



## KIP-K Scholarships and Student Engagement: The Role of Organizational Commitment in Academic and Social Activities

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of the KIP Kuliah Scholarship on student engagement, both directly and indirectly through organizational commitment, within the context of a private higher education institution in Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach and structural equation modeling with SmartPLS 4, data were collected from KIP Kuliah scholarship recipients to analyze the proposed relationships. The results indicate that the KIP Kuliah Scholarship has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment and student engagement. The structural model shows strong explanatory power, with an  $R^2$  value of 0.600 for organizational commitment and 0.876 for student engagement, suggesting that student engagement is largely explained by the combined influence of financial support and organizational commitment. Mediation analysis confirms that organizational commitment plays a significant mediating role in strengthening the relationship between the KIP Kuliah Scholarship and student engagement. This study contributes theoretically by demonstrating organizational commitment as a key internalization mechanism through which external financial support is transformed into sustained student engagement, thereby extending existing scholarship literature beyond direct-effect models.

**Keywords:** *KIP Kuliah Scholarship; Organizational Commitment; Private Higher Education; Student Engagement; Structural Equation Modeling.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Student involvement in academic and social activities is an important indicator in improving the quality of higher education, especially in private higher education institutions (PTS). This involvement includes active student participation in learning, collaboration in groups, and contributions to campus organizations or communities (Astin, 1984). In the context of scholarship recipients, student involvement is closely associated with adequate financial support that enables students to participate more optimally in academic and social activities. One scholarship program that has

contributed significantly to improving access to higher education in Indonesia is the Indonesia Pintar Kuliah (KIP Kuliah) Program, which provides educational assistance to students from economically disadvantaged families and has been shown to enhance learning motivation and academic engagement.

The KIP Kuliah program not only provides opportunities for students to continue their higher education without being burdened by financial constraints, but also has the potential to increase their motivation and involvement in various aspects of campus life. Previous studies have shown that financial support such as scholarships can reduce economic pressure and allow students to focus more on academic activities (Santos et al., 2017). For example, research by Omeje & Abugu (2015) shows that scholarship recipients are more likely to achieve better academic success. In addition, Hermina et al. (2022) highlight that scholarships play an important role in increasing students' learning motivation, which in turn positively influences academic performance and students' willingness to participate in academic and social activities on campus. Recent studies further emphasize that student engagement is strengthened when financial support is accompanied by supportive academic and social environments that encourage sustained academic and social participation (Sá, 2023).

Financial support alone does not automatically translate into sustained student engagement. Prior theoretical work emphasizes that engagement is also influenced by non-financial dimensions, such as psychological support, institutional climate, and students' commitment to collective academic goals (Tinto, 2012). In this context, organizational commitment can be a key factor that strengthens the relationship between scholarships and student engagement. Organizational commitment reflects students' loyalty, responsibility, and dedication to organizations or communities on campus. This factor can serve as intrinsic motivation that encourages students to participate more actively in academic and social activities (Robbins et al., 2004; Fan et al., 2022).

Various studies support that scholarships integrated with the development of organizational commitment can have a more significant impact on student engagement. Kuh et al., (2008) revealed that high student engagement is the result of a combination of institutional support and intrinsic motivation. Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) also emphasized that student engagement does not only depend on facilities and resources, but also on interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging to the campus community. In addition, Zhu, Yao, and Talib (2025) demonstrated that supportive interpersonal relationships and psychological attachment within the university context significantly enhance student engagement, which in turn contributes positively to academic outcomes and the development of interpersonal skills.

In the context of private universities in Indonesia, research on the relationship between scholarships, student engagement, and the role of organizational commitment is still very limited. This is important because private universities often face challenges in terms of funding and resource management. Therefore, understanding how scholarship programs, such as KIP Kuliah, can be optimized to increase student engagement is an urgent need. This study highlights that although financial support has greatly helped students overcome economic constraints, psychological and social factors, such as organizational commitment, need greater attention to increase overall student engagement.

The urgency of this research is reinforced by the need to measure whether the provision of KIP Kuliah scholarships has a significant effect on student engagement in academic and social activities. This study also aims to examine the role of organizational commitment as a mediating variable in this relationship. By understanding this relationship, higher education institutions can design more effective and holistic scholarship policies.

