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English Teachers' Perception of Teacher Supervision: A qualitative study in an Iranian context

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Abstract

Supervising teachers, as a basic component of an educational plan, has positive effects on teachers' classroom behaviors. Following the tenets of Sociocultural theory of mind, this qualitative study delvd into the perception of EFL teachers regarding their worldviews of what supervision is and what it must be like. For this purpose, 25 participants (10 supervisors,10 in-service teachers, and 5 pre-service teachers) were recruited and interviewed. Their responses to a semi-structured interview were recorded by mobile phone, transcribed, and then translated into English for ease of interpretation. To analyze the data, thematic analysis was used. The emerged themes showed that the participants preferred supervision with feedback which is constructive, timely, with effective solution in challenging situations, effective in identifying tecaher's strengths and weaknesses, suggestive and non-judgemental. They also believed that supervision must be with no imposition, with prior notice, with a checklist, in a relaxed atmosphere, with a competent supervisor and without supervisor presence. Criticizing the running model of supervision, they believed that the feedback offered is judgemental and inappropriate, offers no solution to the problems, and has no purpose for improvement. Finally, some valuable implications for TTC holders, supervisors, and on-the-job mentors, and also several recommendations for further research are presented.

Keywords: Supervision, EFL Context, Themes, Prescriptive Model, Collaborative Model, Teacher Perception

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1. Introduction

Teacher supervision is as an exchange of the skills and information about teaching methodologies, guiding and counselling teachers in practice on part of a skilled supervisor to a less skilled observee (Jahanian & Ebrahimi, 2013). No matter whether it is embraced or detested (Cheng & Cheng, 2013; Rahmani, Hasani & Parhoodeh, 2014), it is a vital component of a teacher's professional agenda (Aldaihani, 2017; Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2022, Farr, 2011). There are many useful reasons for implementing the evaluation of teachers through supervision (Kholid & Rohmatika, 2019). One is that critical framework is created to improve teachers' classroom practices and professional development (Hoque, Subramaniam, & Islam, 2020), by presenting teaching practices that can be shared with other instructors (Kayaoglu, 2012; Moradi et al., 2014). Teachers can also get some information through supervisory system about using instructional materials and educational plans in a correct way (Baily, 2006; Weller, 1971) . This necessitates the employment of supervisors who can facilitate language schools' development, evaluate novice teachers', and improve the quality of teaching (Mette, Aguilar, & Wieczorek, 2020). Further they can explore prons and cons of using technology in teaching and understand the problems of students in learning (Moradi, Sepehrifar, & Khadive, 2014). Moreover, supervision brings quality in any educational context by improving the processes of learning, assuring the quality of students' learning, and empowering teachers' instructional capacities (Kurka & Berhanu, 2019; Mwankiki & Guantai, 2018; Wahyu, 2020). Professional teachers and their performance in the learning-teaching cycle are the major goals in educational schools and institutions because of their effects on the active and motivated students and finally, the outputs of schools (Ruslan & Fitria, 2020). Thus, educational supervision is the main factor to help teachers develop professionally through contrived support, collaborative assistance, and sound evaluation (Kurka & Berhanu, 2019).

In the Iranian context, the same as other countries, despite the presence of Ministry of Education (MoE) with experts as inspectors and evaluators, and also the university scholars who are busy conducting research, the issue is still not fully spotlighted. Rashidi and Foroutan (2016), conducting a survey study, concluded that supervision in Iranian context is mainly through Prescriptive Supervisory Modles (Rashidi & Foroutan, 2016), which don't seem to have any positive effect on the current teaching context of Iran. In another qualitative study conducted on seven school supervisors from an Iranian context, Azizpour and Gholami (2021)

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revealed that teacher-supervisors are promoted to supervisory roles most often due to their outstanding teaching performance and academic credentials with no formal training on supervision. The supervisors also referred to ethical conflicts they face when they want to criticically comment on their friend's performance besides mentioning the stockpile of non-supervisories responsibilities that they must shoulder. Also in a recent study on teacher supervision, Estaji and Ghiasvand (2022) tapped into the perception of two groups of novice and experienced teachers towards different supervisory practices and their contribution to teacher pedagogical growth by emlpoying a mixed-method approach. The results revealed that both novice and experienced teachers had a negative view concerning the existing supervision system in Iran. Besides, no significant difference was found between the novice and experienced EFL teachers' beliefs about classroom supervision. The qualitative findings also revealed that both novice and experienced EFL teachers considered supervision as bureaucratic, fault-seeking, confidence-minimizing, and with little to no instructional worth. To the researchers' knowledge, however, no study by far has explored the perception of three groups of stakeholders(preservice teachers, inservice teachers, and teacher supervisors) regarding their views on current practice of teacher supervision in their context. Therefore, to bridge the lacuna, the present study was launched to find out about familiarity and preference of Iranian supervisors, as well as pre-service and on-the-job teachers regrading what supervision is and what it must be like.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Conceptual framework of the study

There is no single agreed-upon definition of the concept of supervision in the literature. Other than that, supervision is not inclusively related to education as the construct has been used in different fields such as management, business, education, health, military and social services (Dangel & Tanguay, 2014). Sullivan and Glanz (2000) referred to supervision as a process of perusing and scanning a passage to locate the errors and deviations from the original passage. Holding the belief that supervision is a process, and not a professional reality, Daresh (2001) suggested a wider definition of supervision and postulated that it is a process of overseeing the ability of individuals to meet the aims of the organization where they work. From the worldview of Goldsberry, supervision is "an organizational responsibility and function focused upon the assessment and refinement of current practices" (1988, p. 1). He hold the belief that supervision is an organizational responsibility, necessarily consisting of interaction between an organizational superordinate and the subordinate members.

