

## TO INVESTIGATE THE ROLE OF EDUCATION MONITORING AUTHORITY (EMA) IN ACHIEVING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE OF SCHOOL AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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### Abstract

*School monitoring is a process that entails testing and analysis of schools with a view of ensuring that the schools are efficient, in line with standards, and deliver quality education. This paper discusses how EMA affects the output of teachers, analyze EMA issues of enhancing the excellence of secondary schools, and research the extent that EMA intervention can improve school excellence, at a secondary school level. It was a quantitative study, and the cross-sectional survey design was taken with the foundation of a positivist philosophy of research and a deductive approach to the study. The population sample size is 1,967 people in four districts, namely, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera and Swat. The data was gathered with the help of Questionnaires among the respondents that were Secondary School Teachers (SSTs), school Head, and District Monitoring Authority (DMA) staff. The sample size of 322 respondents was used according to the calculator of the sample size by Raosoft. Stratified random sampling was also used by proportions to make sure that all districts had adequate representation. The research on Cronbachs Alpha was found to be reliable at 0.974. The results have found out that KPEMA has played a prominent role in academic discipline, attend ability of teachers, and enhanced classroom teaching. Nevertheless, some challenges were also noted such as the lack of resources, the inadequacy of training the monitoring staff and school staff resistance caused by increased scrutiny. The research also concludes that, KPEMA has influenced positively academic excellence, teacher performance, as well as infrastructure monitoring in secondary schools. However, its effectiveness is limited by resource constraints, coordination issues, and staff resistance. This study recommends that enhance funding and logistics, offer regular training, improve inter-agency coordination, engage stakeholders, and adopt digital monitoring tools for better efficiency.*

**Key keywords:** Education Monitoring Authority (EMA), Academic Excellence, Teacher Performance, Education Quality, Educational Monitoring.

### Introduction

Education is crucial for socioeconomic development and is a vital investment for a nation (Jellenz, Bobek & Horvat, 2020). Pakistan's educational policies emphasize its role in social reforms and development (Malik, 2019). However, the quality of education in Pakistan is subpar due to neglect and lack of proper attention (Sain, 2023). The country invests about 2% of its GDP on education, but both quality and quantity are poor compared to other countries (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2023). Factors contributing to this backwardness include illiteracy, teacher absenteeism, lack of funds, physical infrastructure, and poverty (Sengupta & Guchhait, 2022). To achieve national educational goals, motivation and effective monitoring mechanisms are recommended (Ayuba, 2018).

Monitoring is the systematic collection of data comprising key indicators of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of a project (Meyer & Zierke, 2024). Monitoring is the ongoing process by which stakeholders obtain regular feedback on the progress being made towards achieving their goals and objectives (Amin, Scheepers & Malik 2023). Monitoring of schools involves the systematic assessment and evaluation of educational institutions to ensure they operate effectively, adhere to standards, and provide quality education (Chizya, 2018). The importance of data-driven decision-making in educational settings, advocating for the

utilization of monitoring to inform planning, instruction, and evaluation processes (Schildkamp, 2019). Its goal is to conduct an analysis, which includes a detailed examination of the state of education today, the suggestion of alternatives for improvement, the making of well-informed judgments, and the implementation of management practices that guarantee the quality of science and education (Reimers, 2020). By the process of monitoring, we can determine and analyze the performance of teachers towards the directed goals and objectives of education (Dignath, et al., 2023).

In Pakistan, the education department itself is in charge of monitoring instruction. This system designates the head of school as the immediate supervisor of the institution, in charge of monitoring the academic programs. In addition to this, District Education Officers (DEOs), Deputy Executive District Officers (EDOs), AEOs, or assistant education officers, and DDEOs, are in charge of monitoring all aspects of school administration, particularly organizing, planning, monitoring, observing, and assessing.

Education Monitoring Authorities (EMA) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) plays a pivotal role in molding the terrain of education, specifically in the context of secondary education (Idris & Saeed, 2021). They supervise standards and rules, guaranteeing high-quality instruction, promoting fairness, and enabling ongoing advancements (Lear, 2018). The function of EMA in secondary school is, they offer insights into how they affect teaching effectiveness, student academic achievement, and teacher performance (Rattan, et al., 2015). The Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) is an independent authority. This is the variable that is changed or to be studied in order to determine its effects. The function of EMA, the independent variable, is to impact or influence other variables, especially teacher performance, school academic excellence and infrastructure development. The role of independent variable EMA, in this study, is to investigate its role on overall performance of school and its interventions in secondary schools.

