

EVALUATING THE BISE EXAMINATION SYSTEM IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA: ISSUES AND REMEDIES

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Abstract

This article evaluates that the BISE exam system plays a crucial role in deciding the course of study that students take in the province of KP. The BISE exam has great importance; however, it has numerous issues, including low academic achievement, outdated evaluation techniques, exam fraud, and issues with credibility. The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education exams are crucial to improve learning outcomes, transparency, and equity. This study critically evaluates these problems and offers practical solutions that center on integrating technology, changing policies, and developing capacity. The board exam is a vital component of the educational system, as it establishes a benchmark for academic achievement and determines students' future educational and career opportunities in KP. Despite its crucial role, BISE exam malpractice, outdated assessment methods, poor student performance, and other issues continue to undermine the system's effectiveness and credibility. The aim of the study is to evaluate these problems and provide practical solutions to enhance the system's fairness, reliability, and alignment with modern educational objectives. After examining government reports, news articles, and previous studies on educational assessment in KP, the study concludes that digital reforms, improved curricula, improved monitoring systems, and capacity-building programs for educators and administrators are essential interventions. The findings show that integrating technology, promoting professional development, and shifting toward outcome-based assessments will significantly improve student learning outcomes as well as public trust in the testing process. This study highlights the importance of a multifaceted approach that balances policy reform, innovation, and community involvement to create a robust, transparent, and effective BISE examination system in KP.

Keywords: BISE exam in KP, evaluation, malpractices, issues, remedies

Introduction

The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education plays a significant role in determining students' academic success and prospects for the future in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Despite its importance, it has instances of cheating, high failure rates, and lack of emphasis on evaluating critical and creative thinking abilities; the system has long been criticized (Hussain & Khan, 2020; DGIPR Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2024). Besides, there are several issues like paper leaks, insufficient supervision, and antiquated assessment techniques that continue to exist in the KP Education Department and the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Department, 2023; Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar, 2023).

The BISE examination plays an essential role in the careers of students, but malpractices undermine its efficacy. It needs to improve transparency, ensure fairness, and improve overall student outcomes. In this regard, the provincial government has responded by focusing more on digital reforms and tighter examination procedures to improve the quality of education in the province. (Associated Press of Pakistan, 2025; KP set to introduce digital reforms in exam system, 2025). For this purpose, the development of a fair and efficient assessment framework needs to observe the operational and structural problems with the KP BISE examination system and consider possible solutions.

The important turning points in the academic careers of students are the BISE exams administered by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa education board. These assessments assess student learning outcomes and have been used to ensure consistency across schools. Besides, the system has contended with numerous persistent issues

that compromise students' self-esteem and academic honesty. It needs to have sustainability reforms, and evidence-based assessment is required to solve these issues.

The BISE examination system is a vital educational system, determining students' academic trajectories and determining their eligibility for post-secondary education and employment prospects in the KP province. The objectives of these intermediate and matriculation-level exams are to guarantee high-quality instruction, standardize evaluation, and gauge student learning outcomes across a range of learning environments.

In addition, for the purpose of measuring students' true competency, there has been constant criticism of the system's effectiveness, equity, and ability. For the high stakes of these tests' problems, like rote learning, exam anxiety, and a narrow focus on memorization rather than critical thinking skills, are often exacerbated.

In the BISE exam, one of the biggest problems is unfair means, cheating, and malpractice. In the examination halls different reports of cheating, paper leaks, and result manipulation have damaged the credibility of assessment results and have undermined public trust. Besides such issues as mentioned, the traditional examination approach has also drawn criticism for being outdated and not closely aligned with modern teaching practices. Such types of exams did not fulfill the qualitative criteria, which do not measure critical thinking, problem-solving skills, or practical knowledge, which limits the ability to assess analytical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and practical knowledge, limiting the system's capacity to prepare students for real-world challenges.

