

**THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN ROMANIA AND FINLAND:
A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE BASED
ON OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS' ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

Education is a fundamental aspect of modern societies, shaping individuals' knowledge, skills, and competencies. Education systems vary significantly across the globe, reflecting differences in cultural, social, political, and economic contexts. In this study, we aim to compare the educational systems in Romania and Finland, two countries with distinct historical, cultural, and political backgrounds.

The focus of this research is on document analysis, which involves an examination of official reports, policies, and other relevant documents related to education. By comparing these documents, we aim to identify the similarities and differences in the educational systems of Romania and Finland. The purpose of this documents' analysis is to gain insights into the educational policies and practices of these countries and provide a comparative perspective on their approaches to education.

Romania and Finland offer interesting cases for comparison due to their distinct educational systems. Romania's education system has faced numerous challenges in recent years, including issues related to funding, teacher shortages, and curriculum reform. In contrast, Finland has a well-established reputation for its innovative and effective educational system, with an emphasis on quality education and equal opportunities for all students.

The comparative analysis of the educational systems in Romania and Finland can contribute to a better understanding of the factors that shape education systems and their impact on student outcomes. This study's findings may also have implications for educational policies and practices in other countries facing similar challenges in their education systems.

Keywords: educational system, documents' analysis, educational policies, comparative perspective

1. Introduction

Education is a critical component of any society, as it shapes the development of individuals and the growth of a country. The educational systems of various countries have been a topic of extensive research and comparison over the years, with the aim of identifying best practices

and areas for improvement. In this article, we will be examining and comparing the educational systems of Romania and Finland.

Romania and Finland are two countries with distinct educational systems, each with its own unique features and challenges. Romania has a centralized education system that has undergone significant changes over the years, while Finland has a decentralized system that is highly regarded for its emphasis on equity and inclusivity.

Using document analysis as our primary method, we will compare and contrast various aspects of the educational systems in these two countries, including their curricula, teacher training programs, and funding models. We will also explore the historical and cultural factors that have influenced the development of these systems.

As noted by Pasi Sahlberg, a Finnish educator and author, "The Finnish education system is based on the idea that every child should have exactly the same opportunity to learn, regardless of their background or socio-economic status" (Sahlberg, 2011). Meanwhile, Huza (Huza A.R., Huza I.T., 2012, p. 29-34) has highlighted the importance of educational reforms in Romania, stating that changes in the Romanian education system have been motivated by the desire to align it with the standards of the European Union. Through this comparative analysis, we hope to shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of the educational systems in Romania and Finland, and identify potential areas for improvement that could benefit both countries.

2. Why is it necessary to study educational system from Romania and from Finland?

Studying the educational system from Romania can provide insights into the challenges and opportunities that exist in education systems in other countries. By examining the strengths and weaknesses of the Romanian educational system, policymakers and educators can learn from the successes and failures of the system and apply these lessons to their own contexts.

In addition, studying the Romanian educational system can also provide a deeper understanding of the cultural and historical factors that have shaped the country's approach to education. This can be particularly valuable for researchers and educators who are interested in cross-cultural comparisons and understanding how educational systems are influenced by broader social and political factors. (OECD Publishing, Country reports for Romania, 2021)

Furthermore, understanding the Romanian educational system can also be beneficial for individuals who are interested in pursuing academic or professional opportunities in Romania or working with Romanian students and educators. By gaining a better understanding of the country's educational landscape, individuals can better navigate the system and make informed

decisions about how to approach their work or studies (OECD Publishing, Country reports for Romania, 2021)

Historical and cultural context: The Romanian educational system has been shaped by a unique historical and cultural context, including influences from various periods of occupation and political changes. Studying the system can provide insights into how these factors have influenced the development of education in Romania (Szakács-Behling, 2017)

Educational policies and reforms: Romania has undergone significant educational reforms in recent years, with a focus on improving the quality and accessibility of education. Understanding these policies and their effects on the educational system can provide valuable lessons for other countries (Musset P, 2014, OECD Publishing)

