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Challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at Higher Secondary Level in Pakistan

Muhammad Saleem*

Hafiza Sadiya Iqbal†

Rafaqat Ali Akbar‡

Abstract

The study was aimed to examine the challenges of English curriculum implementation at higher secondary level in Punjab. The study is quantitative in nature. The sample of the study was comprised of 429 English teachers teaching at the higher secondary level. A stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample. The data were collected through the survey research method and were analyzed by applying descriptive analysis techniques. The results of the study showed that English teachers face challenges in English curriculum implementation, such as lack of communication skill, inappropriate teacher trainings, teaching method and methodology, lack of teaching resources and aids, inappropriate assessment procedures, misalignment of the content of English textbook, insufficient institutional resources and inappropriate government policies regarding English curriculum implementation. The results of the study suggested giving motivation to English teachers by providing attractive incentives, appropriate training programs and proper supervision of curriculum implementation of English subject.

Key Words: Curriculum, Implementation, Challenges

Introduction

Language is a salient feature of humans. It includes four skills; reading, writing, speaking and listening. Language skills are incorporated in the curriculum document to make students competent in language use. English is used as a second language in Pakistan. It is a language of higher learning in Pakistan and is a source of international communication. English is offered as a compulsory subject from grade one to graduation level in Punjab. It is used as an instructional language for various subjects across the curriculum in Pakistan. It gives better career options to its learners to meet the needs of the time and society (Government of Pakistan, 2006). English is rich in knowledge due to the language of most the translated books (Paolillo & Das, 2006). Formal opportunities are provided for learning English in the instructional settings through an organized curriculum (Gleeson & Davison, 2016).

English has also gained a very high and dominating position and status, and it is considered as a language of

high prestige. English is considered the language of a very high dominance position in Pakistan. English is not only useful for professional, but it is measured as a symbol of honor, high authority, and social superiority (Iqbal, Hassan, & Ali, 2010). In Pakistan, where English is the second official language, but the first language of relatively few, only 10% of the population uses information technology; of this 10%, the majority is 20- to 24-year-old ones are studying at various institutions in Pakistan. These students come from two major streams of education; Urdu-medium schools, where Urdu is the language of instruction, and English-medium schools, where English is the language of instruction. There are two major types of schools in Pakistan; public schools and private schools. Access and exposure to these digital facilities influence English medium schools' students' skills and digital practices positively (Shabbir, Wei, Fu, Chong, Marwat, Nabi & Ahmed, 2014).

* Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Govt. Islamia College Civil Lines, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: saleemrose25@gmail.com

† Lecturer, Department of Education, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

‡ Director, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

The curriculum of English is the pivot of preliminary focus in Pakistan (Makhdoom, 2014). It describes competencies as key learning areas (Laudon & Laudon, 2010). The curriculum document gives detail of standards that elaborate competencies. Standards are defined through benchmarks, and benchmarks elaborate on students learning outcomes. The document also gives guidance for textbook, teaching methodology, assessment of students' achievement and teacher training (Government of Pakistan, 2006). According to Badugela (2012), curriculum implementation emphasizes particular aspects of the curriculum stated in the curriculum document in a systematic manner. Its purpose is to promote students 'competencies and knowledge (Zhao, Ma & Qiao, 2016). It focuses upon the achievement of predetermined objectives (Rose, Ellipse & Freeman, 2004). Curriculum implementation diminishes the gaps between recommended and implemented curriculum (Hurteau, Houle, & Mongiat, 2009). It has been suggested in the English Curriculum document that teacher should create a conducive environment and the communicative situation in classrooms to enhance students' English language skills (Government of Pakistan, 2006). Implementation of the English curriculum is multidimensional at the higher secondary level. It includes textbooks, teaching methodology, assessment procedures and teachers' training. It focuses on developing competencies in language skills.

Teachers face challenges during the implementation of the curriculum. These hinder achieving the objectives mentioned in the curriculum document. Challenge means difficulty in performance, practices and undertaking, which needs cognitive, physical and financial efforts to solve it successfully on the spot or later. It stimulates the personnel to perform well and to show ability and competency in order to achieve the objectives set already being in the situation. Curriculum implementation is influenced by challenges as textbook themes and sub-themes, teaching methodology, assessment procedures and teacher training (Chaudhary, 2015). The effective implementation makes it possible to meet these challenges.

Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions Regarding Teaching Method and Methodology Challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I find it difficult to select a teaching methodology according to the objectives of the lesson.	3.92	.807
2	I find it difficult to conduct group activities in the class.	4.14	.737

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to the public higher secondary level schools in Punjab.

