

The Impact of Educational Supervisory Practices on the Performance of Iraqi EFL Teachers

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Abstract

The present study examines the significance of the teachers' supervision system on the growth and development of English teachers in Iraq. Specifically, it critically examines perceptions of the importance and quality of supervision practices among teachers as a crucial step toward understanding the differences between supervisory practices and their associated needs. Quantitative questionnaire data were collected from 242 English teachers from 346 secondary and preparatory schools alongside semi-structured interviews with all 10 English language supervisors in Karbala, using a convergent mixed-method approach. The results were validated and tested for reliability using appropriate statistical analyses. The findings described a major discrepancy between supervisors' stated practices and teachers' actual experiences. For example, only 14.0% of teachers answered "Always" to receiving instructional feedback; 38.8% answered "Rarely" and 19.0% "Never." The mean frequency of "Rarely" responses was 84.00 in all other categories ($p = 0.0012$): mean frequency of responses indicating weak supervision (Cohen's $d = 0.62$). Qualitative interviews corroborated the questionnaire that reflected a tendency to prioritize administrative duties above instructional mentorship. The supervisory approaches for Iraqi English language teachers are varying and not sufficiently developmental. There is an urgent demand for a standardized, holistic supervision framework that fosters regular feedback, ongoing professional development, and trust building. These results provide concrete, actionable guidance to policymakers and education stakeholders in Iraq and similar settings that seek to improve teacher effectiveness and drive better student outcomes.

Keywords:

Educational supervision, EFL teacher development, supervisors, EFL teaching, transformational leadership theory

INTRODUCTION

The trajectory of social and professional reform often begins with the educational system, reflecting a nation's philosophy and aspirations for future generations. In developing countries like Iraq, the evolution of academic practices, particularly in English language teaching, is a key focus. Despite efforts to implement the comprehensive "English for Iraq" curriculum, systemic challenges such as outdated supervision methods persist.

Unfortunately, Iraq's educational system continues to face significant challenges. The quality of education has declined since the 1980s due to a *mélange* of reasons, whether on the political or educational environment front. The previously mentioned reasons cast a shadow on the academic preparation of English teachers and lead to an assortment of issues when teaching the curriculum, such as inappropriate choice of teaching methods, strategies, and even activities for each of the four skills, grammar functions, and vocabulary. Recent studies (Khasawneh, 2021; Al-Husseini & Ibrahim, 2023; Al-Mamori, 2022) signify the persistent disconnect between curriculum goals and the reality of the classroom in Iraq which results in obstructing both teachers' performance and students' language acquisition.

These issues yield further problems related to student achievement and inhibit their linguistic potential. Khasawneh (2021) states that most Arab students face difficulties when communicating in English; therefore, they resort to using the Arabic language due in part to the traditional teaching methods utilized by the teachers in English language classes. Khasawneh (ibid) adds that students face challenges with reading comprehension because their teachers do not instruct them well on how to deal with reading and which strategies they should use.

Providing effective supervision practices enhances teachers' satisfaction and retention furthermore, it improves teaching which critical in EFL context where teachers encounter a multitude of linguistic, pedagogical, and systemic challenges (Borg, 2006). Consequently, in many post-conflicts or under-resourced systems such as Iraq's, the absence of transformative supervisory models compromises the effectiveness of foreign language teaching.

Although systemic issues plague Iraq, other nations have transitioned from an inspection model for supervision to a developmental one. For example, in the U.S. and the U.K., supervision has since become synonymous with instructional coaching and mentorship (Zepeda, 2007; Hallinger, 2018). Understanding the complexities of modern supervision is as important as knowing the historical context of it, which explains how supervision characterized by constructive feedback, regular observations and mutual planning can help educators reflect and improve their practice. Conversely, most developing countries, including Iraq, still depend on backward and top-down supervision mechanisms, focusing only on compliance and neglecting the professional development of teachers.

This study draws on two major theories to frame the issue of supervision: Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994) and Adult Learning Theory (Knowles, 1984). The former emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring, mentoring, and enabling teachers to exceed expectations through vision, trust, and support. The latter views teachers as adult learners who thrive in contexts that promote autonomy, relevance, and experiential learning.

Effective supervision in EFL contexts is not just an administrative function but a pedagogical one, shaping how communicative, task-based, and student-centered methods are implemented. In fragile systems like Iraq, the lack of developmental supervision may perpetuate outdated methods and inhibit L2 proficiency gains. These frameworks shaped the construction of the research instruments and informed the interpretation of results, especially in evaluating feedback, resource access, and trust-building in supervisory relationships.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To explore the effectiveness of supervisors' practices on English language teachers in Iraqi EFL context, the present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do Iraqi EFL teachers perceive the supervisory support they receive?
2. In what ways do supervisors' claimed roles differ from teachers' reported experiences?
3. How closely do current supervisory practices align with transformational leadership and adult learning principles?

Supervisory Practices and Teacher Development

Research has pointed out the significance of supervision to bring improvement in instruction quality and professional development. For that matter, the characteristics of effective supervision would be clarity in communication, constructive feedback, and focus on the teacher's needs. Supervisory practice in most developing countries remains anchored on an obsolete model, emphasizing inspection instead of mentorship.

The sole purpose of educational supervision is to empower and improve the overall quality of education and ensure the attainment of educational objectives by reinforcing effective teaching methods and motivating teachers' growth. Pierce and Rowell (2005) define supervision as a development process that supports and enhances teachers' skills, motivations, self-awareness, and autonomy to execute curriculum plans appropriately. Additionally, Educational supervision, as defined by Tesfaw and Hofman (2014), encompasses the vital process of monitoring instruction and teaching to ensure effectiveness and adherence to standards. This proactive approach supplements teachers by providing feedback and support to enhance their instructional practices.

Zepeda (2007) further emphasizes the critical role of supervision in fostering teachers' professional development. By offering guidance, feedback, and resources, supervisors contribute significantly to the growth and effectiveness of educators, ultimately benefiting student learning outcomes. Therefore, adequate instructional supervision is essential for maintaining high teaching standards and facilitating ongoing professional development among teachers. Educational supervisors should possess certain prerequisite traits, such as strong leadership skills, effective communication abilities, empathy, patience, adaptability, subject matter expertise, problem-solving skills, organization, and a commitment to continuous improvement and professional development. They should provide constructive feedback and empowerment for instructors, promote a positive learning environment, and demonstrate a genuine passion for education and student success (Glickman et al. 2004:28).

