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The Opinions of Hong Kong Educators on Classroom Observation as a Practice of Staff Development and Appraisal

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Abstract

The present study aimed at understanding the opinions of Hong Kong educators on classroom observation as a practice of staff development and appraisal. A questionnaire survey was conducted with 2,400 educators in summer 1997. About half of the respondents indicated that they practiced classroom observation in their schools. Most of them indicated that the primary objective of the observation was staff development instead of staff appraisal. However, the frequency and patterns they reported suggest that the observation was mainly done by administrators instead peers. School type and rank effects were found in the educators' perception and opinions on classroom observation. Compared to secondary and special school educators, primary school teachers were less likely to welcome observers and not to have observation in their schools. Teachers were more likely than principals to perceive that classroom observation was primarily for appraisal than for staff development. Disregarding school types and ranks, all the respondents indicated that they wished for a model of peer observation and coaching. The implications of the results on the practice were discussed with reference to the need of staff development and appraisal.

The Opinions of Hong Kong Educators on Classroom Observation as a Practice of Staff Development and Appraisal

A motivated and competent teaching workforce is a key to the delivery of quality education in schools. To have an effective teaching cadre, we cannot only rely on the recruitment mechanism or the training programs in Teachers' College. In an ever changing world which requires ceaseless adaptation from people, it is necessary for teachers to keep up with continuous learning. Staff development for teachers is, therefore, an indispensable component in quality education. To ensure teachers' competence and conscientiousness, staff appraisal is another equally essential mechanism. In both staff development and appraisal, classroom observation plays an important role.

Peer observation in classroom has been widely recognized as a tool to improve teaching quality among teachers. Gottesman and Jennings (1994) criticize that staff development for teachers are usually one-shot deal that does not include on-site continual coaching and refresher courses in skills. As a result, what teachers learn from staff development workshop does not necessarily transfer to actual practice in classroom. However, peer observation or coaching can help rewrite this story. Joyce and Showers (1983) found that peer observation or coaching had tremendous effect on transfer. In their study, all the teachers received three months of training in a specific skill. Half the group also received peer coaching back at the school site as they implemented the skill. The other half did not receive the coaching. Results show that 75% of those who received coaching transferred the skill appropriately to the classroom. In the group that was not coached, only 15% transferred it to the classroom. Joyce and Showers' study was repeatedly replicated by other researchers

(Sparks, 1988; Singh & Shifflette, 1996). In a study of staff development program, Sparks (1988) examined three different types of training: (1) workshops only, (2) workshops plus peer coaching, or (3) workshop plus trainer coaching. She found that the second type had the best result. In her study, peer observation was even more effective than trainer-provided coaching in boosting workshop effectiveness. In another study to understand the improvement of marginal or incompetent teachers, Singh & Shifflette (1996) also found that the most promising ways of professional development were those that engaged teachers in peer coaching and sharing, instead of one-shot workshop with cookbook approach to skill training.

There are numerous ways of data gathering for staff appraisal. Nevertheless, classroom observation still occupies a prominent position. There are two distinct trends in appraisal: one for the sake of accountability and one for development and improvement purposes. This distinction corresponds to that between summative and formative evaluation. Summative evaluation is concerned with judging teachers' performance at a given point of time whereas formative evaluation is concerned with helping teachers develop. In the recent years, there are strong voices to bring together both staff development and performance review in appraisal (McLaughlin, 1986, Poster & Poster, 1993). No matter appraisal is for staff development or performance review, classroom observation is still an effective vehicle. Classroom observation can be geared to individual development and be a vehicle for monitoring the achievement of school objectives as well (Bollington, Hopkins, & West, 1990). However, classroom observation does not seem to be welcome by a lot of teachers. Gottesman and Jennings (1994) comment that classrooms are very isolated places. There is subtle resistance from teachers against having another adult in their classrooms. For many teachers, isolation is a guarantee for job security. Thomas

(1992) also points out that having another adult in classrooms are usually perceived as intrusion instead of support.