This study was conducted at YAPAN College of Economics, one of the private universities with a significant population of KIP Kuliah scholarship recipients, particularly in the 2024, 2023, 2022, and 2021 cohorts. This study aims to measure the effect of KIP Kuliah scholarships on student involvement in academic activities and to measure the effect of KIP Kuliah scholarships on student involvement in social activities. This study also aims to assess the role of organizational commitment as a mediating variable in the relationship between KIP Kuliah scholarships and student involvement.

Despite the growing body of literature on scholarships and student engagement, empirical studies that explicitly examine organizational commitment as a mediating mechanism in the context of KIP Kuliah recipients at private universities remain limited. Most previous studies emphasize the direct effects of financial assistance on academic outcomes, with limited attention to the psychological processes that transform economic support into sustained academic and social engagement. Addressing this gap, this study offers a theoretical contribution by integrating Human Capital Theory, Organizational Commitment Theory, and Student Involvement Theory into a unified empirical model. The novelty of this research lies in positioning organizational commitment as a key psychological mediator that explains how the KIP Kuliah Scholarship enhances holistic student engagement within private higher education institutions in Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Scholarships and Student Development*

The KIP Kuliah Scholarship serves as a critical form of financial support aimed at increasing access to higher education for students from underprivileged backgrounds. Empirical evaluations of the program indicate that the KIP Kuliah Scholarship contributes to study continuity and improved access to higher education by reducing financial barriers that often hinder students' ability to remain enrolled in university (Najikh & Subowo, 2025). Scholarship recipients also demonstrate greater opportunities to engage in academic, collaborative, and social activities that support character building and self-confidence, particularly through involvement in campus organizations alongside academic responsibilities (Nuranggraeni & Clearesta, 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) views education as an investment that enhances individuals' productive capacity and social mobility. In the context of KIP Kuliah, financial support reduces economic barriers, allowing students to focus on academic engagement and skill development without excessive financial pressure. Empirical evidence supports this argument, showing that financial assistance enables students to participate more actively in learning activities and achieve better academic outcomes (Santos et al., 2017).

Beyond academic benefits, scholarships also function as a catalyst for students' social and professional development. Reduced financial constraints allow students to

expand their social networks, participate in campus organizations, and develop interpersonal competencies essential for future careers. These findings suggest that scholarships provide not only economic relief but also broader developmental opportunities within higher education institutions.

### *Student engagement*

Student engagement is a key determinant of success in higher education. According to Astin's (1984) Student Involvement Theory, engagement reflects the time, energy, and commitment students devote to academic and social activities, encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Higher levels of involvement are associated with improved academic achievement and the development of interpersonal skills essential for professional life (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Complementing this perspective, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) framework emphasizes both student effort and institutional practices that promote meaningful learning experiences. Engagement is fostered through academic challenge, collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and a supportive campus environment (Kuh et al., 2008). Beyond academic performance, engagement has also been shown to relate closely to students' academic well-being, including reduced levels of academic burnout, particularly within the context of Indonesian higher education institutions (Sari et al., 2025).

Self-Determination Theory further explains engagement as a function of psychological need fulfillment, particularly autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Lopez, 2025). When students feel supported, capable, and socially connected, their engagement tends to increase. In this context, adequate financial support plays an enabling role by allowing students to allocate greater attention and energy to learning activities without financial anxiety.

### *Organizational Commitment as a Mediating Mechanism*

Organizational commitment reflects individuals' emotional attachment, sense of responsibility, and willingness to remain involved within an institution. Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model conceptualizes commitment through affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. For students, affective and normative commitment are particularly relevant, as they influence identification with the institution and motivation to contribute to campus life.

Previous research suggests that scholarship recipients often develop stronger organizational commitment, particularly normative and affective commitment, driven by gratitude, loyalty, and a sense of obligation toward the institution (Eisenberger et al., 2023). Students with higher levels of commitment are more likely to engage actively in academic and social activities, which supports persistence and positive academic outcomes (Sá, 2023; Shomotova, 2025). Sustained engagement in organizational activities may also yield longer-term benefits, including career growth among scholarship alumni (Siregar, 2025).

