

# PREDICTORS OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE KAMPUS MERDEKA PROGRAM: TESTING THE EXTENDED THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR WITH INCENTIVES VARIABLE

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## Keyword

*Kampus Merdeka, Student Participation, Government Incentives, Theory of Planned Behavior, PLS-SEM.*

## Abstract

*The Kampus Merdeka program aims to scrape the gap between education and the rapidly changing work environment that has become an issue nowadays. Three years after launching the program, no research has examined the predictors of student participation in the program that are important for the policy maker to re-evaluate the program. On the other hand, the government spends a lot of money to run the program and give direct benefit for the students who participated in the program, but still not create enough opportunity for all students. This study analyzes the predictors and the impact of government incentives on students' willingness to participate. Using theory of planned behavior with additional incentive variables, the researcher distributes the survey through an online questionnaire to the students who are eligible to participate in Kampus Merdeka. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the significance predictors. As a result, attitude, subjective norm, and incentives significantly influenced students' intention to participate in the program. Intention, in turn, positively influenced actual participation. In contrast, Perceived behavioral control did not significantly affect intention or behavior. Attitude, subjective norm, and incentives play vital roles in encouraging student participation in the Kampus Merdeka program. These findings can guide policymakers and institutions in enhancing program effectiveness.*

## INTRODUCTION

Employment has become a common problem for countries with a booming population. Indonesia, as one of the most densely populated countries, enjoys the benefits of a demographic bonus in the late of 80s-90s with a booming of manufacturing sector. But now, with the development of technology that can replace human labor with technology-related solutions, it is becoming a major threat to employment levels in Indonesia as the automation industry grows in Southeast Asia and Australia (IFR.org, n.d.). This problem is also compounded by Indonesia experiencing faster deindustrialization and global trade dynamics which make the situation uncertain for business (Liu & An, 2022: 2; CNBC Indonesia, 2023).

To tackle the problem, the Indonesian government came up with the Kampus Merdeka, with objective to encourage students to master various knowledge that is useful for entering the world of work (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan., 2020: 1). The government hopes the student can study related to their needs, at their own pace and fastly adapt with the situation given the experience gained from the program about the work environment.

This are align with the opportunity that arises from the development of new startups and enterprises that absorb more than 55.903 workforce in 2019 (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika, 2019). This opportunity makes the market tighter and shifts the types of jobs that are open in the market, so the student need fastly adapt to the current types of job and skilled-demand in the market (Reych, 2016).

Three years after launching the program, this program has benefited more than 450.000 students in Indonesia, and more than 725.000 university students have been registered in Kampus Merdeka website. The survey from Tempo shows that 41% of the students who graduated from the program fastly got a job after graduation (Purnomo, 2023). This is becoming a good start for the government to scrape the gap between education and employment.

However, despite the success of the program and huge investment from the government to run the program that accounted for more than 1 trillion rupiah in 2021, the government is not opening up enough opportunities for students (Anjani, 2021). The data shows that the job postings on the website are experiencing delay, with only 300 job postings a week before closing even though the applicant is expected to grow more than 10%, with 59k applicants in the previous batch. The students' application was also limited to only 22 positions, which were not limited in the previous batch. Creating a masses competition between students, and a lot of student cannot experiencing the program.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to examine the behavior of the student in participating in the program. By examining the predictors, the researcher believes the government can make the budget more efficient, attract the student while creating more opportunities by cutting the budget incentives for the student and paying more vendors and stakeholders.

## 1. Theory of Planned Behavior

To analyze the predictor, the Author use Theory of Planned Behavior by Icek Ajzen, because this theory is well-known and proven to explain the consumer behavior (Ahmmadi et al., 2021). This theory intend to explain the human behavior using three aspect, which is attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. A lot of study uses this theory because of the flexibility of the model to add another variable and is already commonly used to determine consumer behavior (Ahmmadi et al., 2021).

### a. Attitude

Icak Ajzen (1985) explains that the attitude refers to the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior. Attitudes are often seen as a product of experience leading to individual differences and stemming from general, stable personal dispositions (Albarracin et al., 2018). This experience then becomes a basis of the human evaluation that drives human action, and in some cases, inaction.

### b. Subjective Norm

It defined as how social pressure from those seen as valuable for a person can influence the people's decision to perform or not perform the behavior (Kuhl & Beckmann, 2012). The person who is significant has a very wide meaning, but it is often a person who has a power towards others, people who are respectable, people who are significant or simply people who have close relationships.