The resistance to the practice of classroom observation makes an intriguing contrast to the recognition that observation is an integral part of both staff development and appraisal. There is a need to understand how educators perceive classroom observation so that we could have well-informed planning regarding the practice of classroom observation. In the recent years, the Hong Kong government launches a large number of innovative policies in education. School management initiative (SMI) is one of these innovations. Teacher appraisal is an important component in school management. According to the guidelines given by the School Management Initiative Section of the Education Department in Hong Kong (1998), lesson observation is included as one of the appraisal methods. However, before we can make use of classroom observation effectively, we need to know more about the phenomenon in concern. Specifically, the present investigation addressed the following questions:

1. How do teachers and administrators view the existing practice of classroom observation? How do they perceive its frequency, current objectives, and patterns of operation?
2. What do teachers and administrators expect from ideal practice of classroom observation? What would be their ideal frequency, objectives, and patterns of operation? Are there any discrepancies between the perceived and ideal frequency, objectives, and patterns of classroom observation?
3. How do teachers and administrators perceive the difficulties that undermine the practice of classroom observation?
4. Are educators from different school settings and ranks different in their perception and opinions on classroom observation?

Methods

In June 1997, the Education Convergence, an professional teachers' organization in Hong Kong[1] conducted a questionnaire survey with about 2,400 educators to study their attitudes and opinions towards classroom observation. A 100% sampling approach was taken. The questionnaires were sent to all the 427 secondary schools, 818 primary schools, and 87 special schools in Hong Kong (i.e., all the secondary, primary, and special schools in Hong Kong were covered). All the principals were invited to fill out the questionnaire. In each secondary school, 2 panel/sections heads and 2 teachers were randomly invited to participate. In each primary and special school, 1 panel/section head and 2 teachers were randomly invited to participate. A total of 5,755 questionnaires were mailed to schools. The respondents were requested to return the questionnaires with the stamped envelopes provided by the research team. A total of 2,413 questionnaires were returned. The response rate was about 42%.

The questionnaires consisted of questions tapping how the respondents perceived the existing practice of classroom observation in their schools, what they expected from the ideal practice of classroom observation, and how they perceived the difficulties that undermined classroom observation. One of the emphases of the study was to investigate how the respondents perceived the relative importance of staff development and staff appraisal as the objectives of classroom observation and how the perception related to their acceptance of classroom observation.

[1] The Education Convergence was formed in 1994 by a group of enthusiastic educators in Hong Kong. It was established with the mission to improve the education system in Hong Kong. The members of the Education Convergence are composed of teachers and administrators from primary, secondary, and

Among the 2,413 respondents, about 55.5% came from primary schools, 39.9% came from secondary schools, and 5.5% came from special schools. The percentages of teachers, panel/section heads, and principals were 41.6%, 37.4%, and 21.0% respectively.

Results

Prevalence and frequency.

Among the 2,413 respondents, 53.4% indicated that there was practice of classroom observation in their schools. The prevalence of the practice was significantly different across different types of schools. Only 29.6% of the primary school educators indicated that they practiced classroom observation in their schools. In contrast, the percentages of secondary and special school educators who indicated so were 86.7% and 68.7% respectively. The prevalence rate in primary school was significantly lower than that in secondary schools ($z = -34.13$, $p < .05$) and special schools ($z = -8.92$, $p < .05$).

Among the educators who indicated that they practiced classroom observation, they observed their colleagues 3.07 times a year on the average. In return, they were observed by their colleagues 0.92 times in a year. There was no significant difference in the frequency to observe among the educators from different school settings, $F(2, 1{,}265) = .66$, $p > .05$. On the average, the frequencies for primary, secondary, and special school educators to observe their colleagues in a year were 2.94, 3.04, and 3.80. However, there was significant association between the frequency to be

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tertiary institutes. They conduct research, examine educational issues, and provide consultation to

observed and the types of schools, $F(2, 1{,}243) = 8.63$, $p < .001$. The average frequencies to be observed for educators in primary, secondary, and special schools were 0.84, 0.88, and 1.49 in a year. Post-hoc Scheffe tests revealed that primary and secondary school educators were observed less than their counterparts in special schools.

