

# Supervision Beliefs of Primary School Supervisors in Bangladesh

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## Abstract

Supervision is the most powerful activity in attaining organizational goals. There are different approaches in the field of academic supervision. The purpose of the study is to justify whether the primary school supervisor's belief is democratic or bureaucratic approach? A survey model has been used and a pre-determined survey tool was used for data collection, where 125 primary school supervisors provided data willingly by simple random sampling. The results of primary school supervision indicates, 64% of the school supervisors believe in democratic views of supervision, whereas the trend differs depending on working experience or seniority, as well as educational background of supervisors.

**Keywords:** Supervision beliefs, Academic Supervision, Primary School Supervision, School Supervision in Bangladesh.

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## INTRODUCTION

The idea of supervision comes from psychology, as a subject of academic discourse, supervision origins in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in American education. During those early period, the task of supervision was very simple and informal. Supervision is the process of directing and guiding human resources of an organization to see the job is performing accurately by its human resources. The core purpose of supervision is to see if the work is being done according to the predetermined objectives as well as it identifies the weakness and provides cooperation and guidance. It is a formative way of attaining organizational goal. In absence of organizational supervision causes organizations to experience “desolation, chaos, obscurity, stagnancy and a loss of power” (Kimbrough et al., 1990). In any organizational structure, supervision is a pivotal managerial task which determine whether organization work according to predetermined goals. Supervisors provide supporting hands to the individuals into the organization. Actual and practical professional development grow in any organization by supervision. Hicks and Gullet (1981), argued for dynamic organization, in a dynamic organization constant supervision is imperative.

Supervision is a part and parcel of educational institutions. As school is a social organization and it works to attain predetermined objectives so it cannot go without supervision. Continuous academic supervision

in educational institution boost up teachers quality. Many country has taken attempted to re-organize their school supervision strategy to enhance educational quality (Adu et al., 2014). In accordance with the quality education goal, academic supervision gets priority for quality improvement. However, in Bangladesh, this service failed to create a positive effect on quality teaching –learning (Carron and Chau, 1996, p.9). An open secret Cold War exist in the supervision system due to positional power exercise where supervisors dominate over school teacher (Sharma & Al-Sinawai, 2019).

In a centralized system of educational management, operating quality supervision is tough enough. Centrally formulated policies and rules do not work properly due to many reasons. Contemporary supervision approaches basically goes with democratic approaches (Yilmaz et al., 2009). Though predetermined policies do not permit supervisors to change their role or integrate some flexibility in the supervision process. Moreover, Supervision beliefs of academic supervisors impacts a lot.

### *Role of the primary school supervisors in Bangladesh*

Supervision is important for adequate classroom instruction and highest student achievement. In Bangladesh there are three organizations operate supervision activities, this are Upazilla Education Office (UEO), Upazilla Resource Center (URC) and

Primary Teacher Training Institute (PTI). All the units conduct various kinds of supervisory activities under the primary education policy structure and framework (Obaydullah & Talukder, 2020).

UEO officers supervise primary school in regular basis, generally they visits primary schools by rotation within a time frame. They observe classroom activities of each teacher in a school without prior notice and they identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers. They suggest and cooperate the teachers to overcome respective pitfalls.

URC conducts subjective training for the primary school teachers step by step around the year for enhancing skills development in particular subject. Basically they perform in-service supervision while they conduct subjective training.

PTI is the mother institute of primary school teachers training. This institute runs mandatory professional 'Diploma in Education' (DPED) training to fresh teachers for one year in PTI and six months in respective schools of the teachers. Generally they supervise the teachers while training in progress (one year in PTI), as well as it continues to next six months in respective school of the trainee as a part of follow up supervision. School heads is an experienced professional figure on academic supervision. He directly supervise his colleagues regularly.

