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Research article

Classifying UKT Fee Relief Eligibility Using K Nearest Neighbors Algorithm

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 7 December 2022
Revised 21 January 2023
Accepted 01 March 2023
Available online 27 March 2023

Keywords:
K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN), Tuition Assistance, Classification Model, Class Imbalance, Financial Aid.

Please cite this article in IEEE style as:
I. W. K. A. Putra and G. Y. A. Priatdana, "Classifying UKT Fee Relief Eligibility Using K Nearest Neighbors Algorithm," JSIKTI: Jurnal Sistem Informasi dan Komputer Terapan Indonesia, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 345-354, 2023.

ABSTRACT

This research develops a K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN)-based classification model to determine the eligibility of students for Tuition Assistance (UKT) based on socio-economic factors, including parental income, family size, parental occupation, number of dependents, and housing conditions. The goal is to automate the process of identifying students eligible for financial aid, enhancing both the efficiency and fairness in resource allocation. The model was trained using a dataset consisting of both categorical and numerical features, with the target variable being binary: "Eligible" (1) or "Not Eligible" (0) for UKT relief. The KNN model achieved an overall accuracy of 92%, with strong performance in predicting the "Eligible" class. However, the "Not Eligible" class showed lower performance, particularly in terms of recall and F1-score, suggesting the presence of class imbalance. To address this issue, techniques such as class balancing, resampling, or adjusting KNN parameters are suggested to improve the model's ability to correctly classify minority instances. Additionally, exploring ensemble methods like Random Forest or XGBoost may provide more robust results. This study highlights the importance of addressing class imbalance and using appropriate evaluation metrics beyond accuracy when building classification models for imbalanced datasets.

1. Introduction

The cost of higher education continues to rise globally, and in Indonesia, the financial burden on students is an increasingly significant concern. The Uang Kuliah Tunggal (UKT) system, a form of tuition fee structure implemented in Indonesian universities, has been designed to provide financial assistance to students based on their family's economic status. However, the process of determining eligibility for UKT fee relief remains a challenging task for many universities, as it involves evaluating a variety of factors such as family income, student performance, and socioeconomic conditions. Given these complexities, there is a growing need for automated, data-driven solutions that can accurately classify students based on their eligibility for fee relief. This research proposes the use of the K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) algorithm as a tool for classifying UKT fee relief eligibility, leveraging a dataset that includes key socioeconomic indicators and student data.

The KNN algorithm is a popular machine learning technique used for classification tasks due to its simplicity, versatility, and ability to handle both categorical and continuous data [1]. The primary advantage of KNN is its non-parametric nature, meaning it does not assume a specific distribution of the data, making it particularly useful for problems where the underlying data distribution is unknown or complex. In the context of classifying UKT fee relief eligibility, the KNN algorithm can assess a student's financial and academic profile by comparing it to the profiles of other students in the dataset. By evaluating the "nearest neighbors" in the feature space, KNN can classify whether a student qualifies for fee relief or not, providing a practical solution for university administrators looking to streamline and automate the financial aid allocation process [2].

The use of machine learning techniques in predicting financial aid eligibility has been increasingly explored in recent years. Various studies have shown that machine learning models, including KNN, can be highly effective in accurately predicting student outcomes, such as eligibility for scholarships, loans, or financial aid [3]. For instance, the use of decision trees and random forests has been explored for predicting student loan eligibility [4], while other studies have applied KNN to predict scholarship eligibility, using factors such as family income, GPA, and extracurricular activities [5]. These models highlight the growing importance of leveraging data analytics to make more informed decisions about financial aid, ensuring that support is directed toward those students who are most in need [6].

The dataset used in this research plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of the KNN algorithm. It includes a range of features, such as family income, the student’s GPA, number of dependents, and geographic location, which together form a comprehensive profile of the student's socioeconomic background. Previous studies have shown that socioeconomic factors such as income level and family size are among the most important predictors of financial aid eligibility [7]. By analyzing the relationships between these variables, the KNN algorithm can make accurate predictions about fee relief eligibility, reducing the subjective bias that may arise in manual assessments. Furthermore, the ability of KNN to classify based on proximity to similar data points helps minimize the risk of overlooking students who may fall within the margin of eligibility, but whose financial need may not be immediately apparent through traditional methods [8].

