

# Enhancing Higher Education Interest in Garut Regency Through Scholarship Sharing Sessions

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**Abstract:** Higher education is one of the main pillars in the development of quality human resources, which in turn impacts the progress of a region. In Garut Regency, the participation rate of students pursuing higher education remains low, partly due to a lack of information about scholarships. The community service activity, through the Sharing Session on Achieving Scholarships and Reaching Dreams, aims to provide information about available scholarship opportunities and motivate students to continue their higher education. This activity was conducted online via Zoom Meeting on March 6, 2021, and involved scholarship recipients as speakers, both from domestic and international institutions. The results of the activity showed that participants were highly enthusiastic and gained valuable information about scholarship application procedures, requirements, and tips for success. Additionally, participants felt more motivated to pursue higher education after hearing firsthand experiences from the speakers. This activity has a positive impact on increasing interest in higher education in Garut Regency and has expanded access to scholarship information. It is hoped that this activity can serve as a model to be implemented in other regions with similar challenges.

**Keywords:** Garut, Higher Education, Scholarship Socialization, Scholarships, Sharing Session

## Introduction

Higher education is one of the main pillars in the development of quality human resources, which in turn will impact the progress of a region (Asadullah & Mansor, 2023; Lentjushenkova, 2021; Pausits et al., 2022). In Garut Regency, higher education is a key factor in improving the Human Development Index (HDI) and advancing the standard of living of the community. However, despite the significant potential of human resources in Garut Regency, many students face difficulties in continuing their education to higher levels. This poses a major challenge for the local government in improving the quality of education and in producing a younger generation that is ready to compete both nationally and internationally.

Based on available data, the participation rate of students in Garut Regency in pursuing higher education remains relatively low (Agnes et al., n.d.; Daryad et al., 2024; Wijdan et al., 2025). For instance, although many students show interest in continuing their studies, they are hindered by

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various factors, one of which is the lack of information about scholarships and other higher education opportunities. Many students are unaware of the various scholarship programs that they can take advantage of, whether provided by the government or private institutions (Ahmed et al., 2022; McPherson & Schapiro, 2021). As a result, many students opt to enter the workforce immediately after graduating from high school, instead of pursuing further education at higher levels.

This issue is further exacerbated by the lack of socialization regarding available scholarship programs, resulting in students being poorly informed about the opportunities that exist. Additionally, the motivation to pursue higher education is often hindered by economic factors and a lack of support from the surrounding environment (Ebrahim & Chauhan, 2021; Gkrimpizi et al., 2023; Shkoler & Rabenu, 2023). Therefore, efforts to raise awareness and motivate students to continue their higher education are crucial. Programs such as scholarship sharing sessions can be an effective solution to provide accurate information, while also motivating students to view higher education as a pathway to achieve their dreams and improve their quality of life.

The goal of this community service is to educate students in Garut Regency about the importance of continuing their education to higher education and how they can take advantage of various scholarship opportunities available. Through the sharing session activities involving scholarship recipients, both from domestic and international institutions, it is hoped that students will gain broader insights into the scholarship application process, the required requirements, and tips for winning scholarships. In this way, students will become more confident and have a better understanding of the higher education paths they can pursue.

The main objective of this activity is to motivate students to dream bigger and strive to achieve their goals through education. With the sharing session, students can see real-life examples of those who have successfully obtained scholarships, which will inspire them not to give up and to continue fighting for the same opportunities. Through the enhancement of knowledge and motivation, it is hoped that a younger generation will be better prepared to pursue higher education, which in turn will have a positive impact on the quality of human resources in Garut Regency.

The problem formulation of this activity includes the extent to which information about scholarships influences students' decisions in choosing higher education pathways. Many students are unaware of the various types of scholarships available, whether from the government or private institutions. Clear and comprehensive information about scholarships can help students select the right educational path according to their interests and abilities. Through this sharing session, it is hoped that students will not only gain information about scholarships but also receive moral support and inspiration to take bold steps toward higher education. This will be valuable in changing students' perceptions of higher education and making them more open to the opportunities available.

## Method

The method used in this community service activity adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, aimed at providing a detailed description of the implementation of the activity and its impact on the participants (Kiely & Hartman, 2023; Muhajir et al., 2025; Warliani et al., 2025). This approach was chosen because it focuses more on gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomena that occur during the sharing session, as well as identifying the factors that influence students' interest in continuing higher education. Additionally, the qualitative method allows the researcher to explore the participants' experiences, opinions, and perceptions of the information shared during the activity, and to analyze changes in their understanding of scholarships and higher education (Amarulloh et al., 2023).

