

Research Article

The Performance of Student Administrative Services in the Society 5.0 Era: Evidence from Gorontalo State University

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Abstract: This study examines the performance of student administrative services in the Society 5.0 era at the Bureau of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Planning of Gorontalo State University, focusing on scholarship services. It addresses the need for accessible, responsive, transparent, inclusive, and student-centered administrative services in higher education. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Informants included bureau leaders, scholarship and financial aid administrators, operational officers, and students receiving various scholarship schemes. Thematic analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while validity was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. The findings show that accessibility has improved through service counters, websites, social media, WhatsApp, online forms, SIMPEL BAKP, and coordination with faculties and study programs. However, information remains fragmented, digital standard operating procedures are not uniform, and disability-inclusive access is limited. Responsiveness is supported by direct and digital communication, but it lacks a dedicated complaint system, automatic notifications, selection-status dashboards, and real-time disbursement tracking. Service quality is perceived as fairly good because students experience professional, friendly, and fair treatment. Nevertheless, service documentation, procedural standardization, staff training, and humanistic technology integration need strengthening. The study concludes that scholarship administration should be transformed into a centralized, inclusive, responsive, transparent, and student-centered digital-humanistic service model.

Keywords: Accessibility; Scholarship Administration; Service Performance; Society 5.0; Student Administrative Services.

1. Introduction

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped public administration by shifting service delivery from bureaucratic, office-centered procedures toward more integrated, data-driven, participatory, and user-oriented systems. In higher education, this transformation affects not only teaching and learning but also administrative services that directly influence student access, participation, academic continuity, and institutional trust. The Society 5.0 paradigm extends this transformation by emphasizing a human-centered balance between advanced technology and social welfare, where digital systems should enhance rather than replace the human dimension of service delivery. In this perspective, higher education administration is no longer understood merely as a technical bureaucratic function, but as a governance mechanism that connects students, institutional actors, digital platforms, and public values within a more inclusive service ecosystem. Recent studies on Society 5.0, Education 5.0, and University 5.0 argue that digital transformation in universities should promote efficiency, equity, adaptability, transparency, and human-driven innovation rather than merely technological modernization.

The literature consistently frames Society 5.0 and digital transformation in higher education administration as human-centered, governance-oriented, and inclusive. Smart campus and digital governance frameworks emphasize student-centered public services, data governance, and participatory decision-making as essential instruments for improving

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accessibility, responsiveness, and service quality in student administrative functions (Polin et al., 2023; Sziegat, 2022). In this context, the university is expected to develop administrative systems that are not only technologically efficient but also capable of recognizing students' diverse needs, strengthening institutional accountability, and enabling more transparent interaction between service providers and service users. Therefore, digital transformation in higher education administration should be evaluated not only from the availability of websites, online forms, or digital platforms, but also from the extent to which these systems improve the student experience, reduce service barriers, and support fair access to institutional resources.

Student administrative services are a strategic component of higher education governance because they mediate students' interaction with institutional systems, including registration, academic records, scholarships, student welfare, and procedural assistance. In scholarship administration, service performance becomes particularly important because financial aid is directly related to educational access, social equity, and student retention. For students from economically vulnerable backgrounds, delays, unclear procedures, fragmented information, or weak institutional responsiveness may reduce their ability to compete fairly for available support. Therefore, scholarship services must be designed as accessible, responsive, transparent, and inclusive systems that integrate digital efficiency with human-centered assistance. Such services should enable students to obtain accurate information, understand requirements, submit documents, monitor selection progress, and communicate complaints or questions through reliable and accountable mechanisms.

Despite the growing adoption of digital platforms in universities, many higher education institutions still face persistent challenges in transforming administrative services into fully integrated and student-centered systems. Digitalization often remains partial, fragmented, or dependent on separate platforms managed by different units or external partners. This condition creates service gaps when information is available but not centralized, procedures are digital but not standardized, or communication is fast but undocumented. New Public Service and policy-lab approaches provide an important conceptual basis for addressing these challenges because they advocate co-creation with citizens and the use of data-driven public innovation laboratories to enhance policy capacity and service innovation in public institutions, including universities (Kim et al., 2022; Sziegat, 2022). In the higher education context, students should not be treated merely as administrative clients but as active participants whose needs, feedback, and experiences should shape institutional service design.

The main problem addressed in this study is the performance of student administrative services in the Society 5.0 era, with a specific focus on scholarship services at the Bureau of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Planning of Gorontalo State University. Empirical data show that scholarship demand is consistently high, with thousands of applicants annually and considerable variation between the number of applicants and recipients. This situation requires an administrative system capable of managing information, verification, selection, complaint handling, and disbursement tracking in a transparent, reliable, and student-centered manner. However, the research findings indicate that although service counters, websites, social media, WhatsApp, online forms, SIMPEL BAKP, and faculty-level coordination are already available, the service system has not yet become fully integrated, standardized, and inclusive. This creates an important empirical problem because digital channels exist, but their capacity to produce equitable, transparent, and accountable scholarship services remains limited.

