THE INFLUENCE OF KIP-K SCHOLARSHIPS, LEARNING MOTIVATION, AND INTEREST IN HIGHER EDUCATION ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS (CLASS OF 2024) IN THE MANAGEMENT STUDY PROGRAM, FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS, UNIVERSITAS MALIKUSSALEH

M. Fikram[1], Khairawati[2*] Marbawi[3], Ibrahim Qamarius[4]

[1]Department Economy And Busines, Malikussaleh University, Indonesia.
(fikram.210410027@mhs.unimal.ac.id)
[2*]Department Economy And Busines, Malikussaleh University,Indonesia.
(khairawati@unimal.ac.id)
[3]Department Economy And Busines, Malikussaleh University, Indonesia.
(Marbawi@unimal.ac.id)
[4] Departemen Economy And Busines, Malikussaleh University, Indonesia.
(Ibrahim@unimal.ac.id)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of the Indonesia Smart College Card (KIP-K) scholarship, learning motivation, and interest in higher education on the academic achievement of first-year Management students (2024 cohort) at Malikussaleh University. The research highlights the role of scholarships as a government initiative to improve access to higher education for underprivileged students. However, academic success is also shaped by internal motivation and educational aspirations .Using a quantitative approach with Partial Least Squares (PLS) for data analysis, this study surveyed KIP-K recipients through questionnaires. The findings reveal that: (1) the KIP-K scholarship has a positive but insignificant effect on academic achievement, (2) learning motivation significantly and positively affects academic achievement, and (3) interest in higher education also has a significant positive influence. These results suggest that while financial assistance is important, students' internal drive and interest are more critical in achieving academic success. The study provides useful insights for universities and policymakers to enhance scholarship programs by integrating motivation-building strategies in higher education.

Keywords: KIP-K Scholarship, Learning Motivation, Higher Education Interest, Academic Achievement, First-Year Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a crucial role in developing human resources and driving national progress. However, access to tertiary education remains a significant challenge, particularly for students from underprivileged backgrounds. Socioeconomic disparities often prevent capable students from continuing their studies due to financial constraints. To address this issue, the Indonesian government introduced the *Kartu Indonesia Pintar Kuliah* (KIP-K) program, which aims to provide financial assistance for students with strong academic potential but limited economic means. The KIP-K scholarship is designed not only to alleviate the financial burden of tuition and living expenses but also to support students' persistence and motivation in higher education. While financial aid is critical in ensuring access, academic success is influenced by multiple factors, including internal motivation, interest in learning, and educational aspirations. Academic achievement,

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often measured by grade point average (GPA), is a key indicator used to evaluate the success of such scholarship programs. Malikussaleh University, located in Aceh, is one of the top three universities in Indonesia with the highest number of KIP-K recipients. The Management Study Program within the Faculty of Economics and Business ocnsistently attracts high enrollment, with over 400 students admitted annually. Given the significant number of KIP-K awardees, this university provides a strategic and relevant setting to investigate the real impact of the scholarship program on students' academic outcomes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The *Kartu Indonesia Pintar Kuliah* (KIP-K) is a scholarship program launched by the Indonesian government to support students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who demonstrate academic potential. According to Yusuf and Sari (2022), KIP-K contributes significantly to increasing access to higher education by reducing financial barriers, thereby enabling students to focus more on their academic goals. Beyond access, Goa Wea and Adiwidjaja (2018) found that scholarships such as KIP-K also positively affect students' academic motivation. Their findings suggest that financial aid serves as an external motivator, but its effectiveness depends on the students' internal willingness to achieve.

Motivation to learn is one of the most critical internal factors influencing academic performance. Saprianto et al. (2023) define learning motivation as a psychological force that determines the direction, intensity, and persistence of behavior in educational activities. Motivation can be intrinsic, arising from internal satisfaction and curiosity, or extrinsic, driven by external rewards or pressures. Aulia et al. (2023) argue that intrinsically motivated students tend to engage more actively in the learning process and exhibit stronger persistence, ultimately leading to better academic outcomes. This is supported by studies showing that motivation is a reliable predictor of academic success across various educational contexts.

