

Effect of Inspection Fear on Administrative Behaviors at Schools

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Abstract

This study aimed to present the effects of inspection on behaviors of school administrators before, during and after the fear of inspection. The study model was designed in qualitative research model. Study group was comprised of 16 school administrators employed in the province of Kahramanmaraş during the 2014-2015 academic year and selected via "Purposeful sampling technique" method. A semi-structured interviewing form developed by the researcher with expert guidance was used as the data collection tool including 3 questions aiming to discover the effects of the inspection process on administrative behaviors at schools. The data were analyzed using content analysis method. The study showed that school administrators find inspection to be a negative concept but they believe it is necessary because of the benefits for themselves and the school. The school administrators stated that they experience fear of inspection before inspections. They continued to explain that they prepare things such as the required books, files and records, speed up operations and processes and try to ensure that their schools are ready for inspection in every sense before the inspection. School administrators said that during inspections some inspectors have negative attitudes and behaviors, some are close to communication and more destructive than constructive and such situations reflect negatively in the atmosphere of the school. The administrators also stated that because of lack of information pertaining to some subjects, the inspectors are not able to provide the professional guidance needed for the school or the administrators. However, despite all this, inspections are instrumental to the operations and processes of the school being carried out in a more organized fashion and they provide professional development for administrators. Administrators said that they implement inspectors' recommendations when they are suitable and take the inspection reports into consideration while trying to make the necessary changes before the next inspection. According to the study results, it can be said that inspection fear and their aspects (before, during and after inspection processes) are beneficial to administrative behaviors of school administrators.

Keywords: *Inspection Fear, School Administrators, Administrative Behaviors.*

1. Introduction

It can be stated that there are many different factors affecting the success of schools' managing bodies. It is assumed that one of these factors is inspection mechanism whose main objective is guiding and on job training. Both organization and management theories have different points of view on inspection. While classical organization and management theory defines inspection as a controlling process for human behaviours, neo-classical organization and management theory, on the other hand, takes it as training employee on job. Meanwhile, contemporary organization and management theory takes inspection as humans' self controlling their own behaviours. Inspection system exists in almost every complex organization and it is also an organizational and managerial obligation (Aydin, 2007). Inspection is a sine qua non necessity especially in social activities in which human factor dominates (Cengiz, 1992). The importance of inspection will be better understood when the structure of the organizations, managing processes and system theory are reviewed (Taymaz, 2010). Inspection's being obligatory is a natural outcome of organization's being stable to survive (Aydin, 2007).

It is inevitable to control, in other words inspection, the level of goals reached by education, aiming to give common and special behaviours to people, under a plan and programme (Kapusuzoglu, 1988). Inspection system, with its functional structure and healthy action, is expected to determine any deviation from criteria before it occurs and causes large losses in organization and improve. It can be said a healthy inspecting system which has such power (Aydin, 2007).

School manager is responsible for planning and applying school's human resources and related actions, inspection, evaluation, cooperation at school, communication and synchronization, and playing his/her role in solving problems (Sisman and Turan, 2004). Education inspection is also necessary for determining the needs of institution and staff, helping ministry to apply new decisions, deciding whether human sources, equipments and time is used efficiently or not (Dissiz, 2009). Because inspection needs continuity and it leads the organization to achieve its goals. Inspection not only decides whether current situation is good or bad but also it continues to improve and correct. Thus it can be said that the attitudes, behaviours and beliefs of inspectors are important.

Generally, employees do not like being inspected. Especially, it prevents their job satisfaction when inspection searches for imperfection, punishes and humiliates. Thus, employees prefer working at organizations which respect democratic inspection and even self-evaluation (Basaran, 2008). However, inspection has become something in employees' minds which inspires fear and anxiety. It is possible to base the source of this fear and anxiety on classical inspection's reaching a goal with fear and compression. Many studies, on the contrary, have revealed that any fear and anxiety from compression badly effect employees' performance. It is expected that inspection, having such an influence on performance, will certainly effect job satisfaction (Demir, 2001). This seems possible only with constant and planned control and evaluation of organization's inputs, process and outputs. This organizational phenomenon shows the importance and necessity of inspection including continuous observing, evaluating and improving activities (Aydin, 2007). Researches emphasize the importance of inspection in terms of organization's survival. Turkish education system also has to be well aware of the degree of its goals achieved which are also the main motivation for its existence. This is only possible with a functional inspection based on continuous observing, investigating, evaluating and improving.