Other than that, there are disparities in resources and teaching quality between urban and rural schools that also contribute to low academic performance, highlighting systemic problems in the educational system. For this purpose, it needs to address these concerns; a comprehensive evaluation of the operational and systemic elements of the examination process is required. For conducting fair and transparent examinations, solutions like digital integration, outcome-based assessment methods, teacher and examiner professional development, and stricter monitoring protocols have been proposed to enhance transparency, equity, and overall effectiveness.

The main purpose of this study is to explore these issues in depth, identifying the root causes of the inefficiencies in the BISE examination system and evaluating practical remedies to improve student performance, public trust, and the province's long-term credibility in educational evaluation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Research Methodology

The research methodology of this study is based on primary and secondary sources, i.e., books, magazines, libraries, articles, newspapers, data from different BISE of KP province journals, and relevant websites to complete the research paper.

Problems with the BISE Exam System

There are numerous problems with the board of intermediate and secondary education, such as the following:

Cheating and Examinee Malpractice

In the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, BISE examination cheating and malpractice have long plagued and gravely undermined the fairness and validity of academic assessments. These malpractices, including paper leaks, exam copying, impersonation, and student-staff collusion, have all been reported in large numbers, particularly during the important matriculation and intermediate exams. It has the worst impact on overall learning outcomes, demotivates honest students, and creates an unfair academic environment. Such actions not only compromise the integrity of results but also dishearten genius students' academic performance. This type of prevalence of cheating is often linked to systemic issues such as inadequate supervision, high performance pressure, and ignorance of moral behavior.

In response to these concerns, the provincial authorities need to implement stricter oversight over the examination squad and impose penalties upon the defaulters of those teachers who are involved in these malpractices. To secure exam paper, it needs to include the deployment of qualified invigilators, the use of CCTV surveillance in exam rooms, and the implementation of digital reforms designed. In this regard, ethical

education is necessary to reduce malpractice and restore trust in the testing process despite the limited success of these measures, a comprehensive approach involving technology, policy enforcement,

Due to previous malpractices and cheating, the validity of BISE exams has been harmed. For the preservation of quality education, it is crucial to prevent cheating and to ensure the fairness of assessments in the BISE exam system in the KP province. The standard of examination is getting worse day by day; it is crucial to have strict monitoring measures put in place to maintain merit and improve examination supervision, including the deployment of trained officers and the installation of online CCTV cameras.

Poor Academic Achievement

Poor performance of students in the BISE exam and low matriculation exam scores, where in many schools the passing rates are below 40%, have brought attention to shortcomings in the quality of instruction and assessment practices. These low passing rates in the exam are a troubling trend and question mark on the education system in the KP province; it is systemic issues with the evaluation of students' preparedness and performance.

Including low academic performance in the KP BISE examination system has a severe problem, which reflects both systemic and instructional problems in the education sector. From different research articles and studies, many students, especially those in rural and underdeveloped areas, find it difficult to pass matriculation and intermediate exams; pass rates in some districts are as low as 40 percent. There are many reasons that learning is hampered by inadequate instruction, limited access to learning materials, and crowded classrooms.

Additionally, the main cause of low scores is rote memorization of traditional learning. Knowledge, rather than conceptual understanding and critical thinking, affects exam results by leaving students ill-equipped to tackle difficult problems. Due to some causes like socioeconomic factors that have hampered the education system, it leads to poor performance like poverty, lack of parental support, and language barriers. For improving the exam system, certain interventions, such as teacher training programs, curriculum reforms, and extra academic support for struggling students, are required to enhance learning outcomes and the overall effectiveness of the board examination system.

