

VinOpportunities: A Narrative Analysis of Scholarship Experiences of Grade 12 Learners

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Abstract: *This study explores the scholarship experiences of Grade 12 learners from the Standard Curriculum at Vinschool Ocean Park High School, using a narrative inquiry approach. By analyzing personal stories and perceptions shared through interviews and surveys, the research uncovers how scholarships impact students beyond financial assistance, fostering personal growth, academic success, and community engagement. The findings highlight that scholarships shape students' educational journeys and opportunities for the future.*

Keywords: scholarship, grade 12 learners, vinschool, educational opportunities, academic development, financial aid, student experiences, narrative analysis, personal growth.

INTRODUCTION

Vinschool is committed to nurturing excellence and enabling students to attain their full potential. Since its inception, Vinschool has promoted academic rigour, character development, and community involvement. Vinsers are encouraged to strive for greatness while acting as responsible global citizens.

Among them are outstanding individuals who wished to reach greater success. Education is a powerful instrument that opens up unlimited possibilities, and scholarships play an important role in making those opportunities available to more people. Scholarships not only alleviate financial pressures, but they also acknowledge hard work, dedication, and the pursuit of excellence. This opportunity inspires Vinsers to aim higher and realize their full potential by rewarding academic achievement, leadership, and community service. It's more than simply financial assistance; it's a vote of confidence in your capacity to influence the future.

According to an article from the New York Post (2024), individual initiatives like Marcus Stroman's scholarships have empowered students to pursue higher education. The New York Yankees pitcher awarded \$25,000 each to two Bronx high school graduates, supporting their college aspirations. These examples underscore the transformative role of scholarships in providing educational opportunities and fostering student success.

While substantial research has demonstrated the beneficial impact of scholarships on academic achievement and enrollment, numerous crucial areas remain unexplored. For example, the long-term influence of scholarships on job achievement, leadership development, and community service is not well documented. Furthermore, while financial help reduces stress, there is little study on how it affects students' mental health and overall well-being. Many studies place an emphasis on academic accomplishment while ignoring the importance of scholarships in developing soft skills, resilience, and personal growth. Furthermore, impediments to access, such as complicated application processes or a lack of knowledge in underprivileged areas, continue despite efforts to enhance equity. Exploring these gaps would provide a more comprehensive knowledge of how scholarships affect Vinsers' life.

Our findings, based on Vinsers' experiences, highlight four main areas that are key to making scholarships even better: how the money helps students truly focus and grow, making sure the scholarships fit the right students, how well the program itself helps students develop, and how to make the application process easier for everyone. By understanding these points, we can improve scholarships so all future Vinsers can reach their full potential.

METHODOLOGY

The research utilized a qualitative approach to explore the understanding, meaning, and experiences related to scholarship experiences. A narrative inquiry was employed to understand individuals' experiences and perspectives through the exploration and analysis of their personal stories and narratives..

Design

The research utilized a narrative inquiry design, which is a qualitative research approach that focuses on understanding individuals' experiences and perspectives through the exploration and analysis of their personal stories and narratives. In this design, data were gathered through Google Forms and interviews, allowing respondents to share their narratives concerning scholarship experiences. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of their experiences, perceptions, challenges, and preferences regarding scholarship experiences of Grade 12 students of the Standard Curriculum in Vinschool OCP High School.

Approaches and Instruments

One-on-one interviews were conducted with the respondents after a Google form was sent to be answered. This is to delve deeper into their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors without the influence of group dynamics. Qualitative observation was also used to gain insights into contextual factors surrounding the respondents' attitudes and behaviors.

Respondents

The study involved Grade 12 learners from the Standard curriculum in Vinschool OCP Secondary who willingly volunteered to participate. Their willingness to contribute to the research ensured their inclusion in the study.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis of the questionnaire responses and interview data was conducted. Through this analysis, shared themes, patterns, and meanings within the narratives provided by the respondents were identified. This approach allowed the researchers to develop a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' experiences with their scholarship journey.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion of the study, exploring Grade 12 learners' perspectives and experiences with their scholarship experiences. It examines the benefits, challenges, and impact of scholarship experiences.