Inspection necessitates inspector to be a manager, leader, trainer, guide and researcher (Taymaz, 2010). However, inspector should avoid making inspection a personal matter with whom he/she is inspecting by protecting the limits of these duties. Inspector should respect to the inspected, while he/she should not abuse what he/she has learnt or use them for different purposes. A peaceful environment should be created during guiding activities; it should not be an inquiry-like process. The main objective of the inspector should be to increase the strength of inspected and make him/her much more responsible and free. Troubles should remain free from personal views in order to provide objectivity (Basar, 2000). According to contemporary inspection approaches, in order to achieve inspection goals the results should be discussed with the individuals. To prevent the deviations in organizational goals, improvements should be done to inform employees about their imperfection and observed problems (Agaoglu, 2000).

Basar (1995); states that inspection exists with three elements which are related to each other and function in circle and he defines these elements as such:

1. **Determining Situation:** He defines determining situation as to reveal and existing situation as if taking a photograph but although control mechanism should be taken as a data-collecting tool to test goal-result propriety, sometimes it is given much wider meanings such as managing and dominating and used instead of classical inspection.
2. **Evaluation:** He claims that evaluation provides information for decision making and emphasizes on decisions and in order to evaluate an investigation process and situation determining data collecting is needed. While controlling is for proving, evaluation, on the other hand, is an improving activity.
3. **Correcting and Improving:** He states that correcting and improving is applying those options resulting from evaluation process and turned into decisions, then claims that it generates the objective of inspection process. Supplying deficiencies at the end of inspection, turning falses into trues, correcting deviations in goals and plans and reaching suggestions for better process and results are all in correcting and improving element.

Using human and other types of sources efficiently in education organizations is in direct proportion with the capability of education managers (Acar, 2004). The main objective of education is to train people who can think free and versatile, have strong social attitudes, is healthy in both physical and psychological, entrepreneur, carry a vision and assimilate local culture (Can, 2004). Thus school is an institution which none of the societies can disregard (Ataunal, 2004).

Manager is somebody who is responsible for taking producing items to produce service or good on the condition that all the risks and profits belong to another and leads them to fulfill some needs and runs the corporation on behalf of entrepreneur (Tengilimoglu et al, 2008). In short, manager is somebody who urges and directs others by using organizational structure in order to achieve organizational goals (Ilgar, 2005; Kocel, 2003).

School managers are those who stand at the utmost limit of education system (Aydin, 2007). They are responsible at first hand against senior managers, teachers, students, parents and society about producing better education service (Donmez, 2004), they are formal education leaders (Celik, 2003). School manager, with such importance, should both be manager and leader of his school.

School manager is not a position to be filled by ordinary people. In bureaucratic jargon such duties are called “critical duties” and those who carry out such duties are paid attention as “critical staff” (Acikalin, 2006). There is a consensus about school manager’s huge influence on all people related to school especially on teachers and students (Sisman, 2004). School managers’ fulfilling this critical duty efficiently is directly related to their managerial behaviours (Kaya, 1996). Clements (1997) emphasizes that school managers are responsible for improving staff, evaluating staff, staff’s well-being and satisfied with their job, while Mitchell and Cuningam (1990) states that future managers should be ready to resist any possible problem as the instructional leaders of their schools and when the point is lost generations they should create new opportunities to the society.

Definetly, manager carries great importance for every organization. However, managers are thought to be much more important for the education organization of which basic input and output are human. Because it is both possible to catch manufacturing defects for the production organizations and their effect on society is either limited or cheap to overcome while it is almost not possible to catch those of education organizations or they are too expensive to overcome. The trainings they took before and during their service, social learnings, individual studies and inspection system can be said to effect school managers managing capacity.

