

## Supervisory Process in Pre-school Education in Turkey<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

It was the responsibility of primary education supervisors to oversee the activities of pre-school education (PE) schools. All stakeholders in the education system, including teachers, principals and supervisors, were used to experiencing problems in the supervisory process related to early education. To address the issue, the Ministry of National Education (MONE) enacted new legislation that took the responsibility for auditing pre-school education teachers away from primary education supervisors, passing the duty to school principals. In the study, instrumental case study method, one of the qualitative research designs, has been adopted. The current study aims to shed light on functional and dysfunctional aspects of supervision in pre-school education. In order to scrutinize the new regulations related to the supervisory process in pre-school education, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with eight independent pre-school principals working in Van, Turkey. The current study utilized the instrumental case study approach, with the case being the principals' understanding and

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implementation of new regulations in the supervisory process in a pre-school setting. This case is bounded by both time, having started immediately after Ministry of National Education issued a new regulation on supervisory processes, and by context, being the accounts of principals who work only in independent schools. The data obtained from the study were subjected to content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that while the previous supervisory process did not function as intended, the respondent principals had some reservations related to the new supervisory process.

**Keywords:** *Pre-school education, supervision, primary education supervisors*

## Introduction

It is well known fact that the later academic outcomes of students are influenced strongly by their learning experiences as a child, and that leadership is a key factor in making early childhood education successful, since school principals are the second most influential asset behind student achievement after teachers (Leithwood, Jantzi, Earl, Watson & Fullan, 2004). Despite this, leadership in early childhood education is greatly under-represented in academic literature, as the majority of studies focus on primary and secondary education. Thus, the early childhood education setting has been addressed only to a limited extent in studies (Bush, 2012). The terms ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ are sometimes used interchangeably, in that the two activities are often carried out in schools by the same people, although there is a distinction between the two concepts. While the former refers to vision, strategy, the creation of direction and transformation of the organization, the latter refers to the effective implementation of the vision and operational matters, ensuring the organization is run effectively and efficiently, allowing it to achieve its goals (Wa Ho, 2011). The concepts of support and relationship development in education are similar to those experienced in corporations, where the chief executive officer (CEO) aims to establish relationships and to garner support within the organization (Fleming & Love, 2003). School directors are pivotal in the success of a school, being the leader of what is essentially a child-care organization. His or her leadership supports the processes behind change within the organization. Being the director of an early childhood education school is no easy task, and can be of equal complexity as a corporate organization. A pre-school principal is required to ensure harmony among all those involved in education and in the care of young children. The corporate system of early education comprises parents, staff, directors, MONE board members and members from outside the community. In order to succeed in pre-school education, schools directors need to connect all stakeholders for the sake of children (Fleming & Love, 2003). The leadership responsibilities include quality improvement, pedagogical leadership, daily management, human resources management, external relations and advocating pre-school education within the community (Heikka & Hujala, 2013).

Considering the broad variety of programs and roles in the field of early education, it is easy to understand the challenges faced when trying to reach consensus on the type of preparation

leaders should have. First of all, an understanding of the needs and characteristics of school-age children is necessary for work in the field (Schomburg, 1999). Wa Ho (2011) identified three major roles of the school principal, being: role model; school manager; mentor for the curriculum and pedagogy. Regarding these roles, teachers, support staff and parents generally viewed themselves as followers, with the practice of school leadership being largely centralized on the principal him/herself. A leader's actions should be a model for the people that follow him or her, and effective leaders encourage their staff to be self-sufficient and interdependent, which enables colleagues to contribute and draw upon each other's talents (Arora, 2013).

The most important agent for effective school is also defined as "school administrators" by Turkish teachers. They further indicated that their supreme expectations from school administrators are his/her encouragements, cooperation and empathizing ability in personal relations (Uğurlu & Abdurrezzak, 2016). In order to accomplish all these task administrators should be able to adapt renovation in educational systems as Turkish educational system has been changing in a regular basis. The last and dramatic change has happened in Turkey in 2012, when the eight year mandatory education was increased to 12 years, divided into three different levels, and referred to as the 4+4+4 system. (Karadeniz & Ulusoy, 2015). This new system assigned goals for early education, with the schooling rate for pre-school education aimed to be increased to 100 percent for children aged 48–66 months. Unfortunately, the recent schooling rate is still 27 percent for the 3-4 year-old age group, 37 percent for the 4–5 year-old age group, and 42 percent for the 5 year-old age group (MONE, 2014a). The government decided to place more emphasis to raising the schooling rate of pre-school education due to the associated positive effect on the overall development of children. The main objectives of early education are defined in Turkey as follows:

- To educate children to be respectful of national values.
- To improve the physical, cognitive and emotional development of children.
- To ensure the children speak Turkish smoothly and fluently.
- To make children creative, communicative and understanding of others.
- To prepare children for primary education.

