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A Study on Problems and Malpractices Emerge during Examination of Grade 5 and Grade 8 Students in Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

This research was designed to explore the problems and malpractices emerge during examinations of grade 5 and grade 8 students in Punjab. It was qualitative descriptive research based on survey design in nature. Data was collected from 24 heads of Examination Cluster Centers via semi-structure interview protocol who were selected by applying simple random sampling technique. Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of data. The results revealed that problems occurred at three stages e.g. before conducting, during conducting and after conducting exams. These problems include load shedding, disruption of internet, interruption in teaching, incorrect data, shortage of staff and stationery, improper training and low remuneration. According to the respondents, problems like incorrect role number slips and cut lists, shortage and misprinting of papers, security and secrecy, inappropriate examination centers, stringent monitoring and distributing of papers also occurred during examination. The respondents also highlighted various types of malpractices such as peeking and talking with other candidates, possessing cheating material, showing and exchanging papers. The reason behind the malpractices was the desire of teachers, students and parents to show better results.

Keywords: examination, malpractices, problems.

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Introduction

Education gives opportunity to the individuals to become civilized citizens. People learn basic norms, values, rules and regulations of the society through education. A comprehensive examination system is mandatory for quality education (Black & William, 2006). Unfortunately, neither our system of education (Naveed, 2010) nor the current examination system are satisfactory. Moreover, Gondal (2010) argues that conduct of examination by the serving teachers also creates some complications in terms of fairness. Sadiq and Saeed (2014) stated, “Effective examination system is the key to quality education throughout the world. Standard examination or board examinations are the part of education process in many countries throughout the world” (Sadiq & Saeed, 2017).

Government established Punjab Examination Commission (PEC) in 2006 for the examination of grade 5 and grade 8 students and to bring uniform education system in Punjab. Prior to this, examination of grade 5 students was carried out by their respective schools. While, the examination of grade 8 students was conducted by the Director Public Instruction (DPI) Elementary Education, Punjab. PEC was given the status of an autonomous statutory body under the Punjab Examination Commission Act XI of 2010 (The Punjab Gazette, 2010).

Since its establishment, PEC has been administering exams of the entire population of public sector teaching in grade 5 and grade 8, a significant number of private registered candidates and private schools’ students in Punjab. Almost 2.5 million students are registered under PEC for the examination of both grades. Candidates are registered through Online Student Registration Software (OSRS) after summer vacation while examinations are conducted in the month of February every year (Punjab Examination Commission Govt. of Punjab, 2016). In 2019, total number of registered candidates of grade 5 and 8 was 1576843 and 1070337 respectively. To conduct exams at massive scale, 1951 Examination Cluster Centres (ECCs), 13821 examination centres and 715 paper marking centres were established all over the Punjab (PEC, 2019).

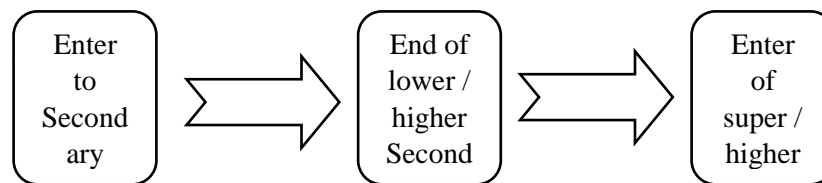
Remarkable improvements are being made for registration of candidates, construction of test items, printing of papers, security & secrecy of exam material, fair conduct of exams, marking of papers & compilation of results since 2015. Most importantly, training of invigilating on conduct of exam and paper marking staff on rubrics was one of the new initiatives of PEC to ensure credibility of exams. Despite of significant improvements, various natures of problems and

malpractices emerge during conduct of external examination at large scale. (PEC Govt. of Punjab, 2015).