It can be said that the fear, the violence and the values are crucial facts in individual and social well-being today as in the past (Eren, 2005: 23). I will argue that the negative emotional impact of inspection on teachers goes beyond the oft reported issues of stress and overwork. Teachers experience a loss of power and control, and the sense of being permanently under a disciplinary regime can lead to fear, anger and disaffection (Perryman, 2007:173). This studies aims to reveal the effects of inspection fear before, during and after inspection on school managers.

2. Methodology

In this study, as it is aimed to reveal school managers’ views on inspection fear phenomenon, a qualitative research model is preferred. It is thought that qualitative desing is much proper because it is aimed to review a phenomenon deeply in its natural reallity. In qualitative studies, data colleting tools such as observation, interviewing and document analysis areused and perceptions and events are tried to be revealed realistically and as a whole (Yildirim and Simsek, 2008).

Study group

Purposeful sampling technique is used to determine study group. It enables to study on those who are thought to have rich information on a special issue (Buyukoztork et al, 2012; Yildirim and Simsek, 2008). Thus, 16 school managers are selected as the study group working in Kahramanmaraş province of Turkey during 2014-2015 academic year.

Data collection tool

In this study, a semi-structured interviewing form is used as data collection tool developed by the author. Such semi-structured interviewing forms enables interviewee to state his/her own thoughts as well (Buyukoztork et al, 2012). In order to maintain validity of the form, firstly legal and theoretical documents are scanned and then 5 inspectors', 5 school managers' and related lectures' were asked for opinions. After that, based on these feedbacks, a question pool was created. These questions were sent to four inspectors and academicians and necessary corrections were made. Moreover, two inspectors and linguists were also asked to examine the form. In order to create a proper, valid and universal interviewing form, each result is showed how it has been reached by the author. While interpreting these data collected, critical and comparing analyses are used. Giving the data collected directly with descriptive analysis, results' being confirmed by experts and analyzing the data with regard to theoretical framework are criteria of reliability (Yildirim and Simsek, 2008). In order to provide a valid and reliable research, study environment, related terms and all steps were defined. For this purpose, school managers were asked these questions on inspection fear:

1. What do you think about inspection? Are you fear of inspection? Which preparations do you do before the inspection, since the beginning of academic year?
2. How do the manners of inspectors affect you during inspection fear and how does the inspection affect your behaviours?
3. Do you pay regard to feedback made by inspectors? Which practices do you change with regard to inspection fear?

Analysis

Descriptive data analysis was used to analyze the data collected. With the permission of participants, written notes were taken during interviews. So, each interviewing form was coded as "P1, P2..." (Participant + Number) and analyzing process was realized in four steps as such:

1. Every form was reviewed and then similar or common statements were highlighted.
2. Then these coded statements were put together to reach themes.
3. Real statements produced by participants were written under related themes.
4. All these codes, themes and statements were interpreted.

3. Findings

Before the inspection

a) The Necessity of Inpection

The participants with the codes P1, P3, P4, P7, P8, P10, P13 and P16 who were asked for their opinions stated that inspite of some of its negative sides, inspection is necessary , in order to run school organizations better, they need to be inspected continuously. For instance P6 stated that: *"Clearly, being inspected is not good but I think it is essential. Without inspection, everybody will act arbitrarily"*. P10, on the other hand said that: *"Inspection is certainly necessary, otherwise the organization will become unhealthy thus it is good for every institution and staff. The tasks at school will get worse but inspectors also should be helpful "*. Similarly, P16 agreed with his colleagues like: *"Inspection is a part of school and education. It should strictly exist but not like what it is today. Because the form of it today does not so efficient and helpful for us"*.