Studies indicate that scholarships are most effective when embedded within supportive institutional environments that strengthen students' connectedness and sustained engagement. Institutional support and peer support mechanisms can reinforce students' willingness to participate and persist in academic and social activities (Parmar et al., 2025; Shomotova, 2025). These findings highlight that scholarships function

optimally not merely as financial instruments but as part of a holistic developmental ecosystem.

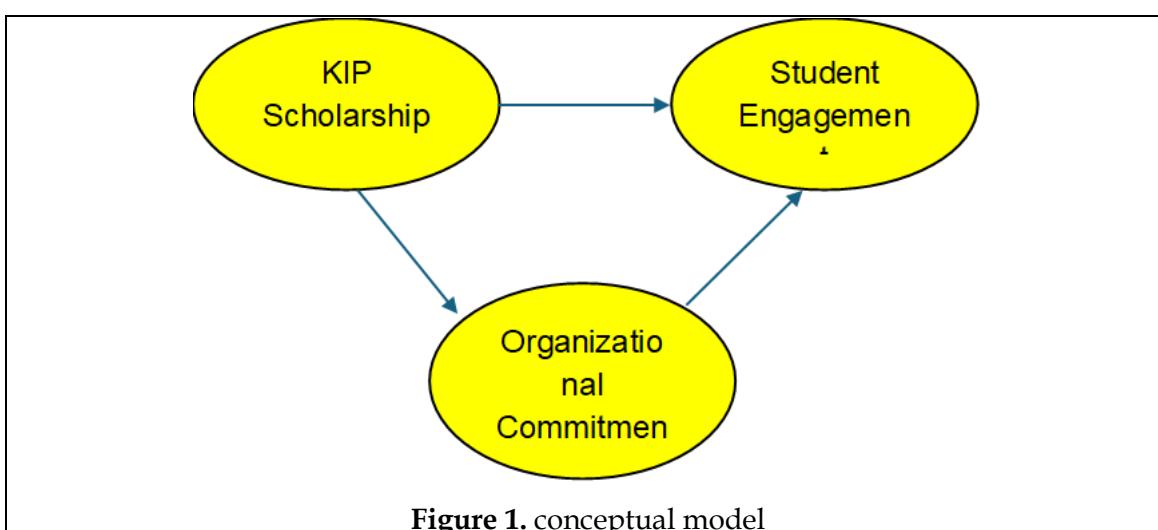
## METHODS

### *Research Methodology*

This study uses a quantitative approach to analyze the relationship between KIP Kuliah scholarships, student involvement in academic and social activities, and the mediating role of organizational commitment. A quantitative approach was chosen because it is suitable for measuring the causal relationship between variables that have been determined in a measurable manner. According to Creswell (2017), the quantitative approach allows researchers to use numerical data to identify patterns, test hypotheses, and determine relationships between variables objectively.

In this study, the quantitative approach was applied through data collection using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire instrument was designed based on relevant theories, such as the Student Involvement Theory (Astin, 1984) and Organizational Commitment Theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The use of a five-point Likert scale in the questionnaire aimed to measure respondents' perceptions more accurately regarding each research variable, such as the level of scholarship benefits, involvement in academic and social activities, and commitment to campus organizations.

This approach also involves inferential statistical analysis to identify relationships and influences between variables. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or PLS SEM is used as the main analysis method, as it allows researchers to test complex causal relationships between independent, dependent, and mediator variables simultaneously (Hair et al., 2019). With this approach, the study is expected to provide valid and reliable results to answer the research questions, which the researchers present in the following model of relationships between variables:



The conceptual model in this study describes the relationship between KIP Kuliah scholarship recipients, organizational commitment, and student involvement in academic and social activities. This model adopts a mediation framework, in which

organizational commitment acts as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of scholarships on student involvement.

In general, this model explains that receiving a KIP Kuliah scholarship not only has a direct impact on student involvement in campus activities, but also has an indirect impact through increasing student commitment to the organization or institution where they are studying. With the mediating variable of student commitment, this will either strengthen or weaken student involvement.

Students who receive KIP scholarships tend to have a high sense of moral responsibility or gratitude towards the institution. This feeling can encourage organizational commitment, which is a psychological condition in which students feel bound and motivated to contribute more actively to their organization or campus environment. This commitment will, in turn, increase student involvement, both in an academic context (such as active learning, participation in discussions, and academic organizations) and in a social context (such as participation in Student Activity Units, social activities, and community service).