Previous literature offers several conceptual foundations for understanding this issue. New Public Service theory emphasizes that public administration should serve citizens rather than steer them, positioning service users as active participants rather than passive recipients. In higher education administration, this means that students should be understood as members of an academic community whose needs, voices, and rights must be embedded in service governance. This orientation is consistent with the Society 5.0 framework, which places human welfare at the center of technological advancement. Digital scholarship services should therefore not only accelerate administrative procedures but also strengthen fairness, empathy, inclusion, accountability, and public value. Policy-lab and co-creation perspectives further reinforce this argument by showing that public service innovation becomes more effective when institutions use data, stakeholder collaboration, and participatory processes to redesign services around users' actual needs (Kim et al., 2022).

Public service performance theory further provides an analytical basis for evaluating university administrative services. (Rizalihadi and Satispi, 2025) identify accessibility, responsiveness, and service quality as central indicators of public service performance in the

Society 5.0 era. Accessibility refers to the ease with which users can obtain information and use services without physical, technological, social, or procedural barriers. Responsiveness concerns the speed and accuracy of institutional responses to user needs, questions, complaints, and changing conditions. Service quality reflects reliability, professionalism, clarity, empathy, assurance, and procedural consistency. These three dimensions are particularly relevant for assessing scholarship services because students require clear information, timely communication, fair treatment, dependable procedures, and transparent monitoring throughout the application, selection, and disbursement process.

Recent research also highlights the importance of inclusive access in digital higher education services. Accessibility should not be understood only as the availability of websites, social media, or online forms, but also as the ability of all students, including students from disadvantaged groups and students with disabilities, to use institutional systems equitably. Inclusive administrative services require universities to address digital divides, unequal digital literacy, infrastructure limitations, and barriers in online service use (Giest & Samuels, 2022; Mesa, 2023; Vidal, 2022). Education and digital literacy are central enablers of inclusion because students can only benefit from digital services when they have the capacity, access, and confidence to navigate them effectively. Thus, an inclusive scholarship administration system must provide not only online access but also clear guidance, accessible formats, human assistance, and institutional support for students with diverse needs.

In addition to accessibility, responsiveness has become a defining feature of modern public service delivery. Digital communication channels such as WhatsApp, email, social media, and websites can accelerate information exchange, but they do not automatically create accountable responsiveness. A responsive service system requires documented complaint handling, ticketing mechanisms, automatic notifications, status dashboards, and real-time monitoring of service progress. Without these features, responsiveness depends heavily on individual staff capacity and informal communication. In scholarship administration, this may create uncertainty for students regarding selection status, verification results, or fund disbursement. Thus, the transition toward Society 5.0 requires not only digital communication but also integrated, traceable, and proactive service mechanisms that allow students to monitor services transparently and institutions to manage responses systematically.

The quality of student administrative services also requires renewed attention because digital systems cannot replace the importance of professionalism, empathy, fairness, and procedural clarity. Students may perceive services positively when officers are friendly and helpful, yet service quality remains incomplete if procedures are inconsistent, documentation is weak, staff training is limited, and information differs across channels. In this respect, service quality in the Society 5.0 era must combine technological reliability with humanistic interaction. The university bureaucracy should provide standardized procedures, integrated data, and digital records while preserving the interpersonal support needed by students who face administrative uncertainty, financial vulnerability, limited digital literacy, or accessibility barriers. A human-centered, inclusive, and digitally enabled governance model, grounded in public service innovation, transparent governance, and stakeholder collaboration, therefore provides the most relevant foundation for student-centered university administration in the digital era (Kim et al., 2022; Mesa, 2023; Polin et al., 2023; Sziegat, 2022; Vidal, 2022).

Although prior studies have examined digital governance, smart campus development, public service innovation, student affairs administration, and inclusive higher education, limited research has integrated accessibility, responsiveness, and service quality into a Society 5.0-based evaluation of scholarship administration in Indonesian higher education. Existing studies tend to focus separately on digital transformation, student satisfaction, service quality, policy innovation, or access to education, while fewer studies examine how university scholarship services operate as a digital-humanistic public service system. This creates a conceptual and empirical gap, particularly in understanding how a university administrative bureau manages scholarship services under conditions of high demand, fragmented digital channels, unequal digital literacy, and increasing expectations for inclusive and responsive governance.

This study aims to analyze the performance of student administrative services in the Society 5.0 era at the Bureau of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Planning of Gorontalo State University, focusing on scholarship services. Specifically, it examines service accessibility, responsiveness, and service quality as experienced by administrators, operational officers, and student scholarship recipients. The novelty of this study lies in its digital-humanistic framing of scholarship administration as a higher education public service, where technological integration must be aligned with accessibility, transparency, inclusion,

responsiveness, data governance, stakeholder collaboration, and student-centered values. The study argues that scholarship administration should move toward a centralized, inclusive, responsive, and human-centered digital service model that strengthens both institutional accountability and student welfare.