As is the case with all levels of education, early education needs to be supervised to establish whether or not all of these objectives are being attained. Supervision is a process in which

somebody is appointed to monitor the operation of organization. In short, supervision involves evaluating the purpose of organization, and then assessing the steps taken to reach that purpose (Kaya, 1991). All organizations need to be measured and evaluated to assess their performance, and supervision is the most common way of evaluating the success of a school. This approach involves determining criteria for success, and measuring whether school activities meet them. The supervisory process can be defined as controlling the operation of schools in line with public interest (Yavuz, 2010). Supervision is a dynamic process that facilitates dialogue aimed at promoting instructional improvement, and is also central to the revitalization of classroom teaching and learning in the new century. The school supervisory process has witnessed a shift from an inspection to an evaluation model. In contrast to the inspection approach, the new paradigm of the supervisory process is collaborative rather than hierarchical, dialogic rather than didactic, descriptive rather than judgmental, and supportive rather than punitive (Sullivan & Glanz, 2000). Studies have revealed that teachers want and need feedback about their performance, but as it stands, they rarely receive information that may help them to improve their work. Teachers are often judged on their performance, and are advised on how to improve themselves; however, what would be more beneficial would be descriptions of practices and the desired effect on students (Akbaba, 2002; Akdağ, 2014; Haser, 2009; Sullivan & Glanz, 2000). This could be achieved by effective supervision process in educational system (Başaran, 2000; Gürkan, 2006). As such, MONE made both structural and practical changes in this supervisory system to make it more effective (Turan, 2016).

MONE is the governing body overseeing pre-school education in Turkey, where pre-school education is offered in two types of public schools: independent pre-schools and primary schools. The former tend to be housed in their own separate building and garden, while the latter are generally only a classroom in a primary schools in which the first to eighth grades are taught. The pre-school classes in primary schools have been established by turning primary education classes into pre-school classes. Independent schools, on the other hand, provide a better educational environment for young children as they are generally run by principles with a pre-school education background. These schools generally have five classes, making both curricular and caring tasks much easier to maintain when compared to primary schools. Some primary schools have more than 2,000 students, and so pre-school classes are often neglected (Sahin & Dostoglu, 2014).

Independent pre-schools and primary pre-school classes used to be supervised by primary education supervisors in Turkey. All stakeholders in the education system, including teachers, principals and supervisors, were used to experiencing problems in the supervisory process related to early education since supervisors were not specialized on pre-school education (Budak, 2009; Büte & Balcı, 2010; Dağlıoğlu, 2008; Haktanır, 2008; Yücel, 2009). To become a supervisor, a teacher needs to work in a public school for eight years, after which they are required to take a written and oral examination. Teachers who pass this exam work as a deputy supervisor for three years, and then have to take another exam to become a supervisor. In addition to teachers with eight years of experience, those engaged in art and science, law, political science, theology and economics are able to take the supervisors' examination, as long as they get the necessary score in the Public Personnel Selection Examinations (MONE, 2014b). Almost all primary education supervisors are male, since the working conditions would be hard for a woman. Supervisors have spent most of their time travelling, and often return home late, sometimes even having to stay close to the facility they are supervising (Tok, 2013). Supervisor applicants should have no health problems that may hinder them from travelling (MONE, 2014b). As such, female teachers avoid becoming a supervisor. Considering the fact that pre-school education is provided mostly by female teachers, reasons for the shortage of supervisors with pre-school education background appears (Tok, 2013). To address the issue, the Ministry of National Education (MONE) enacted new legislation that took the responsibility for auditing pre-school education teachers away from primary education supervisors, passing the duty to school principals, as the teachers' executive managers, who, it was believed, were better placed to observe and guide teachers in schools (Turan, 2016).