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In the realm of education, instructional supervision has been defined in various ways (Chen, 2018; Tesfaw, & Hofman, 2012), making it somehow impossible to provide a solid and agreed-upon definition for the concept (Kayaoglu, 2012). Also, Daresh defines the term as the dynamic process of monitoring the capability of people in an organization with the purpose of augmenting quality and accountability (Daresh, 2001).

Freeman (1982) highlightes three approaches to teacher supervision; namely, Supervisory, an arbitrator who comments and evaluates the teacher's actions and reactions within his/her context of practice, Alternative, the observer proposes a collection of alternatives to the already-observed activities and Non-directive, in which the observer sets the grounds for teacher's reflection on their own practices in a way that a unified integration of positive classroom behavior is achieved.

Extending Freeman's three-tier supervisory model, Gebahard (1984) proposed a five-category supervision model including 1. Directive, 2. Alternative, 3. Collaborative, 4. Non-directive and 5. Creative models. The Directive model, according to Gebhard is the tasks of directing and informing the to-be-observed teacher, modeling various teaching behaviors, and subsequent assessment and evaluation of the already-discussed and spotlighted behavior. In the Alternative model, the teacher finds the opportunity to broaden his scope of knowledge regarding various teaching practices, and also assumes the responsibility for the final outcomes as the teacher has selected the route based on his/her own decision. The third model, the Collaborative model, which sees teaching primarily as a problem-solving process, is applied where the observer and the teacher have some negotiations together before they start the practicum, the reality which persuaded Cogan to call it " clinical supervision" (Cogan, 1973). The fourth model, the Non-directive one, leaves enough space open for the teacher so that they can come up with their own solutions to teaching problems. Respecting the principles of humanistic approach to the learning-teaching process, the supervisor listens patiently to what the teacher says, and consistently reflects on the teacher's behavior, trying to act as a counselor who takes all the to-do and not-to-do factors into consideration. The fifth model, the Creative model, postulates that supervision is carried out through combining the responsibilities and behaviors from prior models. This is rooted in the belief of DeBono who posits that "any particular way of looking at things is only one from among many other possible ways" (DeBono,1970, p.63). This model, according to Gebhard (1984), paves the way for three fundamental stipulations, namely 1) a blending of various models or the act of

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collecting a combination of supervisory behaviors from different models, 2) a shifting of supervisory responsibilities from the supervisor to other sources, and 3) borrowing insights from other fields, the ones which have not been touched upon by any previous supervision models.

Later Wallace (1989) simplified the formely-mentioed five models into two models: 1) Prescriptive and 2) Collaborative. Within the Prescriptive model, the evaluator as an expert uses pre-planned rules and rating scales to assess what happens in the teaching performance of teachers. Whithin the Collaborative model, however, the supervisor has face-to-face relationship and interaction with teachers and discusses and shares with them the ways the teachers have to act in their classes. Further, Clark (1990) comes up with six different roles of observer outlined as 1) judgmental 2) non- judgmental 3) clerical 4) cooperative 5) responsive and 6) clinical. In another attempt, Acheson and Gall (1997) appears to have made changes on Clark's (1990) models, stating different categorization for supervisee's roles including: mentor, counselor, consultant, cooperating teachers, coach, and inspector.

Some scholars consider supervision as organizarional responsibility which target to aid teachers in developing themselves for upcoming professional tasks (Allan, 1960; Chen,2018). Kilminster and Jolly (2000) refer to supervision as the task of counseling and guiding teachers on their personal, professional, and educational development issues. Further, Rahmany et al. (2014) view supervisory acts as tools to be employed to augment understanding and development. They see supervision as observing teacher classroom practices besides collecting data based on some pre-defined standards in order to offer constructive feedback and scholarly guidance to the developing teachers.Similarly, Glanz (2006) defines the concept as a process that engages teachers in guided instructional negotiations with the purpose of making the learning-teaching constructive and increasing learner achievement. To sum up, all the scholars who have tapped the issue commonly believe that the major aim of supervision is to modify classroom behavior of teachers (Chen, 2018; Nolan & Hoover, 2011; Rahmany et al., 2014), which in turn can result in modifying teachers' classroom interactional architecture (Seedshouse, 1998).

2.2. Empirical studies on teacher supervision in school contexts

Many studies have by far been conducted empirically on the effects of teacher supervision. A mixed-method study by Wanzare (2011) in Kenya regarding the attitude of teachers, head teachers, and senior government education officers in public secondary schools revealed that

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the instructional supervision was perceived as following bureaucratic rules by supervisors. Whithin the same year, another study by Chieng and Borg (2011) explored the supervisory process and its effects on pre-service teachers' performance in Kenya. The findings demonstrated that the supervision was judgmental or directive, brief, and without any cooperation with teachers.

Another major study was done in basic schools of Ghana concerning the knowledge of supervisors in clinical supervision. Based on its findings, since the supervisors have theoretical knowledge of clinical supervision, not practical one, they should be trained in the implementation of clinical supervision program processes in order to promote teachers' teaching (Sarfo & Cudjoe, 2016).

