

p-ISSN : 2708-2113 | e-ISSN : 2708-3608

DOI(Journal): 10.31703/gesr
DOI(Volume): 10.31703/gesr/.2024(IX)
DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gesr.2024(IX.II)

www.gesrjournal.com

Global Educational
Studies Review



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VOL. IX, ISSUE II, SPRING (JUNE-2024)


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Double-blind Peer-review Research Journal
www.gesrjournal.com
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Article Title

A Comparative Study of Legal Framework in Educational Counselling in Finland and Pakistan

Global Educational Studies Review

p-ISSN: 2708-2113 e-ISSN: 2708-3608

DOI(journal): 10.31703/gesr

Volume: IX (2024)

DOI (volume): 10.31703/gesr.2024(IX)

Issue: II (Spring-June 2024)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-II)

Home Page

www.gesjournal.com

Volume: IX (2024)

<https://www.gesjournal.com/Current-issues>

Issue: II-Spring (June-2024)

<https://www.gesjournal.com/Current-issues/9/2/2024>

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Abstract

Examining the efficacious educational counseling regulations in Pakistan and Finland for appropriate secondary student assistance was the primary goal of the study. The adoption of appropriate counseling activities as the primary academic curriculum in our schools and colleges is necessary due to the expansion of technology-skilled-based practices. To create rules and policies for educational institutions that will ensure high-quality instruction and a workforce of productive kids, it is necessary to review the regulatory bodies that oversee education. It is still not clear if counseling in educational institutions is allowed under the current legal framework. It is possible to use some laws or acts on educational counseling that are in place throughout the world (such as Finland) as model legislation for similar acts that would be proposed for our own national education policy.

Keywords: Pakistan, Finland, Education, Standard, Counselling

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Pages: 30-37

DOI:10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-II).04

DOI link: [https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2024\(IX-II\).04](https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-II).04)

Article link: <http://www.gesjournal.com/article/A-b-c>

Full-text Link: <https://gesjournal.com/fulltext/>

Pdf link: <https://www.gesjournal.com/jadmin/Auther/31rvIolA2.pdf>

Citing this Article

04		A Comparative Study of Legal Framework in Education Counselling in Finland and Pakistan					
Pages	30-37	Author	Shabnam Mirza Shahid Rizwan Baig		DOI	10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-II).04	
Pages		Year	2024	Volume	IX	Issue	II
Referencing & Citing Styles	APA	Shabnam, & Baig, M. S. R. (2024). A Comparative Study of Legal Framework in Education Counselling in Finland and Pakistan. <i>Global Educational Studies Review</i> , IX(II), 30-37. https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-II).04					
	CHICAGO	Shabnam, and Mirza Shahid Rizwan Baig. 2024. "A Comparative Study of Legal Framework in Education Counselling in Finland and Pakistan." <i>Global Educational Studies Review</i> IX (II):30-37. doi: 10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-II).04.					
	HARVARD	SHABNAM & BAIG, M. S. R. 2024. A Comparative Study of Legal Framework in Education Counselling in Finland and Pakistan. <i>Global Educational Studies Review</i> , IX, 30-37.					
	MHRA	Shabnam, and Mirza Shahid Rizwan Baig. 2024. 'A Comparative Study of Legal Framework in Education Counselling in Finland and Pakistan', <i>Global Educational Studies Review</i> , IX: 30-37.					
	MLA	Shabnam, and Mirza Shahid Rizwan Baig. "A Comparative Study of Legal Framework in Education Counselling in Finland and Pakistan." <i>Global Educational Studies Review</i> IX.II (2024): 30-37. Print.					
	OXFORD	Shabnam and Baig, Mirza Shahid Rizwan (2024), 'A Comparative Study of Legal Framework in Education Counselling in Finland and Pakistan', <i>Global Educational Studies Review</i> , IX (II), 30-37.					
	TURABIAN	Shabnam and Mirza Shahid Rizwan Baig. "A Comparative Study of Legal Framework in Education Counselling in Finland and Pakistan." <i>Global Educational Studies Review</i> IX, no. II (2024): 30-37. https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-II).04 .					