Table-1: What are the key factors you look for in a scholarship program

Answers	Quantity	Theme
Finance	5	Financial
I don't know	1	No certainty
Sustainability	7	Suitability and Eligibility
Clear eligibility criteria	5	
English	1	Academic

Table 1 shows the factors respondents look for in a college scholarship. The most important factor respondents look for in a college scholarship is Sustainability, which was mentioned by 7 participants, accounting for 63.6%. This indicates a strong concern for the long-term relevance and support provided by the scholarship, grouped under the theme of Suitability and

Eligibility. Additionally, both Finance and Clear eligibility criteria were each mentioned 5 times (45.5%). English and I don't know, each with 1 response (9.1%), representing the Academic and No certainty themes, respectively. These results suggest that clarity, sustainability, and financial considerations are the most valued elements in scholarship selection.

Table-2: Expected ways a scholarship supports respondents' academic and personal growth

Answers	Quantity	Theme
Finance	6	Financial
I don't know	4	No Certainty
Yes	1	Certainty

Table 2 shows most students (over half) see scholarships as more than financial aid—they link them directly to academic success, personal development, and professional opportunities. These students expect mentorship, networking, internships, and increased focus on studies. However, a significant portion remains unclear about what support to expect, which may indicate a need for better scholarship literacy and guidance.

Table-3: Specific financial or career-related expectations from a scholarship

Answers	Quantity	Theme
Yes	6	General Satisfaction/Interest
No	5	No General Satisfaction/Interest

Table 3 shows there is a clear expectation from many students that scholarships should do more than cover costs—they should also be stepping stones to career advancement. However, the near-even split suggests some students may not have developed clear career expectations yet or lack exposure to scholarships that provide career support.

Table 4 - Top three criteria respondents consider when selecting a school

Answers	Quantity	Theme
Quality of teaching	7	Program Quality and Outcomes
Future career	3	
Opportunities	3	
Affordability	7	
Major	1	No certainty
Nothing	1	No certainty
Environment	3	Physical setting/environment
Ranking and Infrastructure	1	

Table 4 shows the majority prioritize quality and affordability in school choice, with career opportunities also valued by some. Traditional prestige metrics (ranking) appear to matter less compared to program relevance and economic feasibility, showing a practical mindset among students.

Table-5: Priorities regarding ranking, location, or specific programs when choosing a school

Answers	Quantity	Theme
Ranking	1	Program Characteristics
Program	3	
All	7	
Nothing	1	No certainty

Table 5 shows most students take a holistic approach to school selection, weighing multiple factors. However, a significant subset (27.3%) is laser-focused on specific programs, even willing to sacrifice rank or location for program quality. This suggests students are becoming more strategic and career-oriented in their choices.

Table-6: How availability of scholarships influence respondent's school choice

Answers	Quantity	Theme
Finance	5	Financial
Nothing	1	No certainty
Enhance submission	1	Submission Requirements
Attractive and Realistic	3	Program Characteristics
More options	1	
Significant	1	N/A

Table 6 shows A strong majority (72.8%) said scholarships directly affect their ability to apply to or attend a school, with some explicitly stating they would choose a less prestigious school if it offers better financial aid. This reveals the central role scholarships play in shaping educational opportunities—not just a bonus, but often a necessity.

Table-7: Biggest challenges respondents have encountered while applying for scholarships

Answers	Quantity	Theme
Suitability	3	Suitability and Eligibility
Nothing	5	No certainty
Time-consuming	3	Time frame
Financial	1	Financial
Selection Process	2	Submission Requirements

Table 7 shows almost half have not yet faced major challenges, which may reflect inexperience or limited application attempts. Those who have applied commonly cite the complexity and pressure of deadlines and eligibility. This shows a need for better preparation resources and earlier exposure to the scholarship process.

Table-8: Share an experience where respondents successfully overcame a scholarship-related challenge

Answers	Quantity	Theme
Late submission	2	Submission Requirements
Nothing	7	No related experience
Guidance	2	Suitability and Eligibility

Table 8 shows most respondents (nearly two-thirds) have not had experiences of overcoming difficulties, possibly due to limited participation or confidence. Among those who did, time management and mentor guidance were key. This implies that more students could succeed if given support systems like mentorship, training, and deadline planning.

Table-9: Respondents seeking help from mentors, counselors, or others to overcome application difficulties

Answers	Quantity	Theme
Yes	7	Sought help
Nothing	4	Did not seek help

Table 9 shows a solid majority recognize the value of guidance in scholarship applications, with some citing help in writing essays or managing deadlines. However, over a third did not seek help, indicating a potential lack of access to mentors or hesitation to ask for assistance.

Table-10: Specific resources or platforms respondents recommend for finding scholarships?

