

School Principals' Opinions on In-class Inspections

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Abstract The aim of this research is to determine school principals' opinions on the in-class inspections carried out by inspectors of the Ministry of National Education of Turkey (MEB). The study was modeled as a convergent parallel design, one of the mixed methods which combined qualitative and quantitative methods. For data collection, the researchers developed and used a structured data collection form consisting of open- and closed-ended questions. The purposeful sampling method of convenience sampling was employed in the study, and the study group consisted of 132 school principals. The qualitative data obtained were subjected to descriptive analysis and analytic generalization, whereas frequency and percentage statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data. The research was found that, although school principals believe in the necessity of an inspection system, they generally have negative opinions of the process of the inspections conducted by MEB inspectors. In other words, their negative opinions concern the structure and functioning of the inspection system rather than its existence. Hence, we conclude that the education inspection system in Turkey needs to be improved so that it conforms to contemporary theories and practices.

Keywords School Principal, Education Inspector, In-class Inspection

1. Introduction

Today's constantly changing world requires education systems to constantly undergo modernization and improvement. It has become an important expectation that teachers, who play significant roles in the accomplishment of educational objectives, must possess the qualifications required by their profession and regularly seek to improve themselves. Inspection systems, therefore, have the primary role of determining and improving teachers' professional skills and qualifications.

Inspection is defined in the literature as the process of figuring out whether organizational activities fulfill the principles and rules that are intended to accomplish specific

goals [1]. Inspection in education is defined as a tool for ensuring educational development and assisting teachers with the enhancement of student success [2, 3]. Similarly, Jeffrey and Woods [4] suggest that the inspections should follow the simple principle that student learning increases when the teacher has greater knowledge, skills, and experience. The close inspection of educational organizations is crucial to their effectiveness and efficiency [5, 6] since the most rational way of figuring out whether an education system is accomplishing its objectives is to evaluate data collected by inspection [7].

Given the fact that a variety of management theories have helped organizations achieve their goals in different periods, it is impossible to claim that one theory is always more useful and pertinent than others. Thus, contemporary education is not based on a unique model, but includes a variety of processes. In this understanding, there is no single inspection model for all cases. However, it is possible to state that the periodical implementation of theories of organizational practices leads to specific individual behavior as well as specific organizational models [1, 8].

Before the 1900s, educational inspectors saw teachers as employees who needed to be overseen by the school administration. In the early 1900s, school inspection began to be carried out by experts as specialization became important to educational inspection. Inspection became a scientific enterprise by the 1920s, whereas the 1930s and 40s witnessed the rising importance of human relations in the field. The contemporary approach to inspection, which aims to develop human resources and to use them effectively, has become paramount in recent decades [1, 8-10]. Contemporary approaches, such as clinical supervision, peer supervision, educational supervision, developmental supervision, artistic supervision and diversified supervision, define inspection as a social process that enhances teachers' professional development and directs their attention to the foundations of education and the development of learning while educating and evaluating them [11-15]. In other words, the dimensions of guidance, professional support and on-the-job training have become more important in the contemporary view of school inspection.

For educational organizations, assessment is an important

way to improve education and determine whether they are accomplishing its objectives [16]. The most important phase of assessment is in-class inspection. These activities are key to ensuring teachers' personal and professional development, increasing their performance and improving the quality of education.

The inspection of classroom activities covers the inspection of the planning, conduct and evaluation of courses and external factors [17]. The concept of school inspection is used to refer to these activities. The aim of this type of inspection is to carry out planned activities that will improve the teaching and learning processes and ensure their effectiveness [1, 18, 19]. In-class inspection should be performed according to scientific principles so that the process produces unbiased, objective and accurate data [20]. Using the term, course inspection, to refer to in-class inspection activities, Taymaz [6] defines it as a form of inspection that examines and evaluates teachers' competence, performance and methods, along with the quality of education that students receive. Taymaz also stresses that course evaluation should not be limited to delineating the current situation, and that it should also guide teachers how to overcome problems and improve the educational process. In a similar vein, The Regulations for Guidance and Inspection Directorate and Educational Inspectors Directorates, published by the Ministry of National Education [21], promotes an understanding of school inspection that is oriented towards guiding teachers and eliminating shortcomings to improve the overall quality of education.