In data collection, several techniques were used to gather comprehensive information (Mazhar et al., 2021; Priya et al., 2022; Taherdoost, 2021). First, interviews were conducted with both the participants of the sharing session and the speakers to explore their opinions, experiences, and the impact they felt after attending the event. The purpose of these interviews was to gain personal insights from the participants about how the activity influenced their motivation to pursue higher education. Additionally, observations were made to monitor the interactions between the speakers and participants during the event, as well as to assess the enthusiasm of the participants, as evident in

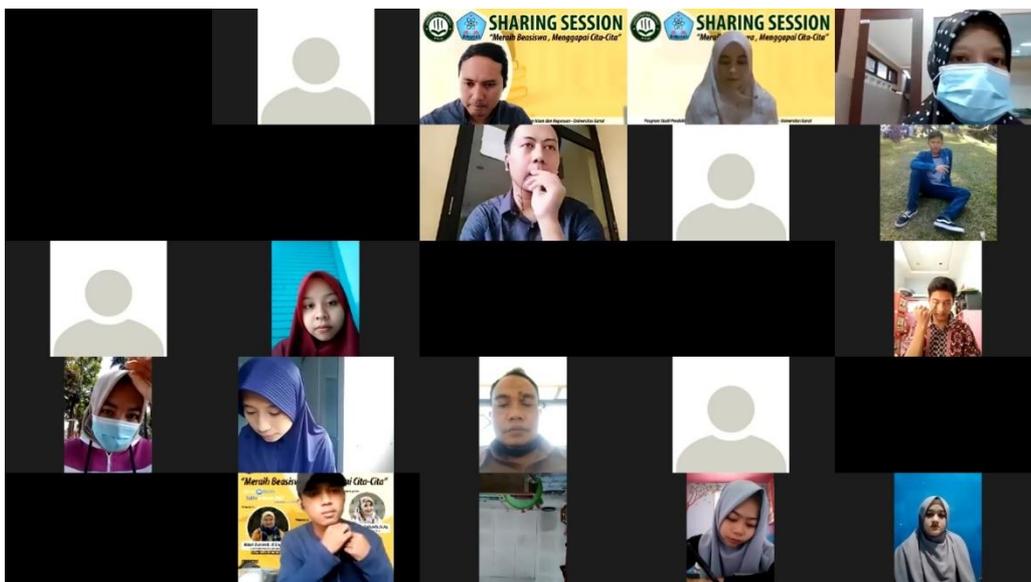
discussions or Q&A sessions. These observations provided an understanding of how engaged the participants were with the topics discussed and whether they were inspired to take further action in seeking scholarship opportunities.

In addition to interviews and observations, documentation is also an essential data collection technique. Documentation includes recordings of the event that were streamed live via YouTube, along with feedback from participants, which can be in the form of comments or responses provided during the event or through post-event surveys. This documentation data is used to assess how the messages delivered during the session were received by the audience, as well as to identify the topics or information that were most engaging for the participants. Documentation also serves as a valuable tool for evaluation, providing useful insights when preparing recommendations for similar activities in the future.

The activity design consists of several well-structured stages. The first stage is planning, which includes needs analysis and the preparation of an activity plan. During this stage, the organizing committee is formed, speakers are selected, and the materials for the sharing session are prepared to align with the participants' needs. Once the planning is finalized, the event is conducted online using the Zoom Meeting platform, which facilitates participation from various locations. Additionally, a live broadcast via the YouTube channel of the Garut University Education Study Program allows participants who cannot attend in person to still engage with the session. After the main event, follow-up support is provided through a WhatsApp Group to assist participants with the scholarship application process, offer further guidance, and address any questions that may arise after the session.

## Result and Discussion

The sharing session was held on Saturday, March 6, 2021, online via the Zoom Meeting platform. The event involved various parties, including speakers who are scholarship recipients, both from domestic and international institutions, who shared their experiences and provided information about the scholarship application process. Additionally, the activity engaged students from various high schools in Garut Regency, who were enthusiastic about attending the event. The invited speakers had relevant backgrounds and extensive experience in obtaining scholarships, allowing them to offer valuable insights to the participants. The event was also streamed live through the YouTube channel of the Garut University Education Study Program, enabling it to reach a larger audience, even though not everyone could attend in person via Zoom.



**Figure 1.** Documentation of Scholarship Sharing Session Activities

The participants' enthusiasm throughout the event was very positive. They showed a high level of interest in the topics discussed, with many questions being asked to the speakers regarding their experiences in obtaining scholarships and tips for successful applications. The Q&A session was interactive, reflecting the participants' eagerness to gain a deeper understanding of the available scholarship opportunities. Additionally, the conducive atmosphere of the event and the clear explanations provided by the speakers helped participants feel more confident and motivated to pursue higher education. This activity is expected to have a positive impact on the students, both in terms of increasing their knowledge about scholarships and boosting their motivation to pursue their dreams.

The number of participants who attended and took part in this activity exceeded one hundred students from various high schools in Garut Regency. The participants' attendance reflects a high level of interest in the topics discussed, namely scholarships and higher education opportunities. Although the event was held online, the participants' enthusiasm remained strong throughout the session, with many actively asking questions and engaging in discussions. This high attendance is an important indicator that the community, particularly students, is in need of more information about scholarships and the higher education pathways they can pursue (Salmi & D'Addio, 2021; Tomaszewski et al., 2025; Wanti et al., 2022).