Methodology

Research Design

This study was quantitative in nature, and the cross-sectional survey was conducted under the survey research method

Population and Sample

The population of the study was constituted of English teachers of all public higher secondary level schools in the province of Punjab. The total number of English teachers at higher secondary level schools is 89 in the northern zone of Punjab, 361 in the central zone of Punjab and 269 in the southern zone of Punjab. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample from all three zones of Punjab.

The Instrument of the Study

The instrument was developed for challenges of English curriculum implementation at higher secondary level in Punjab. Two open-ended questions were also constructed in the questionnaire to take the opinion of English teachers regarding challenges which were analyzed by percentages.

A pilot study of the instrument was also conducted. Fifty teachers were taken as a sample of the pilot study that was exempted later on. The .82 reliability was found for challenges of the English curriculum implementation questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis techniques were used to analyze the collected data. Mean and the standard deviation was calculated in the descriptive statistical analysis.

3	I find it difficult to plan lessons to cater to students' individual differences.	4.13	.745
4	It is difficult for me to encourage students for asking questions.	4.04	.898
5	I find it difficult to use the direct method of English language teaching.	4.08	.816

N=429

Table 1 showed that item 2, "I find it difficult to conduct group activities in the class" had the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.14. This indicated that English teachers strongly agreed that they faced difficulty in conducting group activities. Items 1 had less Mean score, i.e. M = 3.92 indicated that to some extent, the English teachers agreed about the selection of teaching methodology according to the objectives of the lesson.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions Regarding Teachers' Competency Challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	It is difficult for me to manage problem-solving situations for the students.	3.97	1.033
2	I find it difficult to enhance the interest of students in learning the English language.	3.87	1.042
3	I face difficulty in model reading in front of the class.	3.77	1.056

N=429

Table 2 showed that item 1, "It is difficult for me to manage problem-solving situations for the students", had the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 3.97. This indicated that the English teachers strongly agreed that they felt difficulty in managing problem-solving situations for the students. Items 3 had less Mean score, i.e. M = 3.77 indicated that the English teachers agreed to had difficulty in model reading in front of the class

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions Regarding Non-Professional English Teachers challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I face difficulty in pronunciation in front of the class.	3.86	.934
2	I find it difficult to point out students' reading mistakes in reading skills.	4.05	.830
3	I face difficulty to prepare the students to write an English text in their own words.	4.02	.883
4	I find it difficult to conduct class discussions to improve students' English speaking and listening skills.	3.97	.849

N=429

Table 3 showed that item 2, "I find it difficult to point out students' reading mistakes in skills", had the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.05. This indicated that the majority of English teachers found it difficult to point out students' reading mistakes in reading skills. Items 1 with less Mean score, i.e. M = 3.86, indicated that the less English teachers faced difficulty in pronunciation in front of the class.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions Regarding Test Development and Organization Challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	It is difficult for me to organize role plays in class.	4.08	.794
2	I feel it difficult to use A. V. aids effectively for teaching English language skills.	4.05	.867
3	I find it difficult to conduct English quiz competitions in the class.	3.95	.939
4	It is difficult for me to prepare tasks for assessing the learning of students.	4.03	.843
5	It is difficult for me to prepare tasks for listening skills.	4.05	.859

N=429

Table 4.4 reflected, item 1, “It is difficult for me to organize role plays in the class”, was on top with the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.08. This revealed that English teachers feel difficulty in organizing role play in

the class. Items 3 with less Mean score, i.e. M = 3.95, indicated that to some extent, the English teachers felt difficulty in conducting English quiz competitions in the class.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions regarding Students' Assessment challenges of English curriculum implementation at the higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	It is difficult for me to prepare assessment tasks for speaking skills.	4.19	.724
2	It is difficult for me to prepare assessment tasks for reading skills.	4.22	.740
3	It is difficult for me to prepare assessment tasks for writing skills.	4.17	.787

N=429

Table 5 showed that item 2, “It is difficult for me to prepare assessment tasks for reading skills”, with the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.22. This indicated that the English teachers strongly agreed that they had difficulty in

preparing assessment tasks for reading skill. Items 3 with less Mean score, i.e. M = 4.17, the English teachers had difficulty in preparing assessment tasks for writing skills.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions regarding Class Test Conduction and Feedback challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I find it difficult to conduct class tests according to students' learning outcomes.	4.00	.854
2	I find it difficult to give feedback on students' learning mistakes.	4.21	.680