Contemporary approaches to school inspection prioritize in-class inspection activities and aim to contribute to the professional development of teachers with an emphasis on improving the quality of the teaching and learning processes. In clinical supervision, one such contemporary approach, the purpose is to make teachers more effective in the classroom and to improve their teaching competence [6]. Denham [22] defines clinical supervision as the set of face-to-face efforts made by the inspector and the teacher to improve the teacher's teaching competence. Similarly, Golhammer draws attention to the face-to-face interaction between the teacher and the inspector since this is the main characteristic of clinical supervision [23, 24]. In a sense, clinical supervision is an individualized, intimate, internal, complete, continuous and technical course inspection [6]. In short, the aim in clinical supervision is to increase the quality of education by changing and improving teachers' behaviors [1].

The developmental supervision model, which prescribes analyzing the teacher's level of development and inspecting accordingly, aims to transform school inspection from an anxiety-provoking experience into an experience that is more suitable to teachers' needs. In the diversified supervision model, on the other hand, teachers are given various inspection and assessment options to solve their more pressing issues and meet their needs. Similarly, practices like coaching and mentoring are approaches that aim to provide teachers with assistance and improve their teaching practice

[25, 26].

In contemporary school inspection, inspectors are expected to be more experienced than the teachers in the teachers' specialty, to possess the technical and human qualities that will allow them to cooperate with teachers, managers and other personnel, to know the environment, the school and the students very well and to be able to allocate the time needed for inspection [6]. In other words, the common main purpose in the clinical, developmental and diversified models of school supervision as well as in contemporary education supervision practices such as coaching and mentoring is to improve teachers' performance and to increase the effectiveness of education [27, 28].

The common aims of all contemporary approaches to educational inspection are supporting teachers' professional development and improving the quality and effectiveness of education through face-to-face interaction as well as techniques of monitoring and communication [19, 22, 29, 30, 23, 10]. In this respect, contemporary educational inspection is of great importance for the effectiveness and productivity of classroom activities.

In the Turkish educational system, the task of in-class inspection is assigned to MEB (Ministry of National Education) inspectors and school principals. These two groups sometimes uphold different opinions and practices in the inspection process. In order to improve the classroom inspection system that plays a significant role in the effectiveness of in-class teaching, it is important to determine the opinions of MEB inspectors and school principals on in-class inspection. In this study, which was designed as a sub-dimension of a comprehensive project, the aim was to determine school principals' opinions on in-class inspections carried out by inspectors. With this aim, the following questions were asked to school principals:

1. How effectively does the current in-class inspection system improve teaching practice?
2. How effectively does the current in-class inspection system support the professional development of teachers?
3. Do you think the current inspection system should continue to be implemented without changes?
4. What do you think of the current in-class inspection system carried out by MEB inspectors?

2. Methods

This section describes the research model, data collection, data analysis and the sample.

2.1. Research Model

The study was modelled as a convergent parallel design, one of the mixed methods which combined qualitative and quantitative methods. School principals' opinions on the current in-class inspection system were laid out as quantitative data, and qualitative data were used to interpret

their opinions in more depth and detail. In the quantitative section which was designed as a survey model, we asked three questions using Likert scales. We used the qualitative method for the fourth question and collected written data since this is considered a better technique for obtaining in-depth information about human perceptions [31]. We obtained all the data on the same occasion. We used a phenomenological design for the qualitative section. Phenomenological studies aim to collect in-depth information about individuals' perceptions of and reactions to events they experience [32]. In other words, a phenomenological design helps us to focus on phenomena of which we are aware, but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding [33].