It was noteworthy that there was also association between the frequency of observation and the ranks of the respondents. On the average, the frequencies for teachers, panel/section heads, and principals to observe their colleagues were 0.57, 2.55, and 8.47 in a year. The results of one-way ANOVA showed that the differences were significant, $F(2, 1{,}258) = 172.17$, $p < 0.001$. Post-hoc Scheffe tests indicated that teachers observed less than panel/section heads and principals. Whereas panel/section heads also observed less than principals. This trend, however, was reversed for the frequency of being observed. On the average, the frequency for teachers, panel/section head, and principals to be observed were 1.2, 0.86, and 0.45 in a year. The results of one-way ANOVA showed that the differences were significant, $F(2, 1{,}235) = 25.58$, $p < .001$. Post-hoc Scheffe tests indicated that teachers were observed more than panel/section heads and principals. Whereas panel/section heads were also observed more than principals.

In the questionnaires, the respondents were asked to indicate how many times a year they would like to observe and be observed. Taken as a whole, they indicated that they would like to observe 2.08 times and be observed 1.76 times a year. It makes an interesting contrast with the actual frequencies they reported. Pair-samples t tests revealed that the respondents would like to be observed more ($t = 4.16$, $df = 1183$, $p < .001$) but to observe less ($t = -19.07$, $df = 1180$, $p < .001$). However, there

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policy makers.

was significant interaction between the frequency of observation and the position of the respondents. A repeated-measures ANOVA was performed on the frequency to observe among the respondents with different ranks. It was found that the teachers wished to observe more (from 0.58 to 1.85) but the panel/section heads (from 2.42 to 2.07) and the principals (from 8.40 to 3.05) wished to observe less. There was a strong interaction effect between the rank and the frequency to observe ($F = 106.77$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). A repeated-measures ANOVA was also performed on the frequency to be observed among the respondents with different ranks. Interaction effect was also found ($F = 49.73$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). All the respondents would like to increase the frequency to be observed. However, the increase magnitude of the principals (from 0.46 to 2.13) was larger than that of the panel/section heads (from 0.85 to 1.71) and the teachers (from 1.20 to 1.66)[2].

Objectives.

In the questionnaires, respondents were asked to indicate the relative importance of staff appraisal and staff development as the objectives of classroom observation in their schools. The results are presented in Tables 1. About 34% of the respondents perceived that staff appraisal was more important than staff development for classroom observation in their schools. However, when they were asked to indicate the relative importance of these two objectives in an ideal practice of classroom observation, the percentage of respondents who endorsed that staff appraisal was more important dropped to 10.8% (See Table 2). To see if the respondents' ideal objectives were different from what were currently practiced in their schools, we traced the changes of their responses in the items of current and

[2] The means in this paragraph were slightly different from the means reported earlier because the

ideal objectives. We found that only 34 respondents reported that staff appraisal was the primary objective of their current practice and they would like it remain the same in ideal practice. In contrast, 366 respondents indicated that staff development was the primary objective in current practice and they would like it remain the same in ideal practice. Only 12 respondents reported that staff development was the primary objective in their current practice but they would like staff appraisal be the primary objective in ideal situation. In contrast, 175 respondents reported that staff appraisal was the primary objective in their current practice but they would like it be replaced by staff development. We performed z test for correlated proportions and found that there was significant change of primary objective in ideal situation ($z = 13.68$, $p < .001$). There were more respondents who wished to replace staff appraisal with staff development as the primary objective of classroom observation than the respondents who wished vice versa.

When z tests were performed for educators with different ranks on their perceptions of current objectives, it was found that there was significant discrepancy between the perception of teachers and principals. There were more teachers (37.8%) who perceived that their current practice of classroom observation was primarily for staff appraisal than the principals who perceived so (28.0%) ($z = 2.10$, $p < .05$). When z tests were performed on the ideal objectives indicated by the respondents, effects of both school settings and rankings were found. Primary school educators were less than secondary school educators ($z = -0,44$, $p < .05$) and special school educators ($z = -0.49$, $p < .05$) who wished that classroom observation was primarily for staff development. Teachers were also less than panel/section heads to indicate

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paired-samples t-tests and repeated-measures ANOVA only included the respondents who had answered both the questions about current and ideal frequency of observation.

that classroom observation should be primarily for staff development in ideal practice ($z = -2.71$, $p < .05$).

Insert Tables 1 & 2 here

Conflicts between the two objectives.

