

# Teacher Inspection in Turkey

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## Abstract

Current study aimed to identify the quality, efficiency and productivity levels of inspection practices at schools based on the views of school principals by determining principals' opinions on inspection practices in educational organizations and the supervisory roles of education inspectors and school principals. 71 school principals employed in the province of Istanbul were included in the study. Convenience sampling method, a qualitative research method, was used to collect data about the inspection practices in educational institutions. According to research data, inspection practices done/will be done by both education inspectors and school principals have various negative and positive dimensions. Research results show that the majority of principals believe they should inspect teachers. Rationale behind this belief is based on the facts that they follow teachers more closely, know them better and they are the teachers' superiors. Therefore they believe that they can inspect teachers better than the education inspectors and be able to motivate them to a higher extent. Suggestions based on research results include assigning supervisory duties to principals in cases where they are experts in the field and clarifying principles, criteria and other legal regulations about teacher inspection to make them more applicable. Regional and national exam results in which a certain ratio of students also participate can be included in teacher performance assessment scores in addition to the inspections of principals.

## Keywords

Teacher, principal, education inspector, teacher inspection

## Problem Situation

Understanding whether individuals educated in the system are qualified for social purposes can only be possible through controlling the teaching and learning process. Inspection practices will facilitate to develop the system by removing problem areas and to discover methods suitable for the purposes of education and training. Educational institutions strive to educate individuals in line with the specified goals and qualifications. Institutional evaluation and inspection is necessary to

objectively identify the level of achievement in educational practices (Bozkurt, 1995: 531; Taymaz, 1982: 37). Evaluation of a system to observe whether goals are met is crucial for system integrity and products obtained from the system.

Today, based on the effects of modern approaches, inspection is referred as modern inspection, democratic inspection and effective inspection among others. All of these concepts place emphasis on increasing productivity and developing human resources. Effective education inspection processes that emphasize the development of human resources include diagnosis, evaluation and development functions. Accordingly, it is very important for an inspector to collect information about the individual or action that will be inspected, to make an evaluation in the light of the collected information and identify the negative and positive aspects and to make efforts to improve teaching-learning process by interviewing the employee based on the specifics of evaluation (Aydın, 1986: 2).

Inspection in education is the assessment through observation and investigation and the evacuation after these steps (Taymaz, 1985, 83). Inspection is an important factor to ensure the operation of education-training activities in line with identified goals. Accurate understanding of goals by employees, development of goals according to changing environmental conditions and ensuring compatible, productive and cooperative work among employees will only be possible with inspection. Therefore, education systems should have organizational structures that can undertake effective inspection practices and ensure the consistent operation of them.

Inspection is one of the management processes and a guiding service to reorganize other processes. Today, based on the effects of modern approaches, inspection is referred as modern inspection, democratic inspection and effective inspection among others. All of these concepts place emphasis on increasing productivity and developing human resources (Aydın, 1993, 2).

Educational institutions strive to educate individuals in line with the specified goals and qualifications. Understanding whether individuals educated in the system are qualified for social purposes can only be possible through controlling the teaching and learning process (Bozkurt, 1995, 531). Evaluation of a system to observe whether goals are met is crucial for system integrity and products obtained from the system (Taymaz, 1982, 37). Inspection practices will facilitate to develop the system by removing problem areas and to discover methods suitable for the purposes of education and training.

Effective education inspection processes that emphasize the development of human resources include diagnosis, evaluation and development functions. Accordingly, it is very important for an inspector to collect information about the individual or action that will be inspected, to make an evaluation in the light of the collected information and identify the negative and positive aspects and to make efforts to improve teaching-learning process by interviewing the employee based on the specifics of evaluation.