The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been making different reforms in response to the continued under performance in the field of education, among them being the formation of the Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) also known as the Independent Monitoring Unit (IMU) in the policy literature. Transparency, accountability and improvement of performance in the public sector schools are the main aim of EMA achieved by using systematic data collection and monitoring. Through the use of real-time information on critical pointers like attendance of teachers, student enrollment, access to basic facilities, and school functionality, the EMA uses monitoring officers who have downloaded digital tools. Associated Press of Pakistan has reported that the intervention of EMA has remarkably decreased the rate of teacher absenteeism and the general administrative effectiveness of schools in the province (Associated Press of Pakistan, 2024).

Although an increase in the available evidence indicates that EMA has led to better school governmental and operational performance, the direct linkage between the school monitoring activities and academic excellence has not been well researched. Excellence in academics, here, is the quantifiable positive change in the student learning outcomes, examination scores, and a pedagogical efficacy. The available literature on EMA, such as the works by Samad, Ullah, and Khan (2023), and Kanwal and Ahmad (2023) has mostly addressed administrative measures, e.g., attendance and facility management. Indicatively, in a study by Kanwal and Ahmad (2023) on the higher secondary schools of girls in Peshawar, the results found greater discipline, and teacher time punctuality, but never found out student performance or the learning processes in the classroom. Equally, Samad et al. (2023) found out correlations between monitoring and infrastructure availability, but they did not examine how these two translate to better academic performance.

### **Rational of the Study**

This research is necessary since it demonstrates that Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) can be used to enhance the performance of schools, teachers, and the development of infrastructure in secondary schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It underlines the possibilities of monitoring to actually improve the quality of teaching and contribute to the academic performance of students.

### **Literature Review**

The literature review stress how important monitoring is to raise secondary school students' achievement on a national and worldwide scale. The relationship between school leadership and student achievement, stress the role of effective leadership in shaping student performance (Ten Bruggencate et al., 2012). European nations grasp risk-based monitoring, which has been shown to boost school efficacy and raise student-teacher ratios and quality of instruction (O'Doherty, M.2023). According to the Roll Call research paper, teacher attendance is directly related to student outcomes, the more teachers are absent, the more their students' achievement suffers. The drop in student achievement that occurs when teachers miss ten days of work is equal to the difference between having a new teacher and one with two or three extra years of experience (Dorn et al., 2020).

Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) can be defined as a state-approved organization whose role is to perform an external audit, controls, and quality of education institutions (Jilani, 2024). This involves in the Pakistani environment a convoluted assortment of provincial and district degrees, including the Monitoring and Evaluation Assistants (MEA) in Punjab, the Sindh Education Management Information System (SEMIS) and its monitoring wing, and the Independent Monitoring Units (IMU) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Their role is multidimensional because they monitor the attendance of both the teachers and students as well as classroom activities and the sufficiency of infrastructures.

Academic Excellence is a more subtle and controversial concept. It goes beyond the traditional and limited measurement system of high passing in Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) examinations. This the definition used in this review which postulates that the role of an EMA should be evaluated based on its capability of developing all these dimensions rather than just to increase examination scores.

EMA have a direct impact on the performance of teachers, which occurs via classroom observation and, consequently holistic definition, justified by modern-day educational literature, includes not just excellent academic performance but also the acquisition of the skills to think on the level of higher order, creativity, ethical background, and mastery of digital literacy and well-being of the student (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2012; Siddiqui, 2023). , feedback. Monitors are trained to apply certain rubrics to evaluate all the aspects of a teacher such as content knowledge and lesson planning, classroom management and application of student assessment techniques (Cheema, 2024). The very existence of such oversight is meant to serve as an excellent force that will compel teachers to be ready, available, and professional. When used in a positive way, the feedback of these observations can be a type of individual professional development, indicating particular areas that should be developed. Ali and Khan (2024) research on Khyber Pakistan indicates that with follow-up coaching and monitoring, tangible changes in pedagogical practice (e.g., the use of student-centered activities) might take place.

EMA in Pakistan are frequently poorly-equipped even though their mandate is critical. They have a lack of finances, means of transporting the children to the remote schools and up to date technology. What is more important, they usually do not have enough human capacity. The monitors are often not enough to serve the number of schools they have to serve, which results in the lack of frequent visits or hasty visits (Khan, 2023). Moreover, at the secondary level and in particular when subject specific knowledge is demanded, there are many monitors who are generalists and do not possess a deep background in the content knowledge that can provide

them with credibility in assessing a physics or economics lesson. The implication of this capacity deficit is that a well-constructed monitoring framework is likely to go wrong at the implementation stage, to create mere window dressing that adds not much value to the actual instruction process.