The majority of the respondents (79.6%) did not think that there was conflict between staff development and staff appraisal if both were the objectives of classroom observation. However, when we examined the percentages across the educators with different ranks, we found that there were significant differences. The percentages of teachers, panel/section heads, and principals who thought that there was no conflict was 77.8%, 77.3% and 86.8%. The results of z tests indicated that the percentage of principals who thought so was significantly greater than that of the teachers ($z = 4.50$, $p < .05$) and the panel/section heads ($z = 4.62$, $p < .05$).

Patterns of operation.

The respondents were requested to reported what patterns of observation were practiced in their schools. Six patterns were listed in the questionnaires: (1) principal observes teachers, (2) panel/section heads observe teachers (3) teachers observe panel/section heads, (4) teachers observe one another, (5) experienced teachers observe new teachers, and (6) new teachers observe experienced teachers. Respondents were asked to indicate if each of these patterns were used in their schools. It was found that “principal observing teachers” was the most common pattern practiced. About 66% of the respondents reported that they had this pattern of

observation. In contrast, only 29% of the respondents reported they had "teachers observing one another" as a pattern in their schools.

When the respondents were asked to indicate what patterns would be most desirable for ideal practice of classroom observation, they presented a very different picture. They were requested to rank their preference of the 6 patterns from 1 to 6 with "1" for the most preferred pattern. The results are presented in Table 4. The most preferred pattern was "teachers observing one another" (41.2%). In contrast, only 15.7% of the respondents indicated that "principal observing teachers" was the most desirable pattern.

Insert Tables 3 & 4 here

Association between objectives and patterns.

There was an association between the ideal objectives of classroom observation and the ideal patterns of classroom observation. Compared to the educators who preferred staff development as the primary objective of classroom observation, the educators who preferred staff appraisal as the primary objective were more likely to endorse that principals or panel/section heads observing teachers were ideal patterns of classroom observation (see Table 5). In contrast, the educators who preferred staff development as the primary objective of classroom observation was more likely to opt for teachers observing one another or new teachers observing experienced teachers ($\chi^2 = 43.23$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$).

Insert Table 5 here

Association between objectives and follow-up meetings.

There was an association between the perceived objectives of classroom observation and the evaluation of follow-up meetings. The respondents were asked to evaluate the follow-up meetings after classroom observation on a five-point scale with very meaningless" anchored to "1" and very meaningful" anchored to "5." The educators who perceived staff development as the primary objective in their schools rated the meetings as 3.24 whereas the educators who perceived staff appraisal as the primary current objective in their schools rated the meetings as 3.09. The rating of the former was significantly higher than the rating of the latter ($t = 3.35$, $df = 577$, $p < .001$). The educators tended to think that follow-up meetings were more meaningful when they saw that staff development instead of staff appraisal was the primary objective of classroom observation in their schools.

There was also an association between the evaluation of the follow-up meetings and the ranking of the respondents. Teachers, panel/section heads, principals rated the meaningfulness of the meeting as 3.07, 3.14, and 3.36 respectively. One way ANOVA was performed to these ratings. The results indicated that they were significantly different, $F(2, 1065) = 29.35$, $p < .001$. Principals were more positive of the follow-up meetings than teachers and panel/section heads.

Willingness to be observed

The respondents were asked to indicate if they were willing to have observers in their classrooms. The results are presented in Table 6. A strong association between willingness, school settings, and ranking was discerned. It was found that primary schools educators tended not to welcome observers than their counterparts in secondary schools ($z = 11.64$, $p < .05$) and special schools ($z = 15.06$, $p < .05$). It

was also found that teachers tended not to welcome observers than panel/section heads ($z = 4.42$, $p < .05$) and principals ($z = 13.19$, $p < .05$). Panel/section heads also tended not to welcome observers than principals ($z = 8.86$, $p < .05$).

Insert Table 6 here

There was an association between educators' willingness to be observed and their perception of the current objectives of classroom observation in their schools. Compared to the educators who perceived that staff development as the primary objective in their current practice, the educators who perceived that staff appraisal as the primary objective were more reluctant to welcome observers to their classrooms ($\chi^2 = 3.62$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$).

There was also an association between the willingness to be observed and whether classroom observation was currently practiced ($\chi^2 = 149.7$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Compared to the respondents whose schools had practice of classroom observation, the respondents whose schools had no such practice tended not to welcome observers.