Global Educational Studies Review

www.gesrjournal.com

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gesr>



Pages: 30-37

URL: [https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2024\(IX-II\).04](https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-II).04)

Doi: 10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-II).04



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Title

A Comparative Study of Legal Framework in Education Counselling in Finland and Pakistan

Abstract

Examining the efficacious educational counseling regulations in Pakistan and Finland for appropriate secondary student assistance was the primary goal of the study. The adoption of appropriate counseling activities as the primary academic curriculum in our schools and colleges is necessary due to the expansion of technology-skilled-based practices. To create rules and policies for educational institutions that will ensure high-quality instruction and a workforce of productive kids, it is necessary to review the regulatory bodies that oversee education. It is still not clear if counseling in educational institutions is allowed under the current legal framework. It is possible to use some laws or acts on educational counseling that are in place throughout the world (such as Finland) as model legislation for similar acts that would be proposed for our own national education policy.

Keywords: Pakistan, Finland, Education, Standard, Counselling

Introduction

Educational counseling is a crucial instructional tool for reshaping a child's orientation away from harmful concepts that their classmates have instilled in them (Cole, 2008). Thus, school counseling is necessary to help the child shape their future by providing counseling services and strategies. A solid foundation for a more comprehensive life education can be laid by counseling and coaching. Despite not being

medical or psychiatric, it can serve as therapy for people with specific personal issues or as the cornerstone of a broader "life skills training program" for students who, while not experiencing any particular problems, still need help developing their personal resources to deal with life's challenges in the future. Finland has continuously demonstrated remarkable educational equity in addition to being one of the best performers. Finland's education policy

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places a strong emphasis on equity, efficiency, quality, well-being, and lifelong learning. Among the fundamental tenets of the Finnish educational system are the following: every citizen, regardless of age, wealth, ethnicity, or place of residence, is entitled to an education under the constitution (Niemi, 2016). The Finnish National Agency for Education states that advice and counseling are crucial from the perspectives of the students, the school, and the community. The student's mentoring follows them from their years of basic school to their post-basic courses, forming a continuum. The Basic Education Act, which oversees the educational system, acknowledges the value of counseling services in advancing student abilities. It is clear that Finnish education policies aimed at improving student achievement are based on concepts of intelligent accountability, sustainable leadership that prioritizes teaching and learning, and encouraging schools to create the best learning environments and use the instructional materials that will enable their students to meet the requirements of education in general. Educational counseling is an emerging concept in Pakistan. With the diverse career approaches available in the modern era, educational counseling is obligatory for students in early childhood. It is a psychological process to assist an individual in attaining his self-direction, mental balance, and understanding of his aptitude (Sahlberg, 2014). Despite certain efforts, a country like Pakistan is still lagging behind in achieving optimistic academic performance and a productive youth force to stabilize its economic goals. Keeping in view the alarming figures of dropouts, career switching, and unemployment, educational coaching in the form of proper legislation must be introduced in the existing schooling culture equally. Without proper educational counseling at the elementary and secondary level, it seems vague to students to choose the best educational field for themselves at the intermediate and graduation levels ultimately resulting in wasting their precious years on the wrong degree and later switching careers at adult age. Hence, the Role of Guidance and Counseling is effective in Teaching and Learning in Schools for the Child's Future Success (Sitinjak & Canu, 2023).

Need for Legal Framework in Education Counseling

Aside from the academic work, it's very critical to get the outline and counseling for students' psychological health and interests as well as talents for knowing their mental state and native giftedness as school students (Hammond*, 2004). The

combination of subjects they will be choosing can only help them in forging their career paths but there is no guarantee that they will grow passion and interest in the subject to pursue further studies. Finally, if educational counseling is brought in line with our current educational goals and structure, students will do better for they would know that their dreams of the dream job posts are fully pursued and that they have pressure to choose their career paths as they might want, free from family or society. Identities will most assuredly be impacted by molds. There are plenty of things our educational institutions are and this is what we are in now. There have been different roles played by educational institutions as times have gone by. In order to be able to perform their responsibilities at work, they require competence in the two key areas, which are related to their students' studying and personal lives. A main function plus extra importance of the teacher is the ability to counsel and guide students inside and outside the classroom.