The feedback received from participants indicates that they found the information provided during the sharing session to be extremely helpful. Many participants expressed that they not only gained new knowledge about the various types of scholarships but also felt more confident in applying for scholarships after hearing firsthand experiences from the speakers who had successfully obtained them. Some participants also noted that they felt more motivated to continue their education to higher education, as they now realize that there are many opportunities available, even in the face of economic challenges. The information they gained, ranging from requirements, application steps, to tips for successfully obtaining scholarships, was highly valuable to them.

The material presented by the speakers was highly relevant and beneficial, especially in providing practical insights on how to obtain scholarships and take advantage of available opportunities. The speakers not only shared technical information regarding scholarship application procedures but also shared personal experiences about the challenges and struggles they faced in securing scholarships, which inspired the participants to keep striving despite obstacles. The impact on the participants' understanding and motivation was significant, as they gained a real-life perspective on how hard work and thorough preparation can open up broader opportunities. Therefore, this activity not only provided information but also inspired participants to dare to dream and strive to achieve their goals through higher education.

The sharing session activity had a significant impact on students in Garut Regency. One of the main outcomes of this activity was the increased understanding of students about the various scholarship opportunities available, both from the government and private institutions. Before attending the event, many students were unaware of the different types of scholarships they could access. However, after the sharing session, they gained clearer information on how to apply, the requirements needed, and tips to improve their chances of securing a scholarship. This information broadened their perspective on the possibilities they could achieve, which they had previously thought to be out of reach due to limited knowledge.

The sharing session also demonstrated a direct link between scholarship socialization and an increased interest among students to continue their education to higher education. Previously, many students had the desire to pursue further education but were hindered by a lack of information about scholarship pathways. With the information provided during the activity, many students felt more confident to take the next step, which was applying to universities with the support of scholarships. This program successfully conveyed a very important message: higher education is not only for those who are financially capable but also for those who strive and know how to take advantage of the opportunities available.

The implementation of this activity was not without challenges. One of the biggest challenges was the limited internet access experienced by some students in rural areas, which hindered full participation in the online session. Some students struggled to access the Zoom Meeting or YouTube

due to network issues, which prevented them from following the entire session properly. To address this issue, the organizing committee provided a recording of the event, which could be accessed later via YouTube, and also conducted follow-up through a WhatsApp Group to answer any questions that may not have been addressed during the session. This ensured that, despite technical difficulties, participants still benefited from the activity.

This activity also provided valuable lessons on the importance of selecting relevant and experienced speakers. The speakers who shared their experiences about the scholarship application process served as real-life examples for the students, allowing them to directly experience how scholarships can change the course of their lives. The speakers, coming from various backgrounds and different types of scholarships, provided a broad perspective on how students can explore various opportunities to continue their studies. The openness and clarity in explaining the scholarship process were also very helpful for students in planning their next steps.

Compared to similar activities conducted in other regions, this program can serve as an effective model for areas facing similar challenges, especially in terms of increasing higher education participation. Online-based activities like this can be easily implemented in regions with geographical constraints or limited access to educational facilities. The program can also be expanded by adding more topics related to personal development, exam preparation, and other skills that students need to prepare for higher education. With a better understanding of scholarships and higher education, this activity is expected to inspire more students to continue their education and have a positive impact on the quality of human resources in the future (Ahmed et al., 2022; Aithal & Maiya, 2023; Rana et al., 2021).

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion of the "Sharing Session on Achieving Scholarships and Reaching Dreams" activity shows very positive results in increasing the knowledge and motivation of students in Garut Regency to pursue higher education. Based on the results of the activity, participants gained clearer information about the various types of scholarships available, both from the government and private institutions. They also gained a broader understanding of how to apply for scholarships, the required criteria, and tips for securing scholarships. Overall, this activity successfully provided students with a better understanding of the opportunities they can pursue for higher education.

The implications of this activity are highly significant in raising awareness and increasing students' interest in higher education. Through the sharing session, many students felt more confident and inspired to continue their education to the higher education level, especially with the support of scholarships. With clear information about the application process and various scholarship opportunities, students became more open to educational options that they may have previously considered out of reach. This also contributes to the improvement of human resource quality in Garut Regency, which in turn can support regional development by enhancing the Human Development Index.

Moving forward, it is recommended that similar activities be implemented on a larger scale by adding a variety of topics related to higher education and personal development. The use of online platforms as the main medium should continue to be maximized, considering geographic constraints and limited access. Additionally, to address technical issues such as limited internet access in certain areas, the organizing committee could provide materials that can be re-accessed through other platforms, such as YouTube, so that more students can participate in the activity. This activity could also serve as a model for other regions facing similar challenges in increasing higher education participation and providing more equitable access to information for students in remote areas.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the planning, execution, or reporting of the "Sharing Session on Achieving Scholarships and Reaching Dreams." The content presented in this activity was developed solely to provide valuable information and motivation for students, without any commercial, financial, or personal interests influencing the material or its delivery. The authors have no affiliations, financial interests, or personal relationships that could have influenced the outcomes or conclusions presented in this report. The goal

of this initiative was to support students in pursuing higher education and to share unbiased, transparent, and accurate information regarding scholarship opportunities.

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