

Primary School Students' Perception of Inspectors and Inspection Period in Turkey

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Abstract School inspection is essential for the educational achievements, and educators are inspected year at schools every academic in Turkey. Students are also affected by the inspection process while their teachers are examined by inspectors at class time. This study aimed to address primary school inspectors through the perceptions of the students, whose teachers were inspected during a class time. A 16-item open ended question form, which was developed by the authors, was conducted for the 60 5th-grade students who inspected. The data gathered were analyzed through qualitative methods. The data suggest that inspectors' manner such as shouting, being angry, humiliating, scowling, being serious, controlling and taking notes, staring the students, and carrying and playing ruler in his/her hands frightened the students. Besides, the students liked inspectors who were friendly, kind, natty and well-dressed, and who made jokes, and used good communication skills. The results of the study are supposed to foster the essence of school inspection and, in consequence, quality of education.

Key words: Inspection, inspector, perception of students, primary school.

1. Introduction

The mission of the Turkish educational system is to provide opportunities for everyone to self-actualize, and both school principals and teachers have great responsibility in educational activities. School principals provide the most appropriate environment for the educational activities, while teachers educate children. Hence teachers and school principals are supposed to work in collaboration at schools. Since they involved in the educational process, both teachers and principals might not realize mistakes or deficiencies in the education system immediately. Therefore supervising is needed for the schools to sustain attempts for qualified education. The scientific management approach (Daughtry & Ricks, 1989, 9; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996, 5) claims that both teachers and school managers need to be controlled in order to do their job better. Hence supervising is an important part of school management, and qualified teaching practices needed to be examined by supervised professionals.

Educators are inspected instead of being supervised at schools in Turkey. Thus school supervision comprises two ways of inspection that are institutional inspection and course inspection. The school principals are examined in relation to their management acts by institutional inspection process. Inspectors observe and check everything to get answers for the question that "how human and stuff resources have been used?" during the school inspection. In addition, teachers are evaluated on account of their teaching skills, and inspectors observe teachers during their class time to examine their teaching qualifications during the course inspection period (Taymaz, 2002, 28).

Since school inspection aims revealing the most appropriate values and procedures of the instruction and teaching, it is executed in terms of educational goals. Besides, reasoning and practical intelligence is important for inspection. Reasoning has importance to determine educational purposes, while practical intelligence is needed by the people who have roles to perform these objectives. Besides, determining criteria for the task inspected, constructing instrument for measurement, measuring the process and the actions of the tasks, correction, and correcting the results with the employees have great importance in inspection process in schools (Bursalioğlu, 1994, 129; Başaran, 2000, 289). Firstly, a measurement tool is developed, then the processes and actions in the school are measured by the tool, and the correction phase comes after. Finally, the measurement tools and criteria are revised, and the inspection process is cycled (Gökçe, 2009, 76).

School inspection is performed by the inspectors charged by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. Inspection regulations declares that inspection is aimed to determine whether plans and practices actualized or not; and to correct emerged deficiencies during the process; to identify strategies for ensuring the continuous development of the schools, and the educational staff. In addition, by inspection process educators are given suggestions about whether the practices are match with the goals, the resources, the principals, and the objectives that are framed by the law of education. Furthermore, by the help of inspection, educators can determine whether the practices are accurate, regular, efficient, economic, valid, and reliable. Besides, after an inspection period, educators can make comparison of the effectiveness of the actions according to the objectives of national standards and principles. Finally, inspection process gives guidance for deficiencies that can be satisfied, bringing suggestions for change and development concerning mission and vision of national education system (MEB, 2005, 7). Hence, inspection process changes teachers' educational behaviors, thereby the educational process directly. So, while efficient relationship between the teacher and the inspector is essential, it does not enough for powerful inspection. Because inspectors observe teachers with their students that are affected by both the inspectors' and the teacher's behaviors in the course time, during the inspection period.

There are many studies about the school inspection in Turkey. For instance, Yıldız (2007) examined the relationship between primary school inspector's professional performance and burnout, while İşlek (2007) studied professional ethical principles of primary school inspectors by the view of primary school inspectors and teachers. Besides, Cantimer (2008) analyzed primary school inspectors' mentoring roles in Sakarya, and Mulla (2008) studied human relations skills of primary school inspectors. He found that the school inspectors perceive themselves as having higher level human relations skills, while the teachers perceive them not. Finally, Demir (2009) examined inspectors according to the variables such as gender, age, professional experience, branch, graduated school, and their inspection grades of the last three-year, by perception of the teachers who are inspected.

As mentioned above, primary school inspectors are studied in different ways by the view of teachers, and the school administrators inspected, but not in the way of the perception of the students involved in the inspection process. This study aims to reveal perceptions of the students who are involved in but have not been examined about the inspectors and inspection process.

2. Methodology

This study aimed to show primary school students' views of inspectors, and inspection process. Hence open ended question forms were conducted with the students inspected to examine inspectors' behaviors with their perceptions. Then the behaviors of the inspectors that the students stated and frequencies of these behaviors were analyzed through qualitative method. The study consisted of 60 students who were inspected in 5th grades located in Ankara Turkey.