Insert Tables 7 & 8 here

Difficulties.

Three major difficulties that undermine classroom observation were listed in the questionnaire: (1) pressure felt by teachers, (2) lack of time, and (3) lack of understanding and experience in classroom observation. The respondents were requested to rank these difficulties in a descending order. The results are presented in Table 6. The majority of the respondents (71.1%) saw "pressure felt by teachers" as

the top difficulty that undermined classroom observation. Statistical tests revealed significant association of the endorsement of this difficulty with school settings and ranks. The result of z tests indicated that more educators from primary schools (73.3%) saw pressure felt by teachers as the top difficulty than their counterparts from secondary schools (69.0%; $z = 2.22$, $p < .05$) and special schools (63.1%; $z = 2.37$, $p < .05$). There was also a trend for more teachers (72.3%) to endorse such a difficulty than the principals (67.2%) ($z = 2.02$, $p < .05$).

Insert Table 9 here

Discussion

The sample in the present study is representative of Hong Kong educators. In Hong Kong, half of the educators indicate that classroom observation is practiced in their schools. However, the prevalence of the practice varies across different school types. Classroom observation is least practiced in primary schools. In our study, less than 30% of the educators from primary schools indicated that their schools have such a practice. School settings effect is also observed in educators' willingness to have observers. Educators in primary school are less likely than their counterparts in secondary and special schools to welcome observers. At the same time, they are more likely than the latter two groups to rank "pressure felt by the teachers" as the top difficulty that undermines the practice of classroom observation. Classrooms in Hong Kong primary schools seem to fit Gottesman and Jennings' (1994) description of

"isolated places." It is an intriguing phenomenon. Why primary educators in Hong Kong are less likely to practice and welcome classroom observation is worthwhile question for further investigation.

Another interesting finding of the present study is the rank effect on perception and opinions towards classroom observation. Taken as a whole, the majority of Hong Kong educators perceive that classroom observation in their school is primarily for staff development instead of appraisal. However, there are less teachers who think so than the principals. Besides, teachers are also less likely than their supervisors to welcome observers but more likely to rank "pressure felt by the teachers" as the top difficulty that undermines the practice of classroom observation. There is evidence that the reluctance of some teachers in classroom observation may be related to their perception that classroom observation is primarily for staff appraisal instead of staff development. It is found in our study that the educators who perceived staff appraisal as the primary objective were more reluctant to welcome observers than the educators who did not perceive so.

When asked to indicate the primary objective of classroom observation in their schools, most of the respondents indicated that it was staff development. However, part of the data in our study suggest a different picture. When asked to indicate what patterns of classroom observation were practiced, 66% of the respondents reported that "principal observing teachers" was practiced while only 30% reported that "teachers observing one another" was practiced. At the same time, it was found in this study that pattern of observation was related to the objective of the practice. The educators who preferred staff development as the primary objective of classroom observation was more likely to opt for teachers observing one another or new teachers observing experienced teachers. In contrast, the educators who preferred staff

appraisal as the primary objective of classroom were more likely to endorse that principals or panel/section heads observing teachers were ideal patterns of classroom observation. When we examine the data about the frequency of classroom observation reported by the educators from different ranks, we are more convinced that the practice of classroom observation in Hong Kong has a very strong favor of staff appraisal although staff development is publicly recognized as the primary objective. Teachers observe their colleagues less than panel/section heads. On the other hand, panel/section heads observe less than principals. This trend is entirely reversed for the chance to be observed. Teachers have more chances than panel/section head to be observed. Panel/section have also more chances than principals to be observed. The data suggest that the classroom observation in Hong Kong is mainly done by supervisors to their supervisees. We acknowledge that staff development should also be an integral part of staff appraisal. We also acknowledge that supervisors observing supervisees can also enhance individual growth and development. However, this observation model is very different from peer observation or coaching advocated by Joyce and Showers (1982), Gottesman and Jennings (1994).

The results of our study indicate that Hong Kong educators do wish for a peer coaching model for their classroom observation practice. Their most desirable pattern of classroom observation is “teachers observing one another.” More educators wish to replace staff appraisal with staff development as the primary objective of classroom observation than the educators who wish vice versa. The discrepancy between their current and ideal frequency of observation also supports such a switch. While teachers wish to observe more, panel/section heads and principals wish to observe less. On the other hand, teachers wish to be observed less but panel/section heads and

principals wish to be observed more. All these evidences suggest that peer observation or coaching is much more desirable than administrators observing subordinates.