N=429

Table 6 showed that item 2, “I find it difficult to give feedback on students' learning mistakes,” with the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.21. This indicated that the English teachers strongly agreed that they had difficulty in giving

feedback on students' learning mistakes. Items 1 with less Mean score, i.e. M = 4.00 showed that English teachers had difficulty in conducting class tests according to students' learning outcomes.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions Regarding A.V. Aids challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I find it difficult to use A.V. Aids effectively for the assessment of students' English language skills.	4.00	.854
2	I find it difficult to diagnose students' weaknesses in learning English language skills.	4.21	.680

N=186

Table 7 showed that item 2, “I find it difficult to diagnose students' weaknesses in learning English language skills,” had the highest Mean score, i.e., M = 4.21. This

indicated that the English teachers strongly agreed that they felt difficulty in diagnosing students' weaknesses in learning English language skills. Items 1 with less

Mean score, i.e. M = 4.00 that English teachers found it difficult to use A.V. Aids effectively for the assessment of students' English language skills.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions regarding Assessment Item Development Challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	It is difficult for me to organize English quiz competitions in the class for students' assessment.	4.08	.833
2	I find it difficult to construct multiple-choice items for class tests.	4.17	.739
3	I find it difficult to assess essay type answers in-class tests.	4.15	.720

N=429

Table 8 showed that item 2, "I find it difficult to construct multiple-choice items for class tests", was at the top with the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.17. This indicated that the English teachers strongly agreed that it was difficult for them to construct multiple-choice items for class tests. Items 1 with less Mean score, i.e. M = 3.91, showed that English teachers agreed that they faced difficulty to some extent in organizing English quiz competitions in the class for students' assessment.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions regarding Teaching challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I find it difficult to organize discussions in the class to assess students' English language skills.	4.11	.733
2	I feel it difficult to encourage students to participate in oral activities due to their language constraints.	4.15	.764
3	I feel it difficult to encourage students to analyze unseen texts that I include in-class tests.	4.12	.767

N=429

Table 9 showed that item 2, "I find it difficult to organize discussions in the class to assess students' English language skills," had the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.15. This indicated that English teachers had difficulty encouraging students to participate in oral activities due to their language constraints. Item 1 had less Mean score, i.e. M = 4.11, and was about that English teachers feel it difficult to organize discussions in the class to assess students' English language skills.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions Regarding Textbook Challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I find that teaching content presents real-life situations.	4.10	.771
2	I find that objectives correspond to the needs of the learners.	4.08	.793
3	I find that textbook contains material equally on four English language skills.	4.06	.824
4	I find that separate activities for all language skills are given in the textbook.	4.10	.809

N=429

Table 10 showed that two items, item 1 and item 4, "I find that the teaching content presents real-life situations" and "I find that separate activities for all language skills are given in the textbook" with the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.10 were at the top. This indicated that the English teachers strongly agreed that teaching content presented real-life situations and separate activities for all language skills are given in the textbooks. Items 3 with less Mean score, i.e. M = 4.06, showed that English teachers found that textbook contains material equally on four English language skills.

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions Regarding Teachers' guidance challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I find that the instructions to conduct activities are provided in the curriculum.	4.05	.836
2	I find that teachers' manual is provided to all teachers to use a textbook.	4.04	.840
3	I find that the teachers take guidance from the teachers' manual to employ teaching methods.	4.03	.864

N=429

Table 11 showed that item 1, "I find that the instructions to conduct activities are provided in the curriculum", had the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.05. It affirmed that English teachers found instructions conducting activities were provided in the curriculum. Item 3 had less Mean score, i.e. M = 4.02, which confirmed that teachers took guidance from the teachers' manual to employ teaching methods.

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions regarding Teachers' Manual Challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I find that guidance is provided in the teacher's manual to use audio-visual aids.	4.06	.875
2	I find that the teachers' manual suggests textbook assessment techniques to English teachers.	4.09	.818
3	I find that teacher training has a limited role in enhancing English language teaching skills.	4.10	.807

N=429

Table 12 showed that item 3, "I find that teacher training has a limited role in enhancing English language teaching skills", had the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.10. This indicated that the respondents strongly agreed that teacher training had a limited role in enhancing English language teaching skills. Items 1 have less Mean score, i.e. M = 4.06, indicated that the respondents agreed to some extent that guidance was provided in the teacher's manual to use audio-visual aids.

Table 13. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions Regarding Teachers' Training challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I find that training in English language teaching is offered for a short period of time.	4.07	.861
2	I find that teacher training has no guidance on collaborative activities with parents and the community.	4.15	.752
3	I find that teacher training offers only an overview of English language skills.	4.19	.709
4	I find that teacher training involves less practical work in English language teaching.	4.17	.781

N=429

Table 13 showed that item 3, "I find that teacher training offers only an overview of English language skills," had the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.19. This indicated that teacher training offered only an overview of English language skills rather than full information. Item 1 had less Mean score, i.e. M = 4.07, indicated that training in English language teaching was offered for a short period of time.