Supervision should be conducted in a practical and participatory manner, involving collaboration between supervisors and teachers. This

approach fosters a culture of continuous development and improvement among educators. Ensuring training and monitoring continuity helps reinforce desired practices and effectively address emerging needs. Moreover, the program should include mechanisms for the continuous assessment and evaluation of teachers' performance. This ongoing process allows for identifying strengths and areas for growth, ultimately contributing to the overall effectiveness of the supervision program.

Globally research in EFL settings increasingly highlight the importance of instructional supervision in shaping pedagogical practices and developing students' language and engagement. For instance, Copland, Mann, and Garton (2020) studied the opportunities for EFL teachers' professional development and learning based on supervision by focusing on how monitoring-based models influence teachers' willingness to innovate. Wang (2021) similarly investigated how formative supervisory feedback fosters pedagogical agency among novice EFL teachers in China. The aforementioned studies collectively indicate the importance of utilizing educational supervision as an empowering mechanism that supports EFL teachers in adopting communicative and learner-centered methodologies and not as a mere evaluative tool.

Farrell (2016) proposed a reflective supervision framework to help teachers evaluate their beliefs and actions inside the classroom environment. Given the high stakes testing and policy constraints EFL teaching is subjected to. Adaptable supervisory models are essential to cultivating effective, and context-sensitive pedagogy.

Educational Supervision in Iraq: Regional Gaps and Fragile System Challenges

The Iraqi educational system has been shaped by decades of sociopolitical turmoil, as such, it lacks resource allocation, suffers from poorly trained teachers, and its supervisory practices are not uniform. Supervisors often engage themselves in administrative roles at the expense of developmental support, and their influence on teaching quality is therefore often limited.

As mentioned earlier, Educational supervision is an activity that relies on studying the current educational situation and aims to serve all those working in the field of education to enhance and

develop their capabilities and raise their professional and scientific level, thus achieving an improvement in the educational process and its goals, and promoting both teaching and learning processes (Al- Qasim and Al- Zubaidi. 2009:7). In this context, the Ministry of Education (formerly known as the Ministry of Knowledge) has shown tangible interest in educational supervision since its establishment in 1921. The ministry focused on laying down the foundations and rules governing supervision, specifying the criteria for selecting educational supervisors, establishing the necessary bodies for planning, developing, coordinating, monitoring, evaluating supervision activities, and outlining practical ways to achieve its goals and missions on solid foundations that ensure the enhancement of the educational process and increase its effectiveness by raising the professional and scientific level of teachers, solving problems facing the educational system, and actively contributing to the organization of school staff (Al- Qasim and Al- Zubaidi. 2009:7).

Despite these intentions, educational supervision in Iraq has been characterized by fluctuation in terms of organizational changes. For instance, the name of the General Inspectorate of Education was changed to the General Directorate of Educational Supervision in 1972 (Ministry of Education, 1979), which was then abolished in 1981 based on the recommendations of the Education and Higher Education Sector Workshop (Ministry of Education, 1986). Subsequently, the General Directorate of Inspection and Educational Supervision was established in 1998 (Ministry of Education, 1998).

Regarding administrative affiliation, the educational supervision entity in Iraq has been associated with various entities over time. At times, it was under the General Directorate of Educational Supervision. Then, in 1982, two directorates were established: the first was the Directorate of Educational Supervision, and the second was the Directorate of Specialized Supervision. In 1988, the Directorate of Educational Supervision was established within the General Directorate of Public Education, which oversaw educational supervision affairs in the general directorates of education. At that time, a permanent committee for educational supervision was formed.

In 2004, the General Directorate for Teacher Training and Educational Supervision was established, consisting of four departments: Educational Supervision, Specialized Supervision,

Teacher Training, and Training (Ministry of Education, 2004:6).

The Ministry of Education formed a General Directorate for Educational Supervision alongside the General Directorate for Training and Preparation. Currently, the Ministry of Education is making every effort to develop educational supervision and educational specialists, focusing on their selection, qualification, and training (ibid).

Despite numerous institutional reforms, the current educational supervisory system suffers from goal ambiguity and poor alignment with instructional improvement. Supervisors are assigned administrative roles, lack the training and resources to provide sustained pedagogical feedback. Moreover, there is a significant research deficit in understanding how such supervisory practices impact EFL instruction particularly in preparatory and secondary schools where communicative competence and methodological diversity are essential.

The present study addresses that gap by focusing on supervisory practices in the Iraqi government of Karbala, a representative setting with only 10 English language supervisors for (346) secondary and the preparatory schools. The results of the study highlight how institutional legacies, limited capacity, and the absence of developmental models shackles the effectiveness of EFL supervision. By documenting the mismatch between supervisors claims and actual teachers' experiences, this research contributes empirically grounded insights into how supervision should be reimagined to support EFL learning outcomes in fragile under-resourced environments

Goals of Educational Supervision

General and specific objectives for educational supervision have been identified. The general and comprehensive aim of educational supervision is to improve the teaching and learning process by developing students and enhancing society. (Basilio and Bueno. 2021; 2).

Basilio and Bueno (2021: 4) summarized the objectives as follows:

- Assisting teachers in recognizing students' problems and needs and

making efforts to solve those problems and meet students' needs.

- Developing the ethical aspect among teachers and unifying them in a cooperative group.
- Enhancing the new teacher's desire in his profession and school.
- Assisting teachers in diagnosing the difficulties they face in the teaching process and finding ways to overcome them.
- Help clarify the school's programs related to the environment, encourage citizens to contribute to these programs, and enhance their role in solving the school's problems.
- Assisting teachers in utilizing their efforts, organizing their time, and elevating the status of their profession in society.
- Developing and improving school administration and its staff.
- Organizing the educational situation.
- Developing the curriculum through analysis and evaluation for modification and enhancement.
- Efficiently directing human and material resources and effectively utilizing them.
- Enhancing teaching methods teachers use and keeping them informed about new developments in their fields of specialization.
- Developing interpersonal relationships among educational personnel to boost morale.
- Coordinating educational programs to improve the educational process.
- Providing professional and scientific growth opportunities for educational personnel to ensure their ability to keep pace with educational developments.

Theoretical Framework and Alignment with Supervision Constructs

The two theories that ground this research are Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994) and Adult Learning Theory (Knowles, 1984).