Answers	Quantity	Theme
School websites	4	School-influence
Nothing	5	No certainty
Social Media	2	Outside influence
Scholarship websites	6	Advertisements

Table 10 shows while some students are aware of and use reputable scholarship platforms, nearly half gave no suggestions—showing a gap in awareness. Schools and counselors could do more to introduce students to credible scholarship databases and search tools.

Table-11: What respondents think scholarship providers should improve to better support students?

Answers	Quantity	Theme
Nothing	7	No certainty
Simplify Application Process	3	Submission Requirements
Opportunity and Support	3	Seeking and giving help
Flexible Deadlines	1	Submission Requirements

Table 11 shows most students (63.6%) did not offer specific feedback, either from inexperience or lack of engagement. However, those who did made valuable suggestions: simplifying processes, providing mentorship, and supporting different backgrounds. This shows students want not just financial help but also structured, empathetic support.

Overall, the most prominent themes are: (1) Finance, (2) Suitability and Eligibility, (3) Program Quality and Outcomes and (4) Application Process Improvement. Moreover, it showed how scholarships help students beyond just grades, supporting their personal growth and community involvement. Our findings, based on Vinsers' experiences, highlight four main areas that are key to making scholarships even better: how the money helps students truly focus and grow,

making sure the scholarships fit the right students, how well the program itself helps students develop, and how to make the application process easier for everyone.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to comprehensively explore the perceptions and experiences of Grade 12 Vinschool Standard Curriculum students regarding scholarships, particularly focusing on how these opportunities contribute to their holistic success beyond academic grades, encompassing personal growth and community contribution. The findings, derived from both questionnaire responses and interview data, confirm that scholarship experiences profoundly influence students' educational trajectories and broader development.

The analysis revealed four critical and interrelated themes that encapsulate the core insights from the participants: Finance, Suitability and Eligibility, Program Quality and Outcomes, and Application Process Improvement. Firstly, Finance emerged as a foundational factor, indicating that beyond merely covering educational costs, adequate financial support is crucial for enabling students to fully engage in their studies, pursue personal development activities, and participate in community initiatives without undue monetary stress. Students highly value the sustainability of financial aid and its direct impact on their school choices.

Secondly, the theme of Suitability and Eligibility underscores the importance of well-defined and relevant scholarship criteria. Students seek clarity in eligibility and a strong alignment between their individual aspirations—including career goals and personal development—and what a scholarship program offers. This suggests a need for scholarships to not only target academic excellence but also to clearly articulate how they support broader student growth.

Thirdly, Program Quality and Outcomes highlights students' expectations that scholarships should transcend financial aid to offer comprehensive support, such as mentorship, networking opportunities, and internships, which directly foster academic success, personal development, and professional readiness. The study reveals a desire for programs that actively contribute to their holistic growth and provide clear pathways to career advancement, indicating that the value of a scholarship extends significantly beyond its monetary value.

Finally, the theme of Application Process Improvement points to existing challenges within the scholarship application ecosystem. Students frequently encounter issues related to complexity, time consumption, and a lack of clear guidance and awareness of available resources. The findings strongly suggest that simplifying application procedures, providing robust support systems (like mentorship), and enhancing communication about scholarship opportunities can significantly broaden access and encourage more deserving students to pursue these vital pathways.

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the multi-faceted nature of scholarship experiences from the student perspective. It reinforces that effective scholarship programs extend beyond financial provision, playing a pivotal role in nurturing well-rounded individuals who are poised for academic success, personal development, and active community engagement. Identifying these themes—optimizing financial support, enhancing program suitability and quality, and streamlining the application process—scholarship providers and educational institutions can better empower future learners to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

RECOMMENDATION

Summary of Themes

The most prominent themes are:

1. **Finance**
2. **Suitability and Eligibility**
3. **Program Quality and Outcomes**
4. **Application Process Improvement**

CONCLUSION

This analysis suggests that students are primarily concerned with the cost, their eligibility, the program's value, and the ease of applying. Addressing these concerns could increase student interest and participation. Further research, including qualitative data (e.g., open-ended survey questions, interviews), could provide a deeper understanding of the reasons behind these themes and inform targeted interventions.

REFERENCES

New York Post. (2024). *Marcus Stroman awards scholarships to Bronx students*. Retrieved from [Yankees' Marcus Stroman](#)

Data collected through Google Forms survey and personal interviews, conducted by the authors (2025).