This research model consists of three main interconnected pathways, namely the direct influence of KIP Kuliah Scholarship status on student involvement, the influence of KIP Kuliah Scholarships on organizational commitment, and the influence of organizational commitment on student involvement. By testing these three pathways, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of how and why the KIP Kuliah Scholarship can encourage increased student involvement in academic and social activities. Furthermore, this model also emphasizes the important role of organizational commitment as a psychological factor that bridges the relationship between financial support from scholarships and active student participation on campus, thereby strengthening students' attachment, motivation, and contribution to the educational institutions where they study.

### ***Population and Sample***

The population of this study consisted of all KIP Kuliah scholarship recipients at the YAPAN College of Economics, totaling 151 people. This number includes four batches of students, namely the 2021 batch, currently in their 8th semester, numbering 18 students; the 2022 batch, in their 6th semester, numbering 22 students; the 2023 batch, in their 4th semester, numbering 45 students; and the 2024 batch, in their 2nd semester, numbering 66 students.

With a relatively small population, this study used a census approach. All scholarship recipients were included as respondents to ensure that the results of the study reflected the actual conditions of the entire population. This approach was considered effective in providing more comprehensive and representative data on the impact of KIP Kuliah scholarships on student involvement in academic and social activities, as well as the role of.

### ***Research Instruments***

The research instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire consisting of three main sections to collect relevant data in accordance with the research objectives. First, a questionnaire designed to measure students' perceptions of the benefits of the KIP Kuliah scholarship they received. This section aims to find out how students assess the financial benefits and academic opportunities obtained through the

scholarship program, including how the scholarship affects the continuity of their studies.

Second, a questionnaire regarding student involvement in academic and social activities, using a five-point Likert scale. This scale covers dimensions such as participation in class activities, activity in campus organizations, and involvement in campus social events. This instrument was designed based on Astin, (1984) Theory of Student Involvement, which emphasizes the importance of active student participation for academic success and social development.

Third, a questionnaire measuring student organizational commitment, which refers to the theory of Meyer & Allen, (1991). This section measures three dimensions of organizational commitment, namely affective (emotional attachment to the organization), normative (sense of obligation to support the organization), and continuance (consideration of the benefits and disadvantages of continuing to participate). This questionnaire aims to understand the extent to which students feel attached to their campus organizations.

### ***Data Collection Techniques***

Data collection was conducted through an online survey using Google Forms distributed to all KIP Kuliah scholarship recipients at the YAPAN College of Economics. This online approach was chosen to facilitate respondent reach and support the paperless concept as an environmentally friendly measure. The survey lasted for two weeks to ensure maximum response from respondents, with periodic reminders to increase participation rates (Creswell, 2017). With this method, data can be collected efficiently, relevant to research needs, and support time and resource effectiveness.

### ***Measurement Model Evaluation (Validity and Reliability)***

Prior to testing the structural model, the measurement model was evaluated to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments. In PLS-SEM, this evaluation focuses on assessing convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability (Hair et al., 2022). Convergent validity was assessed using indicator loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Indicator loadings greater than 0.70 indicate that the indicators adequately represent their respective constructs, while AVE values exceeding 0.50 confirm that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. The results show that all indicator loadings met the recommended threshold, and all constructs achieved AVE values above 0.50, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. Discriminant validity was examined using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading analysis. Discriminant validity is established when the square root of the AVE for each construct is higher than its correlations with other constructs, and when each indicator loads more strongly on its associated construct than on other constructs. The analysis confirms that all constructs met these criteria, demonstrating adequate discriminant validity.

Construct reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Values above 0.70 indicate acceptable internal consistency. The results reveal that all constructs achieved Cronbach's Alpha and CR values exceeding the recommended thresholds, confirming that the measurement instruments are reliable for further structural analysis.

### ***Data Analysis Techniques***

The collected data were analyzed using two main techniques, namely descriptive and inferential. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the characteristics of the respondents, such as their age, class, and level of involvement, as well as to describe their perceptions of scholarships. Furthermore, inferential analysis is conducted using PLS SEM, due to its ability to test causal relationships between independent variables (scholarships), mediator variables (organizational commitment), and dependent variables (student involvement) simultaneously. With this technique, the study is expected to provide in-depth insights into the influence of scholarship programs on student engagement in academic and social contexts (Hair Jr et al., 2022).