### c. Perceived Behavioral Contro

Perceived Behavioral Control is defined as the individual beliefs about the ability to perform a behavior (Ahmmadi et al., 2021). It is often seen as the perception of a person in seeing the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (Kuhl & Beckmann, 2012). This perception is built by past experiences and the current active opportunities. That will be evaluated with a person's current skills, knowledge, resources, and also access to the opportunities. The person who has high perceived behavioral control, which thinks the behavior is in the person's control, will likely perform the behavior.

### d. Incentives

Incentives are one of the stimuli that can shape human behavior. It can come in many forms, such as monetary and non-monetary rewards. In particular, monetary incentives are one of the most commonly used to encourage individual target behavior (Ji et al., 2023).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

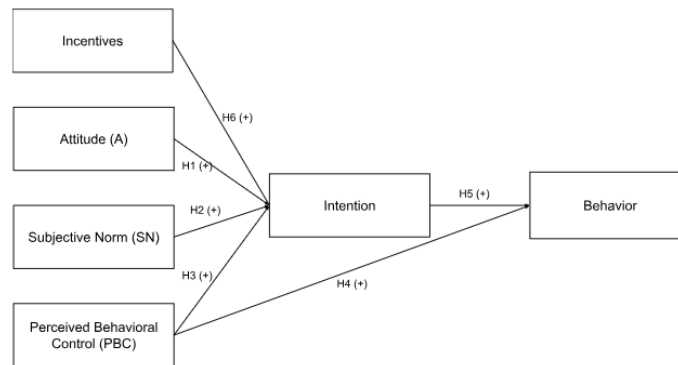


Figure 2 Extended Theory of Planned Behavior

## METHOD

The approach of this study will use a quantitative method considering the effectiveness of the quantitative method to evaluate and study the issue scientifically and give the immediate results to researchers. This approach is also efficient to test hypotheses, clarify the data, count them and build statistical models to explain the result of what is observed during the research.

The author uses Partial Least Square – Structured Equational Modelling as statistical tools to examine the significance of each predictor, considering the tools allows us to assess measurement properties and test key theoretical relationships in a single technique, only requires small sample size, and appropriate to examine the marketing management problem (Guenther et al., 2023).

## RESULTS

### 3.1 Indicator Reliability Test

According to Wong (2013), indicators can be considered as reliable if the outer loadings value is more 0.7 is preferred, but 0.4 is still considered as reliable for exploratory research. The author applied the reliability test to test 21 indicators. All the indicators are pass the test, indicating the measurement is stable and consistent.

### 3.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

According to Wong (2013), internal consistency reliability test is to assess whether all the indicators of a construct align with its value scores. The threshold value is 0.7, all the variable tested are considered as valid because the value is exceed the minimum value which is 0.7.

### 3.3 Validity Test

Validity tests refer to the accuracy and truthfulness of the research findings, to which extent a measurement instrument or procedure accurately measures what it intends to measure. Based on Wong (2014), the appropriate number for the AVE (average variance extracted) must be 0.5 or higher. On the first attempt, the incentives variable is not pass the test, with AVE value 0.442, below the threshold which is 0.5. The second attempt are running after the author remove two indicator with the lowest value of outer loadings. The result is all the variables is considered as valid.

### 3.4 Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity tests are used to assess the validity of the construct by assessing the AVE's square root values or the Fornell Lacker criterion. This analysis will help the researcher to distinct each variable as a measurement tool to capture unique aspects of each construct. According to Wong (2013), the root square of AVE has to be greater than the correlation of other latent variables to be accepted.

	Attitude	Behavior	Incentives	Intention	Perceived Behavioral Control	Subjective Norm
Attitude	0.790					
Behavior	0.455	1.000				
Incentives	0.600	0.557	0.769			
Intention	0.640	0.680	0.674	0.893		
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.560	0.488	0.554	0.549	0.801	

Table 1 Discriminant Validity Test Result

The table shown in table above indicate that the loading values of the indicator items on their respective constructs are higher than the cross loading values. This suggests that all the constructs have a strong discriminant validity.

### 3.5 Collinearity Test

The collinearity test objective is to avoid multicollinearity problems. Multicollinearity arises when there is redundancy or overlap in the information provided by the predictor variables. According to Wong (2013), as the rule of thumb, the VIF should be 5 or lower (i.e., Tolerance level of 0.2 or higher) to avoid collinearity problems. Based on the analysis, all the indicators pass the collinearity test because  $VIF < 5$ .