Primary education supervisors generally are trained in the supervision of primary education schools. Although pre-school education and primary education have some common characteristics, pre-school education has a number of exclusive features, meaning that they need to be inspected and evaluated by a supervisor with knowledge of the development and learning style of young children. Due to a lack of knowledge of pre-school education, primary education supervisors tend to evaluate pre-school education teachers using the same criteria used in the assessment of primary school teachers. This is a flawed approach, in that pre-school classes are not bound by lesson schedules, since their daily schedules are

continuous – in other words, there are no lessons in pre-school education. Still, primary education supervisors ask for lesson schedule when supervising pre-school education teachers (Akdağ, 2014). Teachers have also reported that supervisory process is weak in several aspects. First of all, they have claimed that they are not informed about their supervision, and that their ideas are not taken into consideration at any stage of the process. Second, they often stress the lack of knowledge and experience of supervisors in pre-school education, expressing that supervisors make no contribution to their personal or professional development. Teachers have complained further about the duration of assessment, claiming that it is not long enough to understand the educational situation in class, to communicate with the teacher or manager, to observe classroom processes, to draw conclusions, to evaluate and share the results, or to develop new and creative solutions. Finally, teachers have stated that the supervisors were not suitably equipped to identify their needs and to guide them to develop new strategies to fulfil the environmental expectations (Sabancı & Ömeroğlu, 2013).

Table 1

*Number of Schools, Students, Teachers and Classrooms by Types of Education in Pre-primary Education Institutions in the 2013–14 Academic Years.*

Type of Schools	Schools	Number of Students	Number of Teachers			Number of Classes
			Male	Female	Total	
Pre-primary education (public Private)	26 698	1 059 495	3 387	59 940	63 327	50 466
Pre-primary Education (Public)	22 771	923 590	48 333	2 843	45 490	37 387
Pre-primary Education (Private)	3 927	135 905	14 994	544	14 450	13 079
Independent Kindergartens (public)	2 087	239 217	1 204	11 390	12 603	8 313
Total Number of Nursery Classes	21 268	704 315	1 678	35 791	37 468	31 652

Table 2

*Number of Schools, Students, Teachers and Classrooms by Types of Education in Primary Education Institutions in the 2013–14 Academic Years.*

Type of School	Schools	Number of Students	Number of Teachers			Number of Classes
			Male	Female	Total	
Primary Schools	28 532	5 574 916	120 661	167 783	288 444	243 305
Primary school (public)	27 461	5 390 591	115 548	151 623	267 171	227 679
Primary school (private)	1 071	184 325	5 113	16 160	21 273	15 626

Tables 1 and 2 present the number of schools, students and teachers to which primary education supervisors are responsible for guidance, supervision and assessment in primary education. There are currently 2,810 primary education supervisors affiliated to MONE (2014b). In Van, as the location of the current study, there are only 17 supervisors on duty, and there is a need for 32 more (MONE, 2014b). As a result of this shortage, supervisors are unable to visit schools on a regular basis, with some being visited only once in three years. Principals would actually welcome supervisor visits to their schools if they could provide them with appropriate guidance. This study confirms a finding of previous studies, indicating that supervisors tend to spend their time checking documentation rather than focusing directly on increasing the quality of education and training (Yavuz, 2010). According to the feedback received from the principals, the issues for which the principals are most often criticized by the supervisors are not related directly to education or training. This has led MONE to put in place new regulations related to the supervisory process in early education that prohibits primary education supervisors from entering pre-school classes to observe teachers' performance. The current study aims to shed light on the pros and cons of supervision in pre-school education, which is now carried out by the school director in line with recently issued legislation.

Following the enactment of new supervisory regulations in Turkey, primary education supervisors will no longer inspect pre-school education teachers. This task will now be undertaken by their school principals, who can observe and guide teachers in schools more effectively. There are many studies scrutinizing effectiveness of previous supervision process and almost all of them referred negative aspects of it (Budak, 2009; Büte & Balcı, 2010; Dağlıoğlu, 2008; Haktanır, 2008; Turan, 2016; Yücel, 2009).. New regulation is promising to yield more favorable outcomes as teachers will be supervised and guided by their administrators who have a pre-school education background. School administrators are also capable of evaluating teachers' performance based on the context in which they live. The current study aims to shed light on functional and dysfunctional aspects of supervision in pre-school education. More precisely, this study has been developed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What is the reason behind the new regulations in pre-school education?
- 2) What are the advantages and disadvantages of the new regulatory and supervisory process in pre-school education?
- 3) How will principals implement the new regulations in their school?