Table 14. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions regarding English Language Skills challenges of English Curriculum Implementation at the Higher Secondary Level

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I feel that emphasis has been given to the development of my listening skills while I was a trainee.	4.09	.870

2	I feel that emphasis has not been given to the development of my speaking skills while I was a trainee.	4.21	.716
3	I feel that emphasis has not been given to the development of my reading skills while I was a trainee.	4.16	.768
4	I feel that emphasis has not been given to the development of my writing skills while I was a trainee.	4.21	.719

N=429

Table 14 showed that item 2 and 4 “I feel that emphasis has not been given to the development of my speaking skills while I was a trainee” and “I feel that emphasis has not been given to the development of my writing skills while I was a trainee” had the highest Mean score, i.e. M = 4.21. This indicated that respondents strongly agreed that

the training programs were not fully emphasized on the development of speaking and writing skills of the trainees. Items 1 with less Mean score, i.e. M = 4.09, indicated that emphasis had been given to the development of my listening skills while I was a trainee.

Table 15. Descriptive Statistics for the Opinions regarding Challenges Faced by English Teachers in the Implementation of English Curriculum at Higher Secondary level

S. No	Challenges Faced by English Teachers	Frequency	Percent
1	Lack of Command in English Communication	50	11.7
2	Poor Teaching Methodology	110	25.6
3	Poor Command on English Language Skills	125	29.1
4	Ineffective Assessment Skills	97	22.6
5	Less Motivation to Students	47	11.0
	Total	429	100.0

Table 15 showed that 29 percent of English teachers at higher secondary level had poor command of English language skills which indicated that English teachers at the higher secondary level could not easily communicate with students in the English language. It indicated that

only 11 percent of students are motivated to learn the English language, which means that students were also less motivated. This was also illustrated in a bar graph, which was presented below:

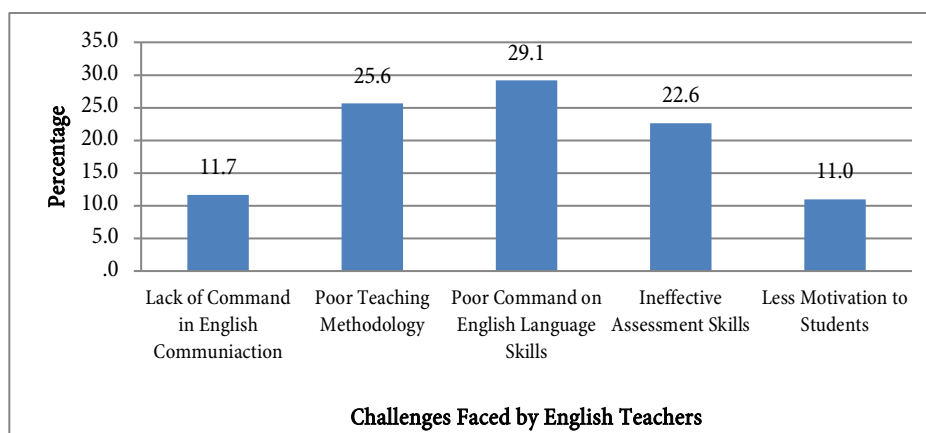


Table 16. Descriptive Statistics for the suggestions to solve challenges faced by English teachers in the implementation of the English curriculum at the Higher Secondary Level

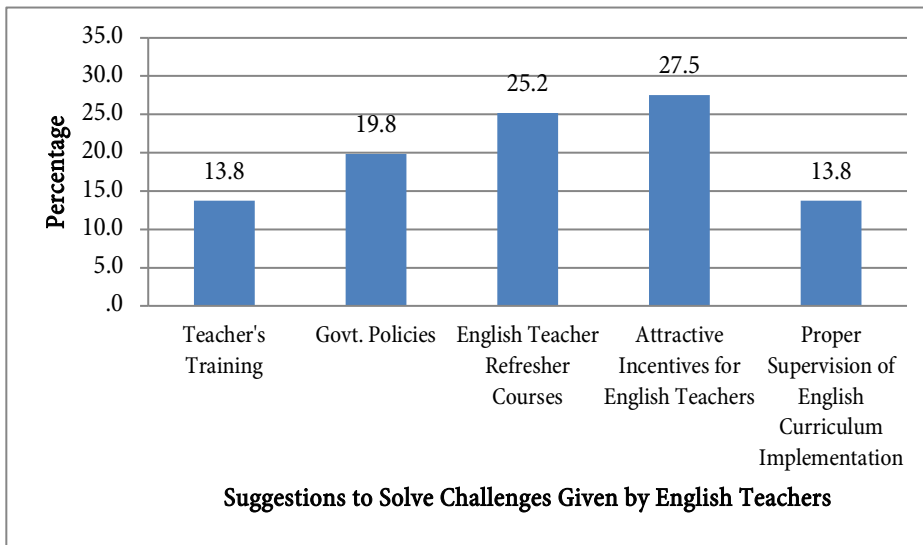
S. No	Suggestions to Solve Challenges given by English Teachers	Frequency	Percent
1	Teacher's Training	59	13.8