In 2017, through a qualitative research eliciting the viewpoint of heads of departments and teachers of high schools in Kuwaiti on teacher professional development, Aldaihani concluded that supervision has a positive impact on school and classroom atmosphere, and supervisor's guidance helps to modify the false behavior of teachers' class. The study results however referred to some drawbacks such as lack of friendly interaction between teachers and supervisor, lack of feedback to guide the teachers, and lack of continuing regular practices (Aldaihani, 2017).

In another study probing into teachers' view on current status of supervision in secondary schools of Malaysia, Sharma and Al-Sinawai (2019) came to the conclusion that current supervision pursued in Malaysian schools is more of directive nature with the purpose of fault-finding in teachers' performance. They also found that supervisory beliefs do not have any relationship with demographic variables (gender, age, position, teaching experience, and supervisory experience).

In a similar study to that of Sharma and Alsinawai (2019), an investigation into the attitude of teachers in educational supervision among 200 teachers in basic schools of Ghana, Yao Dewodo, Dzakpasu, and Agbetorwoka (2020) found that the supervisors only examined poor or false aspects of teachers' teaching, ignoring any counseling or post-observation meetings or sessions.

Some studies (Ussher & Carss, 2014; Wajnryb, 1998) have suggested supervisor's good relationship with teachers, providing supportive atmosphere, and giveing some advices and careful ways for teachers during feedback with low tone of languge as milestones which can result in teachers' professional development, their reduction of the stress of monitoring

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session, and applying supervisor's feedback in their teaching. Berhane (2014) and Bitty et al. (2010) stated that continuous supervision sessions lead to their better competence and performance. In addition, other elements such as high experiences, knowledge, and skills of supervisor in the field of supervising are mandatory for better teaching. Ahmad Kamal et al. (2014) revealed that supervising is not carried out properly, since the supervisors do not have content knowledge of observation and don't know how to implement its processes.

Some studies have suggested that supervision is done by the supervisor with the goal of increasing the teachers' awareness, and instructing them in appropriate classroom behaviors. According to these studies, supervisors have the responsibility of raising their own knowledge about supervision, having checklist and providing timely, non-directive, and constructive feedback and solutions over the strengths and weaknesses of teachers' performance, holding pre-conference sessions in order that the supervisor be aware of the teachers' expectations of him/her as well as the teachers' awareness of lesson plan and supervision processes (Brinko, 1993; Kahyalar & Celik Yazici, 2016).

In another study investigating the teachers' attitudes about observation sessions, Daud, Dali, Khalid and Fauzee (2018) found that teachers hold a positive attitude toward supervision. Moreover, the supervision leads to better teaching and improvement in teachers, increasing their confidence (Daud, Dali, Khalid, & Fauzee, 2018).

In Iranian context of education, one research by Moradi, Sepehrifar, and Khadive (2014), examining the Iranian EFL teachers' knowledge of observation by using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, demonstrated that the supervision was directive with its own frightening effect on teachers. The study also found that such type of supervision does not lead to teachers' better teaching. Another major study by Parhoodeh and Jalili (2014) examined the relationship between EFL teachers' experience in teaching and supervisory program. Employing both observation and questionnaire as instruments, they came up with the conclusion that the prescriptive model of supervision isn't suitable and effective for experienced teachers, so they do not improve in their teaching performance.

In another study, Rashidi and Forutan (2016) reported the differences between Iranian pre-service and in-service EFL teachers' perception of supervision. Through collecting data by both a questionnaire which involved 43 items and interviews, they revealed that the perception of pre-service and in-service EFL teachers were the same about the role of supervision to improve teaching.

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Further Izadi (2016) demonstrated that over-politeness in Persian professional interactions prevents the criticisms and suggestions in directive supervisory models to be fruitful. Regarding the effectiveness of feedback in post-observations in prescriptive supervisory models, Mehrpour and Agheshteh (2017) came up with six components which can help the supervisor in providing effective feedback including: 1) using a more creative model of supervision, 2) considering teachers' ZPD, 3) employing above-the-utterance mitigation, 4) improving public relations and 5,6) assessing sociocultural and attitudes of teachers.

A qualitative research by Amini and Gholami (2018) explored the professional development of EFL teachers through rotatory peer-observation to find out what the teacher supervisors emphasize more and which part of the observation and what kinds of feedback they prefer to provide. In this model of observation, the less experienced teachers' performance was observed by more experienced teachers through constructive feedback via checklist. Findings revealed that their remarks were of three categories: compliments, suggestions, and criticisms. In relation to their criticisms, the supervisors more tried to present them in soft voice and face-saving language to improve both teachers' confidence and performance rather than face-threatening and high tone language.

To determine the effect of educational supervision on Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs, perception, and change in teaching reading comprehension, Alipoor and Salehi (2018), through conducting semi-structured interviews and distributing a questionnaire, explored that there should be a relationship between observer and observee in pre-observation conference. This relationship enhances the teachers' awareness about their teaching style, and the awareness causes the engagement and better teaching performance in classroom observation. Gholaminejad (2020), interviewing five teachers from different language schools in Iran, demonstrated that the negative view of teachers towards supervision is rooted in several factors such as: creating stress in teachers during observation, lack of job security, new techniques, teachers' autonomy, and motivation, unclear goals of supervising teachers, poor quantity and quality in giving feedback and observation sessions.