We agree with Poster and Poster (1993) that appraisal should be able to bring together both staff development and performance review. Classroom observation is part of the appraisal procedure and should have its contribution to staff development. However, we believe that classroom observation can and should exist outside the framework of appraisal. As Bollington, Hopkins & West (1990) point out, classroom observation, as an important approach to professional development, does not need to be restricted to appraisers viewing appraisees. The voices of Hong Kong educators are loud and clear in this issue. They wish for a model that is close to peer observation or coaching advocated by Joyce and Showers (1982), Gottesman and Jennings (1994). Peer coaching is not intended for supervision or evaluation. It is a mutual support between peer professionals on the same level. No one is evaluated nor set up as the master teacher. As Gottesman and Jennings (1994) put it, the coaching is short informal observations on one specific, teacher-identified area. It is also a true teacher empowerment because teachers no longer depend upon a supervisor or evaluator to improve their teaching and learning.

We still see that classroom observation has an important role to play in staff appraisal. However, we think that classroom observation has a much more important role in staff development that is outside the framework of appraisal. The Hong Kong educators have made it clear that they would like to see classroom observation be used to its fullest potential in this respect. We believe that if we want teaching to develop into a true profession, periodic updating and retraining for teachers are in paramount importance. We would like to see classroom observation be a part of the

internal support system for teachers and helps teachers refine their skills on a informal and causal basis.

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Table 1
Primary Objective of Current Practice of Classroom Observation as Perceived by Educators from Different School Settings and Ranks

	Staff appraisal	Staff development
Primary school educators (n=194)	37.6%	62.4%
Secondary school educators (n=437)	33.5%	66.5%
Special school educators (n=47)	29.8%	70.2%
Total (n=668)	34.4%	65.6%
Teachers (n=249)	37.8%	62.2%
Panel/section heads (n=252)	34.5%	65.5%
Principals (n=164)	28.0%	72.0%
Total (n=665)	34.1%	65.9%

Note. The number of respondents for the current item was less than the total sample because half of the sample did not have practice of classroom observation in their schools. The respondents who endorsed other objectives or did not have complete data on this item were also excluded.

Table 2
Primary Objective of Ideal Practice of Classroom Observation as Desired by Educators from Different School Settings and Ranks

	Staff appraisal	Staff development
Primary school educators (n=910)	14.1%	85.9%
Secondary school educators (n=645)	7.3%	92.7%
Special school educators (n=92)	3.3%	96.7%
Total (n=1,647)	10.8%	89.2%
Teachers (n=638)	13.9%	86.9%
Panel/section heads (n=628)	8.4%	91.6%
Principals (n=379)	9.5%	90.5%
Total (n=1,645)	10.8%	89.2%

Note. The number of the respondents reported here was less than the total sample because the respondents who endorsed other objectives or did not have complete data on this item were excluded

Table 3
Patterns of Classroom Observation Practiced as Reported by Educators from Different School Settings and Ranks

	Principal observes teachers	Panel/ section heads observe teachers	Teachers observe panel/ section heads	Teachers observe one another	Experienced teachers observe new teachers	New teachers observe experienced teachers
Primary schools (n=359)	72.8%	13.9%	6.2%	27.2%	12.3%	20.9%
Secondary schools (n=809)	60.8%	82.3%	29.2%	28.9%	18.9%	24.8%
Special schools (n=70)	73.3%	51.1%	36.7%	33.3%	27.8%	71.1%
Total (n=1,238)	66.4%	61.4%	24.0%	29.9%	17.7%	27.7%
Teachers (n=472)	60.7%	53.6%	16.2%	26.5%	14.9%	23.3%
Panel/section heads (n=496)	64.1%	67.7%	100%	30.7%	15.1%	26.6%
Principals (n=285)	81.0%	63.5%	33.5%	35.2%	27.5%	38.8%
Total (n=1,253)	66.4%	61.4%	24.0%	29.9%	17.7%	27.7%

Note. The number of respondents for the current item was less than the total sample because half of the sample did not have practice of classroom observation in their schools. Multiple responses were permitted on this item. The respondents were requested to check as many patterns as possible provided that they practiced these patterns in their schools.