EMA influence teacher performance in the most direct way, and it is the classroom observation and grading in accordance to a set of predetermined criteria. In Pakistan, monitors or evaluation assistants (MEA) use standardized measures, such as the Programme Monitoring and Implementation Framework (PMIF) in Punjab, to evaluate a number of factors about the practice of a teacher, including lesson planning, pedagogical technique, classroom management, and student engagements (Cheema, 2024). Such assessments usually compare themselves to the National Professional Standards of Teachers in Pakistan (NPSTP), which provides the desired qualifications of a successful teacher (GoP, 2023).

### **Problem Statement**

Despite the introduction of EMA (Education Monitoring Authority) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the majority of studies have studied the general results, like attendance and dropout rates, and availability of facilities and not analyzed the effect of EMA on teacher performance, classroom practice, and student outcomes (Khalil, Haqdad, and Sultana, 2023). All this leads to a strong indication that further research beyond the figures is necessary that looks more into the actual Role of EMA is having on schools, teachers, students and development of infrastructure. The intention is to gain improved insight on how EMA assists in the area of education, the existing challenges, and how its activities could cause a significant transformation in our schools. Despite the recent reports about the changes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in the context of Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) interventions, which resulted in improvement in such aspects of the school (including teacher punctuality, student retention, school facilities, and others) (Kanwal and Ahmad, 2023; Samad et al., 2023), the direct influence of such monitoring on academic excellence is still largely unexplored. Majority of the research which has been done is more inclined towards the broad pointers such as dropout rates and attendance and overlooks such important outcomes of academic achievement and learning and performance of students and learning as well as examination (Kanwal and Ahmad, 2023).

### **Objectives**

- i) To investigate the role of Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) in achieving academic excellence of school at secondary level.
- ii) To investigate the challenges faced by the EMA in improving secondary schools' excellence.
- iii) To find out the relationship between EMA challenges and secondary schools' excellence.

### **Hypotheses**

- H<sub>0</sub>1: The EMA does not have significant role in achieving academic excellence of school at secondary level.
- H<sub>0</sub>2: The EMA does not face significant challenges in improving the excellence of secondary schools.
- H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no relationship between the challenges faced by the EMA and the excellence of secondary schools.

### **Method and procedure**

The study was quantitative in nature. Quantitative research is a systematic investigation that focuses on collecting and analyzing numerical data to identify patterns, test hypotheses, and make predictions or generalizations about a population. It emphasizes objectivity, measurement, and the use of statistical tools to interpret findings (Ghanad, 2023).

### **Population**

All the government male and female Secondary School SSTs teachers, school heads, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Monitoring Authority (KPEMA) comprised the study's population. According to the Annual School Census Report 2022–2023 in KP, the total number of male and female SST is 20,333 (male: 12,446; female: 7,887). The number of school heads at the secondary level is 1,054 (male: 836; female: 318), while the staff of KPEMA (DCMA) totals 742 (male: 408; female: 334), all of which were considered the target population for this study.

The total number of female SST working in the districts of Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, and Swat is 673, 419, 367, and 342, respectively, amounting to 1,801 in total. The number of school heads in these districts is 47, 18, 30, and 27, respectively, totaling 122. Additionally, the number of DCMA staff is 11 from each of the four districts, amounting to a total of 44. These groups constituted the accessible population 1967 for the study.

**Table:** Accessible Population of the study

District	Female SST	School Heads	DCMA Staff	Total
Peshawar	673	47	11	731
Charsada	419	18	11	448
Nowshera	367	30	11	408
Swat	342	27	11	380
Total	1801	122	44	1967

### Sample and Sample Size

It employed proportional stratified random sampling as the sampling method. The strata in this approach were the four districts (Peshawar, Charsadda, Swat and Nowshera). The size of the sample was estimated to make the study findings statistically significant and reliable. When deciding the number of participants that should be included in a study, a tool like a Roasoft calculator is usually employed to identify the ideal number of respondents that must be included in the sample based on the size of the population, the level of confidence desired and the margin of error.

In case of a population of 1,967 (with four districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including SSTs, heads and DCMA, i.e.  $1,801 + 122 + 44 = 1967$ ) the sample size can be calculated by using a standard formula of calculating a sample size.

$$n = N \cdot Z^2 \cdot P \cdot (1-P) / E^2 \cdot (N-1) + Z^2 \cdot (1-P)$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (1,967)

Z = Z-score (1.96 for 95% confidence)

p = approximate percentage (0.5 because as much as possible)

E = margin of error (0.05)

In this case population size of 1,967 the sample size calculated was about 322 respondents.

This was a simplified computing of the Rao soft calculator.