2. Literature Review

Society 5.0 and Digital Transformation in Higher Education Administration

Society 5.0 represents a human-centered development paradigm in which advanced technologies are used to solve social problems and improve human welfare. In contrast to technology-driven modernization that prioritizes efficiency alone, Society 5.0 emphasizes the integration of digital innovation with social inclusion, ethical governance, and human well-being. In higher education, this paradigm is highly relevant because universities are no longer expected merely to provide academic instruction, but also to build adaptive, inclusive, and data-informed administrative systems that support student success. Digital transformation in higher education administration therefore involves not only the adoption of websites, online forms, databases, and communication platforms, but also the redesign of governance processes to become more transparent, responsive, participatory, and student-centered.

The literature consistently frames Society 5.0 and digital transformation in higher education administration as human-centered, governance-oriented, and inclusive. Smart campus and digital governance frameworks emphasize student-centered public services, data governance, and participatory decision-making as essential elements for improving accessibility, responsiveness, and service quality in student administrative functions (Polin et al., 2023; Sziegat, 2022). This perspective is consistent with the conceptual foundation of this study, which positions student administrative services as part of public service governance within the university bureaucracy. In this context, digital transformation should not be reduced to the technical provision of online platforms; rather, it should be understood as an institutional effort to ensure that students can access services fairly, receive timely responses, and experience reliable and humanistic administrative support.

In scholarship administration, digital transformation becomes particularly important because scholarship services directly affect educational access, student welfare, and academic continuity. The availability of digital information channels can help students obtain announcements, requirements, deadlines, and application procedures more efficiently. However, digitalization also creates new challenges when information is fragmented, procedures differ across platforms, and students with limited digital literacy or unstable internet access experience barriers. Therefore, Society 5.0-based student administration requires a digital-humanistic model that combines technological efficiency with empathy, inclusion, transparency, and accountability.

New Public Service and Student-Centered University Governance

New Public Service aligns with policy-lab and co-creation approaches in public sector innovation. Recent literature argues that public service innovation should involve users in identifying problems, designing solutions, and evaluating service outcomes. Policy labs and data-driven public innovation mechanisms can strengthen institutional capacity by using evidence, stakeholder collaboration, and participatory processes to improve public services (Kim et al., 2022; Sziegat, 2022). Applied to university administration, this means that scholarship services should be developed not only by administrative officers and leadership, but also through systematic student feedback, service evaluation, and continuous improvement.

This perspective is central to the present study because scholarship services at universities involve multiple actors, including bureau leaders, service officers, faculties, departments, study programs, external scholarship providers, and student applicants. A student-centered governance model requires these actors to coordinate effectively so that students receive consistent information, transparent selection procedures, and accessible complaint mechanisms. Thus, the New Public Service perspective strengthens the argument that digital transformation in scholarship administration must be participatory, accountable, and oriented toward student welfare rather than merely procedural efficiency.

Accessibility in Digital Student Administrative Services

Accessibility is a foundational dimension of student administrative service performance. It refers to the extent to which students can reach, understand, and use services equitably. The literature shows that digital transformation of student administrative services in higher education offers significant potential for improving accessibility, efficiency, and

responsiveness (Mohammadi et al., 2021; Stegenga et al., 2021; Vidal & Barujel, 2021). Online systems can reduce the need for physical visits, accelerate information distribution, and allow students to complete administrative processes more flexibly. In scholarship administration, this includes access to announcements, eligibility criteria, application forms, document submission procedures, selection timelines, and disbursement information.

However, digitalization without intentional inclusive design may deepen exclusion for students with disabilities and other marginalized groups (Giest & Samuels, 2022; Kim et al., 2022; Vidal, 2022). Students may face barriers related to internet access, device availability, digital literacy, website usability, language clarity, or disability-unfriendly interfaces. Therefore, inclusive administrative services require universities to address digital divides and ensure equitable access to online services. Education and digital literacy become central enablers because students can only benefit from digital systems when they have the ability and confidence to use them effectively.

The literature also emphasizes that administrative staff attitudes, training, and familiarity with support services are critical determinants of accessible service provision (Polin et al., 2023; Sziegat, 2022). Even when digital systems are available, students often still require explanation, guidance, and reassurance from officers. This means that accessibility must be understood as both a technological and human service issue. A persistent gap often exists between institutional accessibility policies and their practical implementation (Abduh et al., 2018; Sziegat, 2022; Vidal, 2022). Therefore, student-centered approaches incorporating feedback mechanisms, universal design principles, and proactive communication strategies are essential for equitable digital service delivery (Lee et al., 2023; Shraga-Roitman et al., 2025; Vidal & Barujel, 2021).

Responsiveness in Digitally Mediated University Services

Responsiveness is a key indicator of whether student administrative services can adapt to student needs and institutional dynamics. In digital higher education administration, responsiveness includes not only the speed of communication but also the clarity, traceability, and accountability of institutional responses. Digital communication channels such as WhatsApp, email, websites, social media, and online helpdesks can accelerate interaction between students and administrative officers. However, the literature indicates that responsive university administrative services require a multidimensional approach.

Complaint handling systems, notification dashboards, and service tracking mechanisms must be designed with universal accessibility principles, integrated across institutional units, and complemented by alternative access channels to address digital divides (Friedrich, 2019; Lee et al., 2023; Mesa, 2023; Mohammadi et al., 2021; Rosa et al., 2025; Vidal, 2022). This is important because fragmented systems may force students to search for information across multiple channels, repeat inquiries, or depend on informal networks. A responsive digital service should allow students to submit complaints, receive ticket numbers, monitor response progress, obtain automatic notifications, and track application or disbursement status in real time.

