompatibility with their work (either *overeducation*, *undereducation*, or *horizontal mismatch*). In this study, the sample size was set as many as 100 respondents. The selection of this number is based on the flexible SEM-PLS analysis guidelines for small to medium samples, if in this study there are about 10 indicators, then the sample size is 100 respondents and still meets the minimum recommended limit for analysis using SmartPLS (Hair, *et al*, 2017).

The data collection technique was carried out through a Likert scale questionnaire (1–5) to measure *Educational Mismatch*, *Self-Efficacy*, and *Fresh Graduate Performance* (Djaali, 2021). The questionnaire was distributed in person (*offline*) and through *Google Forms* (*online*) to reach a wider range of respondents and ensure optimal participation. The research framework model can be described as follows:

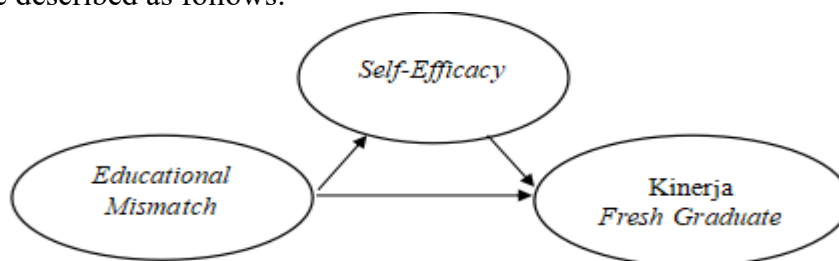


Figure 1: Research Framework

4. Result and Discussion

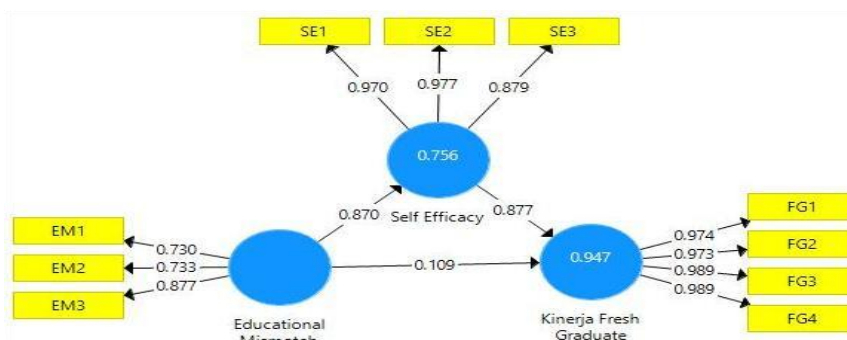


Figure 2: Outer Model Analysis Algorithm

The results of data analysis from 100 respondents who are honorary employees in the Regional Government of Indragiri Hilir Regency. The discussion included testing research instruments, analyzing the relationship between variables using SEM-PLS, and mediation tests to measure the role of *Self-Efficacy* in the influence of *Educational Mismatch* on *Fresh Graduate*

Performance. These results are expected to provide empirical insights related to the impact of educational incompatibility on the performance of honorary personnel.

Table 1. Outer Analysis of Research Variables

Indikator Variabel	Educational Mismatch	Kinerja Fresh Graduate	Self Efficacy	Nilai Outer Loading dan Cross Loading	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha
EM1	0,730	0,461	0,459	Valid	0,825	0,613	0,721
EM2	0,733	0,426	0,414	Valid			
EM3	0,877	0,744	0,647	Valid			
FG1	0,856	0,974	0,937	Valid	0,991	0,963	0,987
FG2	0,851	0,973	0,925	Valid			
FG3	0,858	0,989	0,942	Valid			
FG4	0,856	0,989	0,970	Valid	0,960	0,889	0,937
SE1	0,856	0,929	0,970	Valid			
SE2	0,856	0,974	0,977	Valid			
SE3	0,740	0,766	0,879	Valid			

Source: Researcher's Processed Data, 2025

Based on the results of data analysis, this research instrument is proven to have good validity and reliability. In terms of *convergent validity*, the *Outer Loading* value of the entire indicator is above 0.7, indicating a strong contribution to its construct. In addition, the *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE) value for all variables is more than 0.5, indicating that the construct is able to explain more than 50% of the indicator's variance – the indicator. The discriminant validity is also met, indicated by the *Cross Loading* value, where each indicator has a *loading* highest in its own construct compared to other constructs. This shows that each variable has clear differences and does not overlap with each other. In terms of *reliability*, the *Composite Reliability* (CR) and *Cronbach's Alpha* values for all variables exceeded the minimum limit of 0.7, indicating that this research instrument has a high level of internal consistency. The results show that the research instrument has met the standards of validity and reliability, so that it can be used for further analysis in understanding the influence of *Educational Mismatch* on *Fresh Graduate Performance* with *Self-Efficacy* as a mediating variable.