b) The Fear of Inspection

The participants with the codes P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10, P13 and P16 who were asked for their opinions stated that even the term “inspection” scares them and although one has no fault, to know that they will be inspected worries them. For instance P2 stated his opinions as: *“I think that somebody will criticize me and this annoys me a lot. Just for his reason, I get anxious about being inspected as it worries me!”*. Similarly P10 said: *“Noone likes being inspected. Obviously, I also have such feelings because I don’t want to be in such a difficult situation, however; the inspectors’ attitudes are also important”*. P13, on the other hand, agreed like: *“I have such a fear, like anyone else does, because in each time there is always a problem. The inspectors, certainly, find a problem and this worries me”*.

c) The Stress Before Inspection

The participants with the codes P2, P4, P6, P8, P11, P13, P14 and P16 who were asked for their opinions stated that they become stressful being inspected. P4, with this matter, put forward his opinions like: *“Of course, I have some fears before the inspection, and thus have some questions in my mind like; when they will come, will they find a mistake etc. So that I become stressful.”* P14, also agreed with his colleagues like: *“Even if not as high as it is thought, I get stressed before the inspection. Because I had some troubles in the past and in each time I think about them and become suspicious whether I will have them again or not. On the other hand, the fact that inspectors will come any time also worries me.”* Similarly, P16 stated that: *“I become stressed at the beginning of academic year and wish that the inspectors will come as soon as possible and end my anxiety because I don’t like being inspected. There is an evil in inspection.”*

d) The Preparations for Inspection

The participants with the codes P3, P7, P9, P11 and P15 who were asked for their opinions stated that they already get ready at the beginning of academic year by preparing all necessary documents as if they will be inspected at any time. For example, P7 stated that: *“In fact, I am doing whatever is needed by considering official procedures. I am specially preparing myself for inspection, but when I do my duties on time, this makes me ready for inspection. Because I don’t want to have problems during the inspection process.”* Similarly, P11 said that: *“I am trying to get ready for inspection. Just because I know, what inspectors want to see and like, I am trying make these points perfect. So that I try to supply any type of deficiencies before the inspection”*. P15 also expressed that *“I am fulfilling my duties not only for a better inspection but also for myself and school’s sake. However, while doing school tasks, I also make my institution ready for the inspection.”*

e) Negative Inspector Image

The participants with the codes P1, P4, P5, P9, P12 and P16 who were asked for their opinions stated that they have experienced some negative practices with the inspectors and thus they don’t have much positive inspector image in their minds. P1, on this matter, expressed his opinions like: *“I have been inspected for many times so far. Inspectors generally, come to find any type of deficiencies at school, their main aim is not to help us”*. P9 also stated that: *“I have argued with the inspectors for a few times, because they haven’t behaved us as a colleague but as a superior manager. They give orders and aren’t helpful.”*

Inspection can be systematized as “before, during and after”. In this research, the findings related to before inspection major in some themes as: the necessity of inspection, the fear of inspection, the stress before the inspection, preparing for inspection and negative inspector image. It can be said that school managers believe in the necessity of inspection. However, it can also be stated that school managers have a negative image of inspectors. Moreover, they get anxious about inspection and they have stress before the inspection, finally they prepare themselves for inspection beforehand for all these reasons.

During inspection

a) Negative Attitudes of Inspectors

The participants with the codes P1, P2, P4, P5, P8 and P10 who were asked for their opinions stated that inspectors perform some negative manners during the inspections. On this matter, P1 stated that: *“I feel myself extremely ready for any type of questions without having any stress and psychological trouble if the inspectors who have expertise in their fields and do their job as it is expected. Thus the language used by inspectors, their manners and attitudes are key elements in the success of inspection. However, inspectors do not act in democratic way. They, mostly, try to find a guilty and sustain the process as if there is a guilty and guilty makes us unhappy and demotivate us to progress our duties. At the same time, such an attitude causes us to lose our enthusiasm”*. Similarly, P5 said that: *“Inspectors behave us bad. They only try to find a deficiency instead of help us with our tasks. In fact, their primary duty is to help school managers to develop their career, not to find a mistake!”*.

