

Assessment by Primary School Teachers About Education Supervisors Controlling The Maths Lesson¹

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Abstract

Maths which is very important in students' lives and presenting how they use their ability while doing the job during controlling the lesson are quite necessary by means of making the aims of the Maths lessons real in a higher level for students and motivating the primary school teachers. Qualitative model has been used in the study. The study has been done with 23 primary school teachers working in Selcuk district of Izmir. During the study, datas have been gathered with open-ended written survey to the teachers. These datas gained by open-ended written survey from teachers have been assessed by analyzing the datas descriptively. Descriptions have been classified by categorizing as "positive", "negative" and "neutral". According to the findings of the study, primary school teachers described mostly "negative" for the attitudes of the education supervisors controlling the Maths lessons and their ability to control the lesson.

Keywords: Primary school teacher, Maths education, Education control

1. Introduction

Changes in science and technology has caused some innovations in the field of education. These innovations has taken over as using technology in classrooms and preparing different activities for each individual. Among the activities carried out in classrooms, one of the lessons which needs to be prepared and programmed in the most careful way is Maths. Maths, especially in elementary level, is one of the lessons that students have difficulties. Therefore, in elementary school, teachers should try harder in making effective education and teaching experiences enjoyed by students real in order to make the aims of Maths real for the students in the highest level while especially giving Maths lessons.

1.1. Importance of Maths lesson in the first grade of Primary School

Maths, one of the oldest Positive sciences, has always been one of the most difficult fields to learn and teach by means of its abstract nature. However, Maths teachers have not had as many educational materials as in other fields in order to transport knowledge to the students, especially to make abstract concepts concrete in their minds. It is certain that one of the most important reasons behind adjectives described by learners in each level like "difficult to understand", "complex" and "boring" for Maths is these difficulties which a few number of people worried about teaching and really understanding it have in teaching Maths (Çiftçi, 2006).

Maths is one of the most important ways known as improving thinking. Being able to think, the main feature dividing human being from other living things, is an ability to understand occasions and organize concepts suitable for themselves again.

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That is why Maths education develops one of the important structure in basic education, maybe the most important one. (Umay, 2003; Yenilmez and Teke, 2008). Learning Maths is obligatory as a field developing behaviours necessary for everybody like being able to think in a logical way and analyze, develop mental independence, think in a creative way, recognize relations and generalize, think in a logical way and have communication in solutions to different kinds of problems that we face in our daily lives. (Altun, 2005).

Maths has become to be seen as a way of thinking beyond being an abstract work including theoretical proof, technological knowledge and a lot of formulas (Schoenfeld, 1985; Akt: Özsoy, 2005). In other words, teaching a student to make him successful in his life, educate him in a creative way depends on not only his knowledge of formulas, doing calculations correct but also development of his mathematical understanding and thinking. This becomes possible by balancing students' processing and concept and knowledge by giving importance to the concept and relations rather than operational ways of solutions in school Maths (Baki, 1998). For this reason, the higher the teachers' awarenesses of mathematical knowledge that students need to have are, the more the success increases in a functional way (Baki & Kartal, 2004). Especially in the first grade of elementary school when students have their first Maths class, that teachers teach students to think in a mathematical way is important by means of making them more successful, questioning and creative individuals.

1.2. Controlling the lesson

Controlling the lesson is defined as planned and scheduled complement of actions done in order to improve the process of learning and teaching, guide the teacher, measure and assess students' successes by scientific methods, provide union and integrity in teaching at schools and identify teachers' successes at teaching. It focuses on classroom activities (Karakaya, 1988: 87) It involves making up for deficiencies of the teacher, develop his abilities, make him adjust himself to the profession and environment, his improvement and changes besides evaluating his success at teaching and giving lesson (Taymaz, 2002: 114). It can be said that the main aim of controlling the lesson is to help teachers. It is certain that the main aim of helping teachers is to improve learning and teaching process. (Seçkin, 1998: 209). In accordance with this main aim, it has been aimed at leading and helping the teacher about affecting his behaviours in classroom, choosing, evaluating and using materials and methods relating to teaching in order to improve teaching (Şişman, 2002: 51).