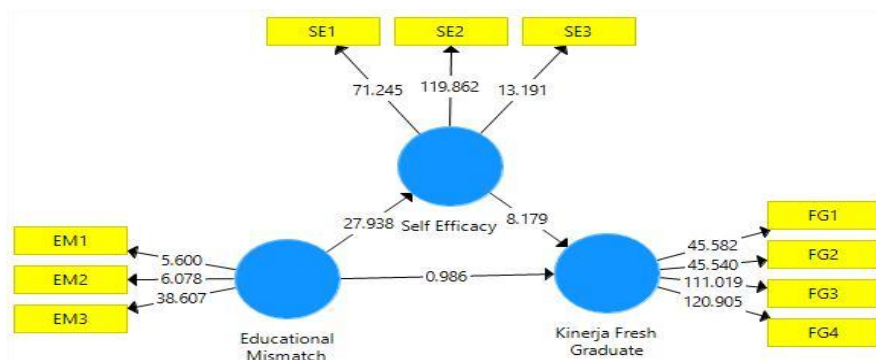


Figure 3. Bootstrapping Analysis Inner Model

Based on the results of the analysis using SEM-PLS, this study reveals that *Educational Mismatch* does not have a direct effect on the *Performance of Fresh Graduates*, but has a significant influence through *Self-Efficacy* as a mediating variable. This is evidenced by a *path coefficient* value of 0.109 with a p-value of 0.327, which shows that the direct relationship between *Educational Mismatch* and *Fresh Graduate Performance* is not significant. In contrast, *Educational Mismatch* had a strong relationship with *Self-Efficacy* with a coefficient of 0.870 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant positive influence. In addition, *Self-Efficacy* also has a significant effect on the *Performance of Fresh Graduates* with a coefficient of 0.877 and a p-value of 0.000.

Table 2. Internal Analysis of Research Variables

Relationships Between Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Information
<i>Educational Mismatch</i> → <i>Performance Fresh Graduate</i>	0,109	0,109	0,986	0,327	Insignificant
<i>Educational Mismatch</i> → <i>Self-Efficacy</i>	0,870	0,873	27,938	0,000	Signifikan
<i>Self-Efficacy</i> → <i>Fresh Graduate Performance</i>	0,877	0,877	8,179	0,000	Signifikan

Source: Researcher's Processed Data, 2025

The results of the *Goodness of Fit Model* show that independent variables have high predictive ability over dependent variables. This is reflected in the R^2 value of 0.947 for *Fresh Graduate Performance*, which means that 94.7% of the variation in performance can be explained by *Educational Mismatch* and *Self-Efficacy*. Meanwhile, *Self-Efficacy* has an R^2 of 0.756, which suggests that 75.6% of the variation in *Self-Efficacy* can be explained by *Educational Mismatch*. This value indicates that the research model has good feasibility in explaining the relationship between variables.

Self-Efficacy has an important role in improving the *Performance of Fresh Graduates*, especially for those who experience educational inconsistencies in their work. Therefore, strategies to increase *Self-Efficacy*, such as skills training, work motivation, and professional development, are very important aspects to be considered by local governments in managing fresh graduate honorary personnel so that they can work more optimally even though they experience *Educational Mismatch*.

5. Conclusions

The results of this study show that *Educational Mismatch* does not have a direct effect on the *Performance of Fresh Graduates*, but has a significant influence through *Self-Efficacy* as a mediating variable. This means that despite the discrepancy between the educational background and the work undertaken, the level of individual confidence and confidence in completing tasks can help improve the performance of fresh graduate honorary personnel. In addition, the research model used had a good Goodness of Fit, indicated by an R^2 value of 0.947 for *Fresh Graduate Performance* and 0.756 for *Self-Efficacy*, which means that this model is quite strong in explaining the relationship between variables. Thus, increasing *Self-Efficacy* is the key in overcoming the negative impact of *Educational Mismatch* on performance. Fresh graduate honorary personnel who have a high level of *Self-Efficacy* tend

to be more able to adapt, face challenges, and increase their work productivity in the local government environment.

Based on the results of the research, there are several recommendations that can be given. Local governments are expected to be more active in increasing the capacity of honorary personnel, especially for fresh graduates, through the implementation of competency-based training that includes technical and soft skills. In addition, there is a need for mentoring and coaching programs from senior employees to help the work adaptation process faster and more effectively. Local governments should also evaluate and place workers appropriately through needs analysis in order to minimize mismatches. No less important, local governments are expected to provide motivation and welfare support in the form of incentives and a supportive work environment, so that honorary employees can work more optimally. For researchers/academics, it is hoped that they can enrich the study by developing a research model that includes additional variables, such as work motivation or organizational support. In addition, the use of longitudinal methods is also important to see the long-term impact of educational mismatch on performance. Researchers can also conduct comparative studies on other sectors, such as the private sector or certain industries, to get a broader picture. Not only that, a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews is also recommended in order to understand the experience of honorary personnel in more detail and comprehensively.

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