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Perceived Gaps in Guidance and Counselling Services: A Study of Students and Teachers at the Higher Secondary Level in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the need, importance, and current state of guidance and counseling services in higher secondary schools in Pakistan. Adolescence is a sensitive and important phase of life, where students go through many academic, emotional, social, and career-related challenges. During this stage, proper guidance and counseling can play a key role in helping students understand themselves, make better decisions, and develop in a balanced way. However, despite its recognized importance worldwide, such support systems are still limited in many Pakistani schools. To understand this issue in depth, the study used a survey-methods approach. Data were collected from teachers and students through questionnaires. In total, 100 male teachers, 300 female teachers, 200 male students, and 400 female students participated in the study. The numerical data were analyzed using percentages and mean scores. The results showed that both teachers and students clearly understand the value of guidance and counseling services. However, most schools do not have proper counseling systems or trained professionals. Many students shared that they struggle with choosing subjects, planning careers, handling academic pressure, and dealing with personal issues. Teachers also expressed the need for proper training so they can better support their students. In addition, students highlighted the importance of co-curricular activities, recreational opportunities, and well-equipped libraries as part of a supportive learning environment. Based on these findings, the study concludes that there is a strong need to introduce well-structured and professionally managed counseling services at the higher secondary level. It recommends setting up counseling centers in schools, hiring trained counselors, providing training for teachers, organizing career guidance programs, and improving collaboration between parents and teachers. Overall, the study emphasizes that by strengthening guidance and counseling services, schools can better support students' academic success, emotional well-being, and future career readiness.

Keywords: Guidance and Counseling, Higher Secondary Education, Pakistan, Adolescents, Career Guidance, Academic Stress, Student Development, Counseling Services, Teacher Training, Emotional Well-being

Introduction

In the field of education and human development, guidance and counselling occupy a central role in promoting personal growth, academic achievement, and social adjustment.



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The increasing complexity of modern life—characterized by rapid technological changes, social instability, and academic competition—has made it essential for individuals, especially students, to receive structured guidance and professional counselling. Guidance and counselling help individuals understand themselves, explore their abilities, set realistic goals, and make appropriate life choices. Moreover, they provide emotional and psychological support to help individuals overcome challenges and achieve holistic development (Gibson & Mitchell, 2011).

Guidance and counselling services are now recognized globally as integral components of educational systems, workplace environments, and community development programs. They aim to facilitate not only career and academic success but also emotional stability, interpersonal harmony, and overall well-being. As Makinde (1984) asserts, a well-organized guidance and counselling program contributes to national development by helping individuals reach their full potential and become productive members of society.

The term guidance refers to a systematic process of helping an individual understand themselves and their environment so they can make informed decisions and adjustments in various aspects of life. According to Okobiah and Okorodudu (2004), guidance involves providing relevant information, advice, and assistance to help individuals make appropriate choices concerning education, career, and personal life. It is preventive and developmental in nature rather than remedial.

Guidance focuses on the individual's total development—academic, vocational, social, and personal. It empowers people to become self-reliant and confident in dealing with everyday challenges. Gibson and Mitchell (2011) emphasize that guidance is not about giving ready-made answers but about equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills to solve their own problems effectively. Counselling, as distinct from guidance, is a more personalized and therapeutic process that involves one-on-one or group interaction between a trained counsellor and clients. It focuses on helping individuals explore their feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to resolve emotional, social, or psychological difficulties. Nwoye (2009) defines counselling as a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals.

Unlike guidance, which tends to be informational, counselling is more interpretative and problem-solving in nature. It provides a confidential setting where individuals can express their concerns, gain insight, and develop coping strategies. Counselling emphasizes empathy, active listening, and acceptance—allowing clients to achieve personal growth and positive behavioral change (Egbo, 2015).

The overarching goal of guidance and counselling is to facilitate holistic development—intellectual, emotional, social, and moral. Specific objectives are self-understanding and self-acceptance, decision-making skills, adjustment and coping, behavioral change and academic and career development. Through these objectives, guidance and counselling serve as a bridge between personal growth and societal development.