A foundation of Transformational Leadership Theory is that leaders who inspire and empower their teams through individualized support, the promotion of an intellectually stimulating environment, and a shared vision are the most effective. In educational terms, supervisors need to be mentors, who give steady feedback, build trust, and promote ongoing development (Hallinger, 2018; Nguyen & Ng, 2020).

Adult Learning Theory (Knowles, 1984) posits that adult learners such as in-service teachers flourish in learning environments honors their autonomy, draw on their experience, and create space for authentic reflection and collaboration. Therefore, supervision should not be based on a top-down or compliance driven models, instead it has to be anchored on reflective, collaborative, and supportive of teachers' agency

The aforementioned Theories shaped the survey construction guiding the formation of five domains that assess the effectiveness of EFL supervisors' practices with regards to teachers' development and instructional capacities. They also informed the qualitative coding process, where themes such as autonomy, feedback quality, and relational trust were connected to the foundations of adult learning and transformational leadership theory.

The table below demonstrates the alignment between the survey domains and theoretical constructs:

Table 1.

Theoretical Mapping of Survey Domains

Survey Domain	Transformational Constructs	Leadership	Adult Learning Principles
Guidance and Feedback	Individualized Intellectual Stimulation	Consideration,	Feedback-centered autonomy; learner respect
Professional Development and Support	Inspirational Motivation,	Mentorship	Experiential, needs-based adult learning
Curriculum and Instructional Supervision	Idealized Stimulation	Influence, Intellectual	Practical problem-solving and collaboration

Resource Provision	Enabling Support	Environment, Strategic	Environmental structuring for adult learners
Trust and Professionalism	Building Trust, Ethical Leadership		Relationship-centered support and respect

Aligning the instrument and analysis with these theoretical frameworks, ensures descriptive and analytical rigor to the study's findings. Quantitative and the qualitative data results emphasize the way EFL supervisors behave either to uphold or undermine core principles of effective instructional leadership and adult learning facilitation.

This theoretical integration aims to strengthen the study's contribution to EFL educational research by demonstrating that transformative and adult-centered supervisory models are both conceptually sound and practically applicable in fragile, under-resourced educational settings like Iraq.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researchers utilized a convergent parallel mixed-methods design where quantitative and qualitative data were collected separately, analyzed independently, and then merged and interpreted together. This design was chosen to provide complementary insights: quantitative data evaluated the prevalence and variability of supervisory practices in the sample, while qualitative interviews contextualized and enriched those findings with lived experience in the field. For the quantitative part, a survey was distributed to a representative sample of Iraqi English Language Teachers to measure the quality of supervisors' practices using structured responses. The qualitative section encompasses meticulous interviews with supervisors to gain an understanding of their professional duties, challenges, and methods of teacher governance.

Population and Sample

The participants of the study were 10 English language supervisors and 242 English language teachers across 346 secondary and preparatory schools in Karbala Governorate, Iraq.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to guarantee diversity across various types of schools (Urban vs Rural, public vs private). To establish broad representation, the teachers' sample was randomly chosen from each category. Karbala's General Directorate of Education has only 10 English language supervisors. Therefore, all of them were included in the study.

- The teachers' sample size (n=242) was calculated according to Cochran's formula for large populations, ensuring statistical relevance.
- The supervisors' sample (n=10) embodies the entire population of English language supervisors in Karbala, securing full coverage of their perspectives.

Instrument and Data Collection

The two main instruments for data collection are structured surveys (quantitative) and semi-structured interviews (qualitative).

- a. Teacher Survey:* A structured survey encompassing 24 items was designed to evaluate teachers' perceptions of supervisors' practices. The items were measured on a Likert scale (1-5), ranging from "Never" to "Always". Five aspects were covered in the survey:
1. Guidance and Feedback
 2. Professional Development and Support
 3. Curriculum and Instructional Supervision
 4. Resource Provision
 5. Trust and Professionalism

To ensure validity and reliability, the survey was subject to expert review by a jury of eight TEFL specialists, and a pilot test of 30 participants was conducted, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86. Domain-specific internal consistency measures were also calculated. The Cronbach's Alpha values for each of the five survey domains were as follows:

- Guidance and Feedback: $\alpha = 0.81$
- Professional Development and Support: $\alpha = 0.84$
- Curriculum and Instructional Supervision: $\alpha = 0.79$
- Resource Provision: $\alpha = 0.76$
- Trust and Professionalism: $\alpha = 0.82$

These values demonstrate acceptable to strong reliability across all domains.

The questionnaire is translated into Arabic to cater to the teachers' various levels of English competencies and attain the most accurate results. A total number of 242 responses were gathered, which is in accordance with the sample size.

- Supervisor Interviews:** The researchers designed a semi-structured interview consisting of (8) open-ended questions. In terms of data collection, the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically. To reduce bias, neutral open-ended questions were used to gain candid responses, the responses were anonymized and confidential to reduce social desirability bias, and finally, triangulation was achieved by comparing supervisors' responses with teacher survey data. To ensure the validity of the qualitative instrument, the interview protocol was presented to eight TEFL experts who evaluated to what extent the questions were clear, and neutral and covered the relevant area. Small changes were made based on this feedback so that the language was not leading and the content aligned with the research objectives. Also, the interview guide was pilot-tested by one out-of-sample supervisor to ensure question flow and clarity. The researchers triangulated themes from interviews with patterns that emerged from the quantitative survey responses.

Data Analysis

A convergent parallel mixed-method design was used in which both the qualitative data and the quantitative data were collected and analyzed separately before being integrated during interpretation. For triangulation, themes from interviews (e.g., 'Seeing administrative support for the group more than mentorship') were juxtaposed with

illustrated results from surveys (e.g., high incidence of 'Rarely' to feedback). Discrepancies (e.g., supervisors' idealized claims vs. teachers' negative experiences) were reconciled through iterative discussion between coders and contextualized with socio-educational limitations.

Quantitative Data Analysis: Descriptive Statistics: Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were computed.