Administrative staff training and positive institutional attitudes toward inclusion are also essential enablers of responsive digital service delivery (Abduh et al., 2018; Mohammadi et al., 2021). Officers must be able to manage digital communication, provide accurate information, handle complaints professionally, and assist students with diverse needs. Continuous monitoring through digital dashboards and periodic audits can further ensure accountability and drive service improvement (Mohammadi et al., 2021; Vidal & Barujel, 2021). Ultimately, responsiveness in university administration must be grounded in student-centered governance frameworks that prioritize equity, transparency, and inclusive access (Kim et al., 2022; Polin et al., 2023; Sziegat, 2022).

Service Quality in Student Affairs and Scholarship Administration

Service quality in student affairs administration is a multidimensional construct that includes empathy, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, professionalism, and tangible service support. The SERVQUAL and SERVPERF traditions provide useful frameworks for evaluating how students perceive administrative services and how far institutional performance meets their expectations. In the context of scholarship services, service quality includes the clarity of information, accuracy of procedures, consistency of requirements, professionalism of officers, fairness of treatment, timeliness of responses, and availability of feedback mechanisms.

The literature demonstrates that empathy is among the strongest determinants of student satisfaction in administrative services (Essaoudi & Lotfi, 2021; Juan & Nair, 2022; Setapa et al., 2024). This is particularly relevant in scholarship administration because students seeking

financial aid may experience uncertainty, anxiety, or vulnerability. Administrative officers therefore play an important role not only in processing documents but also in providing reassurance, guidance, and respectful communication. However, empathy frequently exhibits large quality gaps, indicating a persistent disconnect between student expectations and institutional performance (Aldarmahi et al., 2019; Minja et al., 2024; Rezaei et al., 2017).

Reliability and assurance provide the foundation of trust and professionalism expected from administrative services (Persad et al., 2023; Rezaei et al., 2017; Utami & Regita, 2023). Students need confidence that procedures are consistent, information is accurate, officers are competent, and administrative decisions are fair. Responsiveness, particularly in complaint handling and timely communication, represents another critical area for improvement across diverse higher education contexts (Aldarmahi et al., 2019; Essaoudi & Lotfi, 2021; Persad et al., 2023). Cross-functional collaboration within institutions also mediates the relationship between service quality dimensions and student satisfaction (Alsheyadi & Albalushi, 2020), suggesting that frontline service improvement must be accompanied by structural and governance reforms.

SERVQUAL and SERVPERF provide validated and reliable instruments for continuous monitoring and improvement of student administrative services, including scholarship management (Bui et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022; Utami & Regita, 2023). Their regular use can support evidence-based strategies for improving student experience, identifying service gaps, and strengthening institutional accountability (Aleu et al., 2021; Hamzah et al., 2019; Minja et al., 2024). Therefore, scholarship administration should include systematic student feedback, service satisfaction measurement, and periodic evaluation.

3. Materials and Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the performance of student administrative services in the Society 5.0 era at the Bureau of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Planning of Gorontalo State University, with a specific focus on scholarship services. This approach was selected because the study sought to understand service performance through the lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of service users and administrators.

The research was conducted at the Bureau of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Planning of Gorontalo State University. This site was selected because the bureau is a central administrative unit responsible for academic, student affairs, alumni, and planning services. Scholarship administration represents one of its most strategic and complex services because it involves information dissemination, document verification, eligibility assessment, coordination with faculties and external scholarship providers, and communication with student applicants.

The study used a case study design because it focused on a bounded institutional setting and examined scholarship services in depth. This design enabled the researcher to investigate how services were organized, accessed, communicated, and evaluated by different actors within the university service ecosystem. The case also has empirical relevance because scholarship demand at Gorontalo State University remains consistently high, with 5,068 applicants in 2021, 4,500 in 2022, 5,505 in 2023, 4,849 in 2024, and 5,880 in 2025.

Primary data were obtained from informants directly involved in scholarship services, including the Head of the Bureau, scholarship and financial aid administrators, operational service officers, and students receiving different scholarship schemes. Informants were selected through purposive sampling because the study required participants with direct knowledge and experience of the service process. Student informants represented recipients of BAZNAS, IMIP, Van Deventer-Maas Indonesia, KIP-K, and Bank Indonesia scholarships. Secondary data were obtained from official documents, institutional archives, scholarship statistics, service announcements, digital platforms, official websites, social media pages, and relevant service documents.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Interviews explored students' experiences in accessing scholarship information, using digital platforms, communicating with service officers, receiving responses, and assessing service fairness and professionalism. Interviews with officers and bureau leadership examined administrative procedures, coordination mechanisms, digital platform use, service obstacles, transparency, and institutional readiness for Society 5.0-based services. Participatory observation was conducted to examine service flows, communication practices, student-officer interactions, and the use of digital media such as websites,

WhatsApp, online forms, and SIMPEL BAKP. Document analysis was used to review scholarship announcements, official webpages, internal scholarship data, digital service evidence, and public communication channels.