Literature Review

Albeit endeavors are underway, to impart the best quality education for each child in the nation of Pakistan is akin to grabbing a dream with water as the educational barriers are too many (Alleem, 2020). In Pakistan, the National Education Policy 2017 determines the legislative outline of secondary education counseling which is governed (Alleem, 2020). The goals of the policy are twofold; one is to enable students to achieve their academic and personal goals but also to provide them with access to top-quality teaching and counseling services, however, there is no education counseling law in secondary education that can be used. Finland has, on the one hand, succeeded in bringing about remarkable educational equity and, on the other is listed among the best performing. In Finland's educational policy, equity, effectiveness, quality, well-being, and lifelong learning are areas of significant importance (Taguma, Litjens, & Makowiecki, 2012). Among the fundamental tenets of the Finnish educational system are the following: education is not just a right of a certain group of individuals in a specific economic category or one area but the constitution grants it to every citizen including those who are young or middle-aged, wealthy or poor, and people residing in every corner of the Republic. According to the Finnish education agency, Cultural and educational counseling is essential for the students, the school, and the community to take effect. The time of mentoring is comprehensive: it accompanies the students not only from

the whole period of basic school but also years of their post-basic courses, therefore it is legitimately mentioned as a continuum. The holistic approach to students' education by the Basic Education Act, a law dedicated to the oversight of the educational system, notes the importance of psychosocial counseling services in motivating students on their academic progress and overall well-being. As per the law, the schools must provide counseling services and a variety of resources tailored toward the development of both the student's academic and non-academic abilities. We discover that reform tending to the enhancement of students' performances in Finland must be founded on factors of sustainable leadership and intelligent accountability, and schools must cultivate the optimum learning environment that can support well-designed teaching and learning materials, which supplement the demands of education across the board (Hargreaves, Halász, & Pont, [2008](#)).

Research Methodology

This paper examines the legal frameworks for education counseling in Finland and Pakistan. It conducts a comparative study, analyzing the relevant legislation, regulations, and court rulings in both countries. The aim is to identify similarities and differences in how these legal frameworks approach education counseling and how they ensure the quality and accessibility of such services.

Legal Framework in Education Counselling of Finland

Finland has stood out not only as an outperformer but also as a country that has fair and equal opportunities for learning (Hargreaves, Halász, & Pont, 2008). The main components of Finnish educational policy are concern about quality, good performance, producing results with no useless spending, equal opportunity, and lifelong education (Chung, [2019](#)). Preliminary ideals laid on the base of Finnish education are the presumption that getting an education is the constitutional right of all citizens and it does not matter which age group, state of economic growth, nation, or city they belong to. Whilst the National Agency for Education in Finland creates emphasis, guidance, and counseling are considered the greatest aspects from the interest of the viewpoint of the pupil, school, and society. The guide thus presents alternative and complementary learning paths that are continued beyond secondary education through tertiary education (Chung, 2019). The educational system is governed

by the Basic Education Bylaw (B. Ed. Act) which recognizes the role of counseling services as a tool for the care of students, mental health, and high academic level. The regulation does provide for every school to roll out services such as counseling courses and development programs that try to enhance and develop effectively both the academic and personal life corridor of the learner. The revelation is that Finnish policies in education focused on enhancing student achievement are based on thinking about administrative change but with a major focus on teaching and learning. One is intelligent accountability, encouraging schools to develop optimal learning environments and the use of the right materials or content in the delivery of education. Certain analysts believe that Finns' effectiveness can be viewed as a function of whether the teachers there are highly qualified or are taught excellently, with the teachers taking these ideas from research. In other words, educating children is not only a single aspect of a complex issue for the teachers but also the achievement of the policy is based on the high level of selection found in programs. Therefore, only a few top high school graduates have to go through a teacher corps program that prepares them to teach in school classrooms in the future. Educational success criteria in Finland are constituted by a set of two sections "the ones related to the educational policy" (Powell & Solga, [2010](#)).

The Basic Education Act of 1998

The Basic Education Act, which prioritizes equal opportunities, students' holistic development, and their right to an education, serves as the foundation for Finland's educational system. It advocates for nine years of mandatory education, which typically spans from the ages of seven to sixteen. It also outlines the objectives, topics addressed, and organizational framework of basic education. The Act promotes student-centered learning, interdisciplinary teaching strategies, and tailored support for kids with a variety of learning needs (Yudof et al., [2012](#)).