b) Inspection Process

The participants with the codes P5, P7, P9, P10, P13 and P16 who were asked for their opinions stated that inspectors can not control all the things they have done for an academic year in a few hours and thus the inspection process is too short to achieve its goals. P5 stated that: *“Inspection is a process task, you can not control a year of a school in a few hours. But, unfortunately, inspectors come and do the inspection in a few hours and this leads them to misevaluate our work”*. P13 on the hand said that: *“Inspection process is too short. They come to school and inspect our one-year performance in a day. How can this be healthy and fair to inspect our one-year performance in a day, the process must be longer.”*

c) The Function of Inspection and Inspectors' Lack of Knowledge

The participants with the codes P1, P5, P8 and P10 who were asked for their opinions stated that the main function and aim of inspection is to improve school organization, but there is a model mostly focused on finding deficiencies now. P1 expressed that: *“Obviously, I, as a school manager, expect these inspectors to help me, but this is not the case. I can't learn anything from inspectors, because they don't intend to do it!”*. Similarly P10 stated that: *“The conditions of inspector and inspected are clear before the items of legal regulations. On these conditions, if the inspector does his tasks, shows the deficiencies then he can help school. But, in practice, this differs a lot, inspectors try to find any deficiencies but not help”*. In addition to his colleagues, P8 also stated that: *“I take help on many things during the inspections but there is another problem, lack of knowledge. None of the inspectors accepts his lack of knowledge on any subject, but in fact no one has to know everything!”*.

d) Psychological Tension and Corruption in School Climate

The participants with the codes P2, P3, P6, P7, P11, P14 and P16 who were asked for their opinions stated that during the inspection process, there is psychological tension and embarrassment at school and all the staff members are badly affected by them. P3 said that: *“Everybody is badly affected with the inspection on that day. Everybody wants the inspection will end as soon as possible, because nobody is eager to see an inspector at school. To be sincere, I also get stressed and don't want to see an inspector at school too!”*. Similarly, P11 expressed his opinions like: *“My psychology is badly affected on inspection day, the reason for this is not only the inspector but also my own self. Because being inspected is not a desired thing for me, moreover the attitudes of inspectors also lead me to think so”*. P14, on the other hand, said that: *“Whenever the inspectors come to school, the psychology of the school gets corrupted, everyone feels annoyed and these also corrupt school climate.”*

e) Communication Problem with the Inspectors

The participants with the codes P4, P9, P12 and P15 who were asked for their opinions stated that the inspectors are generally close to communication and interaction and they hardly give satisfying answers. P4 stated that: *“I can't communicate with the inspectors during the process, because they don't want me to do it so. They generally, give orders and I barely catch a chance to ask any question which prevents us*

to interact and so makes inspection process inefficient". Similarly, P9 stated that: "In fact, I only answer their questions, I don't prefer to ask questions as they just give short answers. Thus, I don't want to ask any questions because there is no sense to ask".

Within the research, the findings related to inspection fear major in some themes: negative attitudes of inspectors, the length of inspection, the function of inspection, psychological tension and communication problems. It can be said that school principals are subject to some negative attitudes of inspectors and have communication problems with them. Moreover, it can also be pointed that school managers find the inspection process too short and get stressed during the inspection. In short, as a result of inspectors' negative attitudes; school is badly affected as a whole and its climate corrupted.

After the inspection

a) Fulfilling Inspection Feedback

The participants with the codes P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9 and P12 who were asked for their opinions stated that they take into consideration the feedbacks of inspectors after the inspection process and what is recommended. On this matter, P5 stated that: "We, as a school, try to improve deficiencies prior to inspection reports. For this purpose, we hold meetings, plan our strategies but there still remains some points". Similarly, P8 expressed that: "Inspectors send us reports with their recommendations on and I, as the principal, have to meet their requirements. Even if, I don't believe in some of these recommendations, I have to realize them". P9 said that: "We do our tasks after the inspection as it is expected. But, it is not possible to realize everything they have recommended".