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

Creswell (2007) stated that the research process for qualitative researchers is emergent, meaning that an initial plan for a potential research cannot be tightly organized. Alterations do not necessarily occur at the beginning of a research, in that all phases of the process may change or shift after the researchers enter the field and begin to collect data. The current study is no exception in this regard, and immediately after researcher had developed the interview protocol and was about to begin data collection, the legislation related to supervision in pre-school education changed. As a result, the researcher shifted focus more towards the principals than the teachers, and the design of the study and the interview protocols were also modified.

Pre-school teachers often feel isolated in primary schools, in that primary schools have generally only one pre-school class. Principals tend to lack the relevant knowledge, and this is accompanied by a lack of support given to primary schools (Akdağ, 2014). Accordingly, only the principals of independent schools were chosen for this study, all of whom had graduated from a pre-school teacher education program and had worked as a teacher for at least five years before becoming a principal. An additional reason for the omission of primary school principals from the study is their potential lack of knowledge of the new regulations.

In order to reach participants researcher called all of the 25 schools in Van and she introduced herself, discussed the purpose of the study and asked for cooperation. Following this, non-respondents were contacted with a follow-up phone call again. Researcher could not reach four administrators, seven of them refused to join this study due to their tight schedule, three of them agreed to join study but researcher could not make an appointment with them for

various reason, finally three schools were really far from city center and located in unsafe neighborhood so researcher removed those schools' administrators from participant list. In the end, researchers reached eight independent pre-school principals, all of whom were employed in Van. The average duration of experience of the principals was 11.6 years, and all had been involved in a supervisory process on numerous occasions. There are 25 independent schools in Van, but only eight were available for this study. Table 3 represents participant characteristics.

Table 3  
*Participant Characteristics*

Principals	Years of Experience	Number of Teachers	Number of Students
A1	11	10	190
A2	10	8	170
A3	14	8	170
A4	8	5	100
A5	12	14	260
A6	12	7	120
A7	12	12	200
A8	14	8	152

### **Data Collection**

In order to scrutinize the new regulations related to supervision in pre-school education, the researcher conducted semi-structured interview with eight principals using an interview protocol that was designed based on related literature. The researcher had already carried out a similar research in which focus was on the supervisory process related to beginning pre-school teachers, during which several issues were detected in pre-school education. While the identified issues were specific to novice teachers, they were helpful in the construction of an interview protocol for both new and experienced teachers. The researcher determined a number of questions aimed at garnering in-depth information about the new regulations and their effect on the supervisory process in pre-school education in Turkey. Table 4 demonstrated examples of interview questions:

Table 4  
*Sample Questions of Interview Protocol*

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Why MONE has issued this new regulation?
Have you experienced problems during supervision?
How will you implement new regulation?
What is the reaction of teachers to the new regulation

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The interview protocol was assessed for appropriateness by a primary education supervisor with 30 years of experience, and by a pre-school education principal with 13 years of experience, after which, interviews were conducted with the participating principals. Demographic information form was not prepared as the sample size quite small researcher asked demographic question beginning of the interview. The principals were asked about the implementation of the new regulations and the former supervisory process in pre-school education. All of the interviews took place in the participants' schools, where the researcher had the chance to observe the working conditions. While two of the principals allowed the interview to be recorded, the other six were reluctant, and so during those interviews, the researcher took notes. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

Creswell defines a case study as the exploration of an issue through one or more cases within a bounded system, be it a setting or a context (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Stake, Yin, and Meriam stand out as prominent researchers into the case study methodology since the 1980s (Creswell, 2007). The need for case studies stems from the desire to understand complex social phenomena, in that the case study method enables researchers to ascertain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. Similarly, in all qualitative researches, the case studies method best fits when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events and when focus is on a real-life context (Yin, 2003).

Creswell (2007), describing what makes a research a case study, claims that the case being studied should be identified with its boundaries, and that data collection should involve extensive data sources. As the main aim of case study is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the case in question, the context of the study should be described in detail.