2.2. Data Collection

We gave a three-and-a-half hour seminar to the school principals who participated in the study on contemporary in-class inspection approaches in the conference hall of Antalya's Provincial Directorate of National Education. At the end of the seminar, we distributed the structured questionnaires to the school principals and asked them to share their opinions on the in-class inspections carried out by MEB inspectors. We used a data collection form that consisted of open- and closed-ended questions. The first section of the form inquired about the participants' demographic information, the second section included three questions using Likert scales, and the third section was an open-ended question about their opinions on the current in-class inspection activities. School principals were asked to respond to the close-ended statements, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (None) to 5 (Entirely) in the first two questions of the second section, about the degree to which they believed the current inspection system contributed to teaching in general and to teachers in particular. In the third question of the second section, we asked school principals to choose one of the three options (1: The system should continue as it is, 2: The system should continue with improvements, 3: Or else, please specify your thoughts) on the preferred future course of school inspections. In third section of the questionnaire consisting of an open-ended question, school principals were asked to respond what they thought of the current in-class inspection system carried out by MEB inspectors.

Each question on the form was explained to the participants, who were asked to respond in the time given. They were also asked to sit separately so that they would not influence each other. While the respondents were filling out the forms, the researchers walked around the room to respond to their questions. The entire process lasted 28 minutes.

2.3. Data Analysis

We used percentages and frequencies to analyze the quantitative data, and descriptive analysis and analytic

generalization to analyze the qualitative data. We used NVIVO software for the latter. In the descriptive analysis stage, we first created a thematic framework for data analysis based on the conceptual framework and the research questions. Then, we grouped the data by associating them with the relevant questions and encoding them. Finally, considering the relationships between the codes, we described and interpreted the data through inductive analysis in order to reveal the concepts underlying the data and the relationships between these concepts. To illustrate the participants' opinions, we included some of their responses in the main text [33] and coded their opinions as P1, P2, etc. For example; P1 refers to the views of Principal 1.

2.4. Validity and Reliability Studies

In the stage of qualitative data analysis, we formed a roadmap consisting of the criteria and the thematic framework formulated on the basis of the study's conceptual framework and questions. To ensure conformity and unity in the analysis of data, we three researchers analyzed the responses of the first four respondents using the roadmap. Then, each researcher analyzed the remaining responses separately for consistency. This procedure was important for both the validity and reliability of the analysis of the qualitative data.

The conformity between the separate analyses that the researchers conducted added reliability to the research. Then, we shared our findings with five respondents to check whether the data accurately reflected their opinions. We found that the respondents' opinions regarding the data obtained overlapped with the study's results. This is regarded as a proof of high internal validity. Moreover, the fact that we analyzed the opinions of school principals who came from different regions and had varying demographic characteristics, and that these opinions were consistent with each other increases the study's external validity. Finally, the study's level of reliability is even higher since we clearly explain the research process, and the raw data are now archived and available for future inspection if necessary [33].

2.5. The Sample

This study used the purposeful sampling method of convenience sampling, which is quick and practical for research [33]. The participants' demographic data exhibit maximum diversity. These demographic data are presented in Table 1.

The number of school principals volunteered to participate in the study was 132. Of them, 9.8% (13) are women and 80.2% (119) are men. For the entire group, the average length of service is 23.9 years, and the average length of service as a school principal is 13.51 years. Their average age is 46.7. Of them, 14 (10.6%) have two-year teachers' vocational school degrees, 115 (87.1%) have bachelor's degrees, and three (2.3%) have master's degrees.

Table 1. Demographics of the Sample

Principal (n=132)								
		n	%			n	%	
Gender	Women	13	9,8	Length of service as a principal	1-5 years	32	24,2	
	Men	119	90,2		6-10 years	24	18,2	
Total length of service	1-5 years	1	0,8		11-15 years	27	20,5	
	6-10 years	1	0,8		16-20 years	32	24,2	
	11-15 years	8	6,1		21-25 years	4	3,0	
	16-20 years	33	25,0		26-30 years	11	8,3	
	21-25 years	36	27,3		30 years and over	2	1,5	
	26-30 years	28	21,2		Age	20-30	2	1,5
	30 years and over	25	18,9			31-35	1	,8
Education level	Two-year degree	14	10,6			36-40	25	18,9
	Bachelor's degree	115	87,1	41-45		29	22,0	
	Master's degree	3	2,3	46-50		41	31,1	
				51-55	19	14,4		
				56 and over	15	11,4		

3. Findings

We analyzed the school principals' opinions on the inspection conducted by MEB inspectors under the following themes: the effect of the current in-class inspection system on improving teachers and teaching, general opinions on the current in-class inspection system, and the positive and negative aspects of in-class inspection activities. These analyses are presented below.

