

# The Issue of Education supervision in Turkey in the Views of Teachers, Administrators, Supervisors and Lecturers

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the views of teachers, administrators, supervisors and lecturers that are experts in their fields as people having roles in education regarding the aim, structure, process, strong sides and main problems of the education supervision in Turkey. In this research, the scanning model research was employed through qualitative method. The study group of research was composed of 30 individuals in total who were eight teachers and administrators in the primary and secondary school in the cities of Van and Ankara, six lecturers at the universities of Van and Ankara with eight education supervisors in the mentioned cities. The data were obtained via interview technique by using semi-structured form. The research data were analyzed using content analysis. In the study "the aim, structure and process in the education supervision" with "the strong sides of the education supervision and existing main problems" were dealt within two main categories. The reliability of the research was estimated %79 for the first category, %85 for the second category and in total as %82. The findings of the research were discussed under two main categories and five sub-categories.

## Key Words

Turkish Education System, Supervision, Education Supervision, Content Analysis.

With the functions schools are supposed to meet in the information age, certain terms such as "good education" and "effective school" to talk about the quality of education are frequently used (Balci, 2001a; Ceylan & Ağaoğlu, 2010). The quality of education and school effectiveness require a good functioning assessment process like all other administration processes, which is brought by supervision. Such an auditing process, which is cyclic, starts when the current case in education is specified (definition of good and bad sides) and progresses through assessment and development.

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Audit, originated in the Middle age Latin language (Symth, 1991 cited in Sullivan & Glanz, 2000), was first used for "general administration, control and guidance" (Grumet, 1979). It is clear from the written sources that as of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the term "inspection (control)" was more generally used (Sullivan & Glanz, 2000). Supervision in education process means studies to improve the quality of education and a support service for teachers to teach better (Aydın, 2007). Mosher and Purpel (1972) define the function of supervision as the development of teaching process and professional leadership for teachers on how to teach (cited in Wiles & Bondi, 1996).

It could be said that there is an agreement on the necessity of supervision process in education systems among educators (Aydın, 2005; Balci, Aydın, Yılmaz, Memduhoğlu, & Apaydın, 2007; Başar; 2000; Memduhoğlu & Zengin, 2010; Süngü, 2005; Taymaz, 2005). Today, education supervision has become one of the crucial factors of changing schools into more effective learning environments

(Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2002) and achieving educational aims in the system (Başar, 2000).

Historically, there have been significant changes in the meaning attributed to education supervision. Education supervision was initially applied in such a manner to decrease “error correction” in the education system, to restrict educators with what was needed, and to “supervise” and guide them not to behave wrongly (Abercrombie, Upson, Winship, & Shurman, 1893; Hicks, 1960; Mirick, 1918; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2002; Sullivan & Glanz, 2000). However, today, it is based on development of education and teaching process. As a result of this evolution, education supervisors have been given a role of leaders who increase the quality of education and teaching in schools and develop teachers and student learning (Kowalski & Brunner, 2005; Nelson & Sassi, 2000; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2002; Swaffield & MacBeath, 2005; Weiss & Weiss, 2001; Zepeda, 2001, 2002). According to Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2001, p. 6), supervision has historically been molded with paradigms from an administrator who tries to control teachers’ teaching behaviors to a leader or “*a passionate friend who criticizes... for school development*” in Ehren and Wisscher’s words (2006, p. 51-53) (Everton & Galton, 2004; Fink, 2005; Houston, 2006 cited in Beycioğlu & Dönmez, 2009). Supervisors are now a change model who could manage theoretically as well as being managed by theories, and who could “develop their leadership in context” (Walker & Dimmock, 2005, p. 80), and they are knowledgeable intellectuals who are able to come up with new theories.

As Öz (2003) suggests, supervisors should not be punishers or rewarders, but counselors or guiding powers for teachers and administrators as in developed countries. It is highlighted that today’s supervision, with a mission to increase the quality of education and teaching, needs to be developed not only through an outside assessment but also through both self-assessment of schools and school members and mutual assessment (McNicol, 2004, p. 288). In this context, supervision has gained teacher, family and student attraction (Beycioğlu & Dönmez, 2009). According to Başar (2000), “supervision is everybody’s job”. Students, parents, surroundings and teachers must supervise both schools and themselves in order to attain goals of correction and development”.