Literature Review

Many education systems all over the world have external examination systems which are developed and conducted through an entity outside the institution. Generally, these exams are conducted at the completion of the specific level of education. Examination system in Pakistan is originated from the British system Shirazi (2004). There are several examination systems and patterns of elementary education in Asia-pacific region. The most common pattern prevails in the Asia-pacific region as Hill (2013) summarized in the figure as under:

Figure 1



Most of the countries of the world commence examinations at national level (UNESCO, 2008) “much of this growth, particularly in national level learning assessments, has been observed in developing countries” (Best et al 2009). Most of the countries have administered national examinations for the purpose of entry to the next level of education (Greaney & Kellaghan, 2008; Kamens & McNeely, 2010). At present, national level assessment programs are aimed to monitor and appraise the excellence of students’ learning outcomes. Developing countries started conducting assessments at national level in 1990s (Postlethwaite & Kellaghan 2008) but another global study highlighted that half of the developing countries had implemented national level assessment programs by 2006 (Benavot & Tanner 2012).

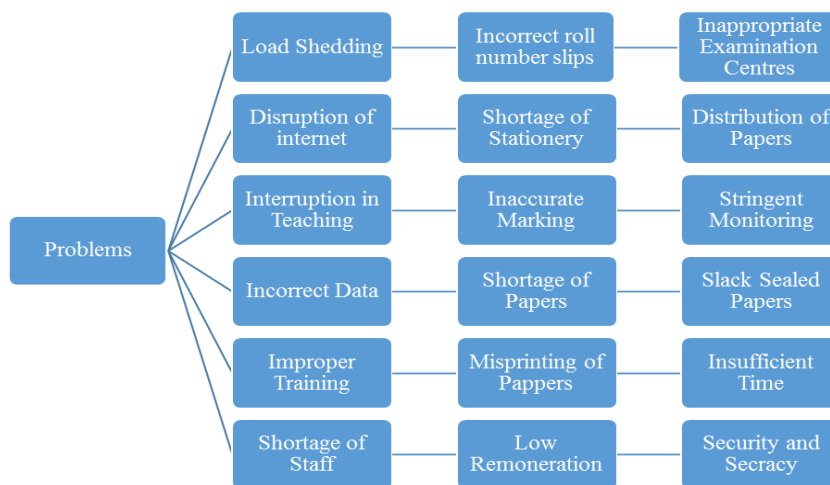
All examination systems are required to introduce well documented and strong policies to minimize errors and to maximize credibility. Despite of numerous efforts, governments fail to control the incidents of malpractices and problems appear during conduct of exams. Aminu(2006), identified that West African Examination Council (WAEC) cancelled the results of 814,699 candidates which highlights the weakness of system. There are many reasons for these malpractices as

identified greed for money as one of the major reasons of malpractices (Olatoye, 2008).

Ukoha (2007) described that examinations are one of the major sources of controlling access to the next level of schooling, admission to the most prestigious institutions and achievement of better jobs. Because of high-stakes consequences, examination systems throughout the world became question mark. Several problems including corruption, cheating and weak processes appear during conduct of examination Arijesuyo & Adeyoju, (2012) noticed that communities in Nigeria chased away the invigilators being non-cooperative for getting undue favor during examinations. To increase reliability of high stake exams; proper marking scheme and training of paper marking staff is mandatory. In short, to overcome the problems emerge during examinations; proper guidelines, rules, regulations and code of conduct must be laid down (Ray et al, 2010). “Conducting examinations has become one of the major problems which the education sector is facing” (Phiri and Nakamba, 2015).

Conduct of examination is complex in its nature as Onah (2013) stated that thousands of staff is engaged for conduct of exams, monitoring the processes and scoring the responses of questions answered by the candidates. So, numerous problems occur during conduct of centralized examinations, marking of papers and compilation of results. Further the following diagram shows occurring problem for conducting exam below:

Figure 2



Significance of the Study

Punjab Examination Commission engages a substantial number of educational managers, invigilator and examiners during administration of grade 5 and grade 8 students' examinations. These staff faces multiple natures of administrative problems which require to be investigated. Findings of the study may be helpful for exam conduct bodies, educational managers, district education authorities and school education and higher education departments to make the exam processes reliable and credible.

Research Objectives

The following objectives were formulated keeping in view the research topic:

1. To explore the types of problems which affects the performance of field staff during administration of grade 5 and grade 8 students' exam;
2. To find out the types of malpractices emerge during examination of grade 5 and grade 8 students;
3. To identify the major reasons of occurrence of malpractices.

Research Questions

Keeping in view the importance of the issue following research questions were advanced:

1. What types of problems affects the performance of field staff during administration of grade 5 and grade 8 students' exam?
2. What types of malpractices emerge during examination of grade 5 and grade 8 students?
3. What are the major reasons of occurrence of malpractices?