b) Psychological Relaxation

The participants with the codes P4, P6, P9, P10, P11, P13 and P16 who were asked for their opinions stated all staff members feel relaxed when the inspection process is over. P9, on this matter, stated that: "Although I, personally, have no fault related to my job, a stranger's existence at school and his giving advice about my work stresses me. Thus whenever the inspection is over, I really feel relaxed". Similarly P12 said that: "As soon as the inspectors leave the school I feel comfortable and psychologically relaxed".

c) Devastating Effect of Inspection

The participants with the codes P2, P4, P7, P10, P14 and P15 who were asked for their opinions stated that if there is an inspection act against school management, it will certainly effect the rest of the staff also and thus inspection has a devastating effect with a chain reaction. P7 said that: "Although they are not actually being inspected, teachers, students and even helping-staff get stressed. Thus, we have to relax them to save the school duties and normalize the daily activities." Similarly, P10 expressed that: "While there is inspection at school, even the students can feel it and can easily recognize this anxiety. The students start to behave different than they were which will continue for a while even after the inspection. We try hard to make the thing as they were once". Moreover, P4, also stated that: "The school become a wreck after the inspection. We should remove this wreck and build it at once".

d) The Fear of Getting Discipline Punishment

The participants with the codes P5, P8, P11 and P13 who were asked for their opinions stated that after the inspection, because of some deficiencies they sometimes have the fear of official investigation which will bring them a discipline punishment. For instance, P5 stated his opinions as follow: "We have tasks to do but sometimes because some additional factors we aren't able to do them all. When an inspector realizes it, he has power to start an investigation and this worries me. As a school manager, this destroys me. Once, I experienced such a thing and thus I believe in fulfilling any type of recommendation written in inspection report." Similarly P11, stated that: "Sometimes, we, the school managers, are expected to take some risks and manage them as well to improve our schools. But if someone, especially an inspector recognizes such a situation then this means you will get in trouble with some investigation process. At

least they, the inspectors, put these things on final report and at the beginning of next inspection, the first thing to look is this so-called "last-year's report", so that I have such fears about inspection."

Within the research, the findings related to after-inspection fear major in some themes: fulfilling inspection feedbacks, psychological relaxation, devastating effect of inspection and fear of getting discipline punishment. It can be said that school managers feel relaxed at the end of the inspections. According to school managers, inspection has a devastating affect and they try hard to eliminate this affect. Finally, school managers tend to be cautious about discipline punishment and thus pay great attention to inspection reports.

4. Results and discussion

In this research, we found that school managers perceive inspection as negative but they can not discard it as it has lots of benefits for school and education process. The main objective for the study is to investigate whether school managers have a type of fear related to inspection and our findings has showed that they have such fear in fact, and it brings negative impact on school management. The participants generally stated that they try hard to prepare their school for inspection by filling all the forms and perform other related bureaucratic behaviors because of this fear. On the other hand, principals also stated that some of the inspectors have undesired behaviours, close to communication and far from being helpful, even devastating and these characteristics badly effect school climate. Similarly, Kocabas and Ozdemir (2010) and Aydin (2008), as well, reached such a result that metaphors related to inspectors are mainly about power and fear themes and they have negative images. Moreover, Yildirim (2012), Toremén & Dos (2009) and Sumbul & Inandi (2005) discussed that teachers and inspectors have negative images against eachother.

School managers suggested that because the inspectors have information gap, they coul not help and guide to school staff as they were expected. Many studies prove this result that inspectors can not help school staff properly (Sagir, 2005; Yuksel, 2001; Gul, 2001; Kilic, 1999, Buyukaslan, 1998; Ecevit, 1996; Patterson, 1990; Hobson, 1990; Richardson, 1998 and Chunn, 1986). However, they also stated that inspectors have added something to their professional developmet and tasks to be done regularly. It can also be said that school managers, certainly, take inspection reports into consideration in order to get ready for the following year's inspection. They try to realize suggested topics on these reports and make necessary improvements till next year. Finally, it can be said that, prior to the finding of this study, inspite of its negative manner, inspection fear contribute to principals' managing habits.

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