Education Administration Act 1998

The Education Administration Act establishes the governance and administrative structure for education in Finland. It describes the roles and responsibilities of several education authorities, including the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish National Agency for Education, and municipal education boards. The Act ensures accountability, openness, and cooperation in the formulation, organizing,

and implementation of educational policy at the local, state, and federal levels. The Act places a strong emphasis on early detection of kids' needs, covering social, emotional, and intellectual domains. Education counselors are essential in determining these needs and ensuring that kids receive the right kind of support (Papa, [2009](#)).

Qualification for Teachers

Finland has evaluation processes to check on teacher certification as this has to be uncompromised to cater to teacher professionalism and competence. The Teacher Qualifications Decree legislation (986/1998) enumerates the educational standards for teaching at various levels of education. Often, having a master's degree in education or any other closely related field is a requirement to be considered for teaching jobs (as a candidate). Before student teaching is next. School counselors are trained using the CSC framework, here are the modern school counseling theory and contemporary models for school counseling. The approach that the framework encompasses aims at mastering the five fork clusters of professional growth as outlined by the CCPTP working group for masters-level professional psychology training (i.e. formation of professionalism, relationship, science, application, and systems). Clusters involve the recommendation of basic competencies for school counselors; clinical mental health competencies are distinctly demonstrated and the differences between mental health proficiency and the competencies of school counseling are examined and illustrated (Webb et al., [2006](#)).

Laws Pertaining to Higher Education

The Finnish university legislation includes the Universities Act of 2009 (558/2009) and its adjoined law of 2014 (932/2014) which stipulates the rights and responsibilities of polytechnics. These criteria define the finance and management of the universities and polytechnics, or colleges of applied sciences. They make a big deal out of academic personal accountability, the conduct of research, and the linkages between the higher education sector and society to eventually solve problems and promote the growth of the economy. The act of teaching and learning aims for equal and face-to-face learning services for all students. The duty of an education counselor is to share the process with students to discover what success looks like to each of them, what they are good at and need to work on, how to establish success and to help the students in pursuit of their individual academic,

personal, and professional goals. The maintenance and development of the student's well-being is a key goal of higher education in Finland. Through the provision of counseling services, running stress management programs, and encouraging peer support networks, education counselors strikingly play a part in giving priority to the mental health and overall wellness of students (Piironen, [2012](#)).

Equity and Welfare in Education Laws

Finnish legal acts like the Act on Student Financial Aid (65/1994) and the Act on Child Welfare Services (417/2007) point towards the country's high level of political responsibility in providing education to all the students and of course protecting the college student well-being in all the spheres. They are adopted to ensure that there are no social inequalities, to offer a range of services like counseling and maintenance of social ties, and to improve the emotional states of teenagers. All attention is paid to a student-oriented teaching approach, full-cycle counseling, and staff counseling process according to international educational counseling standards. The hallowed Finnish educational system emblematically demonstrates these compulsions. On the contrary, cultural norms, lack of appropriate training, and shortage of resources are underlying the significant variances in service standards in the guiding industry in Pakistan (Anderson et al., [2013](#)).

Legal Framework in Special Education

In order to guarantee inclusive education and assistance for kids with special educational needs, Finland has passed laws. According to the Acts on Basic Services for Disabled Persons (380/1987) and the Provision of Pre-primary and Basic Education (540/2018), pupils with disabilities or learning difficulties must receive specialized services, accommodations, and individual support. When it is possible, these laws encourage inclusion and involvement in regular educational settings (Rothstein & Johnson, [2009](#)).

International Best Practices Followed by Finland

The local gap is central to Finland's secondary school system since they consider a comprehensive level of local government and allow schools to be self-regulating. Although the Ministry of Education and Culture is the sole authority to mandate standards and educational objectives, schools have the freedom to curate their own guidance programs that will

cater to community interests and needs. Hence, there are multiple partners who are required to cooperate in the process by incorporating counseling services as part of the broad picture of student help and remedies. In accordance with Finnish counseling standards, pupils' progression and development in this area have to be taken care of in a manner that reflects their advantages, aspirations, and strengths. Counseling staff will fuse academic and careerizing options discussions into the whole process of the decision-making process and will instill confidence in the students themselves (Abetti, 2004).