Inferential Statistics:

- T-tests were conducted to compare the differences between supervisors' claims and teachers' experiences.
- ANOVA was used to investigate differences across different types of schools and geographical locations.
- Effect sizes (Cohen's d & partial eta squared) were reported to assess practical significance.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

Data were analyzed thematically following the six-phase framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the report. This process followed an inductive approach, which allowed themes to emerge from the data rather than imposing preconceptions about the meanings of the data. To strengthen rigor, coding was done manually and cross-validated with NVivo 12 software. Some initial categories were "administrative priority," "limited feedback," "trust dynamics" and "lack of professional development." These were distilled into broader themes (e.g. Disconnect Between Claimed and Perceived Practices, Absence of Mentorship, and Erosion of Supervisory Trust).

Ethical Considerations

To uphold research integrity, the following ethical guidelines were closely adhered to:

- Informed Consent: Subjects were informed of the purpose of the study and signed consent forms.

- Confidentiality: No identifiable information was included in any of the reports.
- Informed Consent: Participants could choose whether to take part in this study and withdraw at any time without any consequences.

The data is then presented to experts in the Ministry of Education to ensure that our curriculum is relevant, engaging, and aligned with national standards.

Human Relations Development: Supervisors prioritize creating a positive and inclusive school climate. Additionally, they are encouraged to build strong relationships with teachers and promote a sense of belonging. As well as facilitating professional development opportunities to enhance teachers' interpersonal skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Supervisors' Practices and Responsibilities

Based on the interview, it is found that Iraqi educational supervisors claim to have a variety of tasks and responsibilities that involve guiding, evaluating, and developing the educational process by improving the educational situation in all its aspects.

They state that their duties include more than assisting teachers in developing their work and improving their methods. Instead, they have numerous tasks and functions that require individuals and the supervisory apparatus to fulfill various duties and responsibilities. The responsibilities of teachers are as follows:

Planning: Supervisors constantly review teachers' lesson plans to ensure they align with the Ministry of Education and curriculum goals. Furthermore, they examine how teachers plan to address their students' specific needs.

Guidance and Coordination: Supervisors additionally claim to offer advice on various aspects of the educational process, including curriculum, assessment, and classroom management. They also certify effective strategies for promoting positive relationships with their students.

Administrative Leadership: They mainly provide the necessary support and resources for the teachers to handle administrative tasks. Moreover, they suggest guidance on effective strategies for managing classroom behavior and communicating with parents.

Curriculum Development: They compile feedback from teachers to develop curricula in terms of content, methodology, and assessment methods.

Even though **teacher training is an integral part of supervisors' responsibilities, they admit that they lack** objective strategies to identify the development needs of the teachers. They additionally state that development and training workshops are primarily general in scope.

Concerning the **Strengthening School-Environment and Community Relations**, they do not participate in or encourage school-wide initiatives like Parent-teacher meetings.

Evaluating the Educational Process: Finally, educational supervisors collect data on student achievement, teacher performance, and school climate to identify areas of improvement and provide targeted support to teachers.

Teachers' Responses

Quantitative findings reveal a significant gap between supervisors' interview claims and teachers' actual experiences with supervision:

1. *High Variability across response categories*

Rarely has the highest average percentage across most questions. For example, it records 45.97% for "Suggesting to teachers how they should teach English" and 35.91% for "Ensuring that teachers have adequate teaching/learning materials." This indicates an inconsistency in the supervisory practices, as the majority of the teachers believe that the supervisors sometimes or hardly involve themselves in such activities.

2. *Moderate "Sometimes" responses*

Sometimes, responses dominate in foundational support practices such as “Suggesting practical communication skills” (37.32%) and “Providing in-service workshops to develop skills” (31.82%). These responses indicate that while supervisory support is present in some instances, it is not consistently reliable. This indicates that Teachers occasionally benefit from supervisory guidance, but the lack of regularity undermines its potential impact.

3. Low “Always” Responses

Always responses rarely exceed 20% for most questions, except for specific ones like “Assessing teachers’ content knowledge” (23.77%) and “Providing time management strategies” (21.14%). This highlights that supervisors are rarely perceived as consistently engaged in supporting teachers. This demonstrates a lack of regular supervisory engagement and suggests a need for structured frameworks to ensure continuous and dependable support.

4. Concerning “Never” Responses

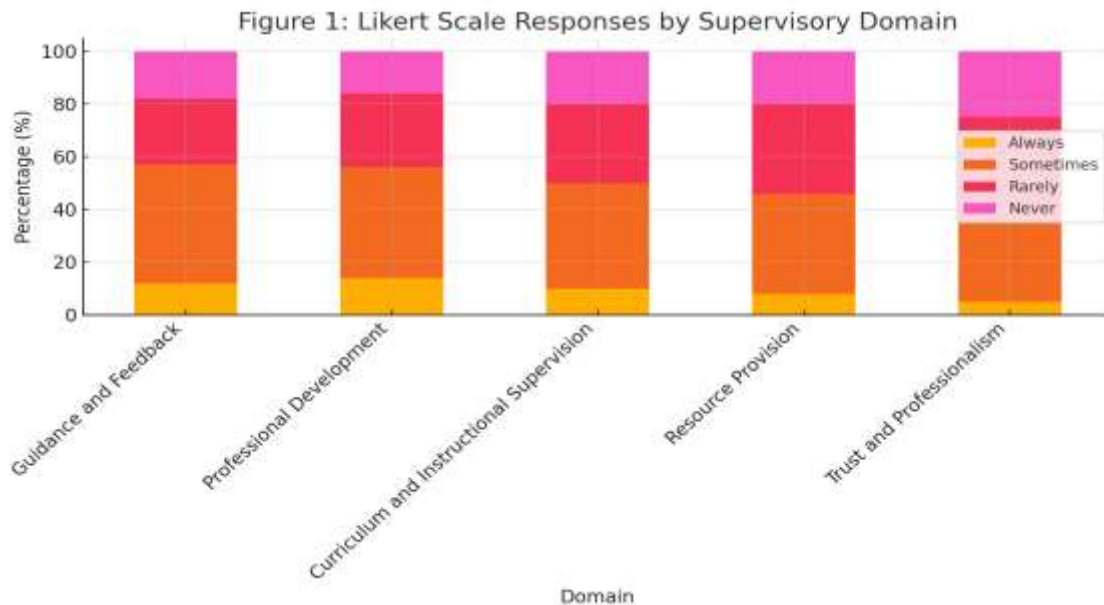
High “Never” response rates are particularly evident in areas such as “Inspecting teachers’

instructional practices for errors” (40%) and “Assisting educators in employing effective solutions” (42.25%), reflecting a complete absence of engagement in critical areas. These supervisory omissions risk undermining teaching effectiveness and impeding professional development. The figure further corroborates this concern by illustrating disproportionate “Rarely” and “Never” responses in key domains, particularly Trust and Professionalism, which showed the highest levels of attrition. This pattern suggests systemic inconsistency and a perception of supervisory ineffectiveness within the modern educational workplace.