## **RESULT**

After the measurement model satisfied the validity and reliability criteria, the structural model was evaluated to examine the relationships among the latent variables. The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0, focusing on the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), path coefficients, and hypothesis testing through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples.

The results indicate that the  $R^2$  value for Organizational Commitment is 0.600, meaning that 60.0% of the variance in organizational commitment is explained by the KIP Kuliah Scholarship. Meanwhile, the  $R^2$  value for Student Engagement is 0.876, indicating that 87.6% of the variance in student engagement is explained by the combined effects of the KIP Kuliah Scholarship and Organizational Commitment. According to the criteria proposed by Hair Jr. et al. (2022), these values fall into the strong category, suggesting high predictive relevance of the research model.

Hypothesis testing results show that all proposed relationships are statistically significant. The path from the KIP Kuliah Scholarship to Organizational Commitment is positive and significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, the KIP Kuliah Scholarship has a significant direct effect on Student Engagement ( $p < 0.001$ ), and Organizational Commitment significantly affects Student Engagement ( $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, the indirect effect of the KIP Kuliah Scholarship on Student Engagement through Organizational Commitment is also statistically significant, confirming the mediating role of Organizational Commitment in the proposed model.

The structural relationships among the constructs, including the path coefficient values and the contribution of endogenous variables generated from the SmartPLS analysis, are presented in Figure 2.

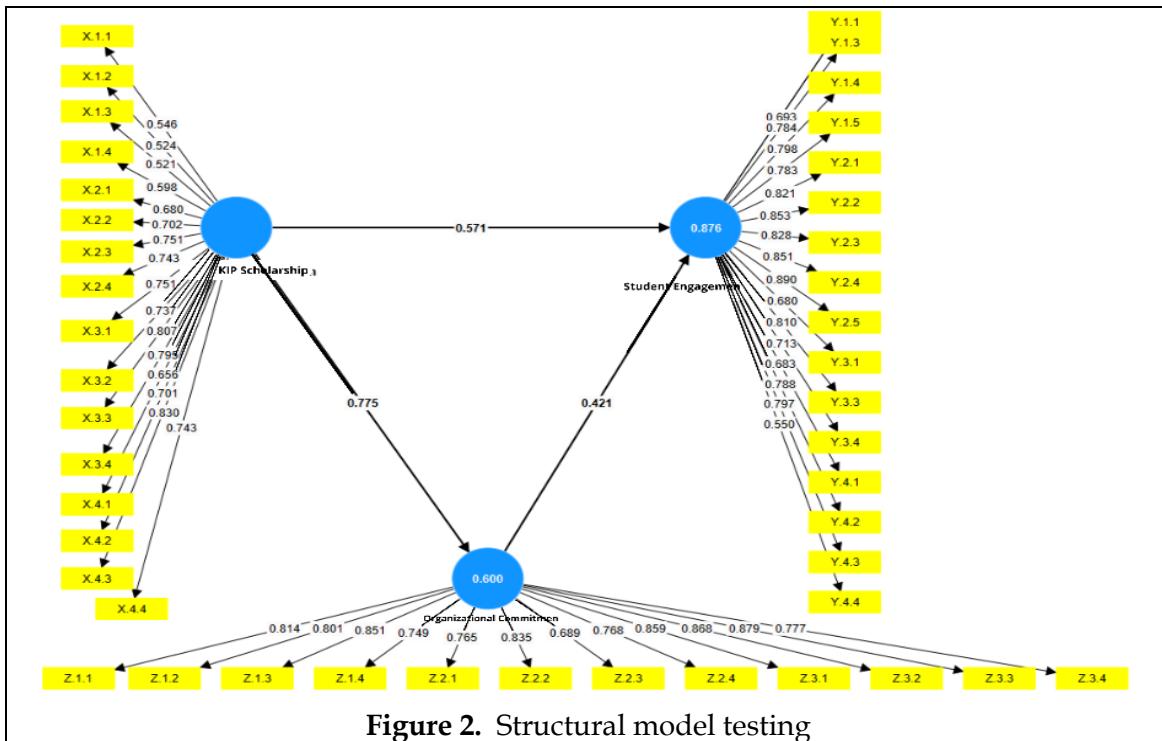


Figure 2. Structural model testing

Furthermore, significance testing using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples produced p-values below 0.05 for all structural paths, indicating that all hypotheses in the research model are supported. The detailed results of hypothesis testing are illustrated in Figure 3.