Qualitative case studies are classified based on their size, such as whether they focus on individuals or groups of people; although case studies may also be classified according to the intent of the research, which can be instrumental, collective or multiple, or intrinsic. In an instrumental case study, the researcher focuses on one issue, and selects a bounded case in order to clarify this issue (Creswell, 2007). The current study utilized the instrumental case study approach, with the case being the principals' understanding and implementation of new regulations in the supervisory process in a pre-school setting.

This case is bounded by both time, having started immediately after MONE issued a new regulation on supervisory processes, and by context, being the accounts of principals who work only in independent schools of MONE. Data analysis in a qualitative research begins with the preparation and organization of the data, which is then categorized into themes through a process of coding, before being represented in figures, tables or narratives. This method is accepted in many books on qualitative research related to data analysis (Cresswell, 2007), and is the method adopted in this study to reduce the interviews into meaningful segments. First of all, the researchers made a fair copy of the noted interviews, after which the two audio recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim for data analysis. As Patton (1980) stated, qualitative data analyses are voluminous, and there is a lack of consensus on the most appropriate method of making sense of page upon page of interviews and files of field notes. That said, reading the transcripts several times gives researchers a level of insight into the data before separating it into themes and categories. Within this process, key concepts may make themselves apparent to the researcher, who should write short memos in the margin, as the first step of the initial data analysis (Creswell, 2007). The following step is the key part of the qualitative data analysis in which coding and categorizing takes place. This study attempted to investigate new regulation of supervising process in early education, however there was not enough predetermined code for such an analysis, since MONE announced the entry into force of new regulations on 25 May, 2014, and data collection started in early June. Open coding, as used in this study, refers to the initial phase of the coding process in which the intention is to break down the raw data into more manageable set of smaller categories and themes. A detailed word-by-word analysis is carried out to uncover the meanings contained within the interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Coding details is seen in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Coding Themes and Categories*

Themes	Categories	Codes
Insufficient supervision	Lack of supervisors	Single shot observation Short time evaluation No multiple source of data
	Lack of pre-school education background	Lack of knowledge on pre-school education Unfamiliarity to pre-school education
Inspection not Guidance	Judgement on performance	Feeling uncomfortable and nervous No guidance and training Relief when it ended Finding shortfalls No feedback Teacher complained Insulting teachers
Primary Schools	Lack of pre-school education background	Lack of knowledge Lack of guidance
	Overcrowded schools	Isolation ignorance
Implementation of New Regulations	Easy supervision in independent school	Small size of school Close relation
	Frequently changing regulation	No reaction from teacher

In order to ensure reliability a senior pre-service pre-school education teacher coded each statement made by the principals in reference to the new regulations. After that, researcher and second coder compared their coding and inter coder reliability ended with .88. Inter coder agreement was calculated with the following formula:

$$\text{Reliability of coding: } \frac{\text{Number of coding}}{\text{Total number of segments coded}}$$

Finally, a narrative description of the experience was made using clustered themes, and the meanings of the case were constructed. For confidentiality, the participants were designated A1 to A8, and the most representative quotations were selected.

## Findings

### Insufficient Supervision

All of the principals agreed that the previous supervision process had not functioned as it was supposed to. First of all, there were an insufficient number of primary education supervisors in Turkey, meaning that class visits made by the supervisors lasted less than an hour, and all of their judgments about the performance of the teachers were based on that single shot observation. The principals stated that education was an ongoing process, and should be evaluated based on multiple sources of data: *'The teachers were working for 5–6 months, and then all their efforts were evaluated in an hour. This raised many reactions'* (A3).

The supervisors' lack of knowledge of pre-school education sometimes resulted in tragicomic situations. Primary education supervisors are mostly have primary education training and work experience, and so their skills are suited to the guidance and evaluation of primary education schools and teachers. All of the principals stated that this unfamiliarity with pre-school education caused countless problems, in that the supervisors were unaware of in what they were in charge, as one principal expressed: *Once, the supervisors called me before coming and asked me what they were supposed to supervise. They said, 'Could you tell me the basics of the pre-school education supervision process?'* (A2)