Research Methodology

Research design

It was descriptive research and survey design in nature.

Population

Population of the study consist of 1951 heads of examination cluster centers, who had been performing as resident inspectors or superintendents as well as heads of paper marking centers for the period of three years.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Twenty (24) heads of examination cluster centers were selected by applying multistage random sampling technique.

Research Instrument

To explore the problems, types of malpractices and reasons of occurrence of malpractices, a semi structured interview protocol was used for the collection of data. The content validity of the interview protocol was ensured through expert opinion. The interview protocol was pilot tested on two ECC heads of district Lahore. Purpose of piloting the questionnaire was to seek the relevance of the questions and to ensure trustworthiness. The instrument was finalized after discussion with relevant experts. Interviewees' consent was taken before conducting the interview.

Data Collection and Analysis

The qualitative method approach was adopted to collect the data from the respondents. The collected data was verified, confirmed. Thematic analysis was done to analyze the data.

Results

The qualitative data was collected from 24 heads of Examination Cluster Centers (ECCs) who had been performing as resident inspectors or superintends as well as heads of paper marking centers. Questions 1 comprised of the problems emerge in the field, question 2 addressed the malpractices appeared during administering examination while reasons of malpractices were retrieved through question 3. The data showed several problems, numerous types of malpractices and their reasons which hampered the performance of field staff and credibility of examination. Results of the study are described as under:

Problems

Load Shedding and Disruption of Internet

More than half (14) ECC heads pointed out that load shedding and disruption of internet services created problems during registration of the candidates. Slow working of PEC website caused delay in registration and compilation of results. One of the participants responded, "Due to

load shedding and failure of internet services, time of the staff engaged for registration of the candidates wasted”(R, 3). Another participant stated, “Slow working of website and interruption of internet connection during data entry of results wasted lot of time and increased chances of errors(R, 11).

Some of the ECC heads (10) were of the view that invigilating staff and candidates face problems due to load shedding. One of the respondent informed, “Students lose their attention and feel difficulty to write on answer sheets while invigilators face [administrative] issues like noise and cheating due to load shedding. Superintendents cannot complete necessary written work within due course of time” [due to load shedding] (R, 1).

Teaching-Learning affected due to Engagement of Teachers

Almost all (21 out of 22) ECC heads were of the view that appointment IT teachers for registration and compilation of results affected teaching and other IT related activities of the schools. One of the respondent stated, “IT teachers are engaged throughout the exam cycle of PEC, it not only affects the teaching in the subject of computer science but also IT activities of schools”(R, 16). Another ECC head shared his experience, “Results are compiled by IT teachers at [their relevant] marking centres. This state of affairs hampers teaching in the subject of computer science”(R, 7).

Improper Training

Majority of the Participants (16) were of the view that invigilators were not trained properly. According to one respondent, “Training is one of the most important activity of PEC, but the invigilators were not informed timely for training; resultantly, they did not took it gravely. Training was nothing except the wastage of time and resources (R, 22). Some of the ECC heads (07) informed that trainers were not competent enough to convey the essence of training activity. One responded shared, “There is no criteria for selection of the trainers; so incompetent, irrelevant and inefficient trainers were engaged for the training [of invigilators] (R, 22).

Eleven (11) ECC heads informed that duration of the training was less, nine (9) pointed out that venue of training was not feasible, while eight (8) ECC heads pointed out that training material was not provided to the invigilators. One of the respondents explained, “Venue of the training was not feasible to accommodate large number of trainees.

Duration of the training was very short and material of training was insufficient. This state of affairs created problems for trainers as they could not convey instructions given in the booklet (R, 13).

Shortage of Invigilators

Majority of ECC heads (15) showed their concern that invigilators were not informed timely regarding their duties; hence they could not report at examination centre. One participant stated, “Some of the invigilators were not informed timely, neither had they got training nor reached well before time on duty”(R, 16). Fourteen (14) ECC heads pointed out that teachers were reluctant to perform duty as invigilator. One of the ECC head shared, “Teachers were not willing to perform as invigilator due to low remuneration and travelling issues”(R, 20).