As shown in **Figure (1)**, which summarizes the average response frequencies for each supervisory domain on the Likert scale. The frequency of “Sometimes” responses is the most common rating across domains like professional development and curriculum support; on the other hand, “Rarely” and “Never” responses dominate domains related to trust and feedback, which indicates inconsistent support. This trend suggests a broader failure in the supervisory system with regard to establishing trust and meaningful instructional dialogue, resembling core components of transformational leadership.

Figure 1

Teachers’ Likert-Scale Responses Across Survey domains

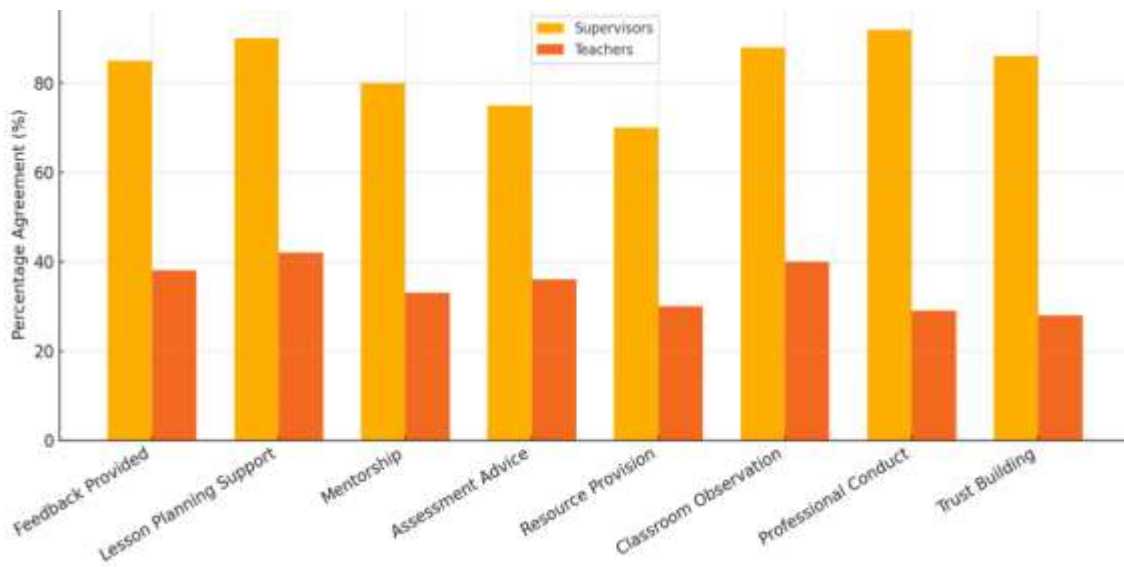


As illustrated in **Figure (2)** below, perceptions of supervisory effectiveness vary considerably across domains. The figure presents a side-by-side column graph comparing eight key supervisory responsibilities—such as instructional feedback, classroom observation, and professional conduct based on supervisors’ interview claims (e.g., “provided regularly”) and teachers’ perceptions (e.g., 42% “Never”). These visuals highlight the stark perceptual gap between supervisory intent and actual

teacher experience. Notably, the domain of Trust and Professionalism exhibits the highest frequency of “Rarely” and “Never” responses, suggesting an erosion of sustained professional rapport and a lack of relational investment. Similarly, in Curriculum and Instructional Supervision, nearly one-third of respondents report minimal or no supervisory engagement. These distributions underscore a weak alignment with adult learning principles, which prioritize teacher autonomy, mutual respect, and constructive feedback, and further reflect the failure to enact transformational leadership behaviors in supervisory practices.

Figure 2

Comparative Matrix of Supervisor Claims vs. Teacher Perceptions



diminished, creating resistance to feedback and collaboration.

5. Trends in Trust and Respect

Questions related to relational aspects, such as “Establishing relationships with teachers built on trust and transparency” and “Demonstrating professional demeanor and respect for teachers,” show higher Never and Rarely responses. These patterns suggest systemic issues in building strong, trust-based relationships between supervisors and teachers. Without trust and professional respect, the effectiveness of supervisory practices is likely

The figure and table below summarize the descriptive statistics for the teachers’ responses across four Likert categories Always, Sometimes, Rarely, Never across five supervisory domains: Guidance and Feedback, Professional Development, Curriculum and Instructional Supervision, Resource Provision, and Trust and Professionalism (for full item-level data, see Appendix 1). As shown in **Figure (3)**, “Rarely” and “Never” responses dominate in key areas such as trust, feedback, and instructional support, with some items exceeding 40% in “Never” ratings. This attrition suggests systemic supervisory gaps that undermine core teacher needs, particularly in reflective dialogue and instructional guidance. From an EFL teaching

perspective, such neglect may lead to fossilization of outdated teaching methods, lack of innovation, and low motivation for pedagogical improvement. These findings directly address Research Questions 1 and 2, exposing a disconnect between supervisory claims and actual teacher experiences. They also signal a

breakdown in transformational supervision, where individualized support, mentoring, and developmental feedback central to both Transformational Leadership Theory and Adult Learning Theory are largely absent in practice.