### **School Supervision**

Supervision is an activity of enhancing the prevailing quality and formative evaluation of quality preservation. Moreover, it can be describe that supervision contains overseeing of the individuals work, and the same time aims to develop and increase the supervisees' levels of professionalism. In the early period of formal education supervision was a way of 'controlling the teachers'. Supervision assist teachers to acquire both qualitative and quantitative instructional efficiency from the ahead as well as it is a crucial variable. According to Ogunu (2000), supervision is the process of overseeing the activities of teachers and other staffs in the school system to ensure that they conform to general accepted principle of education in order to achieve educational goals. Higher professional interacts with junior professional to provide superior knowledge, ideas and methods of accomplishing to the instructional objectives. Most of the researchers articulated supervision as a collaborative and interpersonal process. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2006) narrate, supervision as the opportunities provided for teachers to develop their capacities to contribute for students' academic success. The breadth of supervision involve observation, evaluation, feedback, facilitation of supervisee introspection.

### **Supervision Belief**

Belief is the permanent idea and knowledge about something of an individual. Thus, supervision beliefs indicate individuals' views on and perceptions of the supervision process (Yilmaz *et al.*, 2009). For example, those who believe in scientific management rules they perceive teachers role should be mechanical in nature. Previously determined principle is strictly followed by these supervisors while they supervise in schools. Here the supervisors do not consider the other aspects of human nature.

Another point of view refers that teaching is the immeasurable aspects and it always depends on the situation, topics or subject of the study. From this approach, the teaching is not a mechanical process nor it formed in strict predetermined principle moreover, it is flexible.

Though the supervision is very important in education, little literature (Glickman, 1985; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1980; Glickman *et al.*, 2005; Sullivan & Glanz, 2005; Ozman, 2000) has been found on supervision belief. Supervision belief has been classified from multiple points of view. Glickman (1985) classified supervision as "directive" "collaborative" and "non-directive". On the other hand recent debate on supervision belief encompasses broad two umbrella, namely "bureaucratic" and "democratic" supervision belief system (Sullivan & Glanz, 2005; Yilmaz *et al.*, 2009).

### **Bureaucratic supervisory belief:**

Bureaucratic management has been introduced by Weber. Weber's bureaucratic idea consists five basic characteristics, these are hierarchy, professional specialization, certain duties, authority and records (Jackson & Morgan, 1978; Pankake & Kallio, 2006). However modern organizations management are defined by predetermined law, rules, official resolutions, hierarchy-principles, formality, efficiency etc. Besides bureaucracy model of Weber is considerate as an ideal means of acquiring organizational efficiency.

Experts criticized this approaches because over specialization minimize the productivity, over-commitment may results to unproductive stagnancy, and one way communication for hierarchy. Consequently, lack involvement in decision making impact in job satisfaction and performance. Recognition/promotion of professional achievement depends on flattering and obedience in lieu of performance. Usually such kind of over formality in this management system must hamper productivity and communication (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2000).

In 2005, Sullivan and Glanz emphasize the following bureaucratic supervisory belief traits:

1. Supervision is inspectional.
2. In organizational efficiency hierarchy is imperative.
3. Supervisors are considered as educational expert rather than the teachers.
4. For this supervisors and teachers do not avail equal dignity.
5. Teachers are not too much efficient to improve their teaching by own effort.

So, bureaucratic views of supervision encompasses the characteristics- hierarchy in preference to cooperation, line relationship, specialization and control, which are considered as essential in organizational efficiency, where teachers regarded as incapable in improving their teaching skill. According to bureaucratic supervision belief, school teachers need help from supervisors for improving their teaching skills, moreover, supervisors are considered as changing agents in supervision sector (Ünal, 2010; Sullivan & Glanz, 2005).

#### **Democratic supervisory belief**

Modern approaches of management directly related to democratic supervisory system (Yilmaz et al., 2009). Reflective practice, decision making participation, collaboration are essential for democratic views of supervision (Sullivan & Glanz, 2000). It is best practice for enhancing self-control including skilled professional. Therefor a visionary leader formulate flexible policies in an organization so that subordinates can improve their professional skills.

According to Ünal (2010), first function of supervision was educational inspection; however, this function has changed to large scale in time. Recent definitions of supervision have emphasized to service, collaboration and democracy, moreover democratic supervision is possible by working collaboratively (Oliva & Pawlas, 2001; Sullivan and Glanz, 2005).