In Turkey, education supervision has long been applied with an understanding of control mechanism

of educational activities. Research has shown that the supervision sub-system in Turkey cannot contemporarily function, it fails to meet sector needs and there are many issues in this field (Arslantaş, 2007; Balaban, 2005; Çiğer, 2006; Doğanay, 2006; Dündar, 2005; Gülcan, 2003; İlğan, 2006; Karakış, 2007; Korkmaz, 2007; Koruç, 2005; Şahin, 2005; Uyanık, 2007; Uygur, 2006; Taşar, 2000; Yavuz, 1995; Yıldırım, 2007).

Studies on education supervision in Turkey have generally been conducted on the very limited basis of one or two educational shareholder views. There is an urgent need for research to reflect all the shareholders’ views and to make a holistic assessment. Hence, it is considered important that supervision process in the Turkish education system should be assessed from the viewpoint of teachers, administrators, supervisors and academicians who academically carry out education and do scientific research in the field, as educational shareholders.

### Purpose

The purpose of the research is to explore the views of teachers, administrators, supervisors and field expert lecturers, as educational shareholders, about the aims, strengths, and primary concerns of education supervision in Turkey as well as its structuring and functioning.

### Method

#### Research Model and Group

A survey research methodology was employed in the qualitative research (Karasar, 1986). The research data were collected through interviews. The research group consisted of totally 30 individuals; 8 teachers, 8 school administrators from primary and secondary schools in Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, and Van, a city in eastern Turkey, and 8 supervisors and 6 lecturers from the same provinces.

A half of the participant teachers, school administrators and education supervisors worked in Ankara, and the other half of them was employed in Van. Two of the lecturers were from Ankara University, two from Gazi University, and two from Yüzüncü Yıl University. Two of the lecturers, all of whom had a doctorate degree in “Educational Administration and Supervision”, were professors, one was an associate professor and three were assistant professors.

### Data Gathering and Analysis

A semi structured interview method was employed in the study. For this aim, the interview form, which was developed on the basis of the literature and expert view, five questions were asked about the necessity, benefits and aims of education supervision, the current structure, functioning and issues in education supervision and offered solutions. The interviews were tape-recorded or camera-recorded. The interviews with the four participants who rejected to be recorded were noted down. The recordings were later deciphered and textualized.

“Content analysis”, a qualitative analysis method, was used for data analysis. It could be suggested that content analysis is the most rapidly developing one in qualitative research methods (Kepenekci & Aslan, 2011, p. 481). Frequency definition and categorization of spoken words lies in the centre of the approach (Balci, 2001b, p. 209; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005, p. 227). Content analysis investigates social facts through deductions of overt and covert contents. The overt content is composed of apparent statements. The covert content is used for the underlying meaning of given statements (Neuendorf, 2002, pp. 1–9; Neuman 2007, pp. 663–666; Tavşanlı & Aslan 2001, pp. 24–25; Yıldırım & Şimşek 2005, pp. 227–241). Berelson (1952) sees that technique as an ideal method for an objective, systematic and qualitative definition of interview content (Cook, Selltiz, Jahoda, & Deutsch, 1967, p. 335).

In content analysis, first main categories (theme, analysis unit) and subcategories as analysis units are specified and defined. Contextual unit for the analysis (word, sentence, paragraph, opinion or the whole text) is then decided (Balci, 2001b, p. 209; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005, pp. 227–241). In the study, the statements (sentences) were taken as the basis for category statement and sample encoding (Carley, 1992 cited in Finney & Corbett, 2007). “Aims, structure and functioning of education supervision” and “strengths of education supervision and primary concerns” were taken as the two main categories in the research. Then, the sub-categories were defined by data analysis. The contextual unit in the study was “statement”. Such a statement could be one sentence or a few sentences long. Here, it is important that the statement should reflect a single opinion, and have a certain, similar meaning.

Descriptive analysis technique was used to present occasional direct quotations through three activity phases (data reduction, data presentation, deduction and confirmation) (Türnüklü, 2000) to reflect the participants’ encoded and textualized views in

a striking way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). The following criteria were taken as the basis for quotations in data presentation: remarkability (different view), explanatoriness (theme relatedness), variety and extreme samples (Carley, 1992 cited in Finney & Corbett, 2007; Ünver, Bümen, & Başbay, 2010).