According to Dağlı & Akyıldız's (2009) study titled "Elementary school supervisors' ethic behaviours according to elementary school teachers' opinion", it has been seen that % 27.2 of the teachers "never", %33.3 "inconsiderably", %25.9 "partly", %9 "mostly" and %4.5 of them "totally" agree with the statement "They try to know and understand teachers". Average figure related to their agreement with this statement of the behaviour is 2.30 and this figure shows that teachers agree "inconsiderably" with the statement of behaviour. According to Gündüz's (2010) study titled "Analyzing attitudes of the administrator and teachers working in elementary schools towards the elementary school supervisors", administrator and teachers working in elementary schools have said "I am inconsistent" with the arithmetic average to the matter ($\bar{x} = 3.25$) "I am acknowledged enough by supervisors". Participants in Özdemir Boydak Özkan and Akgün's (25.08.2011) study titled "Points that teachers supervised are pleased or not pleased in the process of inspection" have emphasized the necessity of avoiding attitudes and behaviours to depress the teacher, decrease his motivation, discouraging criticisms and humiliating words and behaviours during the inspection. Another one of the points needed to be emphasized is participants' opinions asserted that supervisors act without any respect.

1.3. Capabilities of the Education Supervisor

Education supervisors need to have some capabilities to carry out their profession. These capabilities can be gathered in three groups. These capabilities are being technical as an authority, humanist in a system in which human being factor is dominant decision capabilities to solve and assess problems. (Taymaz, 2002: 41).

a) Technical Capabilities: They involve technical knowledge, ability and attitudes in the field of activity related to the task. There are methods, techniques and processes to be used in technical capability.

b) Humanist Capabilities: They can be accepted as abilities of motivating, making the mood higher, understanding an individual or groups. They can be thought as composing an effort together, identifying beliefs and attitudes and their methods of usage, caring about individual differences, features related to human relations.

c) Decision Capabilities: They are a process to judge in order to find out the level of reaching the aims, finding solutions to plans of the studies to be done. Decision capability includes not only the stage until the decision is made but also carrying out and evaluating the decision.

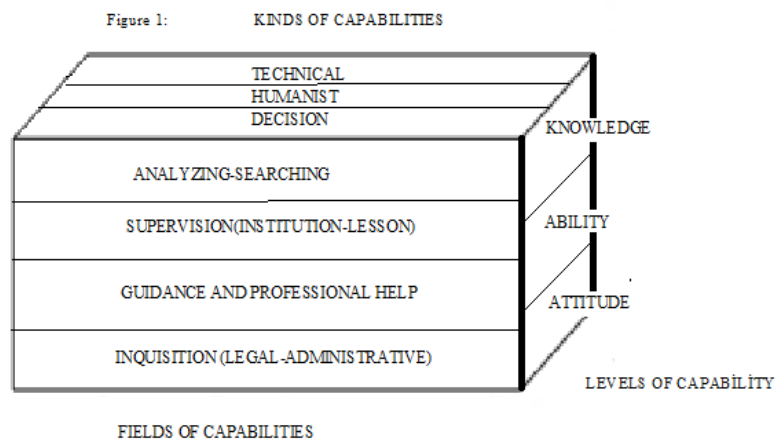


Figure1 The Model of Dimensions and Relations of Supervisor Capabilities

Resource: Başar, H. (1993) Education Supervisor. Ankara: Education Faculty of Hacettepe University, p.91

According to Gündüz's (2010) study titled "Analyzing attitudes relating to elementary school supervisors towards administrators and teachers working in elementary school", administrators and teachers working in elementary schools have said "I agree" with the arithmetic average to the matter ($\bar{X} = 3.57$) "Supervisors deal with documents rather than education and teaching". According to Ünal & Yavuz, M. and Küçüker's (2011) study titled "Assessing educational problems of the city Konya according to elementary school supervisors' end of term reports, education supervisors demand education appropriate for current issues and take it as a problem if this education cannot be provided.

2. The Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to state capabilities of controlling the lesson of the elementary school supervisors controlling Maths lessons and their attitudes towards teachers according to primary school teachers' opinions. As minor problems, (1) the attitudes of the education supervisors controlling Maths lessons according to primary school teachers' opinions, (2) capabilities of the education supervisors controlling Maths lessons according to primary school teachers' opinions have been searched. Stating the attitude of the education supervisor controlling primary school teachers giving Maths lessons which is necessary in students' lives while controlling the Maths lesson and how they use their capabilities while controlling the lesson is crucial by means of making the aims of the Maths lesson real for students in a higher level and motivating primary school teachers.