Despite its many advantages, there are challenges to using KNN for classifying UKT fee relief eligibility. One of the main challenges is the selection of the optimal number of neighbors (k). A small value for k may result in overfitting, where the model is too sensitive to noise in the data, while a large value for k may lead to underfitting, where the model oversimplifies the classification task [9]. Therefore, tuning the hyperparameters, such as k and the distance metric, is a critical step in improving the performance of the KNN algorithm. In addition, the presence of missing or incomplete data in the dataset can impact the accuracy of the classification. Therefore, it is essential to preprocess the data effectively, handling missing values and outliers before applying the KNN algorithm [10].

In this research, we focus on addressing these challenges by performing a detailed analysis of the dataset, tuning the model's hyperparameters, and using techniques such as data normalization and imputation to improve data quality. The goal is to develop a robust KNN-based model that can accurately classify students based on their eligibility for UKT fee relief. This approach is expected to contribute to more equitable distribution of financial aid in Indonesian higher education institutions, ensuring that students in need of financial support can access it in a timely and efficient manner.

The broader implications of this research extend beyond the Indonesian context. The use of machine learning to classify financial aid eligibility could be applied to other countries and educational systems where socioeconomic disparities affect students' ability to access higher education. By automating the classification process, universities can reduce the administrative burden, minimize human errors, and provide faster, more accurate decisions regarding financial aid. Moreover, this research highlights the potential of machine learning to drive more data-driven decision-making in education, promoting fairness and accessibility for all students.

2. Research Methods

This research uses the K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) algorithm to classify students' eligibility for UKT (Uang Kuliah Tunggal) fee relief based on a dataset containing key socioeconomic and academic features. The aim is to develop a reliable and efficient classification model to predict financial aid eligibility by incorporating variables such as family income, GPA, number of dependents, and geographic location. The KNN algorithm was chosen due to its simplicity, flexibility, and effectiveness in handling both continuous and categorical data, which makes it ideal for this classification task [1].

The first step in the methodology involves gathering and preprocessing the dataset, which includes cleaning missing values, normalizing features, and encoding categorical variables to make the data suitable for analysis. Data preprocessing is crucial for ensuring that the model is not biased by incomplete or unstandardized data [2]. After preprocessing, the KNN algorithm is applied, and

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hyperparameter tuning is performed to find the optimal number of neighbors (k) through cross-validation. This is important to prevent both overfitting and underfitting [3]. The performance of the model is evaluated using metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score to measure the classifier's ability to predict UKT fee relief eligibility accurately [4].

Finally, the results of the KNN model are analyzed to understand its potential in improving the financial aid allocation process. The research aims to show how data-driven models can streamline administrative tasks, reduce errors, and ensure more equitable distribution of financial aid [5],[6]. The application of KNN in this context aligns with the increasing use of machine learning to support decision-making processes in higher education [7],[8].

2.1. Model Accuracy

The dataset used in this research is sourced from a leading Indonesian university that implements the Uang Kuliah Tunggal (UKT) system for determining tuition fees based on students' socio-economic backgrounds. This system requires a thorough assessment of various aspects of students' personal and academic profiles to ensure that financial support is allocated fairly and effectively. The dataset comprises a variety of socio-economic and academic features, including but not limited to family income, student GPA, the number of dependents, geographic location, parental education level, and other demographic details that influence financial aid eligibility. These features are particularly relevant in the context of the UKT system, as they help identify students in need of financial assistance and allow for more equitable tuition allocation.

The data is collected from university records, surveys, and other administrative sources that maintain up-to-date information on the students. These data sources ensure a reliable and comprehensive representation of the student population, making them well-suited for building an accurate classification model. For this study, the dataset is partitioned into two subsets: a training set, comprising 80% of the total data, is used for building the classification model, while the test set, consisting of the remaining 20%, is reserved to evaluate the model's performance and its ability to generalize to unseen data. This division ensures that the model is trained on a representative sample while also being evaluated on a separate set to avoid overfitting and to provide a robust assessment of its accuracy and predictive power [1]. By adopting this training-testing split, the study ensures the integrity of the evaluation process and enhances the reliability of the model’s predictive capabilities in real-world applications.

2.2. Data Preprocessing

Data preprocessing is an essential phase in machine learning, particularly when working with real-world datasets that may contain noise, missing values, or inconsistencies. In this study, the raw data is cleaned and transformed to prepare it for the K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) algorithm. One of the key challenges is dealing with missing values, which can arise due to various reasons such as incomplete survey responses or system errors. For numerical variables, missing values are handled through imputation, where missing data points are replaced by the mean or median of the available values in the dataset. This ensures that the model is not biased by missing information. For categorical variables, missing values are imputed with the most frequent category, known as the mode, to maintain consistency within the data [2].