Table 2. The Effect of In-Class Inspection on Improving Teaching Process and Teachers

Questions		None	Little	Moderate	Highly	Entirely	Total
How effectively does the current in-class inspection improve teaching practice?	f	9	25	40	39	2	115
	%	7,8	21,7	34,8	33,9	1,7	100,0
How effectively does the current in-class inspection improve teachers?	f	9	29	47	26	4	115
	%	7,8	25,2	40,9	22,6	3,5	100,0

For the above two questions, 115 school principals shared their opinions, while 17 preferred not to do so.

On the effectiveness of the current in-class inspection system in improving teaching processes, 7.8% said it is not effective at all, 21.7% said it has little effect, and 34.8% said it has a moderate effect. Of them, 33.9% said it is highly effective, and 1.7% said it is entirely effective. Thus, 70.4% of the respondents said that it is effective at the moderate level or higher.

On the system's effectiveness in improving teachers, 7.8% said none, 25.2% little, 40.9% moderate, 22.6% greatly, and 3.5% said it is entirely effective. Overall, 67% of the respondents believed that it is effective at the moderate level or higher.

Table 3. Opinions on In-Class Inspection

Views	n
The dominant understanding is destructive and has negative effects.	52
The inspection system is ineffective. It is too formalistic.	46
Its guidance aspect is useful, but inadequate.	24
Inspections are inconsistent, subjective and unreliable.	22
It has positive and constructive aspects as well.	18
There is a need for more time for inspection.	15
Inspectors exhibit negative attitudes and behavior.	11
Inspectors are incompetent.	9
The inspection system should be improved to keep up with contemporary approaches.	9
It fails to improve the teachers inspected.	7
We need an understanding of school inspection that focuses on the inspected parties.	7
Some improvements have recently been made.	7
Inspectors should have more positive attitudes and behavior in interpersonal relationships.	6
The inspection system is not modern and dynamic.	4
The number of inspectors is low, and their workload is too heavy.	3
Inspections are concerned with teaching and academic success. They ignore the dimension of education.	2
Inspectors' financial means should be improved.	1
Inspectors have expertise in their fields.	1
Inspections are consistent.	1
Techniques that are inappropriate for our society and our education system are being enforced.	1
It is indispensable for education.	1

On the preferred future course of school inspections, 115 school principals expressed their opinions, and 17 did not in question 3. Of those who responded, 2.6% (3) stated that the system should continue as it is, while 70.4% (81) stated that it should continue with improvements. On the other hand, 27% (31) chose the option "Or else, please specify your thoughts" and wrote down their thoughts. Here are their suggestions: "Clinical supervision should be adopted, inspection should be carried out with guidance, inspection commissions should be formed, inspection should be based on teaching specialties, the inspection system should change, inspectors should be trained in universities, inspection should be based on performance, the inspection system should be improved in a process-driven manner, specialty inspection and in-class inspection should be improved, the inspection system should be restructured, the inspection system should keep up with contemporary social realities,

alternative approaches should be developed, inspectors should be replaced with younger people who are more familiar with contemporary approaches, the system should resemble the systems of G3-G8 countries, the process should be entirely transformed, and it should be more practicable.”

This section presents the findings obtained from the open-ended questions.

According to Table 3, the most common opinion expressed by the school principals is that the current in-class inspection system is dominated by an understanding which has destructive and negative effects. More specifically, the respondents emphasized that an old-fashioned understanding of school inspection is prevalent, which is oriented towards interrogating, searching for mistakes and controlling the teachers inspected. This understanding is also inspector-centered, demotivating, disruptive, oppressive, judgmental, formalistic, and based on criticism. Some of the opinions expressed are presented below:

“Some inspectors are still under the influence of the old-fashioned approach. They constantly search for mistakes and criticize” (P5).