### Research Validity and Reliability

Expert views were taken for internal validity (plausibility) and external validity and two teachers were pre-interviewed. Consistency between the views was examined for internal reliability and an expert was asked for a confirmation study for external reliability. The expert encoded the interview data as plain texts under the defined categories and calculated frequencies. The following formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to calculate the reliability of the research.

$$R (\text{Reliability}) = \frac{Na (\text{Agreement})}{Na (\text{Agreement}) + Nd (\text{Disagreement})}$$

The calculations were made for each category and then the means were taken as the research reliability. A minimum 70% agreement between different expert studies is essential for external research reliability. Accordingly, reliability of the first category was found 79%, whereas it was found 85% for the second category and the average reliability of the research was found 82%. Reliability above 70% shows interview data evaluation is reliable (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## Results and Discussion

### Aims, Structure and Functioning of Education Supervision

#### Necessity and Benefits of Education Supervision:

In this sub-category, the participants were asked the following question: “Is supervision essential in educational organizations? If so, why?” Most of the participants thought education supervision was necessary as a system. They felt education supervision was essential for “exploring to what extent educational aims are attained” and “diagnosing educational issues and troubleshooting”. In a study, Döngel (2006) has shown that supervisors think there must be a sub-system for supervision. One of the ways to a sound functioning system is providing supervision services to get feedback about the system, based on attempts for correction and process development.

Organizational audit is compulsory for every organization and it is an eventual result of organizational determination to exist. Without audit, an organization is bound to be exposed to entropy caused by isolation, closure and stagnation (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990, p. 170). Organizational audit brings prompt exploration and urgent prevention of prospective deviations (Hicks, 1960). According to the research, some school administrators and teachers had negative feelings for the necessity of education supervision because of the current applications. In a study by Memişoğlu (2001), the similar results were reached. It could be suggested that relatively expected concerns and prejudices about education supervision are influential on teachers' such views. Other research results also support this suggestion (Kapusuzoğlu, 2004; Karakış, 2007; Ünal, 1999; Yıldırım, 2007). Some teachers think administrators perform supervision and supervision by supervisors should be lifted. External auditing in organizations is essential as much as close/internal supervision in schools by administration.

**Aims of Education Supervision:** In this sub-category, the participants were asked the following question: "In your opinion, with what aims and understanding are the education supervision applications in Turkey carried out?" Most of the supervisors gave positive opinions as: "Education supervision is performed with a contemporary educational insight", whereas most of the participants except for the supervisors expressed negative thoughts. The participants stated although there were positive, significant changes in understanding of education supervision and supervisor views, they were not enough. These findings are parallel to other research results (Arslantaş, 2007; Balaban, 2005; Doğanay, 2006; Gülcan, 2003; Taşar, 2000; Yavuz, 1995). The main aim of education supervision is to develop the process. To this end, what lies in the heart of education supervision is guiding teachers and developing teaching process rather than error seeking and mere evaluation.

**Structure of Education Supervision:** In this category, the participants were asked the following question: "How do you assess education supervision structure in Turkey?" The supervisors and the lecturers stated that the dual structuring of education supervision (ministry inspectors and education supervisors) was wrong. They were in a motivated manner in favor of the view that there was no integration between these two units and such a structuring challenged coordination and cooperation and ministry inspectors generally disregarded guidance.

The dual structure of education supervision in Turkey (ministry inspectors and education supervisors) has been criticized in studies and decisions of National Education Council (Başaran, 2004; Bilir, 1992; Burgaz, 1995; Eyi, 2007; Kapusuzoğlu, 1988; Karagözoğlu, 1977; Korkmaz, 2007). One of the reasons of these criticisms is ministry inspectors do not provide proper guidance and supervision for teaching process development in high schools. Research has shown that there are many retired high school teachers who were never guided or supervised by supervisors during their service time (Tekişik, 1985; Yalçınkaya, 1990) and the two supervisory units created uneasiness in education supervisors (Tok, 2004). Some researchers have developed and suggested new integrated models for education supervision in Turkey (Başaran, Karabıyık, & Bozkurt, 2001; Memduhoğlu & Taymur, 2009; Öz, 1971; Pınardağ, 2005). In some of the National Education Council assemblies, it was emphasized that the dual structure of education supervisions needed changing by unification, and local supervision system and appointment of education supervisors to prospectively created areas were recommended (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 2008a, 2008b, 2008c; 2008d).

#### **Strengths of Education Supervision and Primary Concerns**

**Strengths and Advantages of Education Supervision:** The participant supervisors and lecturers stated that education supervision in Turkey had a long history and a broad literature, which was the strongest side of the system. The followings were shown as the other strengths of education supervision: "*Supervisors have a teaching background and field experience*" and "*There have been positive changes in the understanding of supervision and supervisor views*".