Table 4
Endorsement of the Most Ideal Patterns by Educators from Different School Settings and Ranks

	Principal observes teachers	Panel/ section heads observe teachers	Teachers observe panel/ section heads	Teachers observe one another	Experienced teachers observe new teachers	New teachers observe experienced teachers
Primary schools (n=1,322)	19.3%	7.6%	8.3%	42.1%	13.3%	33.5%
Secondary schools (n=948)	9.9%	25.2%	11.1%	41.1%	14.8%	33.0%
Special schools (n=137)	14.7%	3.1%	3.8%	31.4%	4.0%	53.8%
Total (n=2,402)	15.7%	14.9%	9.2%	41.2%	13.2%	34.4%
Teachers (n=998)	14.5%	11.6%	13.5%	34.4%	15.4%	39.9%%
Panel/section heads (n=899)	16.5%	17.1%	5.7%	44.2%	14.7%	31.0%
principals (n=504)	16.6%	16.6%	6.3%	47.9%	6.1%	29.6%
Total (n=2,401)	15.7%	14.9%	9.2%	41.2%	13.2%	34.4%

Note. The respondents were requested to rank their preference of these patterns from 1 to 6. The percentage in each cell is the percentage of the respondents who ranked the pattern concerned as number 1 in the preference list.

Table 5
Most Desirable Patterns of Classroom Observation and Ideal Objectives of Classroom Observation

	Primary Objectives	
	Staff appraisal (n=142)	Staff development (n=1247)
Principals or panel/section heads observing teachers (n=396)	52.1%	25.8%
Teachers observing one another or new teachers observing experienced teachers (n=993)	47.9%	74.2%

Note. $\chi^2 = 43.23$, df = 2, $p < .001$

Table 6
Willingness of Educators from Different School Settings and Ranks to Have Observers

	Do not welcome observers	Welcome observers	No strong preference
Primary schools (n=1,322)	26.4%	21.0%	42.6%
Secondary schools (n=943)	8.7%	56.5%	34.7%
Special schools (n=137)	1.7%	67.5%	30.8%
Total (n=2,402)	18.2%	43.0%	38.8%
Teachers (n=998)	25.1%	33.4%	41.5%
Panel/ section heads (n=899)	16.9%%	45.7%	37.4%
principals (n=504)	3.8%	59.6%	36.6%
Total (n=2,401)	18.2%	43.0%	38.8%

Table 7
Willingness to be Observed and the Current Objective of Classroom Observation

Welcome observers	Primary Objective	
	Staff appraisal (n=125)	Staff development (n=284)
No (n=64)	20.8%	13.4%
Yes (n=345)	79.2%	86.6%

Note. The number of respondents in the analysis was greatly reduced because considerately large proportion of respondents did not practice classroom observation or had indicated no strong preference for receiving observers. $\chi^2 = 3.62$, df = 1, $p < .05$

Table 8
Willingness to be Observed and the Practice of Classroom Observation

	Classroom observation is practiced	
Welcome observers	No (n=621)	Yes (n=783)
No (n=418)	46.5%	16.5%
Yes (n=986)	53.5%	83.5%

Note. $\chi^2 = 149.7$, df = 1, $p < .001$

Table 9
Difficulties Undermining Classroom Observation as Perceived by Educators from Different School Settings and Ranks

	Pressure felt by the teachers	Lack of time	Lack of understanding and experience
Primary schools (n=1,322)	73.3%	20.2%	15.7%
Secondary schools (n=943)	69.0%	29.7%	16.4%
Special schools (n=137)	63.1%	31.5%	18.8%
Total (n=2,402)	71.1%	24.5%	16.1%
Teachers (n=998)	72.3%	25.9%	13.2%
Panel/ section heads (n=899)	71.9%%	23.2%	17.0%
principals (n=504)	67.2%	23.7%	19.8%
Total (n=2,401)	71.1%	24.5%	16.1%

Note. The respondents were requested to rank the difficulties from the greatest to the least. The percentage in each cell is the percentage of the respondents who ranked the relevant difficulty as the greatest on their list.