3. The Method

Qualitative method of study has been used in the study. The study have been carried out with 23 primary school teachers working as primary school teachers in Selçuk province of Izmir city. The selection of these teachers was according to the aimed exemplification method. In the study, datas have been gathered with open-ended questionnaire applied on teachers who had an exemplification. Because it has been aimed at having unique answers from participants in the study, "open-ended questionnaire" has been used. In the open-ended questionnaire ;

- ✓ As related to the first minor problem "What are your opinions about the attitudes of the education supervisor while he is controlling the Maths lesson?",
- ✓ As related to the second problem "How does the education supervisor assess your activities of preparation, planning, applying and evaluating while he is controlling the Maths lesson?", "How does the education supervisor assess the methods and techniques you use while he is controlling the Maths lesson ?" and "How does the education supervisor assess the efforts you make in order to get over difficulties resulted from the environment and you encounter during the application of the programme while he is controlling the lesson?"

Questions like above were asked to the primary school teachers. By analyzing these datas gained with open-ended descriptive questionnaire from primary school teachers, behaviours towards teachers and capabilities of controlling the lesson of education supervisors controlling the Maths lesson have been assessed. Descriptions have been classified by categorizing as “positive”, ”negative” and “neutral”.

4. Findings and Commentary

In this part, minor problems determined before have been answered.

4.1. Findings and Comments related to the first minor problem

The answers to the question taken place in the open-ended questionnaire for the first minor problem of the study “What are your opinions about the attitudes of the education supervisor while he is controlling the Maths lesson?” have been stated below.

Descriptions related to the positive attitudes of the education supervisor while he is controlling the Maths lesson:

- Education supervisor did not behave in a negative way while he is controlling the lesson. Positive statements he said motivated me. (C.T.5).

Descriptions related to the negative attitudes of the education supervisor while he is controlling the Maths lesson:

- Capabilities of children should be supervised rather than the number of children rising hands up. (C.T.1).
- I would like him to have more conversations with the children and to participate the lesson more. (C.T.4).
- They think we are people who raise children as contestants to participate in a quiz show. (C.T.6).
- The important thing is to detect a weak point. To appreciate is as it were really hard for supervisors. (C.T.7).
- I cannot say all of them are negative, but most of them behave in a way that we would not like. (C.T.8).
- I would not even mention its importance for the teachers, but students are willing to give reaction towards warm and sincere attitudes. I would like them to understand its importance. (C.T.10).
- They ignore our professional problems. (C.T.11).
- They expect unreal things related to the class level. (C.T.12).
- There is no standard among them. Each of them raises another claim. (C.T.14).
- It is a supervision that does not affect the results positively. (C.T.18).
- I have not encountered very positive behaviours of theirs. (C.T.19).
- Supervisors usually begin the controlling with positive sentences and finish it with negative ones. (C.T.15).
- He considered solutions that students made for the questions with different techniques negative and expected students to answer in the way he wanted. That he asked remindful questions about subjects which students learnt throughout full year was the positive thing about him. (C.T.2).
- They usually criticize by considering a few students’ knowledge, having a general opinion. Some of them are really helpful. (C.T.16).
- We sometimes learn good and useful points even if they are a few. However, they mostly behave in a bad way. Perhaps, it seems to us like that. (C.T.17).
- Their negative attitudes : Although deficiencies in a strict manner are rare, they are pleased with the plan and the content of the lesson. (C.T.20).

Descriptions that are neutral about the attitudes of the education supervisor while he is controlling the Maths lesson

- Supervisors have not observed my lesson yet. I do not have any positive or negative opinion. (22).

Opinions of the primary school teachers about the attitudes of the education supervisors while controlling the Maths lesson are predominantly negative. Primary school teachers believe that they do not get appropriate attitudes for their expectations and needs in controlling the Maths lesson and may have prejudice about controlling the Maths lesson and education supervisors

4.2. Findings and Comments related to the second minor problem

There is a question written in the open-ended questionnaire for the second minor problem of the study. The answers for the question 'How does the education supervisor assess your preparation, planning application and assessment activities while controlling the mathematics classes' are given below.

Education supervisors' positive descriptions about the assessment of preparation, planning, application and assessment activities while controlling the mathematics class

- An education supervisor firstly looks at my plans while controlling the mathematics class. He finds out how I have planned my class and on which part of the plan I am (C.T.5).