In a recent study, Azizpour and Gholami (2021) constructed a qualitative study to explore the teacher-supervisors' perception towards supervision in Iranian language schools. Five major themes emerged from semi-structured interviews:1) conditions of being observer, 2) duties of instructional supervisor, 3) supervision challenges, 4) supporting observer, and 5) relationship between teachers and supervisor. Generally, the findings showed that most of the

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supervisors are selected because of their high academic degree and work experiences in teaching, not properly in supervisory field. The relationships between teachers and supervisor are more accompanied with ethical problems such as: supervisor's violent criticisms and firing the teachers. The interviewd participants believed that supervisors usually have many responsibilities other than supervising the teachers' performance which is why observation sessions have low quantity and quality.

In another recent research in Iran by Estaji and Ghiasvand (2022) which was conducted on experienced and novels teachers, the results manifested that both groups considered supervision as bureaucratic, fault-seeking, confidence-minimizing, and with little or no instructional worth. They also had similar beliefs as per the characteristics of an effective supervisory act. Moreover, supervision was perceived useful only when teachers were novice instructors, but ineffective as they became experienced.

Taking the results of the above-mentioned studies into consideration, no study seems to have tapped into the perception of Iranian EFL pre-service, in-service and teacher supervisors in a comparative way to find out their conception of what supervision is like and what it must be like. Therefore, to shed light on the issue, the present study was launched to find out about the perception of Iraninan pre-service, in-service and supervisor teachers regarding the issue. So, the following research question was formulated to fulfill the purposes of the study:

How do Iranian pre-service, in-service and EFL teacher supervisees perceive supervision?

3. Method

3.1. Design

The present study follows the guidelines of qualitative research in approach. As Creswell (2015) puts it, qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups which ascribe to a social or human problem (p.44). Adhering to the emerging qualitative data in inquiry, the researchers adopted an inductive approach to end up with patterns or themes which are the genuine voice of the participants.

3.2. Participants

The participants were chosen from different language schools and institutions of different provinces of Iran. In this qualitative study, due to the nature of the study and types of data required, purposive sampling was followed. Twenty-five participants in both genders male

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and female participated in this study. The exact number of participants is as follows: 5 pre-service teachers, 10 in-service teachers, and also 10 teacher supervisors. In the following table, detailed demographic information of the particiapnts are presented.

Table 1. *Demographic information of the participants*

	Gender	Age	experience in years	Educational background	command of English
Preservice A	F	26	1	MA (teaching)	good
Preservice B	F	26	1	BA(teaching)	good
Preservice C	F	26	-1	MA(teaching)	high
Preservice E	F	26	1	BA(teaching)	good
Preservice F	F	26	1	MA(teaching)	high
Inservice A	F	37	12	MA(teaching)	good
Inservice B	M	25	4	MA(teaching)	good
Inservice C	F	26	4	MA(teaching)	good
Inservice D	M	26	4	MA(teaching)	high
Inservice E	M	25	4	MA(teaching)	good
Inservice F	M	37	13	MA(literature)	high
Inservice G	F	58	28	MA(teaching)	good
Inservice H	F	35	13	PhD (Linguistics)	good
Inservice I	M	42	15	BA(linguistics)	good
Inservice J	F	36	13	MA(teaching)	high
Supervisor A	F	47	20	BA(teaching)	good
Supervisor B	M	51	30	BA(teaching)	good
Supervisor C	M	46	25	PhD(teaching)	high
Supervisor D	F	37	12	BA(teaching)	good
Supervisor E	M	31	9	MA(teaching)	high
Supervisor F	M	37	14	PhD(teaching)	high
Supervisor G	M	45	25	PhD(linguistics)	high
Supervisor H	M	46	28	PhD (linguistis)	high
Supervisor I	F	49	30	MA(teaching)	high
Supervisor G	F	43	15	MA(linguistics)	good

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3.3. The Context of the study

The present study was conducted in the mainstream context of education in Iran. The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: 1- whether the participants were willing to participate; 2- their accessibility during the data collection process; 3- their tendency to be in contact virtually as the data was collected during the Pandemic period. To find the intended participants, first an invitation was sent to several English teacher groups through the national application, SHAD, requiring them to participate in the study. The willing teachers were requested to announce thrie willingness to participate to one of the researchers' private account in SHAD. Whenever a teacher expressed their tendency, they were asked several questions regarding their degree, experience, field, their time allocation, readiness to be interviewed, etc to make sure that they could be regarded as intended participants. The teachers were made certain of the data confidentiality through phone calls. They were also ascertained that their personal identity will remain quite confidential during and after the research process.

3.4. Instrument

In order to collect the required data, the researchers used a semi-structured interview designed by the researchers. The interview included 4 pre-determined questions which explored into the perception of the participating teachers regarding their beliefs and attitudes towards the know-what as well as process of supervision. Since the data was collected during the Pandemic, and also since access to some of the participants was not possible, the interviews were conducted online. First the interview time was set by each individual participat through a phone call. Then the intended participant was sent a link. The interviews were conducted individually through Google Meet, and the interviews were recorded for follow-up analysis by interviewer, upon the previous permission of the participant. Each individual interview was lasted for about 30 miutes. Each individual was first required to introduce themselves, eliciting information regarding their university degree, years of experince, their field of study, their teaching context, etc. Then the interview started in which four pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) were posed. Following each question, the interviewer purposefully tried to sieze the opportunity so that he could explore the intended data, so there were usually several intended unstructured questioning and eliciting following each pre-determined question. To develop the interview questions, 6 university professors who had at least two

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research papers on SLTE were sent the topic and asked to develop the questions that they think will deeply tap into the perception of particiapnts regarding supervision. Then their designed questions were collected, which made a pool of 42 questions. Next the questions were compared and contrsted by researchers, which resulted in 4 distinct questions. Further, to make sure of the content validity of the interview questions, it was sent to two university professors majored in TEFL and their comments were applied.