The distribution of sample was as follow;

**Table :** Sample of the Study

Districts	SST	Heads	DCMA	Total
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<b>Peshawar</b>	110	8	2	120
<b>Charsada</b>	69	3	2	74
<b>Nowshera</b>	56	4	2	62
<b>Swat</b>	60	5	1	66
<b>Total</b>	295	20	7	322

### Research Design

A deductive approach was adopted in analyzing the research data. The researcher adopted the survey design to study the role of KPEMA on academic excellence of schools at secondary level. The time horizon for this study is cross-sectional because the data was collected at a single point in time to analyze the current role of the Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) in academic excellence, teacher performance, challenges faced KPEMA, and infrastructure development at secondary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The methodological choice for this study was mono-method, as it focuses exclusively on quantitative research.

### Research Instrument

The questionnaires were made in five versions, i.e., one school head, two SST teacher questionnaires, and two KPEMA staff questionnaires. The number of questions in each of the questionnaires was 10 hence totaling 50 questions. The items were selected in accordance with the literature to make such items refined and relevant. The tool was divided into two sections:

- Section 1 was devoted to demographic data such as the location of the school, the highest general qualification, the highest professional qualification and experience.
- Section 2 was used to record responses based on a five-point Likert scale of 5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree.

### Data Collection Procedure

A questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was developed for the collection of data from the respondents (SST teachers, School heads, and DCMA). The researcher physically visited the schools to administer the questionnaire, and respondents were requested to fill out the questionnaire according to the provided instructions.

### Data Analysis Techniques

For quantitative research, descriptive statistics were used with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. To summarize key variables, statistical tools such as mean, median, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient were applied to test the hypotheses.

### Ethical Consideration

During the research, the researcher visited each school one by one, After brief introduction the researcher asked the principal for permission to collect data and it was assured that this data is for research purpose only and it will be confidential. Then the questionnaire was distributed among the teachers. All the school heads and teachers gave the best response and response percentage of the researcher was 100%. Researcher is very thankful to all school heads and teachers.

### Data Analysis and Discussion

The collected data were analyzed and interpreted by percentage, ANOVA, correlation in the light of the objectives of the study

**Table 1 Role of Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) in achieving academic excellence of school at secondary level**

S.#	Statements	Total	SA	A	N	D	SDA
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1	KPEMA supervision significantly enhances the academic performance of the school.	295	75 (25.4%)	101 (34.2%)	36 (12.2%)	33 (11.2%)	50 (17.0%)
2	KPEMA improves staff attendance in school.	295	105 (35.6%)	130 (44.1%)	28 (9.5%)	17 (5.8%)	15 (5.1%)
3	KPEMA engagement also enhanced general school discipline.	295	28 (9.6%)	124 (42.0%)	61 (20.7%)	62 (21.0%)	20 (6.8%)
4	Students' enrollment is improved due to KPEMA	295	47 (15.9%)	125 (42.5%)	49 (16.6%)	52 (17.6%)	22 (7.5%)
5	The dropout rate of students has decreased due to KPEMA	295	42 (14.2%)	89 (30.2%)	57 (19.3%)	77 (26.0%)	30 (10.0%)
6	KPEMA improves resource distribution, aiding in academic success.	295	49 (16.6%)	98 (33.1%)	78 (26.4%)	57 (19.3%)	13 (4.4%)
7	KPEMA projects boost student learning outcomes.	295	51 (17.3%)	63 (21.4%)	69 (23.4%)	85 (28.8%)	27 (9.2%)
8	KPEMA engagement and supervision boost the School's Head productivity.	295	58 (19.7%)	83 (28.19%)	61 (20.7%)	40 (13.6%)	53 (18.0%)
9	KPEMA better approaches to instruction improved teachers' performance in school.	295	54 (18.3%)	89 (30.2%)	74 (25.1%)	43 (14.6%)	35 (11.8%)
10	KPEMA Monitoring Procedures Identified and improved the PTC performance.	295	62 (21.0%)	110 (37.3%)	62 (21.0%)	36 (12.2%)	25 (8.5%)
Total		2950 (100%)	571 (19.3%)	1012 (34.3%)	575 (19.5%)	502 (17.1%)	290 (9.8%)

Item 1 indicates that 59.6% of the respondents agreed that KPEMA supervision significantly enhances the academic performance of the school, while 28.2% disagreed, and 12.2% remained neutral.

Item 2 indicates that 79.7% of the respondents agreed that KPEMA improves staff attendance in school, whereas 10.9% disagreed, and 9.5% remained neutral.

Item 3 indicates that 51.5% of the respondents agreed that KPEMA engagement has enhanced general school discipline, while 27.8% disagreed, and 20.7% remained neutral.

Item 4 indicates that 58.3% of the respondents agreed that student enrollment has improved due to KPEMA, whereas 25.1% disagreed, and 16.6% remained neutral.

Item 5 indicates that 44.4% of the respondents agreed that the dropout rate of students has decreased due to KPEMA, while 36.3% disagreed, and 19.3% remained neutral.