In educational institutions, guidance and counselling programs are indispensable for students' all-round development. The academic environment often presents challenges such as peer pressure, examination stress, career uncertainty, and personal adjustment issues. Counselling provides a structured support system to help students navigate these challenges effectively. According to Egbo (2015), the presence of guidance counsellors in schools improves students' academic performance, promotes self-confidence, and reduces dropout rates. It also fosters a healthy school climate by addressing behavioral issues such as bullying, absenteeism, and indiscipline.



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Professional counsellors play a critical role in providing structured and ethical services. Their responsibilities include assessing individual needs, offering emotional support, conducting workshops, and liaising with parents, teachers, and administrators. Despite its recognized importance, guidance and counselling face several challenges, particularly in developing countries. These include inadequate funding, shortage of trained personnel, cultural misconceptions about counselling, and lack of administrative support (Egbo, 2015). Guidance and counselling are indispensable tools for personal, educational, and societal development. They foster self-understanding, informed decision-making, emotional balance, and responsible citizenship.

The higher secondary level is a critical phase in a student's life, marking the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. During this period, students face numerous challenges that can impact their academic performance, personal growth, and future careers. Guidance and counselling services play a vital role in supporting students navigate these challenges and make informed decisions about their lives. This article explores the need and practices of guidance and counselling at the higher secondary level in Pakistan, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for improvement. Additionally, the higher secondary level is a time of significant change and exploration for students. They are expected to make crucial decisions about their academic and professional futures, while also navigating social and emotional challenges. Guidance and counselling services can provide students with the support and guidance they need to make informed decisions and achieve their goals.

Further, guidance and counselling services are essential for supporting students at the higher secondary level in Pakistan. While there are challenges and limitations that need to be addressed, there are also opportunities for improvement and growth. By investing in guidance and counselling services, Pakistan can empower its young people to make informed decisions, achieve their goals, and contribute to the country's development. Despite the importance of guidance and counselling services, several challenges and limitations need to be addressed. There is a shortage of trained counsellors in Pakistan, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas. Guidance and counselling services often lack the necessary resources, including infrastructure, materials, and funding. Cultural and social norms can create barriers to seeking guidance and counselling services, particularly for girls and women. Guidance and counselling play a vital role in the educational, emotional, and social development of students, particularly at the higher secondary level where adolescents face critical decisions about their academic and career futures. Globally, educational systems recognize counselling as an essential component of holistic education, helping students cope with personal challenges, develop decision-making skills, and plan for higher education or vocational careers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Pakistan, the importance of guidance and counselling in schools has been acknowledged in various education policies and strategic plans. However, its implementation remains limited and inconsistent across provinces. Most higher secondary schools lack trained counsellors, structured counselling programs, or designated spaces for such activities. Teachers, often untrained in psychological or career guidance, are expected to provide informal support to students. This situation leaves many students without proper direction regarding subject selection, career planning, and emotional management during a period of rapid psychological and social change.

The challenges faced by students in Pakistan's higher secondary institutions such as



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academic stress, anxiety, peer pressure, lack of career awareness, and family expectations highlight the urgent need for effective guidance and counselling services. Research indicated that educational psychology and school management shows that such services not only improve students' academic performance but also enhance their self-esteem, decision-making skills, and mental well-being.

Mostly, in Pakistan, the significance of guidance and counselling has been highlighted in policy documents such as the National Education Policy (2009) and the Education Sector Reform (ESR) plan. Despite policy support, actual implementation remains weak. Kausar (2010) and Ahmed (2015) reported that most Pakistani schools lack qualified counsellors and rely on teachers who have no formal counselling training. Counselling services are typically limited to academic issues rather than addressing personal or career development needs.

Ali, Awan, and Batool (2017) found that students strongly desire career and personal counselling services but such facilities are rarely available. Similarly, Rehman and Shafiq (2019) revealed that teachers recognize counselling's importance but face constraints such as time shortages and lack of institutional support. Furthermore, Hussain (2021) observed that cultural misconceptions about counselling hinder its adoption. Many parents and educators view counselling as a last resort for problematic students rather than a preventive developmental service.