3.5. Data collection procedure

To collect the required data, the following processes were followed. First, a convenient sampling procedure was followed to get access to the participants of the study. Due to the nature of the qualitative questions, the nature of data required, and the processes to be followed to collect the convienient data as well as ethical issues, willingness to participate on part of the participants was very necessary. Therefore, the participants were given an informed consent to sign prior to their participation. Also, due to the nature of the sub-questions, achieving data saturation was very vital, so the researchers continued conducting further interviews and subsequent analyzing until they made sure that no new portion of information is added. Following the written expression of willingness to participate, gradual interviewing procedures were launched. Upon the permission of the participants, their voice was recorded for follow-up analysis by a mobile phone. For ease of communication, and to get deeper insight into the interviewees attitudes regarding the construct, the interviews were performed in Persian. Later, the interviews were transcribed and then translated into English. Each interview session lasted about roughly 30 minutes.

3.6. Data analysis

To analyze the data collected for the sub-questions, the researchers followed Boyatzis (1998) patterns for thematic analysis. As Holloway and Todres (2003) puts it, despite the incredible complexity, diversity and nuance of qualitative approaches, thematic analysis seems to be a fundamental method for them. To do the analysis, the via-phone-recorded data were transcribed, translated into English, and then initial codes were generated. Next the categorized themes and defined themes emerged. Before analyzing the data, in order to ensure the reliability of the semi-structured interview, the questions were piloted with 5 teachers. Regarding the correctness of this process, the researchers reached 90% agreement. Therefore, the data was analyzed to achieve the appropriate results. To make sure of the credibility of collected data, participant evaluation- member checking- was followed. Following the transcription of the data, they were returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their

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experiences. As for the dependability, care was taken to go through the research process with the detailed description of the steps so that peers can replicate the study. Also the reserchers rigorously went through the data several times to make sure that there process has been coherent enough.

4. Results

4.1.The first interview question

The first interview question of the study in the interview asked *"To what extent are you familiar with supervision? Please explain".* The thematically coded answers to this question are presented in Table 1. It should be noted that in the below table, the frequencies do not hold any relationship with the number of participating teachers in any of the groups. To put it another way, the frequencies of coded instances are taken form the data corpus. Also, the percentages are just showing a relationship between extracted codes of participants of the groups for any particular extracted theme. As the extracted themes in Table 2 shows, the interviewed teachers referred to the following themes regarding what supervision would be like.

Table 2. Thematic Answers to the First Interview Question

	Pre-service F(%)	In-service F(%)	Supervisor F(%)
Supervising with checklist	2(11.76)	7(41.17)	8(47.05)
Supervising with feedback	5(20.83)	10(41.66)	9(37.5)
Supervision consistency	2(16.66)	5(41.66)	5(41.66)
Holding supervision with prior notice	2(20.00)	4(40.00)	4(40.00)
Atmosphere of supervision	3(18.75)	7(43.75)	6(37.5)
With no-imposition feedback	2(15.38)	6(46.15)	5(38.46)
Timely feedback presentation	0(00.00)	4(57.14)	3(42.85)
Content knowledge of supervising	0(00.00)	4(66.66)	2(33.33)

The first theme emerged was *"with-checklist supervision"*. Regarding this, an in-service teacher claimed: *"The supervisor should have a checklist as this provides a framework for supervisor work and based on the factors which examined in the checklist, the teachers' strengths and weaknesses are better extracted".*

Next emerged theme was *"feedback given by the supervisor"*. Regarding the importance of feedback, another in-service teachers stated: "*A supervisor is some one*

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academically equal to or more competent than the teacher being supervised whose job is to give feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers' teaching to him/her."

The next emerged theme was *"supervision consistency"*. Regarding this, one supervisor said: "*The supervisor must observe the teacher's teaching constantly and set a timeframe to give feedback to the teacher in the first session and then, during subsequent sessions evaluate their performance to see what extent s/he has progressed",*

Another theme emerged was with *"prior-notice supervision"*. One excerpt for this from an in-service teacher was: *"Observation should not be done suddenly and only focus on the false parts of teacher's teaching, but also should be done to help the teachers, solve their problems to improve in their performance".*

Still another emerged theme was *"atmosphere of supervision"*. One in-service teacher claimed: *"The supervisor should create a friendly atmosphere with the teacher, so that the teacher does not get stressed and the supervisor should first talk about his/her teaching strengths and then, address the teacher's problems with soft voice".*

The next extracted theme was *"with-no-imposition feedback"*. In this regard, one in-service teacher said: *"The supervision leads to the teacher's learning and development if it is not directive, and the goal of the supervisor should not be to prove his/her superiority over the teacher during supervision".*

Next emerged theme was *"timely feedback"*. In this regard, one supervisor claimed: *"The supervisor should give feedback during a briefing session without mentioning the teacher's name".* The last emerged theme was "*content knowledge of* supervising". In this regard, one supervisor claimed: "*The supervisor must be significantly strong in the field of supervision, be able to give feedback, and introduce some related resources to teachers' development".*

4.2. The second interview question

The second interview question of the study asked *"Do you as a teacher think that your classroom behavior must be supervised by a more competent teacher? why*?*"* The thematically coded responses to this question by the three groups are presented in Table 3. The emerged themes for the second interview question were three, namely *"the ability of identifying their strengths and weaknesses", "the ability to provide a solution to any raised problem",* and *"*the *ability to provide constructive feedback"*.