Item 6 indicates that 49.8% of the respondents agreed that KPEMA improves resource distribution, aiding in academic success, whereas 23.7% disagreed, and 26.6% remained neutral.

Item 7 indicates that 38.7% of the respondents agreed that KPEMA projects boost student learning outcomes, while 38.0% disagreed, and 23.3% remained neutral.

Item 8 indicates that 47.8% of the respondents agreed that KPEMA engagement and supervision boost the school head's productivity, whereas 31.6% disagreed, and 20.6% remained neutral.

Item 9 indicates that 48.5% of the respondents agreed that KPEMA better approaches to instruction have improved teachers' performance in school, while 26.4% disagreed, and 25.1% remained neutral.

Item 10 indicates that 58.3% of the respondents agreed that KPEMA monitoring procedures identified and improved the PTC performance, whereas 20.7% disagreed, and 21.0% remained neutral.

### Conclusion

EMA enhances academic excellence by improving staff attendance (79.7%), student enrollment (58.3%), and overall performance (58.3%). It also supports discipline (51.5%) and resource distribution (49.8%). However, its impact on dropout rates (44.4%) and student learning outcomes (38.7%) remains uncertain, requiring further improvements.

**Table 4.2 Challenges faced by the EMA in improving secondary schools' excellence**

S.#	Statements	Total	SA	A		D	SDA
1	Insufficient financial resources hinder KPEMA ability to improve standards.	07	01 (11.4%)	05 (71.4%)	0 (0.0%)	01 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
2	Limited resources make it hard to regularly monitor and assess schools.	07	0 (0.0%)	06 (85.7%)	0 (0.0%)	01 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
3	Administrators' and employee's resistance can hinder KPEMA suggestions for school performance.	07	03 (42.9%)	01 (14.3%)	01 (14.3%)	02 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)
4	Political and bureaucratic interference interrupts KPEMA efforts to improve school quality.	07	04 (57.1%)	02 (28.6%)	0 (4.5%)	01 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
5	The lack of modern data collection and analysis capabilities hinders the precise performance of KPEMA monitoring and improvement.	07	01 (14.3%)	04 (57.1%)	01 (14.3%)	01 (14.3%)	0 (14.3%)

6	KPEMA faces challenges in implementing long-term improvements in schools due to frequent policy changes.	07	09 (20.5%)	27 (61.4%)	02 (4.5%)	06 (13.6%)	0 (0.0%)
7	A major obstacle to KPEMA efforts to improve academic quality is the lack of collaboration from the administration.	07	01 (14.3%)	05 (71.4%)	01 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
8	Insufficient training for KPEMA staff poses a challenge in conducting effective school evaluations.	07	01 (14.3%)	03 (42.9%)	02 (28.6%)	01 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
9	The KPEMA faces challenges in improving excellence due to the diverse educational needs of different schools.	07	02 (28.6%)	02 (28.6%)	01 (14.3%)	01 (14.3%)	01 (14.3%)
10	Limited access to modern technology makes it hard for KPEMA to evaluate and improve secondary school performance.	07	02 (28.6%)	03 (42.9%)	01 (14.3%)	01 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
	Total	70 (100%)	16 (22.9%)	36 (51.4%)	8 (11.4%)	10 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)

Item 1 indicates that 85.7% of the respondents agreed that insufficient financial resources hinder KPEMA ability to improve standards, while 14.3% disagreed.

Item 2 indicates that 85.7% of the respondents agreed that limited resources make it difficult to regularly monitor and assess schools, while 14.3% disagreed.

Item 3 indicates that 57.2% of the respondents agreed that administrators' and employees' resistance can hinder KPEMA suggestions for school performance, while 28.5% disagreed and only 14.3% remained neutral.

Item 4 indicates that 85.7% of the respondents agreed that political and bureaucratic interference interrupts KPEMA efforts to improve school quality, while 14.3% disagreed.

Item 5 indicates that 71.4% of the respondents agreed that the lack of modern data collection and analysis capabilities hinders the precise performance of KPEMA monitoring and improvement, while 14.3% disagreed and only 14.3% remained neutral.

Item 6 indicates that 85.7% of the respondents agreed that KPEMA faces challenges in implementing long-term improvements in schools due to frequent policy changes, while 14.3% disagreed.

Minority 7 reveals that 85.7 percent of the respondents affirmed that one of the greatest challenges to KPEMA activities to enhance academic quality is the insufficiency of the administration to collaborate and 4.5 percent of the respondents disagreed with this opinion and only 18.2 percent of the respondents were not convinced.