The data were analyzed thematically using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were organized according to three analytical dimensions: accessibility, responsiveness, and service quality. In the display stage, the findings were arranged into themes such as access to information, digital platform use, service integration, complaint handling, response speed, procedural clarity, staff professionalism, and inclusive service provision. In the conclusion stage, these themes were interpreted to explain scholarship service performance from the Society 5.0 perspective.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation compared information from bureau leaders, scholarship administrators, operational officers, and student recipients. Method triangulation compared interview data with observation results and institutional documents. Member checking was conducted by confirming key findings with informants to ensure that the interpretation accurately reflected their experiences.

4. Results and Discussion

Accessibility of Student Administrative Services in the Society 5.0 Era

The findings indicate that the accessibility of scholarship administrative services at the Bureau of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Planning of Gorontalo State University has gradually developed through the adoption of both digital and non-digital service channels. Accessibility in this study refers to the extent to which students can obtain scholarship information, understand administrative procedures, communicate with service officers, and use available service platforms without significant physical, technological, social, or procedural barriers. The institution has initiated a transition toward Society 5.0-based services by utilizing websites, social media, WhatsApp communication, online forms, SIMPEL BAKP, service counters, and coordination through faculties, departments, and study programs. These developments show that BAKP UNG has moved beyond conventional office-centered administration toward a more open, multi-channel, and technology-supported service arrangement.

However, the findings also reveal that this transformation remains incomplete. Scholarship information is still distributed across several channels, digital procedures are not yet standardized across all scholarship schemes, and inclusive access has not been fully institutionalized. Some students reported that scholarship announcements and procedures were relatively easy to access through official websites, social media, and online forms. These students perceived digital channels as practical because they reduced the need for repeated face-to-face visits and allowed them to prepare documents more flexibly. In contrast, other students stated that they still relied on information shared by peers rather than official announcements. This indicates that the presence of digital channels does not automatically guarantee equal access. Accessibility depends not only on the availability of technology but also on the clarity, consistency, centralization, and usability of information.

This finding is consistent with the literature which argues that digital transformation of student administrative services in higher education has significant potential to improve accessibility, efficiency, and responsiveness (Mohammadi et al., 2021; Stegenga et al., 2021; Vidal & Barujel, 2021). In the context of BAKP UNG, digital channels have indeed expanded service reach and reduced dependence on physical office visits. Nevertheless, the findings also support the argument that digitalization without intentional inclusive design may deepen exclusion for students with disabilities and other marginalized groups (Giest & Samuels, 2022; Kim et al., 2022; Vidal, 2022). The issue at BAKP UNG is therefore not merely whether digital platforms exist, but whether these platforms are integrated, inclusive, user-friendly, and capable of supporting equitable access for all students.

The urgency of improving accessibility is strengthened by internal scholarship data. The total number of scholarship applicants reached 5,068 in 2021, 4,500 in 2022, 5,505 in 2023, 4,849 in 2024, and 5,880 in 2025. During the same period, the number of scholarship recipients reached 4,343 in 2021, 3,996 in 2022, 4,981 in 2023, 4,030 in 2024, and 4,801 in 2025. These data show that scholarship demand is consistently high and that the administrative system must be able to distribute information efficiently, equitably, and transparently. When applicant numbers are high, fragmented information may cause students

to miss deadlines, misunderstand requirements, or fail to complete administrative procedures properly. Thus, accessibility becomes not only a technical issue but also an equity issue in higher education governance.

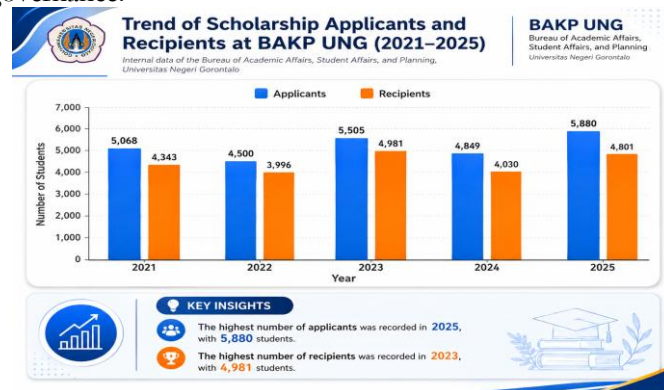


Figure 1. Trend of Scholarship Applicants and Recipients at Gorontalo State University, 2021–2025

The findings further show that online forms and digital announcements have increased procedural flexibility for students. Several scholarship schemes allow students to access information, complete registration, and prepare documents without always coming directly to the service office. In the Society 5.0 perspective, this reflects an early form of digital-humanistic transformation because administrative services begin to adapt to user needs. However, students also experienced technical barriers, including slow website access, unstable internet connections, and difficulties using digital platforms during peak registration periods. This suggests that digital accessibility depends not only on platform availability but also on infrastructure reliability, system capacity, and the ability of students to use digital services effectively.