Two separate units of inspection; Directorate of Guidance and Inspection and Directorate of Education Inspection, were established in the Ministry and in Provincial Directorates of National Education respectively with the Decree Law no. 652 on Organization and Functions of Ministry of National Education. Based on this decree law, inspectors working under the Ministry are to be called supervisors and under the Directorate of national education are to be called education inspectors. Directorate of Guidance and Inspection is a guidance and inspection unit whose activities are organized according to MoNE Inspection Board Statute and MoNE Inspection Board

Regulations based on the annulled act on the Organization and Functions of Ministry of National Education. Basis and procedures for the establishment and functions of Directorate of Education Inspection, selection, training and assignment of education inspectors, duties, authority and responsibilities of education inspectors and assistant education inspectors, their operation principles, training and assignment to other locations were organized according to MoNE Directorate of Education Inspectorate Legislation based on the annulled act on the Organization and Functions of Ministry of National Education.

Inspectors aim to realize, inspect and regulate organizational purposes and the targets of employees in education. They transfer the goals and targets of Ministry of National Education to the field (educational institutions), interpret them and provide leadership. They notify the central organization about the problems observed in the field, develop suggestions and provide solutions (MEB-EARGED, 2002: 78).

Administrators in educational institutions are individuals “responsible from the practices of planning, organization, leadership and inspection that will ensure the realization of goals identified by the institution” (Levis, Goodman and Fandt, 1995, Cited in, N. Yıldırım, 2011). Some of the regulations regarding the inspection duty of school principals are as follows:

Article 60 of MoNE Regulation on Primary Education Institutions states that “primary schools are managed by principals in a democratic education-training climate in cooperation with other employees. School principals have the authority to undertake tasks in line with acts, statutes, legislations, directives, programs and orders, regulate and inspect schools in addition to their teaching duties” (10.7.2010/27637 RG).

Regulation on Pre-School Education Institutions states that “pre-school institution is managed by principals in an education-training climate in cooperation with other employees. Principals are authorized to undertake, manage and inspect all operations in their schools in line with acts, statutes, legislations, directives, programs and orders” (03.04.2012/28253 RG).

Just like organizations, evaluation systems also change and develop according to changing environmental conditions. As in the case for all other managerial legislations, it is necessary to constantly review the methods and goals of evaluation systems and provide necessary changes based on the transformations occurring in the bigger systems that encapsulate management and in the management system. Therefore, current study aimed to identify whether change was necessary in the existing structure.

### **Purpose**

Current study aimed to identify the quality, efficiency and productivity levels of inspection practices at schools based on the views of school principals by determining principals’ opinions on inspection practices in educational organizations and the supervisory roles of education inspectors and school principals.

Answers to questions below were sought in the study:

1. Based on the views of school principals, who should undertake the task of teacher inspections?
2. What are the negative and positive aspects of teacher inspection provided by school principals and education inspectors?

## Method

Interview method, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. "Interview form approach" was utilized in interviews with the help of "semi-structured interviews". Interview form method is based on doing interviews with individuals on similar topics to identify parallel and differing ideas among them and make comparisons based on the findings (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

### Data Collection and Analysis

Collected data were analyzed according to descriptive analysis method. Frequencies were reported while presenting the findings and views of school principals were provided separately. Common findings were also listed. Research questions were prepared following a literature review in order to ensure validity and opinions of field experts were sought. Content analysis was done on the data collected from the questions by two researchers and common categories identified from the themes and answers were analyzed and interpreted. 80% compatibility was identified between the analyses of the two researchers. The forms that were analyzed were given sequence numbers which were provided in parentheses following direct quotes and personal data protection was ensured.

School principals were given 5 semi-structured questions to answer and data were collected. Participating school principals were directed the following questions as well questions about their demographic data:

1. In your opinion, who should inspect teachers?
2. What are the positive aspects of inspection provided by school principals?
3. What are the negative aspects of inspection provided by school principals?
4. What are the positive aspects of inspection provided by education inspectors?
5. What are the negative aspects of inspection provided by education inspectors?