Open ended question forms with 16 items were used during the data collection. The question forms questioned observable inspectors' behaviors, and inspection period such as; (1) Were you informed that the inspector would come to the classroom before s/he come?; (2) Did the inspector introduce himself to you after s/he come; (3) Did the inspector dealt with your teacher's behaviors or yours?; (4) Did the inspector say something before leaving the class?; (5) What did "Inspector" remind you before s/he came to the classroom?; (6) What did "Inspector" remind you after he left the classroom?; (7) Which behaviors of inspector scared you?; (8) Which behaviors of inspectors did you like?; (9) Did the inspector ask your name?; (10) Was the inspector lovely?; (11) How did the inspector call you?; (12) Did the inspector knock on the door when he entered your classroom?; (13) Where did the inspector sit in the classroom?; (14) Did the inspector speak to your teacher in a harsh tone of voice?; (15) Did the inspector sullen or cheerful?; (16) Did the inspector leave the classroom by farewell or without saying anything?.

3. Findings

The students' answers were analyzed by qualitative methods. The results show that high proportion of the students (n=51) stated that they were informed before inspection period and the inspector introduced himself after s/he came to classroom. On the other hand, very few of the students (n = 9) revealed that they were not informed before the inspection period. Most of the students (n=45) indicated that the inspector leaved the classroom by saying "Goodbye", while 15 students stated that the inspector left the classroom without saying anything. Furthermore one-third (n=24) revealed that they realized the inspector' interest, while little (n=7) stated that the inspector interested both them and the teacher. Nearly half of the students (n=27) imagined the inspector as a detective; 9 students stated that they were dreaming a 'horrible man'; 6 students stated that they imagined the inspector as a "well-disciplined teacher"; and 3 students stated

that they were dreaming a cartoon character "Inspector Gadget" before the inspection period. On the other hand, half of the students (n=30) used the metaphor "a detective"; while 4 used "a teacher who comes for observation" and 3 students use a "wise man" and a "tough guy" after the inspection period.

Nearly half of the students (n=26) revealed that they scared when the inspector was angry, shouted, and humiliated them, while one-fourth (n=15) students indicated that they frightened when the inspector scowled; and less (n=10) stated that the inspector was so serious, and they scared when the inspector was controlling and taking notes, staring them, carrying and playing ruler in his/her hands. Only few students (n=8) stated that they did not scared of the inspector. The students' answers related to the inspector's behaviors that they liked, revealed that the students like the inspectors because s/he was friendly, kind, like a teacher, natty and well-dressed. Besides, they stated that they liked the inspector because the inspector made jokes, did not shout them, said good-bye before left the classroom, and talked to them politely. Furthermore, more than half (n=33) indicated that the inspector asked their name while one-fourth (n=15) stated that the inspector did not. Finally, one-fourth (n=15) noted that the inspector asked and used the students' names, while nearly half (n=27) revealed that the inspector used finger points or words like "you, students, children, child, or friend" during any conversation in the classroom.

More than half of the students (n=41) stated that the inspector knocked the door before entering the classroom, while the others stated that the inspector did not. Besides, most of the students (n=49) indicated that the inspector sat the teacher's table, while few (n=11) noted that the inspector sat at the back desk, and sometimes walked in the classroom. High proportion of the students (n=49) stated that the inspector talked to teacher softly and gently, and they identified the inspector as cheerful and kind. On the other hand, one-fourth (n=15) described the inspector as being sullen and having artificial smiles. Besides, half of the students (n=32) stated that their teachers was not troubled with the inspector, and did not changed his/her actions in the classroom during the inspection period. On the other hand, the other half (n=28) mentioned that their teachers was restless, and the teacher's behaviors changed that s/he talked and acted more respectfully and politely to the students during the inspection period.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

This paper has shown that the students inspected were aware of the inspection, and they paid attention to the inspectors' manners from the beginning to the end of the inspection period in the classroom. This study indicated that while the students imagined the inspectors as horrible, and frightening before they seen the inspectors, their perceptions did not changed after the inspection period. The teachers might be considered that affect the students with their negative feelings about the inspectors consciously or unconsciously. From the view of students, the inspectors are firm controller, authoritarian, and strict. Besides, they dealt with the teachers more than the students. This result contributes the inspectors' bureaucratic roles and consistent with the scientific inspection approach taken over by the Ministry of Education in Turkey. Furthermore, these results contribute to the literature on scientific inspection. For instance, Savendra and Hawthorn (1990, 17-20) studied inspectors' roles from the view of inspected ones, and described them as authoritarian, stylish-looking, and strict.

Results of this study revealed that inspectors' manner such as shouting, being angry, humiliating, scowling, being serious, controlling and taking notes, staring the students, and carrying and playing ruler in his/her hands frightened the students. The inspectors might be or act this way because of their bureaucratic roles but they would be better take into consideration the students feelings while doing their jobs. At the same time, the students liked inspectors who were friendly, kind, natty and well-dressed. Besides, they liked the inspectors because they made jokes, did not shout them, said good-bye before left the classroom, and talked to them politely. These results showed that some inspectors represent their rigid bureaucratic roles while some shows humanistic management roles.

This study renders that the students are affected by the inspectors and inspection period. Hence students should be informed about the inspection process before the inspection period, and the teacher should not affect the students negatively about the inspectors. Finally inspectors should be careful for the students' feelings, and be polite to them while doing their jobs.

Consequently, inspectors work hard to check whether all educational activities are done properly for the qualified education that make students felt worthy in their lifetime. Hence, inspectors should behave properly to the students' age and, perception levels as teachers, during inspection period.

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