More than half (13) ECC heads were of the view that they face problems due to peak time of academic activities in schools. One of the respondents informed, “PEC conducts exams during peak time of academic activities, head teachers don't ready to relieve the teaching staff engaged for invigilation and marking of papers. Sometimes teachers are not willing to work [as invigilators or examiners]” (R, 9).

Incorrect Data of Candidates

Most of the respondents (19) informed that there appeared mistakes on filled registration forms of the candidates. They were not filled either by the candidates or by the schools. One respondents informed, “Registration forms of the candidates were not filled properly by the candidates and school administration”(R, 5). Another informed: There reported incorrect names, fathers' names, date of birth and class on registration forms(R, 21).

Some of the ECC heads (10) highlighted that they faced problems during the verification of candidates. One of the participants pointed out, “Roll number slip were not prudent enough to identify the candidates, as pictures of some candidates were not pasted on roll number slips and cut lists. Pictures of the candidates were not attested by the competent authority”(R, 6).

Eleven (11) ECC heads faced problems due to mistakes in roll number slips. One of the respondents informed, “Sometimes candidates of grade 5 are issued the roll number slips of grade 8 and vice versa and sometimes students' and or their fathers' names are not printed correct. It creates problems not only for the candidates and their parents but also for schools, ECC heads and district administration”(R, 13).

Majority of the participants (16) pointed out that format of registration form created problem during the process of registration. One of the respondents informed, “Sequence of student’s and father’s name is not appropriate on registration form. Hence, mistakes occur during filling of registration forms”(R, 19).

Delayed uploading of Roll Number Slips and Cut lists

Majority of the ECC heads (17) were of the view that they faced problems due to delayed uploading of roll number slips and cut lists by PEC. One participant responded, “Roll number slips and cut list were not uploaded timely by PEC. We have to paste the pictures of the candidates on roll number slips and cut lists after getting its print and making its attestation. It requires a lot of time as well as human and financial resources. So, we have to engage school staff which effects our routine activities (R, 11).

Shortage and Misprinting of Papers

Shortage and misprinting of papers were the serious nature of problems faced by most of the ECC heads (18). One stated that, “Sometimes we receive less or misprinted papers. [Hence,] we have to go outside of the examination centre for coping or to acquire the papers from another examination centre, which requires a lot time to manage. There [also] exists threat of leakage of papers, during this course of action”(R, 13).

Shortage of Furniture and Rooms

Most of the ECC heads (17) were of the view that due to PEC exams internal system of the schools affected badly. One of the respondents stated: [Both the] “candidates and students face problems due to lack of furniture and classrooms. Students have to bear the difficulties of cold weather during PEC exam due to shortage of furniture and classrooms”(R, 9). Another explained, “Due to overcrowded rooms, candidates feel uneasy and cannot pay proper attention. Sometimes the candidates disrupt each other; [resultantly,] they fail to answers the questions with thoughtfulness”(R, 16).

Establishment of Inappropriate Examination Centres

Most of ECC heads (16) showed their concern regarding the combine examination centres, established, both for male and female candidates. One stated that, “PEC establishes combine examination centres [both] for male and female candidates, it [PEC] further amalgams roll number of the candidates irrespective of their gender / school. This creates problems both for invigilating staff and candidates because our culture don’t allow such type of arrangements”(R, 8).

Some of the ECC heads (6) reported that students and parents suffer due to the establishment of examination centres at far flung areas. One responded shared her experience, “Parents [and candidates] face travelling problems due to long distances. Some parents cannot go back to their homes, they have to stay within the school, till closing of paper to pick their children”(R, 2).

Receiving and Distribution of Papers

Almost all (21) ECC heads were of the view that mechanism for receiving and distribution of papers was very complicated. Due to this mechanism every tier in hierarchy suffers badly. One of the respondents shared:

“Receiving and distribution of papers is problematic and difficult activity. PEC conducts exams in the month of February each year, fog and sometimes rain prevail during exam cycle. One person receives papers [from Lahore or Islamabad] one day before the start of [each] paper in foggy and rainy season. He hands over it to CEO; CEO hands over to the concerned Dy. DEO at district headquarter in the morning [on the day of paper]. DY. DEO hands over it to the ECC heads and the ECC heads to RIs on the same day before the start of paper. No conveyance and financial assistance is provided to any ECC head”(R, 16).