### Working Group

Working group of the study was composed of 71 randomly selected principals employed at preschools, primary schools, secondary schools and high schools in the province of Istanbul during 2011-2012 academic year. There is no specific limitation regarding the number of individuals that will be included in the sample in qualitative studies. It can be argued that the number of individuals was sufficient to collect data that is theoretically representative (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). At least two schools were included in the sample from each district in Istanbul and data were considered to be representative following interviews done with 71 school principals (6 preschools, 40 primary - secondary schools and 25 high schools). Table 1 presents detailed information about school principals.

**Table 1.** Personal Information about School Principals

|               |               | f  | %  |
|---------------|---------------|----|----|
| <i>Gender</i> | <i>Female</i> | 11 | 16 |
|               | <i>Male</i>   | 60 | 84 |

|                                    |                          |    |    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|----|
| <b>Level of Education</b>          | <i>Associate Degree</i>  | 15 | 22 |
|                                    | <i>Bachelor's Degree</i> | 50 | 70 |
|                                    | <i>Master's degree</i>   | 5  | 7  |
|                                    | <i>Ph. D</i>             | 1  | 1  |
| <b>Age</b>                         | <i>20-30</i>             | -  | -  |
|                                    | <i>31-40</i>             | 10 | 14 |
|                                    | <i>41-50</i>             | 28 | 39 |
|                                    | <i>50 and higher</i>     | 33 | 47 |
| <b>Place of Employment</b>         | <i>Pre-school</i>        | 6  | 9  |
|                                    | <i>Primary School</i>    | 40 | 56 |
|                                    | <i>Secondary School</i>  | 25 | 35 |
| <b>Seniority in Administration</b> | <i>1-8</i>               | 28 | 39 |
|                                    | <i>9-15</i>              | 17 | 24 |
|                                    | <i>16-25</i>             | 20 | 28 |
|                                    | <i>26 and higher</i>     | 6  | 9  |

## Findings

Findings obtained following data analysis are presented in tables and explained. They are organized around themes and views of school principals were evaluated in sub groups and interpreted. Direct quotes were provided while explaining and interpreting the themes. Findings were explained in relation to studies in literature and views of school principals on inspection were identified.

### Individual(s) who should inspect teachers

Views of school principals regarding who should undertake teacher inspection were examined under this heading. Table 2 presents views of school principals regarding who should take part in teacher inspection.

Table 2. Individuals who will inspect teachers

| <i>Themes</i>   | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i> |
|---|----------|----------|
| <i>School Principal</i>   | 40       | 56       |
| <i>Education Inspector, expert in the field</i>                 | 19       | 27       |
| <i>Commission composed of education inspector and educators</i> | 12       | 17       |

Investigation of the themes in Table 2 shows that more than half of the school principals in the study (n=40 – 56%) think that teacher inspection should be done by school principals. School principals also think that education inspectors who are experts in their field (n=19 – 27%) and a commission composed of education inspectors and educators (n=12 – 17%) can provide teacher inspection.

*«Inspection by school principals is productive and provides integrity among teachers, students, parents and administration (M 2)», «...because it is the school principal who knows teachers the best (M 6 )», «...school principal should inspect teachers in cooperation with the other administrators in the school (M 9 )», «School principals can allocate more time for inspection (M 26 )».*

As provided by the findings, the most dominant view is based on the necessity for teacher inspection by school principals who are teachers' superiors, follow teachers more closely and know them the best.

Some of the direct quotes from school principals who believe education inspectors who are expert in their fields should inspect teachers are as follows: *«By education inspectors because school administration cannot be very effective in inspection. (M 12 )», «Education inspectors provide more productive inspection because they are also observe other schools and teachers (M 4 )», «Teacher inspection should be undertaken by well-trained inspection personnel (M 16 )», «It would be more objective if teacher inspection was done by education inspectors (M 1)» ,*

Views of school principals who believe teacher inspection should be undertaken by a commission composed of education inspectors and educators are as follows:

