Teacher Perceptions of School-based Evaluation: A Descriptive Analysis Based on Teachers' Wives

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Abstract

This study is about transformation that has been happening in the field of management and in relation to it in inspection that has been recently taking place both in Turkey and all around the World. The transformation as "School Based Administration" (SBA) in educational administration and "School Based Evaluation" (SBE) or "Self-evaluation" in inspection refers to the transformation of the concepts, expressions, goals, indicators and processes about education, administration and inspection. The research was designed as qualitative and a semi-structured interview was made with 35 teachers. Statements of teachers were classified and interpreted in three themes. The most significant point from the interviews is that teachers criticize classical inspection methods and think that SBE has also similar limitations. Teachers do not rely on the inspectors though they find inspection necessary. They have doubts that they will have similar experiences of inspection done in the past with SBE. They consider inspection as functional and state that they are hopeful with SBE though their expectations have not been met so far. However, their expectations are followed by expressions of condition and worry.

Key Words

Inspection, School Based Evaluation, School Based Management, Stakeholder Evaluation.

This study aims to understand the nature of attempts to start SBE in Turkey based on teacher's views. SBE, in the study, indicates inspection and evaluation activities done at school by school stakeholders. SBE with political and economic statements behind is a considerable matter as it transforms educational area radically and affects all of educational stakeholders. As Perryman (2006), Gewirtz and Ball (2000) underline, inspection and control of teachers is not limited to administrational transformation, organizational structure and change in priorities since it is a political issue.

Educational reforms in general and evolutional dimension of reforms in specific are dealt from a critical perspective in the study. Webb (2005) questions "Is inspection a capacity developer or a disciplinary mechanism?" It is possible to divide

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literature about inspection into two: One group sees inspection as a reward and punishment mechanism (Ball, 1993, 1997; Gallagher, 2010; Hargreaves, 1998a, 1998b; Peryman, 2006, 2009; Power, 2003; Troman, 1997; Webb, 2005; Woods & Jeffrey, 1998) while the other considers it as a functional mechanism to develop schools' and teachers' capacity (Burton, 1930; Glickman, 1992; Rosenthal, 2004; Walker, 1907; Wilcox & Gray, 1996). In this respect, although inspection practices are often criticized, it is accepted that inspection is necessary because of "human flaws" and "flaws" cannot be controlled when there is no control.

In recent years a great deal of researchers (Brown & Cooper, 2000; Chapman, 2000; Glickman, 1992) has made significant criticism on classical "centralist" inspection. It has been stated that excluding educational stakeholders from the process restricts development of teaching and learning process. Instead, it is predicted that each school should be managed as a small business with the principles of "efficiency, performance and accountability" by all stakeholders (Morley & Rassool, 2000). If schools are free to determine their own standards, they will be more motivated to achieve it (Aydın, 2005).

SBE became the most accepted model in all the countries passing the decentralisation in management with statement of accountability in 1990s (Blok, Sleegers, & Karsten, 2008). Thrupp (1998) indicates that SBE was brought forward with a democratic evaluation promise as a "friendly inspection". Hofman, Dijkstra, and Hofman (2009) state that SBE is systematic process in a broad platform to form goal setting, planning, evaluation and new development standards. This process is strategically based on "consumer pressure" predicted by "rational consumer" approach.

There have been significant criticisms on SBE and self-inspection attempts behind it (Gilroy & Wilcox, 1997; Morley & Rassool, 2000; Berliner & Nichols, 2007). These criticisms are mostly that SBE is a new attempt to control and monitoring. One of the significant criticisms on SBE attempts is that schools are structured as a commercial business (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2009; Bushnell, 2003; Gewirtz, 2000; Gewirtz & Ball, 2000; Jeffrey & Woods, 1996; Nias, 1996; Peryman, 2007, 2009; Power, 2003; Troman & Woods, 2000; Webb, 2005; Woods & Jeffrey, 1998).

It stands out in the literature in Turkey that there are more studies about SBA than SBE. Tunç, Bülbül, and Özdem (2012), Tunç, İnandı, Öksüz, and Çal (2013), Aytaç (1999), Summak and Roşan (2006),

Özmen and Hozatlı (2008), Sakıcı (2011), and Yalçınkaya (2004) took applicability of SBA and SBE in their researches. It is determined in the studies mentioned that self-administration based administration approach was generally taken. It is observed in the literature about SBE that there is a great deal of studies on performance evaluation.

Method

Research Model

This study was designed according to "phenomenological" method (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006; Punch, 2005; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011), one of qualitative methods. It is aimed in phenomenological studies that perceptions or perspectives in relation to a particular phenomenon are revealed and interpreted according to participators' point of view.

Research Group

Research group consists of 35 teachers (25 women and 10 men) determined according to "maximum diversity sampling", which is one of purposeful sampling techniques. 14 of the teachers are preschool teachers; 10 class teachers and 11 branch teachers.

Data Collection Tool

A semi-structured interview form was developed by the help of literature to have interviews with teachers. The form was presented to the professors with expertise and experience about the subject to check content and face validity. To have feedback about the form, six teachers were pre-interviewed and then, three questions were corrected because of subtlety and incoherence.

Process

The data were collected in three different ways according to teachers' preferences. Semi-structured interviews were made face-to-face with some of the teachers. Some teachers didn't want a recorder, so their views are noted down by the researchers after they were asked questions. The teachers who couldn't interview face-to-face sent their responses via e-mail.

Reliability analysis between coders was done by examining the teachers' statements separately in terms of predetermined dimensions. An agreement about themes between coders was tried to be reached

through the formula "Reliability between Coders = [Agreement / (Agreement + Disagreement) x 100]" (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The interrater reliability of coders was calculated as the 90%.