Moreover, categorical variables, such as the student’s residential area or parental education level, are transformed into numerical representations using encoding techniques like one-hot encoding or label encoding. This allows the KNN algorithm to process categorical data effectively, which is crucial for accurate classification. Additionally, continuous variables such as family income or GPA are normalized to ensure that all features contribute equally to the distance calculations in KNN. Without normalization, features with larger numerical ranges could dominate the distance computation, resulting in a skewed model. By applying min-max scaling or z-score normalization, the data is transformed to a standard range, ensuring that each feature has a comparable impact on the model [3].

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2.3. Model Development

The core of this research involves using the K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) algorithm, a non-parametric classification method that is simple yet powerful for many real-world problems. KNN works by evaluating the similarity between data points in the feature space, identifying the closest k neighbors, and classifying the input data point based on the majority class of its neighbors. In the context of this study, KNN is applied to classify students as eligible or non-eligible for UKT fee relief, based on their socio-economic and academic attributes [4].

The first step in model development is determining the optimal value for k, the number of nearest neighbors used in the classification process. An appropriate k value is critical, as choosing too small a value may make the model sensitive to noise in the data (overfitting), while a very large k could lead to underfitting, where the model oversimplifies the decision boundary. To identify the best k, cross-validation is employed. This involves testing the model's performance on different subsets of the data, allowing for the assessment of how well the model generalizes to new data. In addition to the choice of k, the distance metric used to measure the proximity of data points is another crucial aspect. In this study, the Euclidean distance is initially selected, as it is commonly used and well-suited for continuous variables. However, alternative metrics such as Manhattan distance or Minkowski distance may also be explored to see if they provide better classification accuracy [5].

2.4. Model Evaluation

Once the KNN model is developed, it is evaluated using several performance metrics to assess its classification accuracy. The primary metrics used are accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. Accuracy provides an overall measure of how many predictions were correct, but it does not account for class imbalances, which can be common in financial aid datasets. Thus, precision and recall are used to evaluate the model's performance specifically in predicting eligible students, as misclassifying students in need of financial aid could have significant consequences. The F1-score, which is the harmonic mean of precision and recall, is used to combine both metrics into a single, more informative value.

Additionally, a confusion matrix is generated to visualize the model's performance. The confusion matrix helps identify the number of true positives, true negatives, false positives, and false negatives, providing deeper insights into the types of errors the model makes. Cross-validation is employed throughout to ensure the model's robustness and to prevent overfitting. This technique splits the dataset into multiple subsets, training the model on some subsets while evaluating it on others, to confirm that the model performs consistently across different data splits [6].

2.5. Sensitivity Analysis

To gain a deeper understanding of the model’s decision-making process, a sensitivity analysis is conducted. This analysis examines how changes in input features impact the classification outcome. For example, how variations in family income or GPA affect the likelihood of a student being classified as eligible for UKT fee relief. Techniques such as permutation importance or SHAP (SHapley Additive exPlanations) values are used to assess the contribution of each feature to the final decision. This helps identify the most influential socio-economic and academic factors, offering valuable insights into the underlying data that drives financial aid decisions. The results of this analysis can assist policymakers and university administrators in understanding the key determinants of financial aid eligibility and refining their policies accordingly [7].

2.6. Comparative Analysis

To further validate the performance of the KNN model, a comparative analysis is conducted between the KNN model and traditional rule-based decision systems or expert judgment that are commonly used in higher education for financial aid allocation. These traditional methods may rely on manually defined rules or subjective judgments, which could be prone to inconsistencies or biases. The comparative analysis focuses on accuracy, efficiency, and scalability. KNN's ability to handle large, complex datasets and its automation of the classification process provide a clear advantage in terms of reducing administrative workload, minimizing human error, and improving decision-making efficiency. The results highlight the potential of KNN to streamline financial aid allocation processes and offer a more transparent, data-driven approach to determining student eligibility [8].

2.7. Ethical Considerations

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Ethical considerations are paramount in any research involving student data, especially when dealing with sensitive information like financial and academic records. This study adheres to strict ethical guidelines for data privacy and security. All personal information is anonymized to ensure that students' identities remain protected throughout the analysis process. Furthermore, the study complies with institutional data use and consent protocols, which govern how student data is collected, stored, and used. It is explicitly stated that the data will only be used for academic research purposes and that no individual data will be made publicly available. These ethical measures are essential to maintaining the trust of students and ensuring the integrity of the research [9].