Educational outcomes: Despite improvements in recent years, Romania still faces challenges in terms of educational outcomes, particularly in terms of equity and access to education. Studying the system can provide insights into these challenges and potential solutions (OECD Publishing, Country reports for Romania, 2021)

Teacher training and support: Romania has a strong tradition of teacher training and support, with a focus on ensuring that teachers have the skills and knowledge necessary to help students achieve their full potential. Studying the Romanian approach to teacher training and support can provide valuable insights for other countries. (Romania, Ongoing reforms and policy developments, Eurydice, 2022)

On the other hand, there are several reasons why the educational system from Finland is worth studying:

High academic achievement: Finland consistently ranks at the top of international assessments of student performance, such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). This success has attracted the attention of educators and policymakers around the world (OECD, 2019. PISA 2018 Results)

Innovative approach to teaching and learning: Finland's educational system emphasizes experiential and student-centered learning, with a focus on critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. This approach has been found to be effective in producing well-rounded and engaged learners (Sahlberg, 2011)

Focus on equity: Finland has a strong commitment to providing equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background. This has led to policies and practices that support the academic success of all students, including those with disabilities and from immigrant backgrounds (Sahlberg, 2011, European Commission, 2019, Finland: Country Report)

Teacher preparation and support: Finnish teachers are highly trained and enjoy high levels of autonomy and professional respect. The system provides extensive professional development opportunities and support to ensure that teachers have the skills and knowledge necessary to help students achieve their full potential (Sahlberg, 2011, European Commission, 2019, Finland: Country Report)

Strong investment in education: Finland invests heavily in education, with significant funding for schools and teacher training. This commitment has helped to create a high-quality educational system that produces successful learners and contributes to the country's overall economic and social well-being (Sahlberg, 2011, European Commission, 2019, Finland: Country Report).

Moreover, studying the Finnish educational system can provide valuable insights into innovative approaches to teaching and learning, as well as effective strategies for promoting academic achievement and equity in education.

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3. A briefly summary of the relevant documents about educational systems from Romania and Finland

The manuscript "*Higher Education in Finland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and UK*" (Davigo, 2016) offers an in-depth analysis of the higher education systems in these six European countries. The manuscript provides a comprehensive overview of the historical, political, and social contexts that have shaped each system, as well as the organizational structure and governance of higher education institutions.

Moreover, the manuscript examines the funding mechanisms and policies for higher education, including public and private funding, tuition fees, and financial aid. It also explores the impact of globalization and internationalization on the higher education systems, such as the growth of transnational education, international student mobility, and cross-border collaborations.

The manuscript also discusses the challenges facing each system, such as the need to enhance quality assurance mechanisms, increase access to higher education for disadvantaged groups, and promote innovation and entrepreneurship in higher education.

Overall, the manuscript offers a nuanced and comparative analysis of the higher education systems in these countries, highlighting the similarities and differences in policies, practices, and outcomes. The manuscript provides valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers interested in understanding and improving higher education systems in Europe and beyond.

The article "***Romania's Willingness To Import The Improvements Of Successful Educational Systems From Europe***" (Ardelean A., Țițan E., Manea I.D. and Burciu A., 2014) explores the Romanian government's efforts to improve its educational system by adopting best practices from successful educational systems in Europe. The article highlights the challenges facing Romania's education system, including low student performance, high dropout rates, and inadequate funding.

The article begins by discussing the Finnish education system, which is widely considered one of the best in the world. The Finnish system prioritizes equity, student-centered learning, and teacher training, and has achieved excellent student outcomes. The article notes that Romania has shown interest in adopting some of these practices, such as reducing class sizes, increasing teacher autonomy, and investing in teacher training.

The article then discusses the challenges facing Romania's education system, such as inadequate funding, a rigid curriculum, and a lack of emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The article notes that Romania's government has recognized the need for improvement and has taken steps to reform the system, including revising the national curriculum and increasing funding for education.