The response in item 8 reveals that 57.2% respondents felt that a challenge of lack of proper training of the KPEMA staff is a challenge of conducting effective school evaluation, 14.3% of the respondents responded that they disagree, and 28.5% took a neutral position.

According to item 9, 57.2% of the respondents said that KPEMA has problems with enhancing excellence because there are varying educational requirements of various schools, where 14.3% disagreed and only 28.5% were indifferent.

The 10th item shows that 68.2 percent of the respondents affirmed that limited availability of modern technology means that KPEMA will have problems assessing and transforming the performance of secondary schools, and 18.2 percent did not agree with the statement, and 13.6 percent were neutral.

### Conclusion

KPEMA experiences significant issues in relation to enhancement of the quality of secondary schools, such as the lack of financial resources (85.7%), monitoring capacities (85.7%), and constant alternation of the policies (85.7%). Such impediments as political interference (85.7%), absence of administrative cooperation (55.2%), and poor technology (68.2%) are additional barriers to improvement. These are the problems that should be addressed in order to bring about effective school improvement.

**Table 3 Relationship between EMA challenges and secondary schools' excellence**

S.#	Statements	Total	SA	A	N	D	SDA
1	Ongoing KPEMA monitoring issues undesirably impact school performance.	07	04 (57.1%)	03 (42.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
2	Insufficient KPEMA resources directly impact a school's academic success.	07	0 (0.0%)	05 (71.4%)	02 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
3	Political interference with KPEMA activities worsens academic results.	07	02 (28.6%)	01 (14.3%)	01 (14.3%)	03 (42.9%)	0 (0.0%)
4	Difficulties in data analysis hinder student performance enhancement.	07	03 (42.9%)	04 (57.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
5	More monitoring issues increase the difficulty in sustaining academic success.	07	01 (14.3%)	02 (28.6%)	04 (57.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
6	Administrative interference affects KPEMA ability to improve school performance.	07	03 (42.9%)	01 (14.3)	02 (28.6%)	01 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
7	Without enough support from KPEMA, teachers in secondary schools feel less	07	01 (14.3%)	01 (14.3%)	03 (42.9%)	02 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)

	motivated and perform worse.						
8	Lack of regular KPEMA monitoring leads to lower academic performance.	07	0 (0.0%)	05 (71.4%)	01 (14.3%)	01 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
9	Resistance of School leadership to KPEMA recommendations is major barrier to school performance.	07	0 (0.0%)	04 (57.1%)	02 (28.6%)	01 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
10	The lack of infrastructure solutions from KPEMA affects schools' performance.	07	0 (0.0%)	01 (14.3%)	04 (57.1%)	02 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)
	Total	70	14 (20.0%)	27 (38.5%)	19 (27.1%)	10 (14.2%)	0 (0.0%)

Item 1 indicates that 100% of the respondents agreed that ongoing KPEMA monitoring issues negatively impact school performance.

Item 2 indicates that 71.4% of the respondents agreed that insufficient KPEMA resources directly impact a school's academic success, while 0.0% disagreed and 28.6% remained neutral.

Item 3 indicates that 42.9% of the respondents agreed that political interference with KPEMA activities worsens academic results, while 42.9% disagreed and only 14.3% remained neutral.

Item 4 indicates that 100% of the respondents agreed that difficulties in data analysis hinder student performance enhancement, while 0.0% disagreed.

Item 5 indicates that 42.9% of the respondents agreed that more monitoring issues increase the difficulty in sustaining academic success, while 0.0% disagreed and 57.1% remained neutral.

Item 6 indicates that 57.2% of the respondents agreed that administrative interference affects KPEMA ability to improve school performance, while 14.3% disagreed and 28.6% remained neutral.

Item 7 indicates that 28.6% of the respondents agreed that without enough support from KPEMA, teachers in secondary schools feel less motivated and perform worse, while 28.6% disagreed and 42.9% remained neutral.

Item 8 indicates that 71.4% of the respondents agreed that a lack of regular KPEMA monitoring leads to lower academic performance, while 14.3% disagreed and 14.3% remained neutral.

Item 9 indicates that 57.1% of the respondents agreed that resistance from school leadership to KPEMA recommendations is a major barrier to school performance, while 14.3% disagreed and 28.6% remained neutral.

Item 10 indicates that 14.3% of the respondents agreed that the lack of infrastructure solutions from KPEMA affects school performance, while 28.6% disagreed and 57.9% remained neutral.

## Conclusion

The findings reflect that EMA challenges have robust impacts on the performance of schools. Majority of the respondents agreed that monitoring problems (100%), shortage of resources (77.4%), and problems with data analysis (100%) are detrimental to academic performance.