Figure 3

Average Response Frequencies by Survey Domain

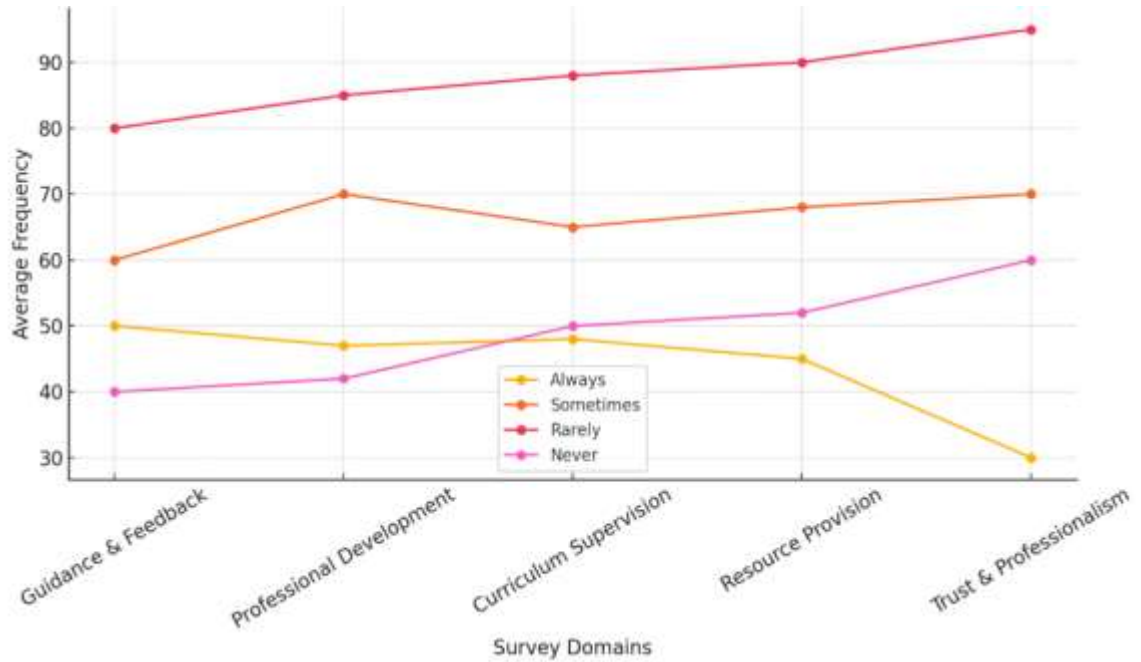


Table 2

Statistical Analysis of Teachers' Responses

Metric	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Mean	45.21	67.79	84.00	46.67
Standard Deviation	14.61	17.23	25.40	19.72

Minimum	10	39	49	10
Maximum	67	102	127	93

in both the direct quotes from supervisors' interviews and the teacher survey responses.

- The mean for **Rarely** (84.00) is notably higher than the other categories, suggesting that "Rarely" is the most frequently chosen response.
- The high standard deviation for **Rarely** (25.40) indicates considerable variability in responses, reflecting inconsistent experiences among teachers.

T-Test Results (Always vs Rarely)

- **T-Statistic:** -3.76
- **P-Value:** 0.0012 (Significant at $p < 0.05$)

The p-value (0.0012) is below the significance threshold of 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference between the Always and Rarely response categories.

ANOVA Results (Across All Categories: Always, Sometimes, Rarely, Never):

- **F-Statistic:** 13.342
- **P-Value:** 0.00001 (Significant at $p < 0.05$)

There is a statistically significant difference between at least two of the response categories.

Supervisor Claims vs Teacher Realities

Iraqi English language supervisors described their duties as multifaceted and development-oriented. The quantitative data gathered from the participants displays a divergent reality. There is a stark disconnect regarding the supervisory responsibilities promoted by supervisors, such as instructional support, professional development, and engagement with the curriculum, compared to what teachers experience. The themes that follow illustrate this disconnect, which is evident

1. Instructional Planning Support: Claim Consistency, Report Absence

Supervisors' Claim:

Supervisors said that they routinely examine teachers' lesson plans and provide direction to make sure lessons match curriculum standards and students' needs.

"We regularly review lesson plans to confirm that they align with the curriculum and the needs of students."

Teachers' Reality:

Only 14 percent of teachers said that supervisors "Always" prescribe how to teach English. By contrast, 45.97% said "Rarely" and 14% said "Never." This indicates restricted involvement in planning support, despite their centrality to the supervisory discourse.

2. Pedagogical Guidance: Expressed Broad Support, Experienced Inconsistency

Supervisors' Claim:

Supervisors in charge of curriculum implementation, assessment, and classroom management regularly guided teachers, or so they reported.

"We help teachers in everything from teaching the content to discipline."

Teachers' Reality:

The survey shows variability of support. For instance, 42.25% of teachers responded "Never" when asked if they received help with instructional

challenges, and 40% responded “Never” when asked if supervisors inspected their instructional practices. This perceived lack of actionable support contrasts with supervisors' asserted roles.

3. Administrative and Resource Assistance: Declared Support, Perceived Shortfall

Supervisors' Claim:

A number of supervisors discussed a supportive role in helping teachers with administrative paperwork, managing behavior in their classroom, and obtaining resources to help with teaching.

“We help teachers handle discipline, we give them tools for managing class, and dealing with misbehavior.”

Teachers' Reality:

Only 21.14% stated “Always” receiving time management strategies. Over 48% percent said supervisors “Rarely” ensured access to adequate teaching materials. The findings indicate systematic differences between support intended and support available.

4. Curriculum Development: Raised Hands, Slight Influence

Supervisors' Claim:

Supervisors said they seek input from teachers and communicate it to curriculum experts for potential revisions.

“We collect teacher input about the English for Iraq Curriculum and send it to the Ministry’s experts for revisions to the curriculum.”

Teachers' Reality:

Responses from teachers do not inspire confidence in supervisors as curriculum mediators. Poor engagement with related articles — such as “Suggesting effective teaching strategies” or “Providing advice on instructional content” — indicates that supervisors’ curricular role is seen as passive or symbolic.

5. Industry Relationships: Asserted Priority, Perceived Disinterest

Supervisors' Claim:

Supervisors claimed that they supported trust and a collegial environment.

“We develop solid relationships with teachers, and we foster a sense of belonging.”

Teachers' Reality:

Teachers say relational dynamics are poor. For example, 26% said supervisors “Never” build trust-based relationships, while 27.7% reported that they “Never” experience respect from supervisors. This disconnect suggests a failure to enact relational goals in workplace practice.

6. Training and Development: Easily Recognized Weakness, Backed by Instructors

Supervisors' Claim:

Although supervisors recognized in-service training as general, it still was a prominent aspect of their job.

“We have something called workshops, but they’re usually pretty generic — not tailored to individual needs.”

Teachers' Reality:

The data do carry this out: skill-based workshop receptions scored at 13.2% of teachers being “Always” receptive and, on the other hand, only 30.6% of teachers responded “Never.” This shows a distinct deficit of professional development based on needs and adult learning theory.

7. School-Community Relations: Silence Noted, echoed by teachers

Supervisors' Claim:

They also acknowledged limited participation in school-wide or parent-teacher activities.