The availability of SIMPEL BAKP illustrates the university's institutional effort to develop digital services. SIMPEL BAKP functions as an information service system for students, lecturers, staff, alumni, parents, prospective students, and the broader public. This platform indicates the potential for centralized digital service development. However, the findings show that SIMPEL BAKP has not yet been fully integrated into scholarship-specific procedures such as application tracking, complaint handling, selection monitoring, automatic notifications, and disbursement updates. Consequently, the platform has not yet become a comprehensive scholarship administration system.

Another important issue concerns disability-inclusive access. Scholarship data indicate that Gorontalo State University has provided scholarship support for students with disabilities. However, the findings show limited evidence of disability-friendly digital interfaces, adaptive service formats, or physical service facilities specifically designed for scholarship administration. This supports the literature indicating that there is often a persistent gap between institutional accessibility policies and practical implementation (Abduh et al., 2018; Sziegat, 2022; Vidal, 2022). In other words, formal recognition of accessibility does not automatically result in inclusive service practices. Accessibility must be translated into service design, staff competence, assistive technology, accessible information formats, and proactive support mechanisms.

The role of administrative staff is also central. Officers at BAKP UNG function as intermediaries between scholarship providers, institutional systems, faculties, and students. They adapt and redistribute information from donors or external partners so that students can better understand the requirements. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing that staff attitudes, training, and familiarity with student support services are critical determinants of accessible service provision (Polin et al., 2023; Sziegat, 2022). Therefore, improving accessibility requires more than technological innovation. It also requires staff development, service ethics, inclusive communication skills, and institutional commitment to student-centered administration.

Overall, accessibility at BAKP UNG has shown meaningful progress but remains uneven. The institution has adopted multiple channels and digital tools, but scholarship services are not yet fully centralized, standardized, or inclusive. To realize truly inclusive digital student services, institutions must adopt comprehensive, multi-level frameworks that integrate policy reform, staff development, technological innovation, universal design, student feedback mechanisms, and continuous evaluation (Polin et al., 2023; Sziegat, 2022;

Vidal & Barujel, 2021). For BAKP UNG, this means developing a centralized scholarship information system that provides integrated announcements, clear requirements, accessible forms, inclusive service features, and transparent selection updates.

Responsiveness of Student Administrative Services in the Society 5.0 Era

The second dimension of service performance examined in this study is responsiveness. Responsiveness refers to the institution's ability to respond quickly, accurately, transparently, and adaptively to students' questions, complaints, administrative needs, policy changes, and service dynamics. In the Society 5.0 framework, responsiveness should not depend solely on interpersonal communication, but should be supported by integrated digital systems capable of enabling real-time interaction, complaint management, status monitoring, service tracking, and automatic notifications.

The findings show that scholarship services at BAKP UNG are perceived as relatively responsive because students can communicate with service officers through WhatsApp, social media, direct consultation, and contact persons listed in scholarship announcements. Many students stated that officers generally responded politely and attempted to provide clarification regarding procedures, requirements, deadlines, and disbursement information. WhatsApp communication was particularly appreciated because it allowed students to obtain faster and more personal responses than formal bureaucratic channels. This indicates that interpersonal responsiveness remains an important strength of BAKP UNG's scholarship services.

However, the findings also demonstrate that responsiveness still depends heavily on informal or semi-formal communication mechanisms rather than an integrated digital service architecture. Students reported that there is no dedicated complaint platform specifically designed for scholarship administration. Most inquiries are submitted through WhatsApp groups, direct messages, social media, or direct visits to the office. Although these channels are useful for quick communication, they do not provide formal documentation, complaint tickets, response tracking, or systematic monitoring. As a result, service responsiveness is difficult to measure and may vary depending on officer availability, workload, applicant volume, and the communication channel used.

This finding is consistent with the literature which argues that responsive university administrative services through digital communication channels require a multidimensional approach. Complaint handling systems, notification dashboards, and service tracking mechanisms must be designed with universal accessibility principles, integrated across institutional units, and supported by alternative access channels to address digital divides (Friedrich, 2019; Lee et al., 2023; Mesa, 2023; Mohammadi et al., 2021; Rosa et al., 2025; Vidal, 2022). In BAKP UNG, communication channels already exist, but they are not yet integrated into a formal scholarship service system. Therefore, the current model reflects a hybrid form of responsiveness: officers are communicative, but the system is not yet fully traceable, proactive, or accountable.

Several students emphasized the absence of a system that allows them to monitor selection status, document verification, or scholarship disbursement in real time. They often rely on announcements circulated through social media, WhatsApp, or informal student networks. This creates uncertainty because students cannot independently check whether their documents have been received, verified, rejected, or approved. In scholarship administration, such uncertainty is significant because financial aid is closely related to students' academic continuity and economic security. A real-time status dashboard would reduce uncertainty, improve transparency, and allow students to follow the process without repeatedly contacting service officers.

The responsiveness challenge becomes more significant during periods of high application volume. For example, in 2025, the Bank Indonesia Scholarship received 280 applicants for 100 recipient slots, while the Van Deventer-Maas Indonesia Scholarship received 310 applicants for only 15 recipient slots. BAZNAS Scholarship also recorded 30 applicants for 15 recipients. These disparities show that scholarship administration involves substantial competition and administrative pressure. High applicant numbers increase the workload associated with document verification, eligibility screening, data validation, selection coordination, and communication management. Without integrated digital tracking systems, responsiveness depends heavily on manual coordination and staff capacity.