Education supervision in the Turkish educational system has a long history (Akyüz, 2001). Supervision process has historically been developed through significant changes and reforms. In Turkey, most supervisors start supervision after a minimum 7 or 8 year-teaching experience. Again, some supervisors are graduates of two different faculties and there are many supervisors with a master's degree. Such an educational background and experience brings remarkable task related advantages to supervisors. The belief that supervisors are more constructive, democratic and suggestive than they were is parallel to other research results. However, it is also proven that this change is not at a desirable

level and is not observed in some supervisors (Can, 2004; Özbek, 1998 cited in İnal, 2008; Taymaz, 2005; Yavuz, 1995).

**Primary Concerns in Education Supervision:** In this category, the participants were asked the following question: "What are the main issues in education supervision in Turkey?" They highlighted three main areas; procedural (process) problems, supervisory role problems, structural problems and supervisor selection and training problems.

The participants except for the supervisors agreed that education supervision restrictively focused on control and evaluation, procedural supervision was more worked on and the process development function was not properly met. Many studies have reached similar results (Arslantaş, 2007; Balaban, 2005; Ciğer, 2006; Dündar, 2005; Gülcan, 2003; Doğanay, 2006; Döngel, 2006; İlğan, 2006; Karakış, 2007; Korkmaz, 2007; Koruç, 2005; Memduhoğlu & Taymur, 2009; Şahin, 2005; Uygur, 2006; Uyanık, 2007; Taşar, 2000; Yavuz, 1995; Yıldırım, 2007). Education supervision with a focus on control and evaluation leads the supervised to self-defense, and concealing errors and lacking parts, which hinders development. Supervisors should spare their time, knowledge and efforts to teacher development rather than bureaucratic proceedings.

According to the findings, the participants stated that they did not know about the evaluation criteria and evaluation of all teachers with the same standard forms was wrong. The standard observation forms in Turkey enable observers to evaluate teachers according to certain criteria (Yücel & Toprakçı, 2009). Therefore, there is no flexibility for supervisors to think of other evaluative cases rather than these criteria.

The participants said there was a communication failure and trust issues between supervisors, teachers and school administrators. Other studies have reached similar results (İnal, 2008; Keskinlik, 1997). Research has shown that supervision is considered as lacking point detection by supervisors and efforts to conceal lacking points by teachers, and teachers avoid expressing educational and teaching problems to supervisors (Memduhoğlu, Aydın, Yılmaz, Güngör, & Oğuz, 2007).

As stated above, the participants thought the dual structure of education supervision was a great problem source. In the research, it was concluded that supervisors were overloaded but low in number, and lesson observations were not given proper time. Over-workload of supervisors hindered guidance time arrangement. It was also shown that ob-

servation time was not enough to get to know and evaluate teachers and teaching aid and process development could not be given much time (Bedir, 2003; Dağlı, 2004; Yalçın, 2001).

The research has concluded that task of supervision born by supervisors is a great problem source. Many researchers suggest that guidance and inspection must be delegated to separate supervisor groups (Balaban, 2005; Balcı et al., 2007; Başar, 2000; Döngel, 2006; Memduhoğlu et al., 2007; Memduhoğlu & Taymur, 2009; Şahin, 2005; Taşar, 2000; Taymaz, 2005; Uyanık, 2007; Yıldırım, 2007). Guidance and inspection delegation to supervisors causes role conflict in supervisors and negatively affected teacher-supervisor relationships (Özdemir, 1990 cited in Uygur, 2006). Guidance requires voluntary participation in the process. Task of inspection allocated to supervisors decreases volunteerism and teachers' trust.

The lecturers and the supervisors included in the study had negative views on supervisor selection and training. The lecturers thought supervisors were not provided with proper pre-service/in-service training, and the teachers and the school administrators felt that supervisors did not renovate themselves. It is difficult to say that supervisor selection and training processes have a sound basis in Turkey (Aydın, 2007; Başar, 2000; Taymaz, 2005; Üstüner & Demirtaş, 2011). Research has shown that supervisors need in-service training (Erturan, 2007; Kayıkçı, 2011; Kayıkçı & Şarlak, 2009; Uyanık, 2007; Yalçınkaya, Selçuk, Doğru, & Coşkun Uslu, 2011). A good functioning education supervision system becomes possible when supervisors gain necessary qualifications. It is only possible with the development of contemporary standards and applications in supervisor selection, pre-service and in-service training.

### Recommendations

In the light of the research findings, the followings are roughly recommended:

- A structural system change and mental renovation is needed to introduce guidance based supervision for teaching development. In this context, it is essential to develop newer, more integrative and permanent models to cover up system aims, structure and functioning instead of limited, temporary, palliative solutions to consider certain aspects of the system.
- Studies to include ministry inspectors and other external shareholders might be conducted.

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