Outdated Assessment Practices

- i All types of examinations are often criticized for not accurately reflecting students' learning because they emphasize rote memorization over critical thinking and analytical skills. Modern educational objectives are also incompatible with higher-order cognitive skills and not an antiquated approach to the recent education system. (A wider analysis of Pakistan's board systems supports this criticism.)
- ii The BISE exam system of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has relied on traditional assessment methods that value rote memorization over critical thinking, problem-solving, and experiential understanding. These outdated approaches often encourage students to focus more on memorization than on a deeper comprehension of concepts, especially on short-term exams. Resultantly, students need to perform well on exams without truly grasping the subject matter, which has reduced their readiness for obstacles in the workplace or in higher education.
- iii However, traditional written exams typically fail to account for a range of learning styles and do not provide opportunities for project-based or experiential learning, which better reflects skills found in the real world. The pedagogical standards currently support a shift toward outcome-based assessments, continuous evaluation, and the inclusion of creative and analytical tasks to promote meaningful learning. It is essential for the KP government to update its assessment system and ensure that these tests accurately reflect student learning outcomes, foster critical thinking skills, and prepare students for success in the classroom and the workplace.

Institutional Credibility and Public Trust

1. In all types of test results, there needs to be transparency and trust in public concern to report on digital reforms and government initiatives. The entire board of KP needs to address perceptions of bias, malpractice, and administrative irregularities to enhance institutional credibility. Like many other educational systems worldwide.

2. The efficiency and credibility of all educational boards of KP are directly tied to public trust, which has been undermined by multiple claims of irregularities in exams, inefficient administrative procedures, and inconsistent results credibility. Different opinions of students, teachers, and parents are that the examination system is biased or unreliable, which has not only undermines confidence in the boards but also negatively affects the overall learning environment.
3. The public discontent is exacerbated by skepticism and opaque result processing, poor exam supervision, and delayed or contested results. For the restoration and rehabilitation of public trust, systemic changes are necessary, such as open result management, digitalization of exam procedures, impartial oversight, and accountability protocols for exam administration and evaluation personnel. In addition to ensuring assessment fairness, enhancing institutional credibility is crucial for fostering student motivation, parental involvement, and public trust in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's educational system.

Widespread Malpractices and Cheating

The widespread malpractice and continuing cheating in the examination are the biggest problems facing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's BISE examination system. These malpractices, including mass copying, the use of unapproved materials, impersonation, and, occasionally, collusion between invigilators and candidates, are all common occurrences, according to reports from several boards that fall under the purview of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar and other regional boards. Such types of actions erode public confidence in the educational system, undermine meritocracy, and jeopardize the validity of test results.

To avoid such malpractice from examination, it needs to have strong policies and accountability frameworks. Besides, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Department needs to make administrative efforts to implement more stringent monitoring measures, including CCTV surveillance, the deployment of monitoring teams, and the randomization of examination personnel. The board exam marks, especially of class 10th and FA/FSC marks, are strong and significant indicators and the base of academic proficiency; the prevalence of cheating not only skews student achievement results but also has a detrimental impact on admission to higher education and career opportunities.

Leaks of Question Papers and Security Vulnerabilities

The leakage of question papers before the exam is a grave concern and a question mark on the board squad and integrity of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's BISE exam system. Due to this leakage, genius students are affected more, and it affects their mental condition. The early release of exam papers via unapproved channels, such as social media and unofficial networks, has raised concerns for several boards that function under the provincial framework, including the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar. These malpractices and violations of rules and regulations undermine the equal opportunity principle, skew results based on merit, and foster a generalized lack of trust between parents, students, and educational institutions.

It's the utmost important problem and burning issue concerning the board exam to prevent such practices. The Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs to implement such measures to prevent recurrence, including improved confidentiality protocols, safe printing and distribution methods, and more digital monitoring. Due to enduring flaws in oversight, storage, and transportation systems, the examination process is still vulnerable. It needs to address these security flaws for restoring public trust and guarantee that board exam results fairly represent students' academic prowess.

Absence of the Merit-Based and Open Processes

The absence of clear and effective procedures on the KP board is still one of the main problems with the exam system. It is a question on accountability and fairness of claiming partiality in the selection of exam personnel, anomalies in the compilation of results, and restricted public access to grievance-redressal procedures. Boards operating under the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar and other regional boards are expected to maintain stringent standards of neutrality and procedural transparency, though oversight gaps and uneven rule enforcement have occasionally undermined stakeholder confidence.