2	Govt. Policies	85	19.8
3	English Teacher Refresher Courses	108	25.2
4	Attractive Incentives for English Teachers	118	27.5
5	Proper Supervision of English Curriculum Implementation	59	13.8
Total		429	100.0

N=429

Table 16 showed that 27 percent of English teachers at higher secondary level were motivated to learn the English language by giving attractive incentives. The second highest percentage showed that refresher courses were offered to English teachers, which were followed by

government policies. The 13 percent of English teachers were suggested for teacher’s training programs and proper supervision of curriculum implementation of English subject. This was also illustrated in the bar graph presented below:



Discussion

The results of the present study support the proposition that challenges in English curriculum implementation affect the implementation process at higher secondary level schools in Pakistan. English teachers remained passive to implement the English curriculum because of not having proper guidance, subject knowledge, professional knowledge and training. They remained in a panic state in the teaching-learning process for completing the course of English subject and felt its pressure that affected their performance. There had not been given relevant material on language skills in the English textbook that made it tough for English teachers to implement the curriculum of the English language. Therefore, in Pakistan, learning and teaching the English language had become a challenge for students and teachers. Schools’ heads’ decisions hindered in English curriculum implementation procedure. They just wanted to complete the syllabus of English in time. The success of

English curriculum implementation highly depends upon controlling such challenges with planning and policymaking by the Government of Pakistan.

It is important for government, policymakers, curriculum wing and English teachers to grip the challenges of English curriculum implementation seriously to meet its objectives. The higher mean score of teaching method and methodology and test development and its organization than other challenges showed that English teachers faced them more than other challenges in the implementation of English curriculum at higher secondary level schools in Pakistan. English teachers were more interested in adopting up-dated teaching methods and methodologies in Pakistan (Asghar & Butt, 2018). But, they had fewer sources to know them because not having their professional trainings by the government affects the implementation procedure of the English curriculum. The results of the study endorsed the findings of [Abilasha and](#)

[Iankumaran \(2018\)](#) that the subject English was taught by adapting traditional teaching methods and methodologies to meet the current needs of English learners that are unfavorable to teach the English language ([Dilshad, 2010](#)). As a result, students did not show their interest in learning the English language ([McKinn, 2003](#)). They just took it as a source of passing exams that proved against the achievement of curriculum implementation objectives.

Results showed that English teachers faced textbook challenges, teachers' training challenges and English language skills challenges. The textbook did not comprise of live examples of life, and the text was not in simple language ([Asgar, 2016](#)). Its content selection was not up to the mark in the context of real-life situations. The national curriculum for the English language (2006) presented content idealistically as it was said related to routine lives and was also suggested methods and methodologies teach it. But, the study showed that it was less practical and consisted of a theoretical approach ([Hameed & Amjad, 2011](#)). Moreover, English teachers adopted mostly the grammar translation method to teach it, and they did not adopt any other approach and method to create interest of students in an English textbook. Students did not show their incitement in textbook reading because of the less attractive teaching

methodology and English language skills of English teachers. The findings are in line with [Poedjiastuie, Amrin and Setiawan \(2018\)](#), stating that English learners remained less participative in the classroom because of English teachers' poor communication skills and their focus on a textbook for teaching English language skills. Teachers feel they need to be trained by their respective department and government for the purpose of updating their teaching English language skills and styles of teaching to attract the interest of students purposefully to succeed in the implementation of the English curriculum ([Jeon & Hahn, 2006](#)). The government's improvement in the monitoring system of curriculum implementation and English teachers' professional development will be effective for the achievement of English curriculum objectives ([Wang & Han, 2002](#)).

Recommendations

Government should conduct trainings and refresher courses on English curriculum implementation to motivate and aware of English teachers about implementation procedures, its challenges and curriculum document as well as should make effective curriculum implementation and its monitoring policy.

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