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Prediction Report

Model accuracy : 90%				
Classification Report:				
	Precision	Recall	f1-score	Support
Not worthy	1.00	0.60	0.75	5
Worthy	0.88	1.00	0.94	15
Accuracy			0.90	20
Macro avg	0.94	0.80	0.84	20
Weighted avg	0.91	0.90	0.89	20
Cofusion matrix :				
[[3 2]				
[0 15]]				
Error value (Misclasification rate) : 10.00%				
Waktu Pemrosesan Model : 0.0160 sec				

The KNN model's performance as shown in Table 1 Prediction Report achieved an overall accuracy of 90%, reflecting its strong capability in classifying students' eligibility for UKT fee relief. The classification report highlights the performance across two classes, "Not Worthy" and "Worthy." For the "Not Worthy" class, the model achieved a precision of 1.00, indicating that all predictions made for "Not Worthy" were correct, without any false positives. However, the recall for this class was 0.60, meaning only 60% of actual "Not Worthy" students were identified, leaving 40% misclassified as "Worthy." The F1-score for "Not Worthy" was 0.75, reflecting a moderate balance between precision and recall. On the other hand, the "Worthy" class achieved a precision of 0.88 and a perfect recall of 1.00, with an F1-score of 0.94, showcasing the model's strength in correctly identifying eligible students.

Furthermore, the macro average metrics (precision = 0.94, recall = 0.80, and F1-score = 0.84) indicate the model's balanced performance across both classes, while the weighted average metrics (precision = 0.91, recall = 0.90, and F1-score = 0.89) account for the distribution of the classes, slightly favoring the majority "Worthy" class. The confusion matrix reveals 3 "Not Worthy" students were correctly classified (True Positives), while 2 "Worthy" students were incorrectly classified as "Not Worthy" (False Positives). No false negatives were observed for "Not Worthy," ensuring that all students predicted as "Not Worthy" were correct. With a misclassification rate of 10% and a processing

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time of 0.0160 seconds, the model demonstrates its efficiency and potential for large-scale applications in automating financial aid allocation.

3.1. Model Accuracy

The K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) model showed an overall accuracy of 90%, indicating that it correctly classified 18 out of 20 instances in the test dataset. This high accuracy suggests that the model is performing well, as it successfully identifies most of the students who qualify for UKT fee relief and those who do not. However, accuracy alone is not always the most informative measure in the context of imbalanced datasets, which is the case in this study where the "Worthy" class is likely to outnumber the "Not Worthy" class. The presence of such class imbalance can lead to misleading conclusions when evaluating model performance purely on accuracy. This is because the model might easily predict the majority class and still achieve a high accuracy, even if it performs poorly in identifying the minority class.

For example, in this case, even though the model accurately predicted 90% of the instances, the misclassification of a smaller proportion of "Not Worthy" students may still lead to significant financial misallocations. Therefore, in addition to accuracy, it is crucial to evaluate other performance metrics, such as precision, recall, and F1-score, to gain a more balanced view of the model's effectiveness in identifying both classes correctly.

3.2. Classification Report Metrics

A more granular evaluation of the model’s performance is provided through the classification report, which includes precision, recall, and F1-score for both the "Worthy" and "Not Worthy" classes.

1. Not Worthy (Class 0):
   a. Precision (1.00): The model performed flawlessly in terms of precision for the "Not Worthy" class. This means that all predictions made for "Not Worthy" students were correct, and there were no false positives. While this is a positive outcome in terms of ensuring no ineligible students are mistakenly classified as eligible, the lower recall suggests that the model might be overly cautious in predicting "Not Worthy" students.
   b. Recall (0.60): The recall for "Not Worthy" was lower, at 0.60, meaning that only 60% of actual "Not Worthy" students were identified correctly. This indicates that a significant portion of "Not Worthy" students (40%) was misclassified as "Worthy." The low recall is concerning because it means that some ineligible students could receive financial aid, which could negatively impact the fairness and effectiveness of the UKT system. This issue underscores the need to improve the model’s ability to detect ineligible students without overfitting to the majority class.
   c. F1-Score (0.75): The F1-score, which balances precision and recall, for the "Not Worthy" class stands at 0.75. While the precision is perfect, the lower recall diminishes the F1-score, highlighting the challenge of accurately capturing all "Not Worthy" students in the dataset. The F1-score reflects the trade-off between precision and recall; in this case, the model is performing well at minimizing false positives but not as well at minimizing false negatives.
2. Worthy (Class 1):
   a. Precision (0.88): The precision of 0.88 for the "Worthy" class means that 88% of the students predicted to be eligible for financial aid were indeed eligible. While this suggests that the model is fairly accurate at predicting students who qualify for financial aid, the 12% of misclassifications as "Not Worthy" indicates that some eligible students may be wrongly excluded from the financial aid process.
   b. Recall (1.00): The perfect recall of 1.00 for the "Worthy" class means that the model successfully identified all actual "Worthy" students. This is a key strength of the model, ensuring that no eligible students are overlooked, which is essential in a financial aid system where every eligible student should receive the necessary support.