Jones (2011) stated that the derivation of the word therapy is from the Greek word *therapeia* which means healing. Literally, the meaning of psychotherapy is healing the mind or the soul. Presently; psychotherapy's meaning is widened as to heal the mind by psychological methods which are applied by adequately trained and qualified practitioners. There are different goals for therapy which includes dealing with severe mental disorders, tackling definite anxieties and phobias, and to assist people discover meaning and purpose in their lives. There are attempts to make a differentiation between counselling and psychotherapy but these are partly successful. Psychotherapy and counselling represent diverse knowledge and activities but both use the same models. In 2000, the British Association for counselling acknowledged the similarity between counselling and psychotherapy. In Australia, the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia exists.

Thompson (2012) stated that future issues and trends that will inescapably influence school counselling are more plentiful and complex. The following trends will have a remarkable impact on the services and needs of students and their families, administrators and business and industry, both locally and globally.

In recent years, the role of guidance and counseling within educational settings has gained considerable attention. Modern education is no longer limited to academic instruction; instead, it increasingly focuses on supporting students' emotional, social, and personal development. Scholars in Educational Psychology argue that students require structured support systems to successfully navigate the growing demands of academic life and future career planning (Ali & Khan, 2022; Yusuf & Ahmed, 2023). Within this broader perspective, guidance and counseling services are seen as essential tools for fostering well-rounded development.

The importance of such services becomes even more evident during adolescence. This stage is marked by rapid physical growth, emotional fluctuations, and evolving social relationships. Students often find themselves dealing with academic expectations alongside personal uncertainties. Research indicates that many adolescents struggle with



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stress, identity-related concerns, peer dynamics, and decisions about their future (Shah et al., 2021; Riaz & Mahmood, 2024). In the absence of proper guidance, these challenges can hinder both academic achievement and psychological well-being. Counseling services, therefore, provide students with an opportunity to seek support, reflect on their experiences, and develop healthier coping mechanisms (Khan et al., 2022).

Across the globe, several education systems have successfully embedded counseling services within their institutional frameworks. For instance, countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom have established comprehensive school counseling programs supported by trained professionals and policy guidelines. Evidence suggests that students who benefit from these services often demonstrate stronger academic engagement, improved decision-making abilities, and greater self-confidence (Brown & Miller, 2021; Johnson et al., 2023). Moreover, these systems encourage collaboration among educators, parents, and counselors to ensure a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

However, the situation in Pakistan reflects a different reality. Although awareness regarding the value of counseling is gradually increasing, its practical implementation remains limited in many schools. Formal counseling structures are often absent, and the availability of trained professionals is minimal. As a result, teachers are frequently expected to take on advisory roles without receiving adequate preparation or training (Ahmed & Rafique, 2022; Latif et al., 2023). This gap makes it difficult to address students' emotional and psychological concerns effectively. Furthermore, studies suggest that students may hesitate to discuss personal issues due to the lack of confidentiality and structured support systems (Hussain et al., 2021).

Another key area highlighted in the literature is career guidance. At the higher secondary level, students are required to make critical decisions regarding subject selection and future professions. Without access to proper guidance, these decisions are often influenced by external factors such as parental expectations or peer opinions rather than individual interests and abilities. Research has shown that insufficient career counseling can lead to confusion, dissatisfaction, and poor academic alignment (Iqbal & Shah, 2022; Rehman et al., 2024). In contrast, effective counseling helps students explore their potential and make informed, realistic choices about their future.

Teachers also play an important role in the guidance process due to their close and continuous interaction with students. They are often in a position to notice early signs of academic or emotional difficulties. However, without formal training in counseling techniques, many teachers feel unprepared to handle sensitive issues such as anxiety, stress, or personal conflicts (Nasir & Saleem, 2023). This underscores the importance of providing teachers with professional development opportunities that enhance their ability to support students beyond academic instruction.