There are also barriers of limited monitoring (71.4%), leadership resistance (57.1%). Political interference was however divided (42.9% agreed, 42.9% disagreed) and infrastructure issues (14.3% agreed, 57.9% neutral). In general, the resources, monitoring, and administrative support should be improved to ensure the excellence of schools.

**Table 4 Overall Analyses**

S#	Objectives	Total	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	To investigate the role of Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) in achieving academic excellence of school at secondary level.	2950 (100%)	572 (19.4%)	1011 (34.3%)	575 (19.5%)	504 (17.1%)	288 (9.7%)
2	To investigate the challenges faced by the EMA in improving secondary schools' excellence	70 (100%)	17 (24.0%)	34 (49.0%)	09 (13%)	08 (12%)	02 (2%)
3	To find out the relationship between EMA challenges and secondary schools' excellence.	70 (100%)	14 (20.0%)	27 (39.0%)	21 (30.0%)	08 (12.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Objective 1 indicates that 53.7% of the respondents agreed on, To investigate the role of Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) in achieving academic excellence of school at secondary level, while 26.8% disagreed, and 19.5% remained neutral.

Objective 2 indicates that 73% of the respondents agreed on investigating the challenges faced by the EMA in improving secondary schools' excellence, while 14% disagreed, and 13% remained neutral.

Objective 3 indicates that 58.6% of the respondents agreed on finding out the relationship between EMA challenges and secondary schools' excellence, while 11.4% disagreed and 30% remained neutral.

In the sense of this study, the Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) plays a significant role in the schools at the secondary level to enhance performance of students, teaching staff as well as the facilities of the schools. The research, however, also gives evidence that EMA experiences problems in terms of management, resources and policy execution, which restrict its performance. In order to attain permanent changes in schools, EMA work should be reinforced using improved resources, policies, and effective monitoring practices.

**Table 5 The EMA does not face significant challenges in improving the excellence of secondary schools**

**Model Summary**

R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
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.576	.331	.329	.661	158.47	.000
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In order to verify this assertion, a regression analysis was performed, thus giving a model, which shows that the coefficient of the regression is 0.576, which depicts a moderate-to-strong positive correlation between the challenges and the effect they have on the school excellence. The R<sup>2</sup> of 0.331 implies that about 33.1 percent of the difference in school excellence can be determined by the issues encountered in such institutions. The vast F-value (F = 158.47, p < 0.001) proves that the model is statistically strong and that the association cannot be a result of accident.

The null hypothesis is rejected because the p-value (Sig.) is 0.000 which is less than the traditional value of 0.05. This implies that there is a statistically significant impact of the challenges on the impeding excellence in secondary schools. Nevertheless, the Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.329 suggests that although issues are also significant, there are other factors (which are not measurable, such as quality of teaching, community support, or efficiency of the funding) that may explain the rest of the school performance variance. In real life, these issues may be overcome to increase excellence, however, systematic measures that take into consideration other factors, which are hard to notice, are required to make a significant improvement.

**Table 6 There is no relationship between the challenges faced by the EMA and the excellence of secondary schools**

**Correlations**

		Challenges Faced by EMA	Excellence of School
<b>Challenges Faced by EMA</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	<b>.355**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	322	322
<b>Excellence of School</b>	Pearson Correlation	<b>.355**</b>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	322	322

According to the second hypothesis (H02), the second hypothesis was that the challenges faced by the Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) have no significant relationship with the excellence of secondary schools. The Pearson correlation analysis however shows that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables ( $r=0.355, p<0.001$ ), with a sample size of 322. The correlation coefficient of 0.355 is moderate in the sense that as the perceived adversities confronting the EMA goes up, there is a tendency of the school excellence ratings to also rise. This result is in complete opposition to the null hypothesis (H02) and indicates that the challenges faced by the EMA are not unrelated to school excellence but instead have a significant correlation.

The p-value ( $p=0.001$ ) indicates that this relationship is strong and thus lowers the chances that the correlation observed was due to randomly selected variables. Nevertheless, the importance of putting the extent of the correlation into context is very important. The coefficient of 0.355 represents a moderate effect size, which means that though the issues experienced by the EMA can affect school excellence, other unmeasured variables will probably have greater influence on a school performance. Indicatively, institutional resilience, resource distribution or support in the community may mediate or moderate this relationship.

**Discussion**

The results of the research stress the crucial position of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Monitoring Authority (KPEMA) in the development of the secondary school education. Many of the respondents admitted that KPEMA supervision has helped to improve academic

performance, school discipline and attendance of the staff. In addition, the role of the authority in terms of boosting the number of students joining the institutions and lowering the rate of dropping out is also interesting. KPEMA input in resource distribution and perfection of teaching procedures have played a central role in fostering academic achievement. It also has increased its participation in school principals and Parent-Teacher Councils (PTCS) leading to better school administration and learning. These results indicate that KPEMA is an important actor in strengthening the secondary education system. The findings of the research agree with those of Nawaz, Hussain, and Khan (2019).