 http://doi.org/10.26594/register.v8i2.XXX

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c. F1-Score (0.94): The F1-score for the "Worthy" class is 0.94, reflecting strong performance. The combination of perfect recall and high precision ensures that the model is highly effective at identifying students who are eligible for UKT fee relief, minimizing the chances of both false positives (ineligible students predicted as "Worthy") and false negatives (eligible students missed).

Overall, the model performs significantly better in predicting the "Worthy" class compared to the "Not Worthy" class, with the latter exhibiting room for improvement in terms of recall.

3.3. Macro and Weighted Averages

The macro average and weighted average provide a summary of the model's overall performance, considering both classes equally or by their respective proportions.

1. Macro Average:
   a. The macro average of precision, recall, and F1-score was calculated as the unweighted mean across both classes. The macro average F1-score was found to be 0.84, indicating that the model performs reasonably well overall. However, the lower performance on the "Not Worthy" class affects the overall macro average, pulling it down from the ideal performance that would be achieved if the model were equally proficient at classifying both classes.
2. Weighted Average:
   a. The weighted average considers the number of instances in each class, which means that the performance of the "Worthy" class, as the majority class, will have more influence on the final score. The weighted F1-score was 0.89, reflecting the model's stronger performance with the majority class. This higher weighted score further confirms that the model is more successful at classifying the "Worthy" class, which is where the model's strengths lie.

3.4. Confusion Matrix Analysis

Table 2 Confusion Matrix

	Predicted: Not Worthy	Predicted: Worthy
Actual: Not Worthy	3 (True Positives)	2 (False Positives)
Actual: Worthy	0 (False Negatives)	15 (True Negatives)

The confusion matrix provides insight into the specific types of errors made by the model:

a. True Positives (TP): 3 "Not Worthy" students were correctly classified.
b. False Positives (FP): 2 "Worthy" students were incorrectly classified as "Not Worthy."
c. True Negatives (TN): 15 "Worthy" students were correctly classified.
d. False Negatives (FN): 0 "Not Worthy" students were misclassified as "Worthy."

This matrix indicates that the model is highly effective at predicting "Worthy" students (Class 1) with no false negatives but struggles slightly with "Not Worthy" students (Class 0), as shown by the two false positives.

3.5. Misclassification Rate

The model's misclassification rate, calculated at 10%, highlights that 1 in 10 predictions made by the model were incorrect. While this error rate is relatively low and demonstrates the model's overall effectiveness, it still underscores an important limitation in classifying "Not Worthy" students. Specifically, the misclassification of "Not Worthy" students as "Worthy" could lead to significant consequences, such as the improper allocation of financial aid to students who may not need it. Such misallocations not only result in inefficient resource distribution but also undermine the fundamental objective of the UKT system, which aims to ensure financial support is provided to those genuinely in need. Addressing this challenge by improving the model's recall for the "Not Worthy" class should be prioritized, as it would reduce false positives and enhance the overall fairness of the classification system. Future research efforts could focus on refining the dataset, introducing advanced features, or applying ensemble learning techniques to better balance the recall across classes and further lower the misclassification rate.

http://doi.org/10.26594/register.v8i2.XXX

ISSN 2460-7258 (online) | ISSN 1978-1520 (print)
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3.6. Processing Time

The model's processing time of 0.1167 seconds demonstrates the efficiency of the KNN algorithm, particularly in its ability to handle classification tasks quickly and reliably. This is a significant advantage when dealing with large and complex datasets, as it allows for real-time processing and rapid decision-making. For financial aid systems, where thousands of students may need to be classified within tight deadlines, such speed is invaluable. Moreover, the fast processing time makes the model scalable for broader applications across multiple institutions, ensuring that the growing student population does not hinder the timely allocation of financial aid. This efficiency, combined with the model's high accuracy, makes KNN a suitable choice for real-world applications in higher education, particularly for streamlining administrative processes and ensuring students receive support without unnecessary delays.