“It is very classic, and it reduces teachers’ motivation” (P9).

“It is an inspection system that fails to guide, constantly looks for mistakes and is judgmental” (P13).

“The current system sees the teacher and the school management as simple machines and reduces motivation to zero” (P16).

“It is oriented towards looking for mistakes rather than guidance. Instead of rewarding, or at least acknowledging what is done right, it constantly looks for and emphasizes shortcomings” (P24).

“We experience anxiety and dissatisfaction in our educational activities when the word is out that an inspector is coming to the school. Inspectors are generally not very friendly, and they often threaten us with prosecution. I think they should be friendlier and warmer” (P80).

“The inspection is mostly about finding what is wrong. Inspectors criticize us harshly most of the time” (P111).

Another opinion frequently expressed by the school principals is that the current inspection system lacks quality and effectiveness and is too formalistic. They stated that the current system is ineffective, unhelpful, formalistic, superficial, unhealthy, unnecessary, and far from enhancing education, meeting needs and solving the problems. Here are some of these opinions:

“They have a Microsoft Word template. They always do the same things. For example, on one occasion, they recorded on the inspection report that the fire extinguishers needed to be replaced even though they were brand new. Some of them even got the name of the school wrong” (P19).

“I do not think it is useful enough. It seems their only concern is to save the day” (P41).

“They do it perfunctorily” (P45).

“Inspections are too superficial. They are one-sided, judgmental and obsessed with finding mistakes. Inspectors mostly work on official documents. They fail to consider other areas that are not always easily recordable on documents” (P87).

“The current way this system is applied is too superficial, and far from truly inspecting, guiding or being objective” (P113).

The school principals emphasized that the guidance aspect of the current inspection system is useful, but inadequate. They reported that inspections fail to guide teachers to better ways of doing their jobs. Therefore, they insisted that guidance should be highlighted more so that school inspections will be more useful and motivating. Here are some of these opinions:

“Most inspectors have disrespectful, hypercritical and unconstructive personalities, although we would like for them to enlighten and guide people” (P23).

“Inspectors are exclusively concerned with finding mistakes and criticizing rather than guiding teachers” (P79).

“We want this classic understanding of school inspection to be replaced by a guidance-based education approach” (P63).

Another negative opinion expressed by the school principals on the quality of inspections is that they are inconsistent, subjective and unreliable. Some of the responses are presented below.

“Inspections are not based on objective and effective criteria” (P67).

“There are huge inconsistencies between what they say when they are with us and what they write on their reports afterwards” (P70).

“Inspectors do not follow the same criteria. Some of them only listen to us, some keep looking at their documents, and others say nothing. There are also others who inspect every single document like insurance inspectors” (P88).

“Teachers get it wrong when there is difference of opinion among them” (P111).

The school principals also said that the current inspection system has some positive and constructive sides. The most commonly expressed benefit is that the system encourages the teachers inspected to work harder and perform better. They reported that the anxiety induced by inspection leads teachers to be prepared and organized, avoid complacency, work to improve themselves and be more aware of what they are doing. However, it was also commonly expressed that these preparations are temporary and some teachers get complacent again after the inspection. Here are some examples of these responses:

“Teachers get their act together thanks to school inspection anxiety” (P1).

“Teachers perform well until the inspectors arrive since they want to be ready for inspection” (P20).

“Teachers are mostly prepared and organized before a school inspection” (P28).

“The prospect of being inspected makes teachers get on top of their responsibilities” (P31).

“Teachers try to work harder and be more organized in preparation for a school inspection” (P36).

“Inspections are useful in that they lead teachers, especially the ones who are not that devoted, to pull themselves together and be aware that a control mechanism exists” (P70).

Another benefit of the current system expressed by the school principals is that it helps identify and eliminate problems and mistakes, and check whether processes are efficacious. Thanks to in-class inspections, school principals think that problems are solved in the learning process by the cooperation of the inspectors and teachers. Here are some of these responses:

“Thanks to inspections, organizations that are being inspected identify their failures and see whether their operations adequately serve their purposes” (P04).