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Table 3. Thematic Answers to the Second Interview Question

	Pre-service F(%)	In-service F(%)	Supervisor F(%)
The ability to identify my strengths and weaknesses	5(20.00)	10(40.00)	10(40.00)
The ability to provide a solution	4(23.52)	6(35.29)	7(41.17)
The ability to provide me with constructive feedback	9(20.83)	16(41.66)	16(41.66)

The first emerged theme was *"the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses"*. In this regard, a supervisor said: *"Besides the knowledge, the supervisor must be more competent and more experienced than the teacher in order that be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teachers".*

The second theme emerged was *"presenting a solution"* by the supervisor. The third emerged theme was *"the ability of providing constructive/effective feedback"*. In this regard, one supervisor said: *"Supervision leads to learning in teachers if the supervisor gives constructive feedback to them through an interactive relationship".*

4.3. The third interview question

The third interview question asked *"Are you satisfied with the present supervision process already conducted by supervisors? Why?".* The emerged themes and their frequencies for each group of teachers are presented in Table 4.

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Table 4. *Thematic Answers for the Third Interview Question*

	Pre-service F(%)	In-service F(%)	Supervisor F(%)
No solution for targeted problems	4(23.52)	6(35.29)	7(41.17)
Discontent with supervisor's physical presence	4(28.57)	6(42.85)	4(28.57)
No purpose for improvement	4(40.00)	4(40.00)	2(20.00)
No prior notice	4(40.00)	4(40.00)	2(20.00)
No feedback in most cases	5(20.83)	10(41.66)	9(37.5)
Providing judgmental feedback	1(16.66)	3(50.00)	2(33.33)
No feedback with soft voice	2(15.38)	6(46.15)	5(38.46)

For the third interview question, the first extracted theme was *"no solution for the targeted problems*. As an example, one in-service teacher claimed: *"The supervisor should provide a solution to improve the teaching environment and problems of teachers' teaching, so that the teachers realize their problems and eliminate them in their performance".*

The second theme emereged was *"discontent with supervisor's physical presence"*. An in-service teacher said: *"The physical presence of the supervisor causes that the teachers get stressed and their performance be different during teaching".*

The third emerged theme was *"no purpose for improvement"*. In some instances, the interviewed participants claimed that the present model for supervision already running in the EFL educational context of Iran doesn't lead to any improvement. As an example, an in-service teacher claimed: *"The current supervision model has some weaknesses rather than strengths, and its purpose is to inspect not to improve and solve educational problems of teachers".*

The fourth emerged theme was *"no prior notice"*. Some of the participants believed that teacher supervisors enter their classes without any previous informing, which they evaluated as negative and unwelcome. In this regard, one pre-service teacher said: *"In the current supervision model, the supervisor enters the teacher's classroom without prior notice, and this causes the teacher gets stressed. That is a kind of catching red-handed".*

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The fifth emerged theme was *"no feedback in most cases"*. Interestingly, the supervisors themselves believed that the required feedback is not provided to the teachers in most cases. In this regard, a teacher supervisor claimed:*"This type of supervision is not effective since supervisors are more focused on catching the teachers red-handed and bolding their negative teaching points. Supervisor first compliment the teacher for his positive points and then indirectly give feedback on his negative teaching points so that the teacher apply them in his teaching."*

The sixth emerged them was *"providing judgmental feedback"*. In this regard, one of the in-service teachers said:*"The supervisor should not give feedback to the teacher as an omniscient and judgmentally, because this action causes stress in the teachers and they do not follow his/her instructions in their teaching".*

The last emerged was *"not providing feedback with soft voice"*. In this regard, one in-service teacher said: *"The observer should first address the teachers' strengths, next point out their weaknesses with soft voice and positive sentences and then, talk about their strengths again. This is called sandwich method in psychology".*

4.4. The fourth interview question

The next interview question asked *"Do you think supervision has different models? Please explain."* The emerged themes and their frequencies for each group of teachers are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Thematic Answers for the Fourth Interveiw Question

	Pre-service F(%)	In-service F(%)	Supervisor F(%)
Direct supervision model	5(22.72)	10(45.45)	7(31.81)
Video-recorded supervision model	4(25.00)	7(43.75)	5(31.25)
Collaborative supervision model	0(00.00)	1(50.00)	1(50.00)
Survey-of-student supervision model	1(16.66)	3(50.00)	2(33.33)
Peer-coach supervision model	0(00.00)	3(50.00)	3(50.00)
Self-supportive & exploratory supervision model	0(00.00)	2(100.00)	0(00.00)
Clinical supervision model	1(16.66)	5(83.33)	0(00.00)
Developmental supervision model	0(00.00)	2(100.00)	0(00.00)

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In response to the question *"Do you think supervision has different models? Please explain"*, th following were extracted from the data. The first one was *"direct supervision model"*. An in-service teacher stated: *"In this model, the supervisor comes to the class with a checklist and without prior informing, and maybe gives feedback in an inspection purpose".*

Another model of supervision mentioned was *"video-recorded supervision model"*. In this regard, a pre-service teacher claimed: *"In this model, the observer is not in the class, but records the teacher's teaching through camera installed in the class, and at the end of the class analyzes the film".*

The next model of supervision mentioned was *"collaborative supervision model"*, *which was extracted in two instances*. Another model of supervision mentioned was *"survey-of-student supervision model"*. The following model of supervision that participants mentioned was *"peer-coach supervision model"*. In this regard, an in-service teacher stated:

> *"In this model of observation, a teacher with high level of knowledge and experience in teaching observes the teachers with low experience and enters the class as a colleague not an inspector, and also his/her purpose is to share ideas"*

Another model of supervision that the participants claimed they were familiar with was *"self-supportive and exploratory supervision model"*, which was extracted in two instances. The participants also mentioned such models as *"clinical supervision model" and "developmental supervision model"*.