*«I believe a healthy inspection process can only be realized as a result cooperation among in-house stakeholders and education inspectors (M 9 )», «...representatives of all units that affect education and are affected by it should participate in the process of inspection (M 17)», «A commission including the school principal should inspect teachers (M 30 )».*

### **Positive Aspects of Inspection Provided by Principals**

Table 3 presents the positive aspects of inspection provided by principals

Table 3. positive aspects of inspection provided by principals

| Sub Themes                                     | N  | %  |
|--|----|----|
| Being objective, unbiased and fair             | 32 | 45 |
| Opportunity to inspect teachers in more detail | 20 | 30 |
| Formation of trust                             | 10 | 13 |
| Being Motivating                               | 9  |    |

Views of school principals on the positive aspects of inspection provided by principals are collected under four themes: Being objective, unbiased and fair (32), Opportunity to inspect teachers in more detail (20), Formation of trust (10) and Being Motivating (9).

Some of the direct quotes from school principals about the positive aspects of teacher inspection by principals are as follows:

*“Inspection will be positive if the school principal can be fair and objective (M 2)”*, *“That would be good if they can find time to inspect (M 6)”*, *“The fact that principals know teachers more closely will ensure better follow-up and guidance as well as taking precautions in time (M 9)”*, *“they can inspect teachers in a more detailed and closer manner (M 26 )”*, *“Trust and human relationships between the principal and teacher are high (M 70)”*, *“The fact that inspection is objective and can be holistic (M 63 )”*, *“It can motivate teachers better and in an ongoing manner (M 64 )”*

### **Negative Aspects of Inspection Provided by Principals**

Table 4 presents the negative aspects of inspection provided by principals.

Table 4. Negative Aspects of Inspection Provided by Principals

| Sub Themes                                     | N  | %  |
|--|----|----|
| Personal judgments and biases                  | 44 | 62 |
| No expertise in the field of inspection        | 12 | 17 |
| Risk of disrupting relationships/communication | 10 | 14 |
| Lack of experience in the field of inspection  | 5  | 7  |

Views of school principals on the negative aspects of inspection provided by principals are collected under four themes: Personal judgments and biases, No expertise in the field of inspection, Risk of disrupting relationships/communication and Lack of experience in the field of inspection

Some of the direct quotes from school principals about the negative aspects of teacher inspection by principals are as follows:

*“Personal views and perspectives can be reflected on evaluations (M 12)”*, *“The principal may not be objective, can be biased (M 16 )”*, *“The principal is not an expert in inspection. He has no competence in the field and no authority to inspect (M 51 )”*, *“The principal has no experience in inspection (M 53 )”*, *“Relationships/communication can be disrupted after inspection (M 1 )”*

### **Positive Aspects of Inspection Provided by Education Inspectors**

Table 5 presents the positive aspects of inspection provided by education inspectors.

Table 5. Positive Aspects of Inspection by Education Inspectors

| Sub Themes                                       | N  | %  |
|--|----|----|
| Based on guidance and is provided in cooperation | 21 | 31 |
| Expertise in the field                           | 17 | 24 |

|  |    |    |
|--|----|----|
| Objective/unbiased                         | 12 | 17 |
| Observation and completion of inadequacies | 8  | 11 |
| Motivating                                 | 7  | 9  |
| Use of explicit and scientific criteria    | 6  | 8  |

Views of school principals on the positive aspects of inspection provided by education inspectors are collected under six themes listed according to percentage: Based on guidance and is provided in cooperation, Expertise in the field, Objective/unbiased, Observation and completion of inadequacies, Motivating and Use of explicit and scientific criteria.

Some direct quotes regarding the positive aspects of inspection by education inspectors are presented below.

*“It is healthier to have inspections based on guidance and in cooperation with school administrators (M 16)”, “The can observed the inadequacies of educators and have them overcome those (M 23)”, “They are experts in their field (M 32)”, “They provide more objective and unbiased inspection (M 42)”, “They motivate administrators and teachers (M 46)”.*

#### **Negative Aspects of Inspection Provided by Education Inspectors**

Table 6 presents the negative aspects of inspection provided by education inspectors.