Legal Framework on Education Counseling in Pakistan

Pakistan, with its complex system of local and national regulations, evidences the manner in which the laws on the federal and provincial levels affect educational counseling all over the country. As much as there is a fact that legislative agencies may not be alone in passing legal measures that only target counseling education, there is still an existence of different statutes and bills that specifically contribute to the process of directing and controlling academic practices in secondary schools. The National Education Policy, which is an umbrella policy for educational activities other than those running independently in the country forms part of the guideline providing overarching federal programs. Moreover, the arrangements on education are given by federal constitutional regulations such as the Pakistan Education Code and the Constitution of Pakistan which function indirectly on the counseling services offered at secondary schools. Moreover, community-based initiatives featuring counseling services in the secondary school system have been visible through the School-Based Counseling Program (SBCP) of the Education Department of the Punjab Government. The objective of this venture is not only to help them academically but also to create positive conditions emotionally and psychologically for them to benefit and feel better. Every province may have its own rules but those regulations are always targeted at the fact that such services as counseling should be available for secondary school students, particularly during adolescence when assistance can be really helpful to achieve academic objectives.

Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Vis a Vis Educational ADVICE

As of now, the Pakistani Constitution which envisages that

every individual must have the basic right to education is a symbol of hope. If you are a child, between the ages of five and sixteen, coming from a family that has no way to pay for school, you can get free & compulsory education from the state, as per Article 25-A, which became possible with the 18th Amendment, passed in the year 2010. This is a reminder clause in the constitution that shows that the government is unwavering in its backing of education not just as a natural human right. It highlights that equal access to top-notch instruction at every level starting from elementary to high school is the most vital part of building necessary support services such as counseling is a priority, particularly at secondary school. Placing the right to education in the Constitution is not just a noble declaration but it shows Pakistan's dedication to seeing everyone at their fullest potential.

Federal Education Policy in Pakistan

The procedure of education falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government of Pakistan. So, the Government has brought a set of initiatives to enhance the educational environment in Pakistan. Those policies are shields, illuminating the roads by which the world is led in the much-improved education to all. The National Education Policy (NEP) is another worth-mentioning policy that surpasses its counterparts at the same level because of the policy's lucrativeness and diplomacy. It often acts as a foundational document that describes broad goals and tactics for educational improvement nationwide. The NEP is being devised by the government and recognizes the importance of such services alongside basic education, even to children at the secondary level. Special attention is allocated to the presentation of different facets of secondary-level counseling services including psycho-counseling, vocational counseling, job training, etc. within the implementation of NEP-2020 (National Education Policy). Therefore, these policies work as goals, which are the directional signs of the ways, the excellent quality, and the universal access to education for all. It is the National Education Policy (NEP), the document that describes generic aims and tools for the improvement of education nationwide is one of the most noticeable policies. To make the NEP a comprehensive program the authority included secondary education and in addition also identified the fundamental role of the school-based counseling services. What is purposely underscored is the importance of vocational counseling, different mental health assistance, and

other services that correspond with the needs of secondary education students to NEP. To reflect this, the National Education Policy (NEP) includes these services as part of the larger educational system by placing whose purpose is to shape individuals who can live a harmonious life in spite of the ever-changing environment.

Provincial Acts and Policies in Pakistan Relating to Education

These policies play the role of lights, which light up the walls of the institutional labyrinth and hence provide the best quality education to all. Another significant policy is the National Education Program – NEP, a fundamental document whose primary purpose is to give general guidelines and strategies for moving the Indiana educational system forward across the state. The school-based counseling services are highlighted in the NEP as a very important approach that plays a significant role in the development of education, not only related to higher education but all education forms. As to the psychological support, career counseling services, and other services that are individually designed for secondary school students under the NEP, the most salient features of the NEP are presented. Through these services, NEP creates an educational structure where the government targets the development of persons with transversal skills that will enable them to live in a world that is so dynamic and changing.