Stringent Monitoring

More than half ECC heads (12) pointed out that monitoring inspectors create harassment at examination centres during conduct of exams. One responded shared, “Monitoring and Evaluation Assistants (MEAs) engaged for monitoring create harassment during conduct of exam, they threaten the invigilating staff and provide incorrect information to the authority”(R, 18).

Security and Secrecy

Majority of the ECC heads (17) highlighted that papers were not sealed properly. One responded, “Secrecy and security of papers was compromised, papers were packed in three layers but not sealed properly. No security protocols were ensured while sealing the papers”(R, 15).

Majority of ECC heads (16) highlighted that identity of the candidates cannot be kept hidden as answer sheets are printed without secrecy protocols. One ECC head commented, “ Answer sheets of the candidates can be tracked and changed, as these are without security protocols such as serial numbers, barcodes and [the options of] factitious roll number”(R, 11).

Almost half of ECC heads (10) highlighted that security of answer sheets is one of the major problems appear during marking of papers. Checked papers are stored at examination cluster centres because PEC never demand of sending back these papers. One ECC head shared, “Security of answer sheets is an additional burden for me as these are not sent back to PEC. We have no proper facilities to keep the answer sheets under necessary security protocols”(R, 20).

Shortage of Examiners

Almost half of the ECC heads (10) were of the view that they face problems due to lack of examiners in the subjects of Science, Mathematics and English. One respondent stated, “Due to peak time of the academic activities; it was difficult to engage Science, Math and English teachers for marking of papers”(R, 9).

More than half (14) respondents were of the view that there was shortage of examiners to assess Islamyat Nazra . One responded stated, “Examiners could not examine candidates properly because examiners for assessment of Islamiyat [Nazra Paper] were not appointed in accordance with time and strength of candidates”(R, 10).

Inaccurate Marking

It is important that all the candidates may be awarded with fair and accurate results. Every answer sheet is required to be marked with accuracy to ensure transparency. More than half of ECC heads (14) pointed out that examiners don't check the papers in accordance with the guidelines provided by PEC. Non serious attitude of the paper markers leads towards the inaccuracy of marking. One of the respondents informed, “Some examiners don't mark the papers with full attention,

neither they take it serious not follow rubrics. They try to avoid syndicate marking despite of the fact that it's easy and most appropriate way of marking”(R, 7).

Shortage of Stationery

Papers, ball pens, packing tapes, toner and transparent tape etc. are necessary for conduct of exams and marking of papers. In the absence of these stationery items; invigilators, paper markers and other staff feel discomfort. Most of the ECC heads (19) pointed out that they face problem due to shortage of stationery during registration, issuance of roll number slips, conduct of exams and marking of papers. One ECC head elaborated, “PEC don't provide any sort of stationery to be used during registration, examination and marking of papers. A very small amount like a small **cumin** seed in a camel's mouth is given to meet the expenditures”(R, 15).

Insufficient Time for Compilation of Results

More than half of the ECC heads (13) informed that they face problems due to shortage of time for feeding and compilation of results. They informed that results are compiled in short span of time, so the chances of error increase. One respondent stated, “Time for feeding of data and compilation of result was very short. Sometimes, errors occur during compilation and uploading the results, due to shortage of time”(R, 1).

Issuance of Result Card

Delayed issuance of result cards create problem for ECC heads. Majority of the respondents (18) were of the view that results cards of the candidates are not issued timely. Students are required to obtain result cards for getting admission in next grade but it takes several months for printing and dispatching. Moreover, Results cards are not provided to schools or candidates, directly. One of the ECC heads responded, “Results cards of the students are not distributed on time. Every year, these are provided at the end of next academic year. Students and schools contact for provision of result cards, again and again; which creates embarrassment for me”(R, 22).

Low Remuneration

Only five (5) ECC heads were of the view that remuneration for the marking of paper is low as compare to other examination bodies in Punjab. Reasonable amount and timely disbursement of remuneration attract the committed, willing and dedicated personnel. But, ECC heads were of the view that remuneration of invigilators, paper markers and other staff is not seemed to be reasonable, moreover it is not paid timely. One respondent informed, “Teachers are not willing for marking of papers due to low remuneration. Payment which is already on lower side, is not paid on time to the staff engaged for examination (R, 12).