The article also highlights the success of other European educational systems, such as those in Estonia and Portugal, which have achieved high student outcomes by investing in teacher training and technology. The article suggests that Romania could learn from these examples by focusing on teacher professional development and incorporating technology into the classroom.

The article concludes by emphasizing the importance of international cooperation and exchange in improving education systems. The article notes that Romania has already begun to participate in international programs and initiatives, such as the Erasmus+ program, which provides funding for educational exchange and cooperation. The article suggests that by learning from successful educational systems in Europe and participating in international cooperation, Romania's education system can improve and achieve better student outcomes.

Overall, the article provides a detailed analysis of the challenges facing Romania's education system and highlights the potential benefits of adopting best practices from successful European systems. The article offers valuable insights for policymakers and educators interested in improving education systems through international cooperation and exchange.

The article "***The best educational systems in the world on example of European and Asian countries***" (Wilk K., 2017) provides an in-depth analysis of the educational systems of various

countries around the world. The article compares the educational systems of European and Asian countries and identifies the factors that contribute to the success of these systems.

The article notes that Finland, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong are among the countries with the best educational systems in the world. The article analyzes the features of these systems and highlights the common factors that contribute to their success.

One of the key factors that the article identifies is a strong focus on equity and access to education. The article notes that these countries prioritize equal access to education and provide support to disadvantaged students to ensure that they have the same opportunities as their peers. Another important factor identified by the article is the quality of teachers. The article notes that these countries have highly trained and skilled teachers who are well-respected and supported by the educational system.

The article also discusses the importance of a curriculum that is relevant and prepares students for the challenges of the 21st century. The article notes that these countries have developed curricula that are tailored to the needs of their societies and economies, and that provide students with skills that are in high demand in the labor market.

Additionally, the article discusses the importance of a supportive and collaborative learning environment. The article notes that these countries have educational systems that foster collaboration and teamwork among students, and that prioritize the development of social and emotional skills alongside academic skills.

Finally, the article notes that these countries prioritize innovation and are constantly seeking to improve their educational systems through research and development.

Overall, the article provides a detailed analysis of the factors that contribute to the success of the best educational systems in the world. The article offers valuable insights for policymakers and educators interested in improving their own educational systems and enhancing the quality of education for students.

"The Secrets of Finnish Education" (<https://edpost.education/the-secrets-of-finnish-education/>) is an article that explores the key factors that make the Finnish education system so successful. The article discusses various aspects of the education system in Finland, including teaching methods, curriculum, and teacher training.

One of the main factors contributing to the success of the Finnish education system is the emphasis on equity and equality. The Finnish education system is designed to provide equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background. This is achieved through a range of measures, including comprehensive schools, free education, and equal distribution of resources.

Another key factor is the emphasis on creativity and critical thinking. Finnish schools focus on developing these skills through practical, hands-on learning experiences, rather than just rote learning and standardized testing. The curriculum is designed to be flexible, allowing teachers to tailor their lessons to their students' needs.

Teacher training is also a critical component of the Finnish education system. All teachers in Finland must hold a master's degree and undergo rigorous training programs. This helps ensure that teachers are highly qualified and competent, and can provide students with the support they need to succeed.

The article also discusses the importance of a strong school culture and community. In Finland, there is a culture of respect and collaboration between teachers, students, and parents. This helps create a positive and supportive learning environment, which contributes to students' success.

Overall, "The Secrets of Finnish Education" highlights the many factors that have contributed to the success of the Finnish education system. By emphasizing equity, creativity, and critical thinking, and investing in teacher training and a strong school culture, Finland has developed an education system that is widely regarded as one of the best in the world.

The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 Results (Volume II): Romania - Country Report is a comprehensive analysis of the results of the TALIS survey conducted in Romania in 2018. The TALIS survey is designed to provide insights into the working conditions of teachers and school leaders, as well as the learning environment and student outcomes in participating countries.