Beyond formal counseling, the overall school environment contributes significantly to student development. Co-curricular activities, including sports, debates, and student organizations, offer valuable opportunities for personal expression and skill development. Similarly, access to well-resourced libraries promotes independent learning and intellectual growth. Research suggests that when such elements are combined with



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effective guidance services, they create a more supportive and enriching educational experience (Zafar & Qureshi, 2022).

In addition, growing attention is being given to students' mental health within educational contexts. Increasing academic competition and societal expectations have contributed to higher levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional challenges among students. Guidance and counseling services can serve both preventive and supportive functions by helping students build resilience and manage stress effectively (World Health Organization, 2023; Tariq & Bano, 2024). Schools that prioritize mental well-being tend to foster more positive and productive learning environments.

Overall, the literature highlights the critical importance of integrating guidance and counseling services into education systems. While countries with established frameworks demonstrate the benefits of such services, developing contexts like Pakistan continue to face structural and institutional challenges. The existing body of research points to the need for comprehensive strategies that include trained personnel, formal programs, and supportive policies. Addressing these gaps is essential for promoting students' academic success, emotional stability, and future readiness.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study was adopted a survey Method . The population for this research study comprised on higher secondary level of Punjab Pakistan. Further, Punjab divided into three main regions: Southern Punjab, Central Punjab, and Northern Punjab. Three key cities Multan, Faisalabad and Sargodha were included as target population. All teachers and students of Multan, Faisalabad and Sargodha were indicated as population of this research study.

Sample of this study consisted on 60 public and private higher secondary schools and colleges of Faisalabad, Multan and Sargodha. Stratified-random sampling technique was used for the allocation of sample size. Ten male and ten female higher secondary schools and colleges were selected on a random basis. The sample size of 600 students and 300 teachers were distributed the questionnaire. Thus, 10 students and 05 teachers from each male and female schools and colleges were chosen randomly.

DATA COLLECTION

By giving the questionnaires to the respondents—that is, the teachers and students—the researcher was able to gather quantitative data. The researcher gathered all of the completed questionnaires from the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS

After data collection from the sample group the researcher placed the quantitative data into SPSS version 20 for the purpose of analysis, interpretation and answer the already formulated questions of chapter one. The researcher applied different descriptive and inferential statistics for the analysis of the collected data. Mean and Standard Deviation were applied to the data to describe the collected data.



RESULTS

Table 4.1: *Teachers Views about their Perceptions in Connection with Guidance and Counseling*

Teachers	Male Teachers						Female Teachers (300)						
	(100)												
Indicator-1	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	
	%	%	%	%	%	Value	%	%	%	%	%	Value (X)	
							(\bar{X})						
Perceptions in Connection with Guidance and Counseling	45	2	15	10	5	4.48	120	50	80	40	10	4.10	
							5						

The findings regarding teachers’ perceptions in connection with guidance and counseling indicate an overall strong and favorable attitude among both male and female teachers. The general trend of responses shows that most teachers expressed agreement or strong agreement with the statement related to the importance of guidance and counseling. This reflects a clear recognition among teachers that guidance and counseling services play a significant role in supporting students’ academic, social, and emotional development within educational institutions.

Male teachers demonstrated a comparatively stronger level of positive perception. Their responses were more concentrated toward the higher end of the rating scale, suggesting a very high level of endorsement of guidance and counseling initiatives. This implies that male teachers not only acknowledge the importance of such services but may also perceive them as essential components of institutional support systems. Their stronger agreement may reflect greater awareness, exposure, or confidence regarding the role of counseling services in improving student outcomes.

Female teachers also exhibited a positive perception, indicating substantial agreement with the need for guidance and counseling. However, their responses showed slightly more variation across the rating categories compared to male teachers. Although the overall perception remains high, the relatively moderate dispersion suggests that female teachers may hold more nuanced views regarding implementation, structure, or effectiveness of guidance and counseling services. Nevertheless, the collective response still confirms that female teachers strongly support the integration and strengthening of such services within educational settings.