“Parent-teacher meetings and community work are not exactly our area of expertise.”

Teachers' Reality:

Survey items pertaining to community engagement were amongst the lowest-rated return items, reinforcing the argument that this domain is largely disregarded within the supervisory framework.

8. Performance Evaluation and Feedback: Alleged Monitoring, Denied Visibility

Supervisors' Claim:

Supervisors said they gauge instruction through observations and achievement data.

“We do classroom observations and look at student performance data to pinpoint where teachers need support.”

Teachers' Reality:

They reportedly receive little feedback from such observations. Only 15.7% of teachers said that they “Always” receive objective feedback, and 30.2% said that they “Never” receive objective feedback at all. Without well-structured feedback mechanisms, which contradicts supervisors’ claims of performance assessments.

Furthermore, the thematic analysis identifies a consistent pattern: while supervisors define expectations for supervision in broad, multi-faceted terms, teachers describe supervision as sporadic, undeveloped, and uninspired. The data highlights not just specific role misalignment but a broader systemic failure to operationalize key practices of effective educational supervision (including instructional leadership, developmental feedback, and professional trust) within the educational system. To counter this shortcoming, we need to reconceptualize supervisory functions by providing formal support to teachers, integrating accountability protocols, and engaging in genuine relational dynamics.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings highlight systemic weaknesses in Iraq's supervisory framework, characterized by a

persistent lack of clarity regarding supervisors' roles and excessive emphasis on administration over development. Dissatisfaction among the teaching workforce is evident, particularly regarding feedback, professionalism, and growth opportunities. Supervisory support is perceived as irregular, with most responses falling into the Rarely (M=84.00, SD=25.40) or sometimes (M=67.69, SD=17.23) categories, while the low percentage of Always responses (M=45.21, SD=14.61) underscores a lack of sustained and dependable supervisory practices. Critical gaps are also evident, with high Never responses (M=46.67, SD=19.72) in certain areas reflecting a lack of sustainable and reliable inspection measures. To address these issues, supervisors must prioritize improving interpersonal dynamics with teachers to build trust and foster collaboration, shifting the focus toward relational building and developmental support.

Framed within the Transformational Leadership Theory, the findings indicate that supervisors are failing to exhibit the fundamental characteristics of individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, or inspirational motivation. Supervisors are entrenched in top-down roles that discourage teachers from initiating positive changes rather than serving as mentors and role models. Additionally, the lack of tailored feedback, applicable skill development, and social learning remove the core constructs of self-directed and situationally relevant professional learning. These mismatches suggest an application or utter abdication of the pedagogical theories that underline supervisory practice.

These theoretical shortcomings have direct consequences for EFL teaching and learning. When supervisors fail to offer individualized feedback or meaningful observation, teachers are likely to continue ineffective methods without reflection or refinement, leading to fossilized teaching practices. In Iraq's context, this could mean persistent reliance on outdated grammar-translation approaches, limited communicative interaction, and failure to meet CEFR-aligned outcomes. Low trust further impedes willingness to implement supervisory advice, while the absence of structured support prevents experimentation with innovative methods such as task-based learning or differentiated instruction. This breakdown in the supervision–instruction–learning chain not only affects classroom dynamics but may also hinder learners’ language acquisition, autonomy, and motivation.

These results are not exclusive to Iraq. A recent research study in other developing countries, one conducted in Egypt (Elmahdy, 2021), one in Sudan (Ahmed, 2020), and one in Jordan (Al-Momani, 2019) revealed similar findings of supervisory models based on inspection rather than mentorship. In these contexts, supervisors often function as bureaucrats with little carrying capacity for professional development or teacher empowerment. This regional trend indicates a wider problem in MENA education systems where changes in curriculum and teaching practices occur faster than changes in supervision models.

The gap between these idealistic supervisory statements and the reality in the classroom is not solely a problem of individual failure, it is a structural problem. This is a system whose policy frameworks, professional development, autonomy, and accountability have failed to evolve alongside the work of supervisors. Supervision in Iraq remains performative rather than transformative, without systemic reform inclusive of policy, funding, and institutional culture. Such constraints need to be addressed alongside attempts to redefine supervisory roles.

Effect Size and Practical Significance

Statistical analysis showed a large effect size ($t = -3.76$, $p = 0.0012$, Cohen's $d = 0.62$), with a significant difference between the Always and Rarely groups. Not only is this a statistically significant difference, but also practically significant, since it amounted to a nearly three-point difference on a five-point scale, or a moderate effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.25$), a large effect in practice according to the widely-used Cohen conventions.

Likewise, the ANOVA revealed significant differences with moderate-to-large effect sizes ($F = 13.342$, $p = 0.00001$, partial eta squared = 0.144) in that teachers' reported response categories (Always, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never) represent meaningful variations in their experiences. Such discrepancies led to the conclusion that supervisory practices are often inconsistent and poorly guided, resulting in a disconnect between assistance and professional development needs.

There are several explanations for the disconnect between supervisors' assertions and teachers' realities:

1. *Administrative Pressures. Reality*

This results in supervisors describing teaching responsibilities in an idealized manner that reflects Ministry of Education expectations, but in reality, administration trumps teacher development. The elevated responses of "Rarely" and "Never" to key categories such as feedback and instructional support indicate that teachers receive little direct support from supervisors.

2. *No Focus on Resources or Well-Structured Training*

Most supervisors agree that teacher development methods rather than focused and targeted development methods are followed, and there is a gap between what they are responsible for theoretically and what they provide in reality. Furthermore, schools are often under-resourced to implement meaningful supervisory interventions, which may leave supervisors unable to incorporate meaningful support.

3. *Lack of Accountability and Professional Relationships*

Trust and respect issues between teachers and supervisors are apparent in responses to relationship-based questions; they additionally show high percentages in the "Never" and "Rarely" categories. Supervisory practices are of limited impact if teachers are less open to receiving feedback due to a lack of interpersonal relationships.

The need, therefore, is to move toward a more holistic, teacher-centered model of supervision that incorporates:

- **Improved Training for Supervisors:** Mentor-oriented, curriculum alignment, providing feedback.
- **Structured Professional Development:** Regular workshops, peer observation sessions, and collaborative learning opportunities.
- **Resource Allocation:** Ensuring that schools have the materials and infrastructure needed to support effective teaching and supervision.

- **Relationship Building:** Enabling free flow of information and building trust between the supervisors and teachers.