The report begins with an overview of the education system in Romania, providing information on the structure and organization of schools, the curriculum, and the qualifications and training required for teachers and school leaders. The report notes that Romania's education system has undergone significant changes in recent years, including the introduction of a new curriculum and increased emphasis on student-centered learning.

The report then provides an in-depth analysis of the TALIS survey results, focusing on key areas such as teacher and school leader demographics, working conditions, professional development, and job satisfaction. The report also examines the learning environment in Romanian schools, including classroom management, student engagement, and the use of technology.

Overall, the report highlights some of the strengths and challenges of the education system in Romania. For example, the report notes that Romanian teachers and school leaders tend to be highly qualified and committed to their work, but they also face challenges such as heavy

workloads and limited opportunities for professional development. The report also highlights areas where there is room for improvement, such as increasing the use of technology in the classroom and providing more support for struggling students.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations for improving the education system in Romania, including providing more support for teachers and school leaders, increasing the use of technology in the classroom, and focusing on student-centered learning. The report is a valuable resource for policymakers, educators, and researchers interested in understanding the strengths and challenges of the education system in Romania, and identifying opportunities for improvement.

The blog "*Finland Education System: The Secret behind Finland's Education Success*" published on Leverage Edu's website provides a detailed insight into the education system of Finland, which is widely regarded as one of the best education systems in the world.

The blog starts by highlighting some key facts about the Finnish education system, such as the fact that Finnish students consistently rank at the top of global education rankings, and that the system is based on the principle of equal opportunities for all. It then delves deeper into the unique features of the Finnish education system that have contributed to its success.

The blog discusses the key characteristics of the Finnish education system, such as the absence of formal testing until the age of 16, and the focus on collaborative learning and teacher training. It also highlights the importance of early childhood education, and the fact that Finnish schools are known for providing a safe and nurturing environment for students.

One of the key features of the Finnish education system that the blog explores in detail is the role of teachers. The blog describes the high level of professionalism and autonomy that Finnish teachers enjoy, and the emphasis placed on teacher training and development. It also discusses the competitive nature of the process for becoming a teacher in Finland, which ensures that only the most dedicated and passionate individuals enter the profession.

Throughout the blog, the author provides examples and statistics to support their claims about the effectiveness of the Finnish education system. The blog also includes a section on how other countries can learn from the Finnish model, and highlights the importance of tailoring education systems to meet the specific needs and contexts of individual countries.

Overall, the blog offers a comprehensive overview of the Finnish education system, and provides insights into the unique features that have contributed to its success. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in understanding the factors that underpin high-performing education systems around the world.

4. Reflections and discussions about educational system from Romania and from Finland

The Romanian educational system is a comprehensive system that provides education to students from pre-school to higher education, with a focus on developing their knowledge, skills, and competencies in various fields such as language, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, and arts, and preparing them for higher education or for entering the workforce. The system is structured into several levels, including pre-school education, primary education, lower and upper secondary education, and higher education, with various pathways available for students to choose from, such as vocational education, technical education, and general education, depending on their interests and career goals. The system is governed by the Ministry of Education and Research and is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of students and society.

The Finnish educational system is widely regarded as one of the best in the world, with a strong emphasis on equity, inclusivity, and high-quality teaching and learning. The system is structured into several levels, including pre-primary education, basic education, upper secondary education, and higher education.

The Finnish educational system is known for its high-quality teaching and learning, with a strong focus on teacher education and professional development. Teachers are highly respected and have a great deal of autonomy in the classroom, with a focus on student-centered and collaborative learning. The system is also known for its emphasis on equity and inclusivity, with a strong commitment to providing equal opportunities for all students regardless of their background or socioeconomic status.

However, both educational systems have strong and weak points.

The educational system in Romania has both positive and negative aspects.