### Inspection not Guidance

All of the principals emphasized how the teachers felt uncomfortable about the supervisory process. Although the purpose of supervising is defined as to provide guidance and training, the teachers felt like they were being interrogated by the supervisors. Both principals and teachers all voiced negative feelings about the supervisory process, and expressed relief when it ended. All of the principals mentioned the conflicts between the supervisors' expectations and pre-school education requirements. In general, the primary education supervisors paid more attention to constructional deficiencies rather than giving feedback about educational practices. *'The supervisor asked us to form an 'Honor and Great Turkish Ancestors corner', which is inappropriate for pre-school education.'* (A2)

All of the participants complained that the purpose of supervision seemed to be to identify shortfalls in both the teachers and the school. *'It is supposed to be a guiding process, but principals seemed to be more interested in finding problems in the teachers' classes.'* (A4)

When the supervisors found even a minor deficiency, they did not miss the chance to hold that deficiency against the teachers: *'The supervisor found that a date that had been written incorrectly, and insulted the teacher in front of the students. Teacher cried a lot, and even wanted to resign'* (A2)

### **Primary Schools**

The new regulations may result in more problems in primary pre-school education classes as the principals will need to supervise and guide pre-school education teachers with the limited knowledge that they possess. One of the principals mentioned the isolation associated with pre-school education in primary schools: *'Pre-school classes have always been ignored in primary schools, and the new regulations may increase the loneliness of teachers. Primary school principals have neither the time nor knowledge to guide and supervise pre-school teachers.'* (A7)

Another principal indicated that there will not be much change for teachers working in primary schools since primary schools principals' educational background is quite similar with primary education supervisors. *'Nothing has changed for teachers working in primary schools because their principals are also from different branches. How principals having BA degree from geography would guide or supervise pre-school education teachers?'* (A6)

### **Implementation of New Regulations**

At the time of this study, none of the participating principals had any experience with the new regulations, since the data for the study was collected immediately after MONE announced the changes to the supervisory process in pre-school education. Although all of the principals agreed that primary education supervisors should not enter pre-school classes or supervise or guide teachers, they expressed particular concerns at being the only providers of supervision to teachers. A8 anticipated a number of disadvantages of the supervisory process: *'The power*

*of the principals is increased [under the new regulations], which may lead to a misuse of power. Besides, teachers may use flattery with the principals to take advantage of their new position.’ A8*

Some of the principals (A4, A1, A3, A5, A7) stated that the MONE supervisors were so busy that they were able to visit school only every two or three years. Supervisors’ visits put pressure on the teachers, and those visits were not deemed sufficiently long for the evaluation of teacher performance. The largest school in the study employed 14 teachers. The principals expressed that providing guidance and support to teachers did not require much effort: *‘Our school is small, and it is easy to guide and supervise teachers in such small schools. We have close relationships, and we can intervene immediately when any problems arise.’ (A4)*

Legislation in MONE changes on a regular basis, and teachers become desensitized towards those changes, although they are closely linked to their professional life. The principals summarized the reason for the low level of interest among teachers in the new supervisory regulations: *‘Teachers gave no reaction. They show no interest due to the frequency at which legislation changes.’ A1*

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The job description of a primary education supervisor includes guidance and in-service training, supervision and assessment, investigation, and the examination of teachers, principals and schools in order to ensure the creation of efficient learning environments and to achieve better teaching standards (MONE, 2010). More precisely, the wide range of roles and duties of primary school supervisors aim at achieving the following goals within the national education system in coordination with teachers and supervisors: to follow and keep teachers and principals informed about the latest advances and professional publications; to contribute to educational practice consistent with the law and principles of the Turkish education system; to examine physical learning environments and identify needs; and to carry out research into educational issues such as the school enrollment problems of students, maintaining school environment relations and raising the efficiency of school personnel. Based on this wide range of roles and duties, primary school supervisors would indicate that

they would be a significant reference group for the evaluation of the existing structure of schooling in Turkey (Balci, 2011), however the principals involved in this study did not mentioned the supervisors' role of informing teachers or carrying out research to improve educational standards in schools. The unfamiliarity of supervisors with early education did more to hinder the teachers rather than giving them the chance to benefit from the supervision process.