Lacunae in Legal Frame of Education Counselling in Pakistan

The country has about 49,000 schools though at least three of the country's premier schools deliver counseling services to the students (Manager, All Pakistan Private School Association). The students traverse these areas of cooperative work, empathy, conflict resolution, ambition, effective communication, organization, self-control, and self-awareness when working on emotional and social issues. Pupils who are faced with these dilemmas need more than mere academic help. They also require counseling to help them handle the problems. Students may benefit academically because they may start to excel in their academics and also their interpersonal relationships with their peers, parents, and teachers may improve if stressors and adversities related to this stage are dealt with in a proactive way. Their self-efficacy, self-esteem, emotional

intelligence, and their degrees to study all have a higher level after they receive the mentorship. Now, national education policy has no terms and conditions for counseling services to become compulsory for students. Ambiguous monetary body regulation. The basic mission of Pakistan's National Education Assessment System, the subsidiary of the Education Ministry, is to ensure that students have top-notch education. Nevertheless, it is still unknown if this body is overseeing the operation of educational institutions to confirm whether the ordinances set for the educational coaching service provided are put in place.

Analysis of Legal Frameworks of Finland and Pakistan

In Pakistan, no such standardized educational counseling legal systems exist. The legal aspects have no rules that are particularly specific to education counseling. Nevertheless, the acts and statutes have rules related to education counseling. Finland has a long-standing practice of implementing basic and higher education guidance within high-quality legal principles. These legal policies help to provide such counseling services to catalyze the academic, employment, and overall development of the student. In Pakistan, the role of schools and healthcare institutions situated in larger cities or well-renowned institutions in providing counseling services is too separate and this restraint limits the scope and availability of such services. Community psychiatrists in rural and financially disadvantaged neighborhoods are exclusively medically trained and are often unable to offer licensed counselors. In Finland, the counseling system of education is inclusive; all the educational institutions especially have such a service. The counseling system is very thorough. The scope of the campaign encompasses academic guidance, professional advice, mental health services, and creative activities aimed at developing the participants. Students in both urban and rural locations are targeted. Regarding the certifications and educational levels for school psychologists, Pakistan is not that strict. By engaging different cultures and levels of ability, these counseling resources will be made available to people. Finland has education counselors who are usually highly professional and educated people who have Masters or Doctoral degrees in psychology, education, or counseling. They go through strenuous education and training involving real-world lessons where they must acquire skills to help them serve students effectively. It is implied in Pakistan that

job guidance and academic achievement should be the goal of education counseling. Social-emotional health and personal growth of students are usually not considered in education counseling. The country's education counseling system which is holistic in nature, honestly believes in students' overall development and not just a one-dimensional focus on academic progress. Advisors deal with problems connected with the study, work, and personal life, stressing the significance of mental health and social and emotive development. A substantial lack of educational infrastructures and support services will affect education counseling services implementation in Pakistan. Stays on talking programs may not have budget proportionality, in turn, such differences can both be in the receive of and quality of programs. Finland allocates significant amounts of funding for undertaking programs aimed at school counseling among others, and therefore, puts in place the necessary infrastructure, staffing, and capacity building. There is committed institutional support in place for the provision of counseling services, so this makes it easier for them to be done and have a significant effect (Cashman, [2000](#)).

Conclusion

The Finnish and Pakistani countries' educational counseling system's legal framework comparisons reveal significant differences in planning strategies, initiatives, and results. While counseling services are indisputably important for the psychological as well as academic development of students both in the countries under consideration, their attributes vary as concerns their usefulness and level of accessibility. The lack of a uniform legislative regulation for education

guidance in Pakistan is generally accompanied by faulty and uneven access to counseling services, most notably in poor and rural areas. Across high school, and more so in college, the main focus is academic success and career counseling, and consequently, student's socioemotional health and overall well-being receive less emphasis. Lack of funds and shortage of properly trained counselors also make it unfeasible to offer college students in the U. S. the best counseling services there could be. In alliance with this, Finland, has, in place, strong regulatory bodies that control education counseling in both primary and higher education. Part of parent sessions in the school board in both the rural areas and the urban areas; guided by the actual learning environment. Counseling in Finland is the wide spectrum of counseling services that focus on mental health coping, personal development, and professional and academic well-being. The counseling service program gains more effectiveness and availability by giving applicable training and institutional support to well-trained counselors. In helping students to excel and flourish, this comparative study sets the importance of having clear enough laws, adequate funding, and all-embracing counseling on education matters. As a good case for many others, the comprehensive counseling program in Finland should be regarded. At the same time, we advise Pakistan to stress efficient legislation; invest more resources in counselors' training; and make child development the central goal of their school system. These issues, resolving them will boost the effort of the two nations to ensure that every student obtains the guidance and counseling services that give them a competitive advantage in all spheres of their lives.

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