Positive aspects:

- **Free education:** The Romanian government provides free primary and secondary education, which is accessible to all children, regardless of their economic status.
- **Strong emphasis on academics:** The Romanian educational system places a strong emphasis on academics, and students are expected to perform well in a wide range of subjects, including math, science, literature, and foreign languages.
- **Quality higher education:** Romania has a number of high-quality universities, which are recognized around the world for their academic excellence.

- **Emphasis on hard work and discipline:** The Romanian educational system encourages hard work and discipline, which are seen as essential for success in both academics and later in life.

Negative aspects:

- **Insufficient funding:** The educational system in Romania is often underfunded, leading to inadequate facilities, outdated equipment, and a lack of resources for teachers and students.
- **Outdated curriculum:** The curriculum in Romania is often outdated and fails to keep pace with current developments in science, technology, and other fields.
- **High dropout rate:** The dropout rate in Romania is relatively high, with many students leaving school before completing their education.
- **Inadequate teacher training:** Many teachers in Romania are not adequately trained, leading to a lack of consistency in teaching quality across schools and regions.

Some positive and negative aspects of the educational system in Finland:

Positive aspects:

- **High academic achievement:** Finland consistently ranks at the top of international assessments of student performance, such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). This success has attracted the attention of educators and policymakers around the world.
- **Innovative approach to teaching and learning:** Finland's educational system emphasizes experiential and student-centered learning, with a focus on critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. This approach has been found to be effective in producing well-rounded and engaged learners.
- **Focus on equity:** Finland has a strong commitment to providing equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background. This has led to policies and practices that support the academic success of all students, including those with disabilities and from immigrant backgrounds.
- **Teacher preparation and support:** Finnish teachers are highly trained and enjoy high levels of autonomy and professional respect. The system provides extensive professional development opportunities and support to ensure that teachers have the skills and knowledge necessary to help students achieve their full potential.
- **Strong investment in education:** Finland invests heavily in education, with significant funding for schools and teacher training. This commitment has helped to create a high-

quality educational system that produces successful learners and contributes to the country's overall economic and social well-being.

Negative aspects:

- **Lack of diversity:** Finland is a relatively homogenous country, which can limit exposure to different cultures and perspectives in the classroom.
- **Limited choice:** The Finnish educational system is highly centralized, with limited opportunities for students to choose their courses or schools. This can limit individualization and customization of education to meet the unique needs and interests of students.
- **Limited assessment:** While Finland's approach to assessment is seen as a positive aspect by some, others argue that the lack of high-stakes testing and accountability measures can lead to complacency and a lack of rigor in the system.
- **Limited emphasis on vocational education:** While Finland's focus on academic education is seen as a positive aspect by some, others argue that the system does not provide enough emphasis on vocational education and training, which could limit opportunities for students who are not interested in pursuing academic paths.

Conclusions

Based on the document analysis comparing the educational systems in Romania and Finland, some conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, both Romania and Finland have comprehensive educational systems that provide education to students from pre-primary education to higher education. However, the Finnish system is often regarded as one of the best in the world, with a strong focus on equity, inclusivity, and high-quality teaching and learning.

Secondly, the Finnish system is more learner-centered and flexible, with a focus on creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, while the Romanian system is more structured and curriculum-focused. Finnish students have more autonomy in the classroom, with a focus on collaboration and student-centered learning.

Thirdly, the Finnish system places a strong emphasis on teacher education and professional development, with highly respected teachers who have a great deal of autonomy in the classroom. In contrast, the Romanian system has struggled with teacher shortages and a lack of investment in teacher education.

Finally, the Finnish system is known for its strong commitment to equity and inclusivity, with a focus on providing equal opportunities for all students regardless of their background or

socioeconomic status. The Romanian system has made progress in this area, but still has some way to go to ensure equal access to education for all students.

Overall, while both Romania and Finland have comprehensive educational systems, the Finnish system stands out for its learner-centered approach, focus on high-quality teaching and learning, and commitment to equity and inclusivity.

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