For fairness and transparency in the examination hall, the Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs to implement measures like computerized result processing, supervisory staff assignment at random, and more stringent monitoring procedures. Institutionalized accountability systems, independent

audits, and clearly stated merit criteria are necessary for sustainable reform to maintain fairness, credibility, and lack of undue influence in the administration of exams.

Inefficient Monitoring and Management

The ongoing issues of ineffective monitoring and management in the BISE examination system, fairness, and dependability of exam administration have been impacted by lack of monitoring and management. The improper supervision at testing locations, improper training for invigilators, and uneven rule enforcement in many cases caused irregularities like cheating, procedural errors, and delays in processing results. From different data taken from various boards in KP are these problems that are made worse by a lack of accountability and poor coordination between higher authorities and administrative staff.

To eradicate malpractices and unfair means from the examination hall, the Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs to take steps to address these issues, such as introducing digital monitoring systems, standardizing invigilation procedures, and assigning senior officers to inspection duties. In a nutshell, frequent staff performance reviews, consistent enforcement, and institutional safeguards that guarantee proactive oversight throughout the examination process are necessary for these reforms to be more effective.

Rote learning and a Narrow Scope for Assessment (in the context of wider Pakistan)

Traditional rote learning and a narrow assessment scope continue as major obstacles in the board exam in KP. In the current curriculum and exam design, critical thinking, problem-solving, and conceptual understanding are largely neglected in favor of fact memorization and content replication. By encouraging them to concentrate on short-term memorization techniques rather than in-depth learning, this method will make students less prepared for college and the workforce. Thereby limiting the effectiveness of the education system in fostering meaningful learning outcomes, these studies have noted that such assessment methods fail to measure students' analytical abilities, creativity, and practical application of knowledge (Malik & Rehman, 2021; Tariq, 2022). For a better exam system, it needs to revise exam patterns to include more application-based questions, project work, and continuous assessment alongside traditional written tests for the improvement of student learning.

High Rates of Failure and Gaps in Knowledge (observation in general)

High failure rates and ongoing learning gaps are significant issues and indicators of structural flaws in both teaching and evaluation in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa BISE exam system. Preparedness of students for standardized tests is evident in the large percentage who fall short of the minimal passing requirements and disparities in the quality of instruction and access to resources. In this regard, different official reports and research results are not only the result of poor student performance but are also related to out-of-date curricula, insufficient teacher preparation, and a lack of resources for student support (Hussain & Khan, 2020; Ahmed, 2021). To improve remedial programs, ongoing formative assessments, and teacher capacity-building initiatives are desperately needed to bridge learning gaps because these trends not only demotivate students but also put a strain on families and educational institutions.

Variability in the Application of Reforms

Inconsistent implementation in many organizational and governmental contexts, the success of reform initiatives is often hampered. There are many reasons and a variety of factors, including insufficient resources, unclear communication, and differing stakeholder commitment levels. Whenever reforms are not implemented consistently, it causes perplexity, inconsistencies in results, low morale, and a sense of injustice as its shortcomings (Smith & Lewis, 2020). Leading to fragmented practices that fall short of the desired results, such a lack of standardized training also causes frontline practitioners to interpret policy changes differently (Anderson, 2018). In addition, inconsistent implementation has undermined legitimacy and undermines trust in leadership if expected benefits are not evenly distributed across departments or regions (Brown & Green, 2019). To minimize these impediments, it is crucial that strong planning, ongoing observation, and flexible feedback systems are needed to guarantee commitment to reform objectives while taking contextual variances into account.