“We are made aware of our mistakes” (P42).

“It enables us to question whether the ways we do things will help us reach our goals” (P62).

“It helps us identify problems and take measures accordingly” (P67).

“Even if it is the worst inspection, I would find it helpful in reinforcing the operation of the organization” (P75).

“I find it useful when it is done correctly and properly” (P120).

As for the form of the in-class inspection activities, the school principals complained about the insufficient time and number of inspections. Some respondents expressed this insufficiency as follows:

“Doing inspections once a year is not enough” (P45).

“They carry out inspections for only an hour once a year or two” (P52).

“I do not believe that these very brief inspections of teachers and principals are healthy” (P118).

“They make decisions based on a one-hour inspection. The teacher may very well be experiencing psychological or material problems at that moment. Or they may be sick that day, but it does not matter for their score on the inspection” (P35).

The school principals also reported that inspectors exhibit unfavorable attitudes and behaviors. They, in detail, express unfavorable attitudes of the inspectors towards teacher cause demotivation on teachers. For example, P23 stated, “Inspectors mostly have hypercritical, nitpicking, intimidating, offensive and discouraging personalities,” and P119 referred to “their prejudices and obsession with finding mistakes.”

Some school principals suggested that the inspectors are incompetent at their jobs, which is a problem that needs to be addressed. They also state that incompetent inspectors are not able to contribute to the professional developments of teachers. For example, P47 denied that, “Inspectors are sufficiently well-versed in their specialty,” and P52 said, “Inspectors are not familiar with the new curricula, technical instruments, or the regulations.” Similarly, P84 points to inspectors’ need to improve themselves by suggesting, “School principals and inspectors should be trained in self-improvement seminars and in-service training.”

In addition, the school principals stated that the inspection system’s form and quality should be improved according to contemporary principles: “It should keep up with contemporary approaches” (P39 and P76). P109 said, “I think both sides of the entire inspection process should undergo a transformation. I believe we need an inspection system that prioritizes education and considers people not as individuals but as employees in education.”

Overall, the school principals mostly have negative opinions on the current in-class inspection system. Yet another of these negative opinions is that the system fails to contribute to the professional developments of teachers and managers, and thus there is a need for a new approach that prioritizes the teachers inspected. For example, P28 complained, “The inspection system does not contribute to the professional development of teachers and enhance their performance.” P71 similarly stated, “The inspection system fails to help improve the school and the teachers inspected.” Some of the school principals suggested that an alternative system should be developed which would acknowledge and listen to teachers and include them in decision-making processes: “Inspectors do not recognize and acknowledge teachers” (P108), “In classic school inspection, they never listen to what the organization’s employees have to say” (P110), and “Inspectors work with the teacher in their imagination instead of seeing the current situation. They never think of consulting with the teacher and coming up with solutions to problems together” (P132).

Yet other opinions expressed by the school principals on the current in-class inspection system include: “There have been positive developments in the system,” “Inspectors now try to care more about teachers’ motivation,” “Inspectors need to exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors especially in interpersonal relationships,” “The inspection system is not up-to-date and dynamic,” “The number of inspectors is low, and they have excessive workloads,” “Inspections mostly focus on teaching and academic success,” “Inspection is the sine qua non of education,” “The system imposes techniques that are not suitable for the Turkish educational system,” “Inspectors deserve better financial status,” and “Inspectors are consistent and have expertise in their specialties.”

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The research findings reflect only the personal opinions of the respondents, and we analyzed them accordingly without aiming to generalize.

Their opinions on the current in-class inspection system are generally about the quality, effectiveness and form of the inspection as well as the inspectors' characters. The qualitative research findings reveal that the participant school principals generally have negative perceptions regarding in-class inspections. The quantitative data support these opinions and indicate that although an inspection system is necessary, it should be better designed and implemented. It can therefore be concluded that the school principals' demands and expectations for a better inspection system are the result of their discontent with the current system, since most of the relevant responses are concerned with the elimination of problems.