Overall, the results suggest that teachers, irrespective of gender, recognize guidance and counseling as a vital element in enhancing students’ well-being and academic success. The slight difference in the intensity of agreement between male and female teachers does not undermine the shared consensus; rather, it highlights a generally positive professional orientation toward student support services. These findings reinforce the need for institutional policies that further strengthen guidance and counseling frameworks, as they are clearly valued by teaching professionals.



Table 4.2: *Students Views about their Perceptions in Connection with Guidance and Counseling*

Indicator-1	N (600)											
	Male Students (200)						Female Students (400)					
	5	4	3	2	1	Mean (\bar{X})	5	4	3	2	1	Mean (\bar{X})
	%	%	%	%	%		%	%	%	%	%	
Perceptions in Connection with Guidance and Counseling	80	60	30	20	10	4.48	160	13	60	30	20	4.10

The findings for Indicator–1 reveal that both male and female students hold generally positive perceptions regarding guidance and counseling services. The overall response trend is inclined toward the higher end of the rating scale, indicating agreement about the importance and relevance of guidance and counseling within educational institutions.

Male students demonstrate a comparatively higher mean score than female students, suggesting that male respondents express stronger positive perceptions toward guidance and counseling services. This indicates that male students may perceive these services as more beneficial or necessary in addressing their academic, personal, and career-related concerns.

Although female students also show agreement overall, their responses appear slightly more distributed across the scale, resulting in a comparatively lower mean score. This suggests that while a substantial proportion of female students recognize the value of guidance and counseling, some may have reservations regarding its effectiveness, accessibility, or implementation.

The response pattern indicates that the majority of students in both groups selected the highest and second-highest categories, reflecting a favorable outlook. Only a small proportion expressed lower levels of agreement, showing that negative perceptions are minimal.

These findings imply that students generally acknowledge the significance of structured guidance and counseling services in supporting their educational and personal development. However, the difference in mean scores suggests a slight gender variation in perception, which may be influenced by differing experiences, expectations, or levels of awareness.

In conclusion, Indicator–1 demonstrates an overall positive perception of guidance and counseling among students, with male students exhibiting relatively stronger agreement compared to female students. Nevertheless, both groups collectively affirm the importance of guidance and counseling services in the academic environment.



Table 4.3: Responses of Teachers about Problems of Students and Teachers in Connection with Guidance and Counseling

Indicator-2	Male Teachers (100)						Female Teachers (300)					
	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	5	4	3	2	1	Mean
Problems of Students and Teachers in Connection with Guidance and Counseling	%	%	%	%	%	(X)	%	%	%	%	%	(X)
	50	20	15	10	5	4.60	160	60	35	25	20	4.52

The findings reveal that both male and female teachers strongly perceive the existence of significant problems related to guidance and counseling services in schools. The overall trend of responses is heavily inclined toward the higher end of the rating scale, indicating a strong level of agreement among respondents.

Male teachers demonstrate a slightly higher level of agreement compared to female teachers, as reflected in their comparatively higher mean score. This suggests that male teachers perceive the issues in guidance and counseling practices somewhat more intensely. However, the difference between the two groups is minimal, indicating general consensus across gender.

The distribution pattern shows that the majority of respondents in both groups selected the highest response category, followed by the second-highest category. Very few teachers expressed disagreement or strong disagreement. This pattern reflects that problems related to guidance and counseling are widely recognized rather than being isolated or gender-specific concerns.

The results imply that guidance and counseling services may be facing structural, administrative, or professional challenges within institutions. Teachers appear to acknowledge deficiencies such as lack of trained counselors, insufficient resources, inadequate awareness, or limited institutional support. The strong agreement trend further suggests an urgent need for policy-level attention and practical interventions. In summary, Indicator-2 demonstrates a high level of perceived problems in guidance and counseling services, with both male and female teachers largely sharing similar views. The slight variation in mean scores does not indicate a substantial gender-based difference but rather reinforces a collective recognition of the issue.