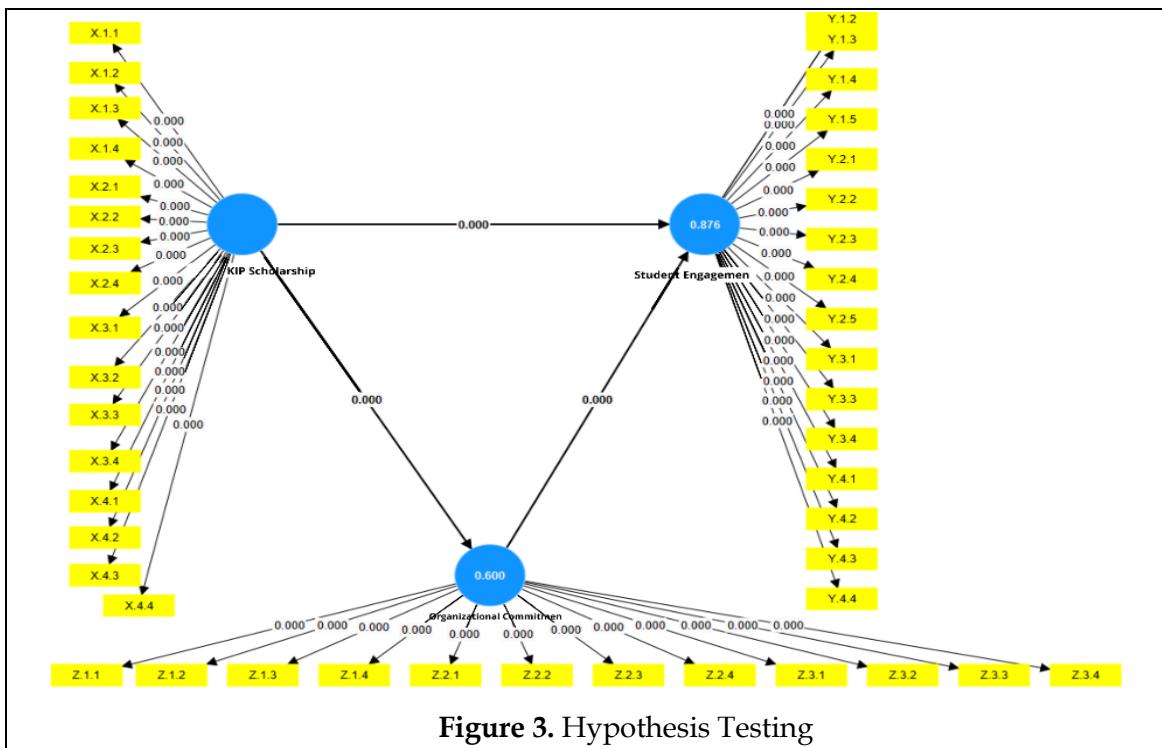


Figure 3. Hypothesis Testing

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the KIP Kuliah Scholarship has a significant effect on students' organizational commitment. This result suggests that scholarship provision does not merely function as financial assistance, but also generates psychological responses such as gratitude, loyalty, and a sense of responsibility toward the institution. These findings are consistent with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that individuals tend to reciprocate institutional support through positive attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, the result supports the concept of affective commitment proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991), indicating that tangible institutional support fosters emotional attachment among students.

In addition, the results reveal that Organizational Commitment significantly influences Student Engagement. Students with higher levels of organizational commitment tend to demonstrate greater involvement in academic, social, and emotional activities. This finding aligns with Student Involvement Theory (Astin, 1984), which emphasizes that engagement is a manifestation of students' emotional attachment and self-identification with their educational institutions. Empirical support for this relationship is also found in previous studies showing that committed students are more active in campus life and exhibit stronger academic persistence.

The study further confirms that the KIP Kuliah Scholarship has a significant direct effect on Student Engagement. Financial support enables students to focus on their academic responsibilities and participate in campus activities without economic pressure. However, the results indicate that the indirect effect through Organizational Commitment is stronger than the direct effect, highlighting the critical mediating role of commitment in strengthening the impact of scholarships on student engagement.