5. Discussion

The present study explored the attitudes of three groups of teachers regarding supervision in the EFL context of Iran. Following analyzing the data, one of the major themes emerged and spotlighted was "feedback". It is interesting to note that 8 sub-themes emerged regarding what feeback should be like and what it is like in the EFL context of Iran. The emerged sub-theme *"feedback given by the supervisor"*, was welcomed by both in-service teachers and teacher supervisors. This is in line with stockpile of researches in the literature of teacher supervision (e.g., Amini & Gholami, 2018; Izadi, 2016; Kahyalar & Celik Yazici, 2016; Mehrpour & Agheshteh, 2017) which have highlighted the importance of feedback as a key strategy in teacher development.Therefore, in line with findings of the previous studies (Brinko, 1993; Kahyalar & Celik Yazici, 2016) supervisors are supposed to give their own constructive solution to the points they see as challenging in the learning-teaching process which is in corroboration with studies in the literature which emphasize the importance of constructive

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feedback in teacher supervision (Amini & Gholami, 2018; Izadi, 2016; Kahyalar & Celik Yazici, 2016; Mehrpour & Agheshteh, 2017, among others).

Other than constructive nature of to-be-provided feeddback, according to the themses emerged from the data, feedback must be presented timely (Kahyalar & Celik Yazici, 2016; Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001).This has *the ability of identifying teacher's strengths and weaknesses"* which according to the participants (pre-service, in-service, and supervisors) can be provided with a supervisor with more experience and expertise than the to-be-supervised teacher (Berhane, 2014; Bitty Salwana et al., 2010) who can act their modifying role satisfactorily. More interestingly, other than pre-service and in-service teachers, the supervisors also believed that they respected the presence of a more competent supervisor than themselves (40 percent of coded instances). This shows that being professionalized in pedagogical knowledge of teaching is a never-ending circle (Ahmad Kamal et al., 2014; Kahyalar & Celik Yazici, 2016), which requires constant observation and being supervised on part a more competent teacher.

Closely-linked to the theme feedback, *"with-no-imposition feedback",* was also equally refered to by in- service teachers, holding the belief that an observation should not be directive or judgemental which following the possible face threatening act of supervisors (Amini & Gholami, 2018; Izadi, 2016), can result in stressful situations (Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2022). To be more precise, the judgemental nature of feedback, the one which is not based on evidence from literature on teacher supervision (Chieng & Borg, 2011; Sharma & Al-Sinawai, 2019), but based on their personal opinion and their prior experience (Moradi et al., 2014), will end up with the type of feedback which is not appropriated for improving teaches' classroom strategies. The findings corroborates with the findings of previous research (e.g., Bailey, 2006; Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2022; Kahyalar & Celik Yazici, 2016; Mehrpour & Agheshteh, 2017).

Lastly, the belief was that feedback must be provided with a soft voice.The in-service teachers and even supervisors both believed that the supervisors provide feedback directly or with sharp criticism. The results are in agreement with those of (Amini & Gholami, 2018; Izadi, 2016) who found that teacher supervisors do not react gently to the supervisees, trying to hold their authoritative position (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001), and to impose on the supervisees what to be done or not done in their learning-teaching process (Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2022).

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Regarding the present status of supervision in the EFL context of Iran, the the following themes emerged which are of considerable notice. In line with the findings of Amini and Gholami(2018), they (in-service teachers and supervisors) believed that with-checklist-supervision can act as a key tool and guide map in supervising. Also, participants (mostly in-service teachers and supervisors) believed that supervision must be consistent which is in agreement with such studies as (Aldaihani, 2017), and (Wanzare, 2011) in holding the belief that ad-hoc versions of supervision is not rewarding for follow-up development of the teachers. This is also, in line with the findings in the literature by far (Berhane, 2014; Bitty Salwana et al., 2010) as for how consistency in supervision can result in better results for teachers and subsequently for their learners. Also, the participants (mostly in-service teachers) suggested that supervisors must have enough content knowledge whithin their command in case they want wish to succeed. This is in line with Ahmad Kamal et al.(2014), Kahyalar & Celik Yazici (2016) and Sarfo and Cudjoe(2016) which suggested that supervisors can be more successful in their career if they have the required content knowledge about supervision in the literature.