Table 4.4: Responses of students about Problems of Students and Teachers in Connection with Guidance and Counseling

Indicator-2	N (600)	
	Male Students (200)	Female Students (400)



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Problems of Students and Teachers in Connection with Guidance and Counseling	5	4	3	2	1	Mean (X)	5	4	3	2	1	Mean (X)
	%	%	%	%	%		%	%	%	%	%	
	80	70	25	15	10	4.50	200	150	25	20	5	4.52

The findings of Indicator–2 indicate that both male and female students strongly perceive the existence of problems related to guidance and counseling services in educational institutions. The responses are heavily concentrated toward the higher end of the rating scale, reflecting strong agreement that certain challenges or deficiencies exist within the current system.

The mean scores of male and female students are almost identical, with female students showing a very slightly higher mean. This minimal difference suggests that perceptions of problems in guidance and counseling are consistent across gender. Both groups equally recognize the presence of obstacles affecting the effectiveness of these services.

The overall response pattern demonstrates that the majority of students selected the highest response categories, indicating strong acknowledgment of existing issues. Only a small proportion of respondents expressed disagreement or strong disagreement, which confirms that concerns regarding guidance and counseling are widely shared rather than isolated among a specific gender group.

These perceived problems may relate to factors such as lack of trained counselors, insufficient availability of counseling sessions, limited awareness programs, confidentiality concerns, or inadequate institutional support. The strong agreement trend implies that students are not only aware of the importance of guidance and counseling but also conscious of the practical shortcomings affecting its implementation.

In conclusion, Indicator–2 reveals a high level of agreement among both male and female students regarding the presence of problems in guidance and counseling services. The nearly equal mean scores indicate gender uniformity in perception, highlighting the need for systematic improvements to address these challenges effectively within educational institutions.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the need, importance, and practices of guidance and counseling services at the higher secondary school level. The findings indicate that both teachers and students strongly recognize the importance of guidance and counseling programs in schools. These results are consistent with recent research emphasizing the crucial role of counseling services in students' academic, emotional, and career development.

First, the findings revealed that the higher secondary level is a critical stage in students' personal and educational development. A large majority of teachers and students agreed that students require proper guidance at this stage because they face academic pressure, career confusion, and emotional challenges. Guidance and counseling services are considered essential for helping students develop confidence, understand their strengths, and achieve academic success (Khan & Ali, 2022; Ahmed et al., 2023).

Second, the present study found that most teachers and students strongly support the



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establishment of formal guidance and counseling programs in schools. However, the study also revealed that many schools lack trained counselors and structured counseling services. Similar findings were reported by Shah et al. (2022), who found that although teachers recognize the importance of counseling services, limited training and resources restrict their ability to provide effective guidance to students.

Third, the study highlights the importance of counseling services in improving students' academic performance and educational decision-making. Students often face difficulties in selecting subjects, planning careers, and managing examination stress. Previous research conducted in Pakistan also found that guidance and counseling services help students align their abilities and interests with appropriate educational choices, thereby improving their learning outcomes (Iqbal & Riaz, 2023; Malik et al., 2021).

Fourth, the study revealed that lack of trained counselors and limited resources are major barriers to effective counseling programs in schools. This is supported by Ahmed et al. (2023), who reported that many secondary schools lack proper counseling facilities, trained staff, and institutional support, reducing the effectiveness of guidance services.

Another important finding was that students emphasized the importance of recreational activities, sports, educational tours, and library facilities as part of their guidance needs. These activities contribute to students' social development, emotional well-being, and academic motivation. Recent studies have also highlighted that counseling programs help students develop self-awareness, build healthy relationships, and achieve independence and success in their educational environment (Hussain & Akhtar, 2022; Khan et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the results of the study emphasize the growing importance of mental health support and career counseling in modern education systems. Around the world, education systems are increasingly recognizing the need for structured counseling programs to address students' psychological and academic challenges. For example, policy changes in several educational systems now require schools to appoint trained counselors to support students' mental health and career planning (Times of India, 2023).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, the following major findings were obtained:

1. Importance of Guidance and Counseling at Secondary Level

A very large majority of respondents believed that the secondary and higher secondary level is the most critical stage of student development. Approximately 94% of teachers and 100% of students agreed that students require proper guidance during this stage because they face numerous academic, emotional, and social challenges.