Malpractices

Almost all ECC heads (21) were of the view that malpractices during the conduct of exams have affected our education system. One of the respondents, “Private schools, Teachers, students and parents are found involved in malpractices to achieve better results” (R, 12). Malpractices have contaminated education system of the country. One of the respondents shared, “Malpractices has destroyed our education system. It not only affected the integrity of teachers but also had shaken the morale of students. Types and reasons of malpractices as highlighted by the ECC heads are as under:

Table 1

Types of Malpractices Ensued by Candidates

Malpractices	No. of Respondents
Peeking and talking with other candidate(s)	19
Showing paper to other candidate(s)	16
Possessing / using unauthorized material.	12
Exchanged paper with other candidate(s)	4

Above table shows that most of the ECC heads were of the view that students talk with each other during examination while majority of ECC heads opinioned that candidates show paper to each other. More than half ECC heads shared that students possess unauthorized material while some other informed that student exchange paper with each other during examination.

Table 2

Types of most common Malpractices ensued by Invigilators

Malpractices	No. of Respondents
Non-collection of unauthorized material from the candidates.	18
Leaving the examination hall unattended	18
Awarding with incorrect marks more or less	16
Helping candidates in solving papers	14
Display of helpful material on the walls of exam hall / room.	13
Invigilators use mobile phones	13
Falsification of result	12
Obstruction through Security Guards till clearance of centre	11
Opening seal of papers before starting time of paper.	11
Changing answer sheets of candidates	06
Leakage of the paper with mobile phone etc.	06
Impersonation	03

Above table shows that majority of the ECC heads were of the view that invigilators don't collect unauthorized material from the candidates, leave examination hall unattended after distribution of the paper, help candidates in solving papers and don't take down helpful material from the walls of the rooms during examination. Almost half of the ECC heads pointed out that mobile phones are used by invigilators, seal of the papers is opened before time and monitors are obstructed through security guards till the indication of clearance. Some of the ECC heads shared that invigilators change answer sheets of candidates, leak paper with the help of mobile phone and commit impersonation. Most of the ECC heads had the opinion that examiners were awarding incorrect marks; more or less. Some of the ECC heads shared that result of the candidates is fabricated after marking of the papers.

Table 3

Reasons of Malpractices

Reasons	No. of Respondents
Competition among schools to attract students / parents	18
Teachers are forced to show better performance	17
Students desire to get higher marks	12
Parents want better results of their children	10
Students intend to promote in next grade	06

In the opinion of most of the ECC heads malpractices are materialized due to competition among schools to attract students and parents. Most of the respondents also shared that teachers are forced to

show better performance, so they use unfair means. Almost half of the ECC heads had the opinion that malpractices occur due to the desire of students and parent to get higher marks. Some ECC heads pointed out that students intention of promotion also leads towards malpractices.

Conclusion

The conclusion which was drawn from the result or finding. It was concluded that

Majority of the ECCs were facing three types of problems e.g. before conducting exam, while conducting exam, and after conducting exam. The problems which occur before conducting exam are load shedding and failure of internet services, time of the staff engaged for registration of the candidates wasted. Invigilators were not informed timely for training. Resultantly, they did not took it gravely. Training was nothing except the wastage of time and resources because irrelevant and inefficient trainers were engaged for the training. Even than teachers were reluctant to perform duty as invigilator due to low remuneration or travelling issues and because of PEC conducts exams during peak time of academic activities, head teachers don't ready to relieve the teaching staff. Furthermore, registration forms of the candidates are not even filled properly by the candidates or school administration. The problems which occur while conducting exam are when there is no light at the time when exam is being conducted, invigilating staff and candidates lose their attention and feel difficulty to write on answer sheets while invigilators face (administrative) issues like noise and cheating due to load shedding. Superintendents cannot complete necessary written work within due course of time. Moreover, and from the PEC side, roll number slip of the candidates are not prudent enough to identify the candidates, as pictures of some candidates is not pasted on roll number slips and cut lists. Pictures of the candidates were not attested by the competent PEC's authority. Sometimes candidates of grade 5 are issued the roll number slips of grade 8 and vice versa and sometimes students' and or their fathers' names are not printed correct. Even question papers were also misprinted and less than the required at ECCs. Another problem do the candidates and examination staff faced lack of furniture and classrooms in examination centers and due to shortage of rooms if they adjust candidates, due to Due to overcrowded rooms, candidates feel uneasy and cannot pay proper attention on paper solution. Weather effect was also found a problem while conducting exam because PEC conducts exams in the month of February each year, fog and sometimes rain prevail during exam cycle. There is also inappropriate monitoring system