Education supervisors' negative descriptions about the assessment of preparation, planning, application and assessment activities while controlling the mathematics class.

- He mostly checks the documents (C.T.1).
- The discussions were made about giving classes by including the activities in the teachers' book and by planning the extra activities done except the ones in the teachers' book. I want to mention that I believe the preparation, planning and application- assessments parts have not been able to be achieved properly if the weekly class hours are taken into consideration. Even if it is not accepted, this is the case...(C.T.3)
- If you have a plan, it is OK. (C.T.6).
- Each education supervisor asks for a different thing. They should have a common attitude so that the teacher can arrange everything according to that. (C.T.7).
- He controls according to the fixed questions in his mind (C.T.9).
- They forget that they can't behave in the same way in every school. The teacher is same, but students' profiles may change. However, they also forget about the need for the flexibility in the framework program because of changing student profiles (C.T.10).
- Plans haven't been cared recently as there are teachers' books (C.T.11).
- We are expected to obey fixed and old fashioned rules (C.T.12).
- They behave in a traditional way about the plans (C.T.13).
- It is enough for them if we have plans and scales (C.T.14).
- He inspects the plans in detail, but he doesn't say anything except the deficiencies and procedures (C.T.15).
- Most of them inspect in detail, but they just mention the deficiencies of it (C.T.16).
- Plans are not inspected much (C.T.18).
- They ask questions that they have memorized to the students (C.T.19).
- Even if they like most of the activities and find them suitable, they criticize this issue by putting forward a nonsense deficiency. They insist us to use the activities that they themselves like (C.T.20).
- They inspect the plans, listen to the lesson and assess just by asking a few questions (C.T.4).
- They pay attention how much we use of the teachers' book while planning (C.T.8).
- Some inspect in details whereas some do not ask a question (C.T.17).
- He liked my preparation activity. He also liked the planning. He had detected some of my deficiencies in the application part. He found some deficiencies in the assessment part (C.T.23).

Education supervisors' neutral descriptions about the assessment of preparation, planning, application and assessment activities while controlling the mathematics class.

- In all the inspections I have had, I have never been assessed like that before. He wanted me to plan the activities done in general. He stated that only the teachers' books should not be used. (C.T.2).
- Education supervisors did not listen to my lessons (C.T.22).
- He did not listen to my lessons. Education supervisors mostly deal with the Turkish class and check the documents (C.T.21).

The primary school teachers' ideas about education supervisors' control activities for the planning, application and assessment processes of the mathematics class are that rough and simple assessments are done mostly by sticking to the formalities. Although the primary school teachers expect to have more informative inspections and to be inspected according to their real needs, the education supervisors do not meet this need.

The answers for the question which is written in the open-ended questionnaire 'How does the education supervisor assess your methods and techniques while inspecting the mathematics class?' are stated below.

The education supervisors' positive descriptions about the assessment of the methods and techniques used while inspecting the mathematics class.

- It was positive. It was agreed about the negative sides of the traditional methods especially for some acquisitions (C.T.3).
- He made positive descriptions as I used question and answer techniques, hands on activities and group work (C.T.4).
- I am trying to use more than one method and technique, as I have supported my teaching with drama and visual activities, the education supervisors appreciated my teaching (C.T.%).

The education supervisors' negative descriptions about the assessment of the methods and techniques used while inspecting the mathematics class.

- They do not help much for our methods and techniques (C.T.6).
- They state that visual activities should be given importance. They said that the cross-curriculum activities should be done (C.T.2).
- Only the answers they gave at that time are important. Methods and techniques do not have much importance (C.T.7).
- They do not ask the methods and techniques I use. They assess according to what they know (C.T.9).
- None of the techniques is used properly for them (C.T.11).
- We are asked to use techniques of the new system, but there is no explanation how they are applied (C.T.12).
- They deal with the outcome rather the process of the education (C.T.13).
- He/ she enters the class and ask a question to one of the students he choose randomly. This means that they find out our technique (C.T.14).
- They mention about several method that we know as well, but they do not know the scientific term well (C.T.16).
- They inspect whether we use any materials, but they do not ask how we use them (C.T.17).
- As they give importance to the outcome, the technique is not so important (C.T.18).
- He/she does not appreciate the methods and techniques we use, he/she assesses according to his own knowledge (C.T.20).
- He requested me to improve or vary my methods and techniques (C.T.23).

The education supervisors' neutral descriptions about the assessment of the methods and techniques used while inspecting the mathematics class.