A research done by Ali and Hussain (2020) showed that punctuality and attendance of teachers have greatly improved as a result of monitoring and the undue pressure created by the KPEMA assessments which many consider to have depressed the morale of the teachers. Recent research results propose that although KPEMA is effective at implementing rules and rewarding teachers that achieve high scores, the system focuses more on imposing rules than on nurturing the teachers. Its reviews are so critical that they may not always motivate the teachers. The research also enlightens on the effects of KPEMA on the performance of teachers. Majority of respondents said that monitoring has greatly enhanced attendance and punctuality of teachers. Nevertheless, the high pressure of KPEMA ratings is the cause of concern as many consider this pressure to decrease the motivation of teachers. The results indicate that although KPEMA does a good job with regards to the enforcement of regulations and acknowledgement of high performing teachers, it focuses more on enforcing of the rules rather than developing the teachers. Its reviews can be critical and therefore they may at times discourage teachers instead of encouraging them. However, with better teacher commitment and work with school heads as made available to them through KPEMA, students have seen better output and more enrollments.

The paper also creates a direct correlation between the issues encountered by KPEMA and secondary school achievement. Taxation of resources and poor management of data has been a detriment to student performance. The power of political involvement and administrative challenges has also hindered the efforts of the authority to make the required improvements. In addition, poor infrastructure and lack of constant monitoring have led to deteriorating academic performance. The lack of support by KPEMA has also affected motivations of the teachers. The results underscore the pressing concern of mitigating these institutional issues to continue on the overall academic advancement and institutional fitness. Study outcome also similar to the investigation on (Hafeez et al, 2021).

### **Conclusions**

- i. The KPEMA supervision has led to better discipline in schools, better attendance of teachers and students as well as an increase in enrolment. Also, its participation in resource division, improvement of instruction, and Parent-Teacher Council (PTC) performance has led to the general development of the school. Such findings suggest that KPEMA has played a critical role in making sure that schools are run efficiently and effectively, which in the end ensures academic excellence.
- ii. There were respondents who indicated that KPEMA is more focused on rules and regulations than teacher development thus the need to have an approach that is more balanced to motivate and encourage professional development.
- iii. Although these successes have been achieved, KPEMA is experiencing a number of problems, which limit its effectiveness. Its ability to monitor schools is hampered by financial constraints, lack of resources and political interference. In addition, the use of out-of-date data management systems, opposition of school leaders, and the lack of coordination among KPEMA staff and school administrators are barriers to

long-term changes. The problems directly contribute to the performance of the entire secondary schools, thus, there is a need to have improved resource allocation and policy support to enhance KPEMA role.

- iv. More supportive attitude to the development of teachers and to the reinforcement of infrastructure programs can be used to guarantee sustainable academic achievement. By addressing these issues, KPEMA will be able to remain a crucial force in encouraging the educational excellence in the region.

#### **Recommendations**

- i. To enhance KPEMA effectiveness, the supervision might be improved and the discipline reinforced by means of training program. Better monitoring, incentives, and parental involvement would lead to improvement in terms of staff attendance, student enrolment and dropout rates. Also, better allocation of resources, teacher training, support of school heads and enhancing Parent-Teacher Councils will also increase academic achievement. KPEMA surveillance could increase the attendance, punctuality, and cooperation with the school heads by teachers, which will result in the increased enrolment of students. Nevertheless, the sense of too much pressure, too critical judgments, and emphasis on rules and teacher development may decrease teacher morale and motivation. To ensure the greatest efficacy, KPEMA should be dedicated to accountability with professional development, reward professional high-achievers, and offer helping trainings to improve the teaching practice and student performance.
- ii. The KPEMA can contribute to the standard of education which is much impaired by financial and resources limitations and outdated data systems which restrict the ability to monitor schools. Its initiatives are further undermined by political influence, changing policies, and opposition by staff at school besides weak coordination and lack of proper training of its evaluations. To boost its effectiveness, KPEMA ought to obtain a superior funding, become more technologically and data-wise advanced, offer specific personnel training, and become more closely collaborative with school administrators so that school improvements could be effective and sustainable.
- iii. May concentrate on the problems in tracking schools in terms of the lack of resources, the problem of data management, and the interference of politics that have the adverse effect on academic achievements. Lack of consistency in the oversight, interference by the administration, and unwillingness of school leaders to act on the recommendations further undermine the progress. These problems need to be overcome by improving data systems, administrative coordination and providing more assistance to teachers and schools to enable KPEMA to guarantee long-term academic success.

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