CONCLUSION

By providing context-specific insights from Iraq, this study adds to the growing body of literature on teacher supervision in fragile and transitional education systems. It empirically demonstrates how the absence of transformational leadership and adult learning principles in supervisory practices undermines the professional growth of English language teachers. The findings reveal a critical disjuncture between supervisory claims and teachers' lived realities—one that perpetuates traditional, inspection-based approaches at the expense of developmental, pedagogically supportive guidance.

This study contributes to L2 teacher education by highlighting how supervision systems, when detached from reflective and learner-centered paradigms, risk stagnating classroom innovation, reinforcing fossilized teaching practices, and limiting communicative language teaching. In doing so, the research bridges supervisory theory with practical implications for EFL pedagogy in resource-constrained settings.

The implications extend beyond Iraq. The findings offer a roadmap for policymakers and institutional leaders across similarly under-resourced or post-conflict systems to reimagine supervision not as a bureaucratic ritual, but as a mechanism for fostering reflective practice, relational trust, and instructional coherence. Advancing teacher development in EFL contexts demands supervisory frameworks that promote collaboration, autonomy, and context-sensitive support grounded in both global theory and local realities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The cost for establishing a new supervisory model will be an upfront investment in the development of the curriculum and digital infrastructure and training. But the long-term advantages, greater teacher retention, better student outcomes, and meeting international benchmarks far surpass the costs. For instance, the use of Moodle-based observation logs or online workshops can substantially reduce the challenges of supervision.

To address the supervisory challenges identified in this study, the researchers suggest the following strategic recommendations for education policymakers and leaders in Iraq and analogous settings:

- **Structured Professional Development:** Implement a bi-monthly workshop cycle, including communicative language teaching, in-service training, and reflective practice. These must be supplemented with peer observation sessions and ongoing mentorship. Well-designed digital platforms (e.g., Moodle or Google Classroom) allow for flexible, asynchronous engagement and resource-sharing and can promote inclusion if adapted to be conducive to Iraq's technological infrastructure.
- **Provide collaborative resources:** Collaborate with organizations such as UNESCO to provide contributions such as teaching kits, audio-visual content, and printed modules. This content should be teaching English language and should be equitably distributed across all the schools including the rural schools which are under-resourced.
- **Relational Capacity-Building:** Create supervisory-teacher feedback committees to build trust, encourage bilateral communication, and address perceptions of overseer and overseen. These committees may also co-design school-based improvement plans and supervision protocols.
- **Redistribute Supervisory Work:** Increase the number of qualified English language supervisors, especially in provinces like Karbala, where there is a small cohort overseeing hundreds of schools (there are currently only 10). Supervisors will be able to provide more consistent classroom engagement, individualized teacher support, and higher-quality feedback cycles by lowering the supervisor-to-school ratio.

These recommendations will need to be contextualized within Iraq's current political and economic realities. Long-term systemic changes would be constrained by limited resources and institutions. Therefore, reform should be focused on low-cost and high-impact interventions such as digitized observation templates, community-based training, and supervisors' training through partnerships with regional universities or international agencies. Additionally, addressing supervisory shortages, especially in underserved provinces like

Karbala, should be a national priority. Investing in the recruitment and training of new supervisors will be essential to reducing role strain and realizing meaningful, instructional supervision reform. The feasibility of implementing them will depend on the Ministry of Education's willingness to integrate supervision reform into a prominent place within broader national education policy and to provide the schools with the resources, timelines, and mechanisms for accountability.

These actions may yield pedagogical alignment, strengthen professional networks, and develop students' outcomes. More broadly, this study contributes to global discourses in educational supervision by proposing reform strategies that can be adapted to developing and post-conflict education systems. Future research should examine the long-term influence of supervision reform on the behavior of teachers and student results. Achieving sustainable change will take iterative refinement, continuing stakeholder engagement, and a transformation in supervisory culture from compliance to collaboration.

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Appendix 1. Teachers' Questionnaire and Responses

Questions	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. Suggesting to teachers how they should teach English.	34	58	116	34
2. Suggesting practical communication skills.	39	87	97	19
3. Inspecting teachers' instructional practices for errors.	37	39	99	67
4. Assisting educators in employing effective solutions to the teaching challenges they face	38	53	58	93
5. Help teachers deal with the curriculum content appropriately.	39	77	82	44
6. Evaluating teachers' classroom instructional practices	48	77	49	68
7. Assessing teachers' content knowledge.	67	102	54	19
8. Providing time management strategies.	42	77	94	29
9. Suggesting innovative ways to motivate students.	57	48	63	73
10. Suggesting helpful advice to strengthen teaching practices.	53	77	93	19
11. Offering innovative ways to link previous learning to current subjects.	67	63	73	39

12. Ensuring that teachers have adequate teaching \ learning materials to teach.	57	48	117	19
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13. Suggesting effective English teaching strategies	43	44	116	39
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14. Suggesting effective assessment techniques for the four skills.	53	73	77	39
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15. Ensuring the availability of anoptimal Language Learning Environment.	46	92	65	39
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16. Suggesting or providing ways to improve theclassroom environment.	43	97	63	39
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17. Giving Advice for better lesson planning.	48	72	89	34
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18. Providing objective feedback about classroom observations.	38	87	73	44
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19. Promoting peer reviews and Classroom Visits between teachers.	37	63	84	58
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20. Creating chances for instructors to meet and learn from others' experiences.	22	72	109	39
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21. Providing in-service workshops to teachers to develop their skills.	32	72	64	74
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22. Giving in-service workshops on linguistic development.	47	58	127	10
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23. Establishing relationships with teachers built on trust and transparency	33	48	98	63
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24. Demonstrating professional demeanor and respect for teachers.	10	72	92	67
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Appendix 2. Interview Questions

1. When you visit them, do you discuss teachers' lesson plans and how they align with the school's overall goals and objectives?
2. Do you guide teachers on curriculum implementation, assessment, and classroom management?
3. How do you support teachers in managing attendance, communicating with parents, and handling disciplinary issues?
4. How do you collaborate with teachers and subject matter experts to develop and revise curriculum materials?
5. What are your strategies for fostering a positive and supportive school climate?
6. How do you identify and address teachers' professional development needs?
7. What strategies do you use to involve teachers in school-wide initiatives to strengthen community relationships?
8. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' instruction and the overall quality of education?