Table 1. Scholarship Applicant and Recipient Disparities in Selected Scholarship Programs, 2025.

Scholarship Program	Applicants	Recipients
Bank Indonesia Scholarship	280	100
Van Deventer-Maas Indonesia Scholarship	310	15
BAZNAS Scholarship	30	15

The findings also show that some scholarship schemes already use online registration systems and digital forms, particularly those managed in cooperation with external donors or partners. These platforms simplify document submission and reduce the need for face-to-face interaction. However, these systems are not yet unified into a single institutional scholarship platform. Some scholarship programs use relatively systematic digital procedures, while others still rely on manual verification or semi-digital processes. This produces uneven responsiveness across scholarship schemes and limits the development of an integrated digital service ecosystem.

Administrative staff training is also an important factor in improving responsiveness. The literature emphasizes that administrative staff training and positive institutional attitudes toward inclusion are essential enablers of responsive digital service delivery (Abduh et al., 2018; Mohammadi et al., 2021). The findings at BAKP UNG show that officers are willing to assist students, but the lack of integrated complaint management and automated tracking systems limits their ability to provide consistent and measurable responses. Therefore, responsiveness should be strengthened through both technological development and staff capacity building. Officers need training in digital service management, complaint handling, inclusive communication, data-based decision-making, and service documentation.

Leadership strategy also plays an important role. The Head of BAKP explained that responsiveness is maintained through coordination with faculties, departments, study programs, and scholarship partners. This coordination is necessary because scholarship policies often depend on external donors, ministries, banks, foundations, or partner institutions. However, coordination-based responsiveness must be complemented by system-based responsiveness. Continuous monitoring through digital dashboards and periodic audits can strengthen accountability and support evidence-based improvement (Mohammadi et al., 2021; Vidal & Barujel, 2021).

Overall, responsiveness at BAKP UNG has improved through direct communication and digital interaction, but it has not yet reached the level expected in Society 5.0-based student services. The transition to digitally mediated administrative responsiveness must be grounded in student-centered governance frameworks that prioritize equity, transparency, inclusive access, and institutional accountability (Kim et al., 2022; Polin et al., 2023; Sziegat, 2022). Therefore, BAKP UNG needs to develop a dedicated scholarship complaint system, automatic notification features, selection-status dashboards, verification tracking, and real-time disbursement monitoring. These features would transform responsiveness from personal communication into an accountable institutional service system.

Service Quality of Student Administrative Services in the Society 5.0 Era

The third dimension analyzed in this study is service quality. Service quality refers to the extent to which scholarship administration fulfills student expectations regarding professionalism, reliability, fairness, procedural clarity, empathy, assurance, and consistency. In the Society 5.0 perspective, service quality is not limited to technical efficiency but also includes the institution's ability to integrate digital systems with human-centered interaction and inclusive public service values.

The findings indicate that students generally perceive scholarship services at BAKP UNG as fairly good. Many participants described service officers as polite, communicative, helpful, and fair. Students explained that officers attempted to provide clarification regarding requirements, deadlines, document submission, and procedural difficulties. These interpersonal interactions contributed positively to students' perceptions of fairness and institutional concern. This finding suggests that the humanistic dimension of service remains important even in an increasingly digital administrative environment.

This result is consistent with the literature indicating that service quality in student affairs administration is a multidimensional construct in which empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance are interconnected but contextually variable. Empathy consistently emerges as one of the strongest determinants of student satisfaction (Essaoudi & Lotfi, 2021; Juan & Nair, 2022; Setapa et al., 2024). In the case of BAKP UNG, students' positive perceptions are strongly related to the friendliness, helpfulness, and fairness of service officers. This indicates

that human interaction remains a key component of perceived service quality, especially in scholarship services where students may experience financial vulnerability and administrative uncertainty.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal several weaknesses. Procedural explanations sometimes differ depending on the communication channel or officer providing information. Students occasionally need repeated clarification because information is distributed through multiple channels with varying levels of detail. Documentation practices and procedural workflows also differ across scholarship programs. Some scholarships have relatively clear digital procedures, while others still rely on manual coordination and physical document submission. This inconsistency affects reliability because students experience different administrative standards depending on the scholarship type.

The literature suggests that empathy often exhibits one of the largest service quality gaps, indicating a persistent disconnect between student expectations and institutional performance (Aldarmahi et al., 2019; Minja et al., 2024; Rezaei et al., 2017). Although students at BAKP UNG perceive officers as friendly and helpful, service quality cannot rely solely on interpersonal goodwill. Reliability and assurance are also needed to build trust and professionalism in administrative services (Persad et al., 2023; Rezaei et al., 2017; Utami & Regita, 2023). In this study, reliability is weakened by fragmented information, inconsistent SOPs, incomplete documentation, and the absence of integrated digital monitoring. Assurance is also affected when students cannot clearly track selection results, verification status, or disbursement progress.