In democratic supervision beliefs, supervisors try to solve educational problems using scientific method and collaborative problem-solving approach (Pajak, 1993). The democratic supervision views by Sullivan and Glanz (2005) are as follows:

1. Teaching is a complex process, it's not easy enough to define or understood.
2. Individuals gets priority than organization.
3. Teachers are efficient, responsible and self-directed.
4. Supervision should be collaborative.
5. Quantitative and qualitative approach are valid for educational development.
6. Traditional supervision may have alternative approaches.
7. The supervisors perform best by teachers critical questions.

Democratic supervision belief highlights supervisor-teacher relationship, where teacher and supervisor collectively attain student's benefits. Democratic supervision helps the improvement of teaching, whereas bureaucratic supervision makes a judgment on teacher efficiency (Yilmaz *et al.*, 2009).

Very few research has been done about supervision belief (Glickman, 1981; Clarke, 2004; Yilmaz *et al.*, 2009; Ünal, 2010; Lee *et al.*, 2008). Although, some studies have been done on alternative supervision approaches (Glickman, 1985; Glickman *et al.*, 1987; Glickman *et al.*, 2005; Sharma *et al.*, 2019). Supervision beliefs are ignored by themselves. The purpose of the present study was to determine supervision beliefs of primary school supervisors in Bangladesh and justify this in terms of modern approaches.

The study were guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the supervision beliefs of primary school supervisors?
2. Do supervision beliefs among primary school supervisors change according to educational background?
3. Do supervision beliefs of primary school supervisors' changed according to seniority?

## **METHOD**

In this study, a survey method has been followed. However, it is a quantitative study. Researcher wanted to find the present scenario of the educational supervision at primary schools in Bangladesh.

### **Sample**

There are different supervisory units for primary school supervision but the UEO is the main supervision unit. 125 primary school supervisors were the sample of this research. Using simple random sampling method the supervisors were chosen for this study. There are more than 5 hundred UEO office in the country (DPE). A total of 450 instrument were sent to UEO official e-mail adders. Besides, they were contacted by their WhatsApp account. However, the response rate was 28%.

### **Data collection and processing**

A secondary data collection tool was used in this research. The tool was used in determining 'Turkish primary school supervision beliefs' (Yilmaz *et al.*, 2009). The researcher contacted with the author and ask for the tool. Moreover, the researcher received consent to use it. The tool was written in Turkish language. Before using the tool the researcher had translated it into English and re-translated in Bengali language. While necessary adjustment was performed by the researcher. And, the Bangladeshi primary

education supervision system has taken into consideration while modifying the instrument.

According to the author, the instrument was pilot tested, validate by exploratory factor analysis besides, reliability obtained by cronbach's $\alpha$ . The supervision beliefs scale had 26 items Likert scale including two sub-dimensions where democratic supervision belief consist 13 items, and bureaucratic supervision belief consist 13 items. Democratic supervision belief item's load factor was ranged 0.33 to 0.74, variance 18.08% and reliability co-efficient  $\alpha=0.73$ . Bureaucratic supervision belief item's load factor ranged 0.32 to 0.58, variance 15.69% and reliability co-efficient  $\alpha=0.70$ . The whole scale variance was 34%, cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliability 0.60. A five-point Likert-type Scale (5.strongly agree; 4.agree; 3.moderately agree; 2.disagree and 1.strongly disagree) were used to measure the supervisors responses. The responses from the scale determined the bureaucratic and democratic beliefs level where democratic beliefs were scored evenly on the other hand bureaucratic beliefs were scored inversely. However, greater scores represent the grater democratic supervisory beliefs as well as lower score represent the grater bureaucratic supervisory beliefs.

**Data Analysis**

Percentages and frequency calculation were administrated for demographic information analysis of the supervisors. Arithmetical mean and standard deviation were conducted in order to reveal the answers done by the respondents. With that, variance analysis

was applied in order to reveal whether the respondent's belief varies according to professional experience and educational background variables.

**RESULTS**

First, the participant's demographics has been presented; secondly, presented- the findings of supervisor's supervision beliefs, and weather these views varies according to professional experience and educational background.