Although supervisors are supposed to guide rather than inspect teachers, in truth, the supervisory process does not function to support teachers. Teachers in general feel that they are questioned and monitored, while principals summarize the goal of the entire supervisory process as being to find shortfalls in both the school and teachers. School inspections are an important means in providing legitimacy to the school's operations as conformity to inspection standards is considered to be the criterion of good performance. Yet, such an external quality management and assessment systems may challenge the intrinsic value systems of professionals and will motivate a mechanism through which extrinsic values are given greater weight (Ehren, Perryman, & Shackleton, 2015). When principals start to guide teachers supervising process would become more efficient. All of the principals were in favor of new regulations, and agreed to collaborate with the teachers to provide a better level of education to young children. Their approach is parallel to Heikka and Hujala's (2013) distributed leadership approach in which traditional leadership role perception has evolved shared leadership practices to foster change and development. There is an awareness of a need to develop distributed leadership to change. Such a change may mean that leadership is no longer the work of one person, and this could lessen the managerial work and allow more time and resources to be allocated to the encouraging of pedagogical leadership through the support of both directors and teachers in PE schools. The more people share a common vision or passion, the more they bond together in a team or to an organization (Pemberton, 2009). Given that teachers and principals share a common goal of providing children with a qualified educational experience, the teachers' relationship with the principals is likely to be more positive than with supervisors. Turan (2016) suggests in-service training for school principals for more rigorous supervision in which teachers receive guidance and training. He further recommends to determine standards for monitoring and evaluation of teacher activities in classroom. When these standards are applied in schools each schools and teachers will receive score based on their performance in class with children. Schools should

also published each teachers score on their website so that parents can make their school and teacher preferences based on those scores. In this way both teachers' and principals' motivation would be increased in making effort to improve educational standards in their school.

Although the current study has addressed some previously unaddressed issues related to supervision process in pre-school education in Turkey. It also has certain limitations. First of all, the present study was conducted with the principals working in Van which is located eastern part of Turkey. This region is highly differed from Turkey. As such, findings of this study might be specific to that region. Besides, sample size of this study is quite small. Another potential limitation of the study is that data collection was limited to interviews, as observing beginning supervision process or investigating supervision documents may yield more a comprehensive understanding of the supervision process in pre-school education.

### **Suggestions**

Independent schools contain only pre-school education classes rather than primary grades, while primary schools comprise of K-8 classes. Some primary schools have more than 1,000 students, and generally have only one PE class, resulting in the increased isolation of PE teachers. This lack of peer support is accompanied by a lack of support from the principal in primary schools; Meaning that nothing has changed for teachers working in primary pre-school classes, since in their schools, the principals tend to be from teaching branches other than early education. Accordingly, teachers in primary schools are still left on their own, and receive no feedback, constructive criticism or information. It is not possible to establish independent schools all over the country or to provide a physical separation between early education and primary schools, and so it is better to inform primary education principals about the aims, needs and requirements of early education. Some of the participating principals were influenced by the belief of the societal movement that early education was not optional, but rather essential in a child's life, and so attributed more importance to early education. Teachers working with those principals were more able to carry out their teaching practice with more comfort (Akdağ, 2012). Taking this into account, MONE could increase

the number of independent schools, or even in the long run, pre-school education may only be provided in independent schools for the sake of children.

The nature of the teaching profession is indeed demanding due to the responsibility of raising future generations (Krecic & Grmek, 2005). When teachers are under severe pressure to meet the diverse needs of children when budget cuts have resulted in material shortages, and when teachers are expected to assume greater decision-making roles, visits by primary school supervisors to inspect them places an additional burden on them. In this sense, teachers would feel more comfortable, free and empowered if it was the responsibility of their principals to supervise and guide them.

The Turkish educational system is highly centralized and is governed by complex legislation that involves a heavy load of paper work in which teachers struggle to learn and navigate through the bureaucracy. Akdağ (2014) states that teachers need someone to guide them through MONE's complicated bureaucracy, legislation and paper work. Moreover, they also need guidance in the form of practical information for the management of their classroom activities. A responsive principal with a pre-school education background could meet all of the needs of teachers. All principals are happier with the new regulations, having experienced several problems with the primary education supervisors under the former system. In summary, by focusing on the multidimensional aspects of the supervisory process, principals would be able to carry out both their own roles, and those of the supervisors' The Turkish National educational system has seen a number of recent fundamental changes; however this has not resulted in any noticeable improvements. These findings may provide insight to teachers, supervisors and principals with an interest in increasing the quality of schooling in Turkey.

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