Suggested Solutions

Technology Integration and Digital Transformation

For a fair and free examination hall, all malpractices and unfair means are necessary to take strict action on paper leaks, duplication, and human bias. These have greatly decreased by digitizing the exam system with online result platforms, e-marking, and a digital papers bank. There is a need to have clear rules and reforms, such as modernizing procedures and regaining public trust in the fairness of assessments, which are the goals of these reforms.

Improved Accountability and Monitoring

The examination system will be improved by using increasing monitoring authorities, surveillance technologies, and deploying merit-based invigilation teams. For this purpose, it needs to ensure procedural compliance, and malpractice is discouraged with clear accountability structures. If the government takes strict action and imposes penalties under the rules, in this way such malpractices will be eradicated from board examinations.

Reform of Curriculum and Assessment

To encourage students to show a deeper understanding of the shift from memorization to assessments based on student learning outcomes is crucial. Assessment on monthly basis is also essential to make students aware of their learning process so that they improve their learning and call upon PTM to inform their parents about their weakness.

Building Capacity and Developing Professional Skills

To enhance the caliber of the marking and assessment procedures, examiners, invigilators, and board officials all need to receive training. In this regard ongoing professional development lowers errors and bias while improving comprehension of contemporary assessment methods.

Conclusion

The BISE examination system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faces persistent challenges that undermine its effectiveness, including high failure rates, cheating, and insufficient assessment of students' critical and creative abilities (Hussain & Khan, 2020; DGIPR Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2024). The government of KP offers promising solutions to address these issues, while traditional methods have struggled to ensure transparency and fairness. Recent initiatives, such as digital reforms, stricter supervision, and updated policy frameworks, (Associated Press of Pakistan, 2025; KP government to digitize education boards, 2025). To improve sustainable development in the BISE exam, it is crucial that these reforms are accompanied by continuous monitoring, capacity-building of examination staff, and integration of modern pedagogical approaches that prioritize learning outcomes over rote memorization. By taking the above-mentioned measures, KP government will move toward a more reliable, equitable, and student-centered board examination system that better reflects educational standards and fosters academic growth. Besides, there are serious issues with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's BISE exam system that impact public trust, learning outcomes, and fairness. Digital innovation, improved oversight, educational reforms, and institutional capacity building are all necessary to address these problems. The government will improve its examination system and make sure that it accurately and fairly evaluates student learning by adhering to modern educational objectives by putting such fixes into place that will improve it.

The BISE examination system continues to be an essential tool for assessing student learning and upholding academic standards in KP. This study has highlighted that problems like exam fraud, poor academic achievement, antiquated evaluation procedures, and damaged institutional legitimacy still undermine its efficacy.

Examination malpractice erodes equity and public confidence, while poor student performance and a dependence on rote memorization are indicative of structural and pedagogical flaws. Critical thinking and practical skills are not captured by outdated assessment methods, and systemic inconsistencies erode trust.

A multifaceted strategy is needed to overcome these obstacles. Online paper management and e-marking are two examples of digital reforms that will greatly lower malpractice and enhance result processing. Through curriculum and assessment reforms, learning outcomes will be improved that emphasize critical thinking, outcome-based evaluation, and ongoing assessment. Programs for professional development for

educators, examiners, and administrative personnel will also improve accountability and thorough capacity building.

Malpractice in the BISE examination has undermined equity and public trust, even though subpar student performance and a reliance on rote memorization are signs of structural and pedagogical problems. Moreover, outdated assessment techniques fail to capture practical skills, and critical thinking and systemic inconsistencies undermine trust. A diversified approach is required to get past these challenges. Digital reforms are essential that will significantly reduce malpractice and improve result processing, including e-marking and online paper management. Curriculum and assessment reforms that prioritize ongoing assessment, outcome-based evaluation, and critical thinking will enhance learning outcomes. Through professional development programs for teachers, examiners, and administrative staff will also increase capacity and accountability. For the quality of education and to ensure merit, it needs to clear all examination centers of cheating, malpractices, unfair means, favoritism, and nepotism; it will enhance fair merit in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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