87 % of the respondents had completed post graduate degree, only 2 % had graduated from education, 51% participants had 1-10 years' experience; 38 % had 11-12 years' experience; 11% had 21 years' experience and above. The workplace location of 77% participants were in village area. 49.6% participants were male and 50.4% participants female.

According to supervision belief scale data: The descriptive statistics of the scale are presented in the table-1. For data analysis, obtained scores from the scale accumulated and divided by its total item number, whereas the output was converted in to the range 1 to 5. Average score (3.50) of primary school supervisors in Bangladesh represent the 'I moderately agree' to their answer sheet, and the standard deviation was 0.29. On the other hand, primary school supervisors' average score was 83.45 out of possible 130. It was count as 64%. So, it represent the democratic beliefs of supervision.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics on supervision beliefs of the participants**

Score	N	K	Minimum score	Maximum score	X	S
Supervision belief	125	26	2.23	3.68	3.50	0.29

**Table 2: t-test analysis on supervision beliefs of supervisors based on educational background**

Score	Educational background	n	X	S	sd	t	p
Supervision belief	Postgraduate studies	122	3.25	0.24	292	3.39	.00*
	Faculty of Education	3	3.15	0.28			

\*p< 0.05

According to t- test analysis, educational background is significant for supervision beliefs of the supervisors. There was a significant difference between primary school supervisor's views on 'supervision beliefs' according to their educational background [ $t_{(292)} = 3.39, p <0.05$ ]. However, Post graduated supervisor's average was 3.25, on the other hand, faculty of education graduated supervisor's average was 3.15. So, it can be said that the higher the educational

background, the more the democratic beliefs were occurred.

In Table-3, variance analysis show the supervision belief that varies according to job experience or seniority. There was a significant difference between the supervisor's belief according to seniority [ $F_{(2-123)} = 18.40, p <0.05$ ]. Here, it was clear that who had "21 years' experience and above" was the lowest average and suggest that the grater the seniority, the less democratic supervision beliefs were counted.

**Table 3: Variance analysis on supervision belief based on Job experience**

Score	Job experience	n	X	S	sd	F	p	Sig. difference
Supervision belief	1-10 years	64	3.25	0.23	2-123	18.40	0.00*	1-3
	11-20 years	47	3.23	0.23				2-3
	21+ years	14	3.11	0.26				

\*  $p < 0.05$ 

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study show that the level of democratic supervision beliefs of the primary school supervisors is not satisfactory, on the other hand the determined difference between the beliefs of the supervisors' according to educational background and job experience are supporting the findings. Recent study on academic supervision openly support the democratic approaches. Not only in national (Obaydullah *et al.*, 2020; Alam *et al.*, 2021) studies but also international (Sullivan *et al.*, 2000; Unal, 2010; Ylmaz *et al.*, 2009; Glickman *et al.*, 2005; Sergiovanni *et al.*, 1993; Haris *et al.*, 2018) studies, most of the researchers were tends to support bureaucratic approaches. Alam (2021), argues that the supervision at the primary level in Bangladesh is more or less outmoded and it is more mechanical than educational. Obaydullah (2020), state that importance of supervision manifests to promote reflective practice and contributes to professional development. The prevailing supervisory structure is control based and considers supervisors as educational experts, with a formal seniority over teachers (Ylmaz *et al.*, 2009). Supervision, E-learning module, (2012, para-2) suggest that supervision have to be collaborative and reflective.

Though academic supervision is aimed at 'guidance and help', present centralized management system and supervision does not work effectively. In this study, it was shown that supervisors does not practice in accordance to modern understanding of supervision activities. Few of the school supervisors have had actual classroom experience and their training and educational backgrounds do not always make them qualified supervisor (Obaydullah *et al.*, 2020). There is lack of accountability in the management and supervision (Chowdhury *et al.*, 2002, p.57). As is clear, there are lots of criticism regarding to academic supervision in Bangladesh. And today emphasis has been given to review the supervision approaches. Dynamic supervision deserve relevant educational background and training. With that, modern and progressive academic supervision depends on guidance, support, partnership and collaborations.

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