in Pakistan. Monitoring and Evaluation Assistants (MEAs) engaged for monitoring create harassment during conduct of exam, they threaten the invigilating staff and provide incorrect information to the authority. The problem which occur after exam were inaccurate marking procedure. According to the majority of the respondents, some examiners don't mark the papers with full attention, neither they take it serious not follow rubrics. They try to avoid syndicate marking despite of the fact that it's easy and most appropriate way of marking. Moreover, time for feeding of data and compilation of result was very short. Sometimes, errors occur during compilation and uploading the results, due to shortage of time. Even that Results cards of the students are not distributed on time. Every year, these are provided at the end of next academic year. Students and schools contact for provision of result cards, again and again; which creates embarrassment. It was also drawn from the finding that malpractices such as peeking and talking with other candidate, showing paper, possessing unauthorized material, exchange answer sheets, helping candidates for solving paper, use of mobile by the staff while conducting exam, opening seal of papers before starting time of paper, and leakage of the paper occurred in ECCs. The causes of malpractices is school heads do all this to compete each other because teachers were forced to show their performance.

Discussion

Examinations are considered to be the best tool of evaluating students' performance. It also motivates to create healthy competitions among the students to attain academic excellence. Only a reliable and strong examination system leads towards quality education and in case of failure, it affects teaching and learning process. PEC has made efforts to bring substantial improvements to make its examination system credible (PEC, 2016). Hudson (2017) stated that there is still lack of comprehensive planning and resources in PEC which create problems during the whole exam process as evidenced in the current study. Sadiq & Saeed (2017) highlighted problems emerged during administration of exams conducted under Board of intermediate & secondary Education (BISE). Similar findings have been reported in the current study wherein the heads of examination cluster centres stated the problems of load shedding, mistakes in roll number slips & cut lists and delayed issuance of roll number slips and cut lists. Erroneous marking, lack of furniture, shortage of rooms, slack sealed papers, misprinting, internet connectivity and load shedding also created problems during exams.

The researcher further found that improper training, inappropriate format of registration forms, incorrect data of candidates and engagement of IT teachers throughout the exam process made problems for ECC heads. Shortage of trained invigilators, establishment of combine examination centres and amalgamation of roll numbers irrespective of gender, created complications during exams. Shortage of papers, misprinting and use of low quality papers were very serious nature of challenges. ECC heads also showed their concern regarding receiving and distribution of papers. Lack of stationery and packing material, monitoring through MEAs, insufficient time to assess Islamiyat nazra, establishment of examination centres at far flung areas and loose secrecy protocols also created problems. Shortage of examiners, shortage of stationery, low remuneration, insufficient time for marking and compilation of result, delayed payment and late issuance of results cards were also the major issues for ECC heads, which are in agreement of the results of current study.

Another serious nature of problem, reported by the ECC heads was, the incidents of malpractices. The malpractices ensued by the candidates were peeking / talking of candidate, showing the paper, exchanging paper, possessing / using unauthorized material and impersonation . Malpractices materialized by invigilators were opening seal of papers before time, leakage of paper, non-collection of unauthorized material from the candidates, helping candidates in solving papers, obstruction, display of helpful material on the walls of exam hall, leaving the examination hall unattended after distribution of paper, awarding incorrect marks and falsification of result. Similar results were shown by & Kobiowu (2015) study conducted in Nigerian scenario.

Reasons behind these malpractices were; students' desire to promote, students' desire to get higher marks, teachers are forced to show better results, parents need better results and competition among private schools to attract parents. Examinations Council of Zambia in its reports identified such types of malpractices (Examination Council of Zambia, 2013). Results of the studies conducted in Nigerian scenario were similar to the current study (Alao & Kbiowu, 2015).

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