Next emerged theme which can be second in importance is atmosphere of supervision which was equally touched upon by in-service teachers and supervisors. In accordance with previous research(Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2022; Ussher & Carss, 2014), the findings highlight the importance of making a good relationship between supervisor and supervisee to make supervision more effective. Here of course the major purpose is not praise-providing, instead the supervisor must try to tap their colleagues areas of problem in a suggestive way (Wajnryb, 1998) so that they mitigate their criticism voice. For this to crystalize, two other related themes emerged. One was *"prior-notice supervision"*. In accordance with previous research in the literature(Amini & Gholami, 2018; Alipoor Asl & Salehi, 2018; Kahyalar & Celik Yazici, 2016), both in-service teachers and supervisors believd that supervisors are respected and welcomed by the teachers in case they inform the teachers in advance of the incident, and even of sharing what might be focused on during the supervision process. Further, and related to the atmosphere of supervision, majority of in-service teachers besides some of pre-service ones and supervisors believed that the presence of supervision in the classroom is unwelcome. This is in line with previous results from related studies (Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2022; Gholaminejad, 2020), in that they suggest that the physical presence of supervisor in the classroom context can result in negative performance on part of the teacher (Moradi et al., 2014), therefore it is better to use other means for recording their performance such as technological aids (Kaneko-

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Marques, 2015). However, the result is contrary to (Daud et al., 2018) wich posited that the supervisor presence does not affect the performance of the teacher and is not stressful for them.

Regarding the satisfaction of participants with supervision in their context, some other themes emerged which show the unsatisfactory inclinication of the current attitude of participants towards supervision. The first emerged theme was *"no solution for the targeted problems"*. This is in line with Brinko (1993) and Kahyalar & Celik Yazici (2016) which claimed that teacher supervisors don't provide a specific solution to the problems or challenges of the learning-teaching process. Also, the participants believed that supervisors entered the classes without any prior notice (Amini & Gholami, 2018), which according to Moradi et al. (2014) results in poor performance of teachers. The participants of the present study criticized the accidental presence of a teacher supervisor in their classes as they believed that it results in their poor performance (Moradi et al., 2014). Further, they believed that there is no purpose for improvement with the dominant Prescriptive supervision model, corroborating the findings of several previous studies conducted in Iran (e.g, Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2022; Gholaminejad, 2020; Moradi et al., 2014; Parhoodeh & Jalili, 2014; Rashidi & Foroutan, 2016). However, the results are in opposition to those of (Daud et al., 2018) which found that the present models of supervision can be rewarding for future performance of the supervisees. Further, in line with research in the literature, many of in-service teachers and supervisors believed that lack of feedback prevents the supervising sessions from being fruitful (Kahyalar & Celik Yazici, 2016; Mehrpour & Agheshteh, 2017) on teacher classroom behavior problems albeit some believed that teacher supervisors provide the supervisees with a kind of feedback which is judgmental, that is not based on evidence from literature on teacher supervision (Chieng & Borg, 2011; Sharma & Al-Sinawai, 2019), but based on their personal opinion and their prior experience (Moradi et al., 2014).

Regarding familiarity of participants with different supervision models, the collaborative supervision model was refered to by two cases which shows that participants are not familiar with such model (Alipoor Asl, & Salehi, 2018; Azizpour & Gholami, 2021; Chieng & Borg, 2011; Yao Dewodo et al., 2020). Regarding clinical supervision model, the interesting point was that, despite the in-service teachers, the supervisors didn't refer to the model which might show that participants cannot make a distinction between *"direct supervision model"* and *"clinical supervision model"* (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001; Sarfo & Cudjoe, 2016), as in both cases the supervisor has a kind of intervention in the learning-teaching process.

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6. Conclusion

The current study aimed at exploring the perception of Iranian pre-service, in-service, and teacher supervisors toward supervision. Four questions were probed to elicit their perception. The outstanding theme emerged following data analysis was " feedback". The participants, while spotlighting feedback as leading, believed that feedback must be constructive, create a constructive solution to the challenging problems, be timely, be effective in identifying teachers' strengths and weaknesses, enjoy a suggestive nature, and finally be provided with a soft voice. Also, the participants had a whould-be criterion for their favourite model of supervision. They belived that supervision must be accompanied by a checklist, be followed consistently with a supervisor who has a full command of content knowledge. Further, participants spotlighted the gentele atmosphere of supervision as demanding. They believed that any supervision must be conducted with prior notice, and preferably with no physical presence of the supervisor. Regarding the current model of supervision already launced in their teaching context, most of the participants believed that it offers no solution to the problems, there is no purpose for improvement, and results in providing a kind of feedback which is judemental and inappropriate. Finally, the findings suggested that the participants were mostly unfamiliar with collaborative model of superviosn, and couldn't make a clear-cut distinction between direct supervision model versus the clinical one.

Considering this issue, it is very important that the supervisors be trained in the field of supervision periodically, so that they get familiar and use new supervisory models which will have positive effects on the teaching process of teachers. Purposeful and constructive supervision leads to improve the teachers' performance as well as students' learning. Therefore, the findings of this study can create an opportunity for supervisors to use the proposed supervisory model for observing teachers.

The results of the study can be fruitful for TTC holders, teacher mentors and all those stakeholders busy training teachers in the formal context of education (Farhangian University Branches) as they can purposefully make the teacher students aware of the principles of supervision and make them familiar with different supervision models and their tenets.

Also, present supervisors and on-the-job mentor teachers can benefit from the results of the study in a way that they modify their beliefs and future practices regarding supervision as-it-is and supervision as it-must-be-like.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1) Introduce yourself please:

a) name:

b) age:

c) academic degree:

d) field of study:

e) year(s) of teaching experience:

f) teaching context:

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2) To what extent are you familiar with supervision? Please explain.

3) Do you as a teacher think that your classroom behavior must be supervised by a more competent teacher? Why?

4) Are you satisfied with the present supervision process already conducted by supervisors? Why?

5) Do you think supervision has different models? Please explain.

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