The school principals also had generally negative opinions on the quality and effectiveness of inspections. They argued that the inspections are oppressive, intimidating, boring, nitpicking and hypercritical. In addition, they stated that the system is inadequate, unhelpful, and ineffective and negatively affects teachers' motivation and productivity.

Yet another important finding is the opinion that inspections are useful, but not sufficient. Paterson [34] similarly found that teachers could not obtain the assistance that they wanted from inspectors. In another study, Gündüz [35] observed that inspectors largely fail to fulfill their guidance duties, which are of great importance for teachers' professional development. Sabancı and Şahin [36] and Sabancı, Şahin and Sönmez [37] similarly found low levels of guidance duty fulfillment among inspectors. In a study by Balcı [38], elementary school principals reported that inspectors fail to provide guidance while performing their duties. These findings are significant in that they all point to the need for more guidance activities in school inspections to contribute to the professional development of teachers.

As for the form of inspection, the school principals spoke of the limited time allocated for inspections and the lack of continuity. They also emphasized inspectors' failure to consider teachers' opinions and reported that some inspectors are not specialists in the fields of teachers that they inspect. In a study conducted by Hilo [39], the time allocated for inspection as well as the frequency of inspections were found to be insufficient. Another important finding of our study concerns the excessive workloads of inspectors. The high ratio of the number of teachers to inspectors is seen by Sarpkaya [7] as a problem with school inspections that has not been resolved for years.

The school principals also had negative opinions of the inspectors' characters. They claimed that inspectors are personally and professionally incompetent, not open to innovation and self-improvement, and that they exhibit negative attitudes and behaviors. This reluctance to improve themselves may be the cause of inspectors' personal and

professional incompetence. Sarpkaya [7] similarly found that inspectors are not very eager to improve themselves.

The respondents also suggested that the current inspection system is old-fashioned, not dynamic, and not welcoming of new approaches. Nevertheless, they acknowledged some improvements in the system, which are taking place recently.

Although the participant school principals expressed mostly negative opinions on the current in-class inspection system, the findings also demonstrate that the system has some positive and constructive effects. The respondents suggested that especially the anxiety induced by the prospect of being inspected leads teachers and school principals to perform better and to work on their shortcomings. Moreover, they reported that the guidance aspect of inspections is useful, even though they believe this aspect should be given greater emphasis. In a study carried out by Demirtaş and Ersözlü [40], teachers stated that guidance activities improve the quality of education and teaching. Therefore, emphasizing guidance will increase the benefit of school inspections for organizations and people.

Another positive aspect of in-class inspection is that it compels teachers to be ready for an eventual inspection. However, the respondents warned that this readiness does not last long since teachers tend to return to complacency after the inspection. Therefore, there is a need for an inspection system that will ensure the continuity of the interaction between inspectors and teachers. Moreover, the finding that teachers tend to become complacent after inspections reinforces the perception that the current system is a judgmental process, which is not oriented towards the professional development of teachers. It is thus no surprise that teachers view inspections as boring, oppressive and hypercritical. Another important finding of this study is that teachers' motivation is becoming more important in the system. This finding suggests that the system's approach to school inspection is undergoing positive change towards modernization.

The research findings suggest that the problems experienced during school inspections are the result of inspectors' attitudes and behavior as well as the structure and functioning of the system. In this respect, we argue that in-class inspection activities can be rendered more effective and productive by restructuring the system according to contemporary theories and practices of school inspection. In such a system, inspectors should approach teachers and principals with more positive attitudes, and the form and functioning of the inspection system should allow for more guidance and self-improvement.

Collectively, the school principals' opinions indicate that in-class inspection activities contribute to the general quality of education and to teachers' professional development. However, the school principals' perceptions of the current inspection system are dominated by formal and functional problems. Although at first sight this finding suggests that the school inspection system is perceived negatively, it shows that school principals believe in the

indispensability of school inspection for education. Moreover, it also indicates that school principals want a more effective and useful inspection system. Therefore, as most of the school principals stated, the current in-class inspection system should undergo a restructuring process that will render it more compatible with contemporary theories and practices. In this restructuring process, school inspectors should take the lion's share of responsibility.

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