The findings and interpretations were confirmed by the teachers interviewed in order to prove validity and reliability of the research.

Results

First of all in the study, teachers are asked "what inspection means" for them in order to see how inspection is perceived by teachers. It is possible to group teachers' expressions into two: inspection as a useful process and inspection for controlling rather than being useful. Some of the teachers stated that inspection is done by professionals and refers to determining the suitability of educational activities to predetermined goals and evaluation about correcting mistakes if there are any. However, some teachers think that what is done as inspection hasn't been able to go beyond examining and there is no much place for evaluative and corrective practices in inspection. The teachers with this notion emphasized that inspection brings being controlled to mind. Some teachers define inspection as a control mechanism in which mistakes of school administrators and teachers are found, calling them to account is aimed, thus stress and distrust are caused, and creativity of teachers are restricted.

It is remarkable that none of the teachers have positive opinion about inspection practices. It is understood from teachers' statements that almost all of them are not happy with the current inspection system.

Another question in the study to determine how SBE efforts are perceived by teachers is what they think about "multi-stakeholder evaluation, accountability, being observed constantly, evaluation according to performance". It is remarkable that their statements are similar to what is mostly criticized in classical inspection process. It can be said that SBE-centred evaluation efforts are not positively taken by teachers and SBE is found to have low potential to solve problems.

Some teachers stated that it would bring positive results to make evaluations at particular intervals according to objective criteria and to participate students and parents into this process. They also indicated that such kind of evaluation approaches would contribute to democracy at school and teacher-student-parent relations.

Most of the teachers think that inspection is a professional practice and therefore, it must be done by professionals and it is unnecessary and insufficient to ask students' and parents' ideas during this process. Some teachers think that evaluating teachers cannot be objective since students and parents can act emotionally and there can be comparisons between teachers.

Finally, teachers are asked how an ideal evaluation system should be. Considering their views about this, teachers stated that increasing the quality of inspection can be a true solution rather than increasing the frequency of inspection. They think understanding of a multi-stakeholders and constant evaluation will not be able to remove the problems of current evaluation understanding. It was emphasized in teaches' statements that they should be a part of system in order for evaluation system to be successful. It can be interpreted that SBE efforts is not seen an ideal inspection alternation in teachers' perceptions because they do not accept multi-stakeholder, especially out-of-school participation and also do not mention such issues as performance and accountability in their definition of ideal inspection system.

Discussion

Teachers indicated significant points about inspection and transformation of this process in the study. Their statements are sometimes of their experiences and sometimes of their predictions based on these experiences. It can be said that teachers' perceive inspection to a great extent as a process in which educational activities are examined by professionals regarding the goals and mistakes are corrected if there are any. Upon this determination, it is understood that teachers find inspection as a mechanism to increase quality of education by having a functional role in solution of educational problems or deficiencies. Though almost all of the teachers believe the necessity and functionality of inspection, it seems like a paradox that they do not considerably have a positive opinion about inspection. Brimblecombe and Ormston (1995) also mentioned a similar paradox in their studies. A great deal of teachers pointed out in the study that they are not observed enough; on the other hand, they say they do not like being supervised.

It is criticized in teachers' expressions that inspection is a process in which mistakes of school administrators and teachers are found, calling them to account is aimed, thus causing stress and

distrust, and also restricting creativity of teachers. It is understood that teachers see inspection as a mechanism which contributes little to quality of education. In also researches of Özdayı and Özcan (2005), Özmen and Özdemir (2012), Yüksel (2011), Jeffrey and Woods (1996), and Woods and Jeffrey (1998), teachers stated inspection serves to identify the inadequacies of the system but its contribution to quality of education is limited.

It is often emphasized in the study that limitations indicated about classical inspection cannot be met with SBE efforts. However, several teachers stated that parents and students' evaluations about teachers may result in positive outcomes by creating a force and pressure provided that it is done according to objective criteria. Some of the teachers remarked in Rudd and Davies' (2000) study that being observed by a critical eye has positive sides in that it helps their development.

They state a significant point that taking academic success and exam results into consideration for performance evaluation is to the detriment of schools in rural and disadvantageous regions. As Schneider and Keesler (2007) underline, evaluations about schools' performances in performance-based management efforts are grounded technically on administrative or individual inadequacies or mistakes instead of environmental socioeconomic features.

Some teachers stated that it is not ethical teachers are evaluated by parents and students, and such a situation is humiliating for teachers. Similarly in Altun and Memişoğlu's (2008) studies, teachers opposed to parent and student evaluation of teachers. It is stated in researches of Matranga, Horner, Hill, and Peltier (1993), Webb (2005), Osborn (2006), Bushnell (2003), Yvonne (2006), Hall and Noyes (2009), Blok et al. (2008) that participation at school level does not have a democratic nature, that participation is in financial and technical dimensions such as budget, employment, practice schedule, and that there is little participation regarding process of determination of educational policies and aims. Jeffrey and Woods (1996), Nias (1996) stated in their studies that it is hard for teachers to observe each other regardless of their prejudices and, on the other hand, state of being emotionally distant between the inspectors and the teachers is destroyed by making inspection constant.

Freire (2010) states that a paradox arises between teachers and students because of reaching a judgment about students, and this paradox ends the spirit of solidarity and cooperation between the teacher and learner. Judgment of education stakeholders about each other will cause irreconcilable paradoxes between stakeholders. Educational cooperation and collective spirit can be seriously harmed. Freire states that emancipator education can only be possible if hierarchy and paradoxes between stakeholders are removed. In this respect, that the educators are evaluated by multidimensional and different stakeholders will increase and deepen the paradoxes Freire mentions.

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