### 3.6 Structural Path Significance

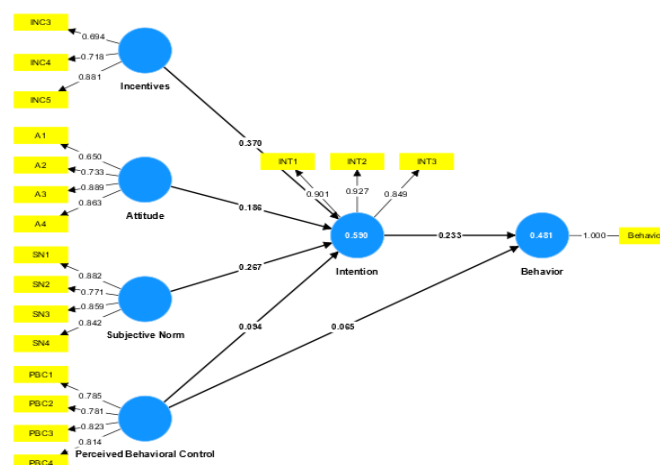


Figure 2 Structural Path Significance Result

The diagram above is the model that is already assessed by the PLS-SEM based on the data that already passed the reliable and validity test above. The model is consist of 6 variable, with 21 indicators. The researcher continues the analysis to evaluate the model.

R-square is a statistics value to measure the amount of variance in dependent variables explained by the model. According to the table below, the coefficient of determination, or r-square for intention variable is 0.590, meaning the incentives, attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are able to explain 59% of the variance in intention variable. Besides that, the r-square for Behavior variable is 0.481, meaning the intention and perceived behavioral control are able to explain 48.1% of variance in behavior. According to Wong (2013), the result of r-

square for intentions categorized as moderate because r-square >0.5, while r-square for behavior categorized as weak because r-square >0.25, but still acceptable.

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Behavior	0.481	0.473
Intention	0.590	0.578

Table 2 R-square result

### 3.7 Hypothesis Testing

Refer to Wong (2013), the hypothesis considered as accepted is when the path coefficient has a positive value of T-value is greater than 1.96 or the P values below 0.05. The table below summarizes the hypothesis testing result.

	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Result
Attitude -> Intention	0.082	2.260	0.024	Accepted
Incentives -> Intention	0.094	3.931	0.000	Accepted
Intention -> Behavior	0.039	5.929	0.000	Accepted
Perceived Behavioral Control -> Behavior	0.039	1.656	0.098	Rejected
Perceived Behavioral Control -> Intention	0.086	1.091	0.275	Rejected
Subjective Norm -> Intention	0.086	3.111	0.002	Accepted

Table Hypothesis Testing Result

- H1: Attitude has a significance positive relationship toward Intention
- H2: Incentives has a significance positive relationship toward Intention
- H3: Intention has a significance positive relationship toward Behavior
- H4: Perceived Behavioral Control has a significance positive relationship toward Actual Behavior
- H5: Perceived Behavioral Control has a significance positive relationship towards intention
- H6: Subjective Norm has a significance positive relationship towards intention

## DISCUSSION

The result shows, the attitude, subjective norm, and incentives variable significantly influence the student intention to participate in the program, and the intention variable significantly influences the person to perform the behavior. While perceived behavioral control is not significant to determine the intention and behavior of the students. Incentives have become the highest variable to influence the intention variable, with 0.370 per one-unit change in incentives, followed by subjective norm by 0.267, and attitude 0.186. Student intentions, on the other hand, are able to influence the behavior as much as 0.233 per one-unit change in intentions.

According previous studies from Ababneh et al., (2022), Ahmmadi et al., (2021), and Albarracin et al., (2018), the attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are positively significant to intentions, while the perceived behavioral control and intention are positively significant to actual behavior. The result is align with the research, expect the perceived behavioral control, that insignificance to intention and behavior.

Further studies of this research show that more than half of students are neutral and have low intention to participate in the program if the government does not provide monetary incentives for those who participate in the program (55%). And 38% of them have a neutral or low deal if the government is late in providing monetary incentives, indicating the importance of the monetary incentives to attract students to participate in the program. Thus, the result shows that the incentives is really important to attract the students to participate in the program.

## CONCLUSION

The objective of this research is to know and understand the factors that influence university students in deciding their participation in the Kampus Merdeka Program and how effective and important the incentives, especially monetary incentive to influence and attract the students to participate in the program. The purpose of this research is to know and understand the factors that influence university students in deciding their participation in the Kampus Merdeka Program and how effective and important the incentives, especially monetary incentives to influence and attract the students to participate in the program. To conduct this research, the researcher uses quantitative descriptive analysis and PLS-SEM analysis.

Based on the result of this study, the incentives variable becomes the most significant variable to explain the student's intention. That is said, the variable can change as much as 0.370 of student intention per one-change unit in the incentive variable. It follows by subjective norm and attitude. Considering the importance of monetary incentives, as the most impactful variable to influence student intention, the government right now is already right on track to provide various incentives for students who participate in the program.

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