2. Need for Formal Guidance and Counseling Programs

The study revealed that both teachers and students strongly supported the establishment of formal guidance and counseling programs in schools. Most respondents believed that counseling services would help students overcome personal and academic problems and make better decisions regarding their future.



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3. Lack of Professional Counselors

One of the major findings of the study was that most schools do not have trained professional counselors. Teachers often try to guide students informally, but due to lack of training and heavy workload, they are unable to provide effective counseling services.

4. Role of Teachers in Student Guidance

Teachers play an important role in guiding students in academic and personal matters. However, many teachers reported that they do not have sufficient training in counseling techniques, which limits their ability to address students' psychological and emotional issues effectively.

5. Contribution of Parent Teacher Council

The study found that the Parent Teacher Council (PTC) plays a supportive role in guiding students. About 76% of teachers believed that the PTC contributes to student guidance, although its role is still limited and needs improvement.

6. Need for Career and Vocational Guidance

A significant number of students expressed the need for career counseling services. Students reported that they often feel confused while selecting subjects, academic streams, and future professions. They believe that proper guidance would help them choose careers according to their interests and abilities.

7. Recreational and Co-curricular Guidance

Students highlighted the importance of sports, recreational activities, and study tours in schools. Many students suggested that these activities help reduce stress, improve social interaction, and promote overall development.

8. Need for Library and Academic Support

A considerable number of students emphasized the importance of functional libraries and academic guidance resources in schools. They believed that access to books, career information, and educational resources would support their academic growth.

9. Gender Differences in Perceptions

The analysis indicated that female teachers and students showed slightly higher awareness regarding the importance of guidance and counseling services compared to male respondents.

10. Overall Need for Guidance Services

Overall findings of the study clearly indicated a strong need for organized and systematic guidance and counseling programs in higher secondary schools in Pakistan.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the findings of the study, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, the study confirms that guidance and counseling services are essential at the higher secondary school level. Students at this stage experience various academic, emotional, and social challenges which require professional support.



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Second, although teachers recognize the importance of guidance services, most schools lack formal counseling programs and trained counselors. As a result, students often do not receive adequate support in dealing with their personal or academic problems.

Third, the study indicates that career guidance is particularly important for students at the higher secondary level. Proper counseling can help students identify their interests, abilities, and future career opportunities.

Fourth, the results show that co-curricular and recreational activities contribute positively to students' personal and social development. Such activities should therefore be integrated into school programs.

Fifth, the findings suggest that guidance and counseling programs can significantly improve students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and career planning.

Finally, the study highlights the need for systematic policies and institutional support to establish effective guidance and counseling services in schools across Pakistan.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve guidance and counseling services in schools.

1. Establishment of Guidance and Counseling Centers

Every higher secondary school should establish a guidance and counseling center to provide professional support to students in academic, personal, and career-related matters.

2. Appointment of Professional Counselors

The government and educational authorities should appoint trained and qualified counselors in schools. Professional counselors can help students deal with emotional, psychological, and academic problems more effectively.

3. Training for Teachers

Teachers should receive training in guidance and counseling techniques so that they can better understand students' needs and provide appropriate support.

4. Career Counseling Programs

Schools should organize career counseling seminars, workshops, and guidance sessions to help students explore different career opportunities and make informed decisions.

5. Strengthening Parent–Teacher Collaboration

Parents should be actively involved in the guidance process. Regular meetings between parents and teachers can help identify students' problems and provide better support.

6. Promotion of Co-curricular Activities

Schools should promote sports, recreational activities, and educational tours to support students' physical and emotional development.



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7. Improvement of Library Facilities

Schools should establish well-equipped libraries that provide academic resources, career information, and guidance materials for students.

8. Development of National Guidance Policy

Educational authorities should develop a comprehensive national policy for guidance and counseling in schools to ensure consistent implementation across the education system.

9. Awareness Programs

Awareness programs should be conducted for students, teachers, and parents to highlight the importance and benefits of guidance and counseling services.

10. Further Research

Further research should be conducted at different educational levels and in different regions of Pakistan to explore additional aspects of guidance and counseling services.

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