These findings suggest that Organizational Commitment acts as a key psychological mechanism that transforms external financial support into sustained academic and social involvement. This mechanism is consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which explains that external incentives can be internalized into intrinsic motivation when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and social connectedness. Recent empirical evidence further supports this mechanism, showing that perceived organizational support facilitates behavioral outcomes through the mediation of basic psychological needs, thereby reinforcing the process of psychological internalization that sustains engagement (Fan et al., 2022). In the context of higher education, motivation and engagement grounded in Self-Determination Theory have also been shown to significantly shape students' sustained academic and social involvement (Lopez, 2025).

The results also reinforce previous findings indicating that social support and a sense of belonging play an important role in enhancing student retention and engagement. In this context, the KIP Kuliah Scholarship serves not only as an economic instrument but also as a strategic tool for building student identity and institutional solidarity. This finding is consistent with **Zhu, Yao, and Talib (2025)**, who emphasize that supportive interpersonal relationships and institutional support foster students' sense of belonging, which in turn enhances learning engagement and academic persistence.

In the specific context of the YAPAN College of Economics (STIE), the findings indicate that scholarship recipients not only experience financial support but also develop a sense of moral responsibility and psychological attachment toward the institution. This sense of responsibility is reflected in stronger loyalty, attachment, and active participation in academic activities, student organizations, and social programs. Empirical studies have shown that scholarship programs such as KIP Kuliah encourage students' academic and organizational involvement when financial assistance is accompanied by institutional recognition and supportive learning environments (Arika et al., 2024; Meiriza et al., 2025). Moreover, faculty and institutional support have been found to strengthen students' sense of belonging and academic motivation, which in turn fosters sustained engagement and commitment (Crowe, 2021; Raboca & Cărbunărean, 2024).

While many studies report a positive association between financial aid and student engagement, other research suggests that financial assistance alone does not automatically translate into higher engagement. In contexts where institutional integration mechanisms and support systems are weak, scholarships tend to be perceived as transactional financial support rather than as part of a broader developmental framework (Kuzhabekova & Amankulova, 2023). The contrast between these findings and the present study underscores the importance of organizational commitment as a mediating mechanism, explaining how financial support becomes more effective in institutional environments that foster psychological attachment, belonging, and meaningful student integration.

This study contributes to the literature by empirically demonstrating the mediating role of Organizational Commitment in shaping holistic student engagement. Earlier research has primarily focused on the direct effects of scholarships on academic performance or retention, whereas the present findings reveal the psychological process through which financial support is internalized into sustained engagement. The integration of financial assistance with affective attachment and institutional belonging offers a more nuanced explanation of how scholarship programs operate within private higher education institutions in Indonesia.

These findings indicate that scholarship programs achieve their strongest impact when implemented within institutional environments that actively cultivate organizational commitment and student integration. Financial aid alone is insufficient to sustain engagement unless it is accompanied by psychological and social support that encourages students to internalize institutional trust and recognition. This combination enables scholarship recipients to translate economic assistance into long-term academic and social involvement, reinforcing the strategic role of scholarships in higher education development.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the KIP Kuliah Scholarship has a positive and significant effect on student engagement, both directly and indirectly through organizational commitment. The strong explanatory power of the research model indicates that student engagement among scholarship recipients is shaped by the interaction between financial support and students' psychological attachment to their

institution. These results underscore that scholarship programs extend beyond economic assistance and function as strategic mechanisms that foster a sense of belonging and institutional commitment among students.

The implications of these findings highlight the importance of integrating scholarship programs with institutional initiatives that strengthen organizational commitment. Higher education institutions may enhance the sustainability and quality of student engagement by complementing financial assistance with mentoring schemes, student development programs, and structured opportunities for participation in academic and social organizations. A supportive campus environment appears to play a critical role in enabling students to internalize institutional support and translate it into sustained engagement.

Future research may build on this study by employing longitudinal designs to examine changes in student engagement over time and by exploring additional mediating or moderating variables, such as institutional culture or leadership support. Expanding the analytical framework in this way would provide deeper insights into how scholarship programs can be optimized to support holistic student development in higher education contexts.

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