Table 6. Negative Aspects of Inspection by Education Inspectors

| Sub Themes  | N  | %  |
|---|----|----|
| Short inspection periods                            | 30 | 42 |
| Inspection based on documents                       | 9  | 12 |
| Negative impact on teachers (anxiety, tension etc.) | 8  | 11 |
| Providing inspection every two years                | 7  | 10 |
| Lack of holistic inspection in education            | 7  | 10 |
| Lack of clear and comprehensive inspection criteria | 5  | 7  |
| Lack of objectivity                                 | 5  | 7  |

Views of school principals on the negative aspects of inspection provided by education inspectors are collected under seven themes listed according to percentage: Short inspection periods, Inspection based on documents, Negative impact on teachers (anxiety, tension etc.), Providing inspection every two years, Lack of holistic inspection in education, Lack of holistic inspection in education, Lack of clear and comprehensive inspection criteria and Lack of objectivity

Some direct quotes regarding the negative aspects of inspection by education inspectors are presented below.

*"It is not productive to inspect in a short time period (during a 2-hour class) (M 27)", "Inspection based on documents and formalism are dominant (M 70)", "Inspectors are not experts in the same areas as the teachers they inspect (M 61)", "There are differences in scoring among inspectors (M 64)", "Some inspector behaviors create anxiety and tension in teachers (M 68)", "Inspection criteria are not clear and comprehensive (M 69)", "Teachers constantly complain about inspectors (M 52)", "it is not realistic and effective (M 58)", "It is not objective (M 31)", "It is not reassuring (M 21)", "Inspection every two years is a rather long process (M 40)", "Inspectors do not have sufficient information about the teacher, they don't know the teacher well and cannot provide holistic evaluation (M 69)"*

## **Result and Discussion**

School principals who participated in the study have different ideas regarding the provision of teacher inspection by different actors such as school principals, education inspectors and teams composed of school principals and educators.

The majority of school principals express that they should inspect teachers themselves. Rationale behind this belief is based on the facts that they follow teachers more closely, know them better and they are the teachers' superiors. Therefore they think that they can inspect and motivate teachers better than education inspectors. Current finding is parallel to the findings of Şahin (2005) regarding the fact that competences of primary school inspectors regarding teacher inspection is generally at medium level. Based on the study by Yıldırım and Demirtaş (2012) it was identified that constructive learning principles are not sufficiently followed in teacher inspection and it was suggested that necessary changes and improvements should be provided in the inspection system and legislation to ensure teacher inspection based on constructive learning principles. A similar result was obtained by Memişoğlu and Sağır (2008) who reported that primary school inspectors try to provide on the job training, albeit partially, however they cannot contribute to teacher development sufficiently.

According to research data, there are both positive and negative aspects in providing inspection by school principals or by education inspectors. The most important negative aspect is related to lack of objectivity in teacher inspection and that there is not sufficient guidance for teachers. This finding is parallel to Altun and Memişoğlu's (2008) finding regarding the lack of belief by education inspectors, school principals and teachers regarding the provision of sufficient guidance through inspection practices and the emphasis on the need for restricting inspection practices.

According to research data, it is necessary for education inspectors or administrators to know teachers better, provide holistic inspection, be motivating, to extend inspection over a longer time period and shy away from creating anxiety in teachers. Similarly Karagöz (1977), Memişoğlu, (2001) and Sağır (2005) emphasized that education inspectors focus more on inspection compared to guidance and that guidance practices are not at the desired level and Arabacı (1995) reported that inspection is provided at a superficial level and therefore does not contribute to the development of teaching.

Suggestions based on the findings are listed below:

- Teacher inspection can be provided by school principals in case they are experts in their fields
- Principles, criteria and other legal regulations should be clear and applicable
- Regional and national exam results in which a certain ratio of students also participate can be included in teacher performance assessment scores in addition to the inspections of principals.

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