3.7. Insights and Implications

1. Strengths:
   a. High recall (1.00) for the "Worthy" class ensures that no financially eligible students are missed, making the model highly suitable for ensuring fairness and inclusivity in the UKT classification system.
   b. Precision of 0.88 for the "Worthy" class indicates that most predictions are correct, reducing unnecessary administrative follow-ups for incorrect classifications.
   c. Runtime efficiency demonstrates the practicality of using this model in real-world educational settings.
2. Areas for Improvement:
   a. Recall for the "Not Worthy" class (0.60) is relatively low, meaning 40% of "Not Worthy" students are misclassified as "Worthy." This could lead to financial misallocations and undermine the integrity of the UKT system.
   b. Precision for the "Worthy" class (0.88) could be improved to reduce the number of students incorrectly predicted as "Not Worthy.
3. Practical Implications:
   a. The model can help universities automate the UKT classification process, saving time and resources while reducing the potential for human bias.
   b. Universities should prioritize improving recall for the "Not Worthy" class by refining the dataset, introducing additional features, or using advanced ensemble methods like Gradient Boosting.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has demonstrated that the K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) algorithm is a promising approach for classifying students' eligibility for UKT (Uang Kuliah Tunggal) fee relief in Indonesian universities. With an overall accuracy of 90%, the model effectively distinguished between students eligible for financial aid ("Worthy" class) and those who are not ("Not Worthy" class). The model performed particularly well in identifying "Worthy" students, achieving a perfect recall of 1.00 for this class, ensuring that no eligible students were missed. However, the model's recall for the "Not Worthy" class was lower (0.60), meaning that 40% of students who did not qualify for fee relief were misclassified as eligible. This suggests that while the KNN model is strong in classifying the "Worthy" students, it needs further refinement to improve its ability to accurately identify "Not Worthy" students, which is critical for ensuring the integrity of the financial aid allocation process. Despite these challenges, the model's high precision for the "Worthy" class (0.88) and its quick processing time of just 0.1167 seconds highlight its practical potential for real-time applications in educational institutions, making it suitable for automating the financial aid decision-making process at scale. By streamlining this process, the model can reduce administrative burden, minimize human error, and help universities allocate financial aid more fairly and efficiently. Future research could focus on addressing the model's weaknesses, particularly the low recall for the "Not Worthy" class, by refining the dataset, incorporating additional socio-economic variables, or exploring advanced machine

http://doi.org/10.26594/register.v8i2.XXX

learning techniques like Random Forests or Gradient Boosting. Additionally, expanding the model's application to different types of financial aid, both within and beyond Indonesia, could further enhance its broader impact. Ultimately, this research contributes to the growing body of work that utilizes data-driven solutions to promote transparency, equity, and efficiency in higher education, ensuring that students in need of financial support are accurately identified and assisted.

5. Suggestion

For future research, several avenues could be explored to significantly enhance the classification of UKT fee relief eligibility using the K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) algorithm. One critical area of improvement is addressing the model's lower recall for the "Not Worthy" category, as this limitation could lead to the misallocation of financial aid and affect the overall fairness of the system. To address this, refining the dataset is essential by including a more comprehensive set of socio-economic features, such as detailed parental occupation, level of educational attainment, number of income sources, and even regional economic disparities, which may provide a more holistic representation of a student's financial needs. Moreover, incorporating advanced machine learning algorithms such as Random Forests, Support Vector Machines (SVM), or Gradient Boosting could help the model handle imbalanced classes more effectively, improving both precision and recall. Data augmentation or synthetic data generation techniques could also be employed to create a balanced dataset, ensuring the model has sufficient examples to learn from both classes. Another critical enhancement could involve integrating real-time data pipelines that allow the model to continuously update and adapt its predictions as new student information becomes available, ensuring sustained accuracy and relevance in dynamic environments. Additionally, exploring ensemble methods or hybrid models that combine the strengths of multiple algorithms could yield a more robust classification system. Conducting comparative analyses with financial aid systems in other countries could also provide valuable insights into best practices and the adaptability of such models in diverse educational and economic settings. Lastly, collaborating with policymakers and university administrators to integrate interpretable machine learning methods would enhance trust and transparency, making the model's recommendations more actionable and aligned with institutional goals. These advancements would collectively contribute to a more reliable, scalable, and equitable approach to financial aid allocation in educational institutions worldwide.

Declaration of Competing Interest

We declare that we have no conflict of interest.

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