Another important variable in academic achievement is students' interest in entering higher education. Wijaya (2023) and Oryza & Listiadi (2021) emphasize that students with a strong desire to pursue tertiary education tend to be more focused and committed, which enhances their academic engagement. Such interest is shaped by multiple factors, including parental encouragement, long-term career plans, and the perceived value of a college degree. Meiriza et al. (2023) note that scholarship programs like KIP-K play a dual role—not only alleviating economic burdens but also stimulating students' enthusiasm for higher education.

The interaction between financial assistance, learning motivation, and educational interest creates a synergistic effect on student performance. While KIP-K facilitates entry into higher education, its long-term success in fostering academic achievement depends on how well it aligns with students'

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internal motivation and aspirations. This is especially relevant for scholarship programs that aim not only to improve access but also to ensure retention and academic excellence. As such, evaluating the interplay among these variables is crucial for policymakers seeking to design more effective and sustainable education interventions.

Financial assistance programs such as the KIP-K scholarship aim not only to remove financial barriers but also to create equal opportunities for academic advancement. According to Hamzah (2008), financial aid must be accompanied by personal responsibility and academic engagement to produce tangible academic benefits. In many cases, scholarships can alleviate stress related to tuition and living costs, allowing students to focus more on their studies. However, without strong internal motivation, the availability of financial support alone may not translate into higher academic performance.

In addition, the combination of motivation and interest plays a critical role in shaping academic behavior. Suryabrata (2011) emphasized that academic interest is not only a result of external encouragement but also a reflection of the student's long-term goals and educational values. Students who are both motivated and genuinely interested in their field of study tend to approach learning with greater persistence and autonomy. This dynamic is particularly relevant for new university students, who must quickly adapt to independent learning environments while staying committed to their academic goals.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative explanatory approach to analyze the influence of KIP-K scholarships, learning motivation, and interest in higher education on academic achievement. The research was conducted at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, targeting first-year Management students (Class of 2024**)** who received KIP-K.

Data were collected using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire developed from validated indicators in previous studies. The sample was selected through purposive sampling, focusing on active KIP-K recipients.

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. The analysis included outer model evaluation (convergent and discriminant validity, composite reliability) and inner model evaluation (path analysis and bootstrapping) to test hypotheses and assess the structural relationships among variables.

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3.2 Sample

This study involved 161 first-year students of the Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Malikussaleh University, who were recipients of the KIP-K Scholarship. The sampling technique used was the census method (saturated sampling), in which the entire population was taken as the sample because the number was relatively manageable to study. The respondents consisted of 118 students from Aceh, 42 students from North Sumatra, and 1 student from West Sumatra.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through questionnaires distributed both directly and via WhatsApp to KIP-K scholarship recipients. The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

1. Respondent characteristics (age, gender, place of origin).
2. Research items related to the variables of KIP-K scholarship, learning motivation, interest in entering higher education, and academic achievement.

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1–5), ranging from *Strongly Disagree (1)* to *Strongly Agree (5)*.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method with the assistance of SmartPLS 4.0 software. The data analysis procedure included:

1. Outer Model: to test the validity and reliability of the research instruments.
2. Inner Model: to examine the relationships among latent variables.
3. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping technique, with hypotheses accepted if the *p-value* < 0.05 or the *t-statistic* > 1.96 at a 5% significance level.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

In testing the hypotheses, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was utilized to evaluate the significance of the relationships between variables. This process involved a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples to generate standard errors and t-statistics for each path coefficient. The significance of the relationships was determined using t-statistics and p-values, where a relationship is considered statistically significant if the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 (for a 5% significance level) or if the p-value is less than 0.10. These criteria ensure the robustness of the model in detecting meaningful effects among the latent variables.