Responsiveness is another critical component of service quality. The literature shows that timely communication and complaint handling remain major areas for improvement in higher education administrative services (Aldarmahi et al., 2019; Essaoudi & Lotfi, 2021; Persad et al., 2023). The findings at BAKP UNG confirm this argument. Officers respond to students through WhatsApp, social media, and direct interaction, but service quality remains limited because these responses are not supported by a formal complaint system, documented service records, or measurable response standards. Thus, responsiveness contributes positively to perceived service quality, but its institutionalization remains weak.

The findings further demonstrate that service quality is closely linked to staff competence and training. Officers stated that services are delivered according to existing procedures, but training related to digital systems, complaint management, inclusive services, and human-centered communication still needs strengthening. This is important because cross-functional collaboration within institutions mediates the relationship between service quality dimensions and student satisfaction (Alsheyadi & Albalushi, 2020). Scholarship services involve not only BAKP officers but also faculties, departments, study programs, external donors, and financial institutions. Therefore, service quality depends on coordination across units, shared procedures, integrated data, and consistent communication.

Another important finding is the limited use of systematic evaluation mechanisms. Although students may provide informal feedback through direct communication or social media, BAKP UNG has not yet implemented a comprehensive digital feedback system specifically for scholarship services. As a result, service improvement depends largely on operational experience rather than structured user evaluation. The literature indicates that SERVQUAL and SERVPERF frameworks provide validated and reliable instruments for continuous monitoring and improvement of student administrative services, including scholarship management (Bui et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022; Utami & Regita, 2023). Regular deployment of such tools can inform evidence-based strategies for improving student experience in higher education (Aleu et al., 2021; Hamzah et al., 2019; Minja et al., 2024).

The integration of interviews, observations, and institutional documents indicates that scholarship service quality at BAKP UNG is currently positioned within a transitional phase. The institution has developed important foundations for digital-humanistic services through websites, online forms, social media, WhatsApp communication, service counters, and staff support. Students generally perceive the service atmosphere positively because officers demonstrate professionalism, friendliness, and fairness. However, structural limitations remain evident, including inconsistent procedural standardization, fragmented communication, limited documentation systems, uneven digital integration, and insufficient institutionalization of inclusive service practices.

Toward a Centralized, Inclusive, Responsive, and Student-Centered Scholarship Service Model

The integration of the three dimensions shows that scholarship administrative services at BAKP UNG have begun moving toward a Society 5.0-oriented model characterized by digital support and student-centered interaction. However, the transformation remains incomplete because the service ecosystem has not yet become fully centralized, integrated, responsive, transparent, and inclusive. Accessibility has improved through multiple service channels, but information remains fragmented. Responsiveness has improved through direct and digital communication, but it lacks traceable complaint handling and real-time monitoring. Service quality is perceived positively in interpersonal terms, but procedural standardization, documentation, training, and systematic evaluation remain limited.

These findings suggest that the main challenge is not merely technology adoption, but institutional redesign. A Society 5.0-based scholarship service model must integrate technology, governance, human capacity, and student participation. The recommended model should include centralized scholarship announcements, online application submission, document verification tracking, selection-status dashboards, complaint ticketing, automatic notifications, disbursement monitoring, disability-accessible interfaces, digital feedback tools, and periodic service evaluation. Such a model would reduce dependence on informal information networks, strengthen transparency, improve staff efficiency, and increase student trust.

The findings also support the argument that digital-humanistic governance is essential for higher education administration. Technology should not replace human service but should enhance it. Digital systems can reduce repetitive administrative burdens, improve data accuracy, and provide real-time information. At the same time, human officers remain essential for guidance, interpretation, empathy, conflict resolution, and support for students who face financial vulnerability, digital literacy limitations, or special needs. Therefore, the transformation of scholarship services at BAKP UNG should combine digital integration with human-centered service values.

In theoretical terms, this study contributes to public administration and higher education governance by showing that scholarship administration can be evaluated through the integrated dimensions of accessibility, responsiveness, and service quality within a Society 5.0 framework. In practical terms, the findings provide a basis for developing a centralized, inclusive, responsive, transparent, and student-centered digital-humanistic scholarship service model. For BAKP UNG, such transformation is not only a technical modernization project but also a reform of higher education public service governance aimed at strengthening institutional accountability and student welfare.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that scholarship administrative services at BAKP UNG have developed toward Society 5.0-oriented service delivery, but the transformation remains partial. Accessibility has improved through service counters, websites, social media, WhatsApp, online forms, SIMPEL BAKP, and coordination with faculties and study programs. However, fragmented information, non-uniform digital procedures, technical constraints, and limited disability-inclusive access still reduce service equity. Responsiveness is supported by direct and digital communication, yet the absence of a dedicated complaint system, automatic notifications, selection-status dashboard, and real-time disbursement tracking limits service transparency. Service quality is perceived as fairly good because students experience professional, friendly, and fair treatment, but procedural standardization, documentation, staff training, and digital-humanistic integration require further improvement.

The study contributes to public administration and higher education governance by demonstrating that scholarship services in the Society 5.0 era must be evaluated through the integrated dimensions of accessibility, responsiveness, and service quality. Future research may develop and test a digital-humanistic scholarship service model across different universities.

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