- I do not know (C.T.1).
- They give some suggestions after they listen to the lesson (C.T.8).
- I do not have any idea how the education supervisor assess (C.T.10).
- He did not listen to my lesson (C.T.22).

The primary school teachers think that education supervisors made mainly traditional assessments while inspecting the methods and techniques used in the mathematics class. Primary school teachers want to learn about the methods and techniques of the new system, but it is obvious that education supervisors have mentioned only about the general application rules rather than pragmatic application examples.

The answers for the question which is written in the open-ended questionnaire ‘*How does the education supervisor assess the efforts you make in order to overcome the difficulties encountered while applying the program or the ones which are caused by the environment?*’ are stated below.

The education supervisors’ positive descriptions for the mathematic class’ assessment about the efforts done to overcome the difficulties encountered while the program is applied and the ones caused by the environment.

- They gave positive assessments (C.T.2).
- We talked positively. He highly appreciated my efforts as he knows about the student and parents capacity of our school (C.T.23).

The education supervisors’ negative descriptions for the mathematic class’ assessment about the efforts done to overcome the difficulties encountered while the program is applied and the ones caused by the environment.

- We do not have enough power to change the problems caused by environment (C.T.6).
- They all underestimate. They behave as if they had never been teachers before (C.T.7).
- They don’t even ask (C.T.9).
- We struggle a lot, but the education supervisors do not share their ideas a lot, we only may learn about their ideas when the inspection reports are received (C.T.10).
- Each of them gives different ideas (C.T.11).
- They mostly focus on our deficiencies rather than our efforts (C.T.12).
- They focus on finding our deficiencies rather than appreciating our efforts (C.T.13).
- They ignore our complaints about the problems caused by environment thinking that these problems are common in all areas (C.T.16).
- They assess the environmental issues in general not just for the mathematics class (C.T.17).
- They want us to be aware of the problems caused by environment and to take into consideration these problems (C.T.18).
- They do not even listen (C.T.19).
- I feel that I am underestimated while explaining my efforts. They always want more (C.T.20).
- They asked us to be self-sacrificing and to give lessons at the lunch times. They say that the teachers should be self-scarifying and do more (C.T.22).

The education supervisors’ neutral descriptions for the mathematic class’ assessment about the efforts done to overcome the difficulties encountered while the program is applied and the ones caused by the environment.

- We do not have any serious problems caused by the environment (C.T.15).
- We do not have any serious problems caused by environment (C.T.8).
- He did not do any comment (C.T.4).
- They said that we should put pressure on the parents, but we should not insist if they reject. I do not know what they mean (C.T.14).

The description of the primary school teachers who are pleased with the education supervisors’ assessment of the dealing the environmental problems in maths programmes are limited. However, the description of the primary school teachers who are not pleased with these assessments are more common. Furthermore, primary school teachers think it is wearisome that environmental problems in the application of the Maths programme are reflected as if they are professional deficiencies by the education supervisors.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

According to the findings of the study, primary school teachers have predominantly “negative” descriptions related to the controlling the lesson capabilities and the attitudes of the education supervisors controlling Maths lessons.

According to the findings of the study, these can be suggested: (1) Opinions stated by primary school teachers related to the attitudes of the education supervisors while controlling the Maths lesson are predominantly negative. Developing an awareness about the fact that it is necessary for education supervisors to behave more positively while controlling primary school teachers' Maths lessons can affect the social side of the supervision. (2) Opinions of primary school teachers related to supervision studies of education supervisors in processes of planning, application and assessment of Maths lesson are that they are assessed generally and simply rather by considering formalities /documentaries. Evaluating the efforts of primary school teachers for Maths lessons in an objective and functional way by education supervisors can increase the effectiveness of the supervision. (3) Primary school teachers think that rather traditional assessments are made in assessments by education supervisors about the educational methods and techniques used in Maths lessons. If education supervisors try to help primary school teachers by educational activities based on excellence" and application about the methods and techniques to be used in carrying out Maths lessons, Prejudices about the education supervisor and the supervision can be prevented. (4) Descriptions by primary school teachers who are not pleased with the assessment by the education supervisor about the efforts to solve environmental problems in application of the Maths programme are more excessive. Appreciation to be made by education supervisors about the efforts of primary school teachers to solve environmental problems in application of Maths programme can be effective in motivating the teacher.

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