4.2 Discussion

The results of this study reveal several important insights into the factors that influence students' academic achievement. First, although the KIP-K scholarship has a positive effect on

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academic performance, the effect is not statistically significant. This finding implies that financial support alone is not a sufficient determinan**t** of academic success. While scholarships help reduce the financial burden and enable students to access higher education, they do not automatically translate into improved academic outcomes unless accompanied by other supporting factors. These may include individual effort, study discipline, and a conducive learning environment.

This result aligns with prior studies, such as Yusuf and Sari (2022), who noted that KIP-K serves as a foundation to access education but must be reinforced with internal motivation and personal commitment. Students who rely solely on financial support without developing strong academic engagement may still struggle to achieve optimal performance. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the complementary role of financial aid—it removes barriers but does not directly build capacity.

In contrast, the study found that learning motivation has a strong and statistically significant effect on academic achievement. This reinforces existing theoretical and empirical literature which suggests that motivated students are more persistent, self-regulated, and goal-oriented in their studies. Motivation drives students to engage actively with their academic tasks, overcome challenges, and strive for higher performance. As highlighted by Saprianto et al. (2023), motivation—whether intrinsic or extrinsic—is a central psychological driver that enhances learning behavior and academic success. In particular, intrinsic motivation tends to foster deeper learning and long-term academic engagement, making it a key target for academic development programs.

Likewise, interest in pursuing higher education also demonstrates a significant and positive effect on academic achievement. Students who express a genuine desire to attend university often approach their studies with a higher level of enthusiasm, direction, and seriousness. This educational aspiration often stems from personal goals, family support, or a clear vision for future career opportunities. As noted by Wijaya (2023) and Oryza & Listiadi (2021), students with higher academic interest tend to have better focus and are more likely to persevere through academic challenges. This reflects the importance of aligning students' personal ambitions with institutional support systems to foster sustained achievement.

Taken together, these findings underscore a critical distinction: while external support (like KIP-K) is essential to providing opportunity, internal factors (motivation and interest) are more decisive in determining academic outcomes. Therefore, to maximize the impact of scholarship programs, it is essential not only to provide financial aid but also to design holistic interventions that cultivate students' motivation and clarify their academic goals.

Policy implications from this study suggest that scholarship providers and universities should consider implementing non-financial support mechanisms, such as mentoring, counseling, learning communities, and career planning workshops. These strategies can help reinforce internal factors that

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directly influence academic achievement and ensure that financial investments in education yield sustainable and meaningful outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that learning motivation and interest in entering higher education have a positive and statistically significant effect on students' academic achievement. These two internal factors play a pivotal role in influencing student performance, highlighting the importance of psychological readiness and personal aspirations in academic success. In contrast, the KIP-K scholarship, while showing a positive direction of influence, does not significantly affect academic achievement. This suggests that financial aid alone does not guarantee better academic outcomes unless supported by strong internal motivation and clear educational goals.

Overall, the findings emphasize that increasing access to education through scholarships must be accompanied by efforts to strengthen internal student factors. Academic achievement is shaped more by students' personal engagement, motivation, and interest than by financial support alone. Therefore, a more holistic and integrated approach is needed to improve educational outcomes among scholarship recipients.

Recommendations

1. For policymakers: Scholarship schemes like KIP-K should be supplemented with non-financial interventions, such as academic mentoring, motivational programs, and regular performance monitoring, to ensure that financial assistance leads to improved academic outcomes.
2. For higher education institutions: Universities should enhance student support services, including academic counseling, study skills workshops, peer mentoring programs, and career guidance, to foster learning motivation and long-term academic commitment among students.
3. For researchers: Future studies are encouraged to include additional influencing variables, such as parental support, prior academic achievement, learning environment, self-regulated learning, and digital literacy, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting student academic performance, especially in the context of scholarship recipients.
4. For scholarship recipients: Students should be encouraged to actively develop self-motivation and educational goals, take advantage of campus support resources, and engage consistently in learning activities to optimize the benefits of the scholarship and enhance their academic outcomes.

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