
Implementation and Management of School Self-Evaluation: Insights from Selected Secondary Schools in Botswana

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Abstract

School Self-Evaluation (SSE) as an emerging discourse is increasingly becoming relevant in education circles globally. This paper discusses the implementation and management of SSE in Botswana's selected secondary schools around a plurality of factors. The paper determines the implementing agencies readiness level to implement and manage SSE; establish approaches to SSE; examine the strengths and challenges facing SSE and determine how the inspectorate and pastoral policy systems support SSE. The study situates itself within the mixed method approach and utilises the concurrent nested case study design which embeds the smaller quantitative component into the primate qualitative component. By utilising purposive sampling technique, focus group discussions used a sample of 16 participants (4 school heads, 3 heads of houses, 6 teachers, 3 school inspectors). Through purposeful random sampling technique, questionnaires were distributed to 70 respondents where 66 respondents participated (5 school heads, 12 heads of houses, 45 teachers, 4 school inspectors). Findings revealed that the readiness to introduce, implement and manage SSE remains peripheral. Multiple technical challenges overly seat behind the implementation of SSE. Paradoxically, SSE has minimally lived up to expectation due to lack of support from School Inspection (SI) and the school pastoral policy system. It is concluded that SSE subsists on theory than praxis; a situation that has occasioned an immature and debased form of the reform. The study recommends a practical based approach to SSE, prioritisation of SSE in the strategic plan and an appreciation of the synergetic relationship between SSE, SI and the school pastoral policy.

Key words: School self-evaluation, Implementation, Management, School inspection, Secondary school, Pastoral policy

Introduction

The school evaluation discourse has occasioned an 'evaluation continuum' with accountability on the one extreme and school improvement on the other (Brown et al., 2018). This continuum has compelled many education systems to develop towards more lateral, collaborative and bottom-up approaches than hierarchical top-down structures in which schools are evaluated by one central agency such as the inspectorate (Park, 2013; Ehren, 2015). In this transitional period, School Inspection (SI) finds itself receiving resounding criticism. Thereof, School Self-Evaluation (SSE) is increasingly becoming relevant in education circles globally in the wake of evolving forms of evaluation practices geared towards a culture of continuous quality improvement.

According to McNamara (2021), Kurum and Çinkır (2019), Earley (2016) and Brown (2013), SSE evolved within the context of international policy on the basis of three competing logics namely economic (cost effectiveness), accountability demands (value for money proposition) and the school improvement agenda (Quality assurance and standardization). An analysis of recent research work indicates that as a relatively new discourse, SSE lacks maturity in terms of implementation and management. SSE began to attract a lot of attention from many international school systems in the late 1990s. In the context of Botswana, SSE dates back to 2012 following the regionalisation process which divided the Ministry of Basic Education into ten regions manned by Regional Directors. During this period, attempts were made by the ministry of education to introduce a hybridized country specific parallel model of evaluation wherein the SSE and SI frameworks were developed.

In global literature, it is evident that the implementation and management of SSE is nested with multiple internal and external challenges. A large volume of these studies was conducted especially among European countries from both a comparative and country specific approach. Substantively, there is virtually limited to no study done in Botswana regarding SSE implementation and management. In light of the foregoing, this paper utilizes a mixed method approach by drawing insights from selected secondary schools in Botswana using Kgatleng region as a case study area. The paper was motivated by the following research questions:

a) What is the school heads, heads of houses, teachers and inspectors' level of readiness to implement and manage school self-evaluation?

- b) How is school self-evaluation implemented and managed in secondary schools?
- c) What are the strengths and challenges of implementing school self-evaluation?
- d) How does the inspectorate and school pastoral policy influence the implementation and management of school self-evaluation in some secondary schools?

School self-evaluation as a concept can be introduced to the reader as an internal review conducted by school members to assess the effectiveness of structures and processes in place including the quality of students' learning outcomes (OECD, 2013; Freddano & Siri, 2012). In this sense, SSE is a collaborative, inclusive and a reflective process of internal school appraisal (School Inspectors' Manual, 2012). The study will contribute immensely in gauging the overall readiness level of secondary schools to implement and manage the emerging SSE reform and provide future trajectory on change management. Since theory, policy and practice form a nexus (Harvey, 2015) it is hoped that the results of this study may inform the three constructs in many respects.

Statement of the problem

The relevance of SSE for cost effectiveness, quality assurance and accountability purposes cannot be overemphasized. Historically, Botswana's education system has lacked a sound culture of self-evaluation that promotes continuous quality improvement. The disposition to overly neglect such a practice has relegated SSE to a more peripheral function in evaluation matters. Apparently, education quality in Botswana schools is increasingly criticized due to falling achievement standards (Tabulawa et al., 2013 & Makwinja, 2017). As an emerging discourse, SSE and its processes are not fully understood by schools and support structures in Botswana. School heads, heads of houses, teachers and school inspectors' readiness to introduce, implement and manage SSE is lacking in many respects. This paper, therefore, discusses the SSE reform in Botswana's selected secondary schools around multiple implementation and management challenges that are internal and external to the implementing agencies.

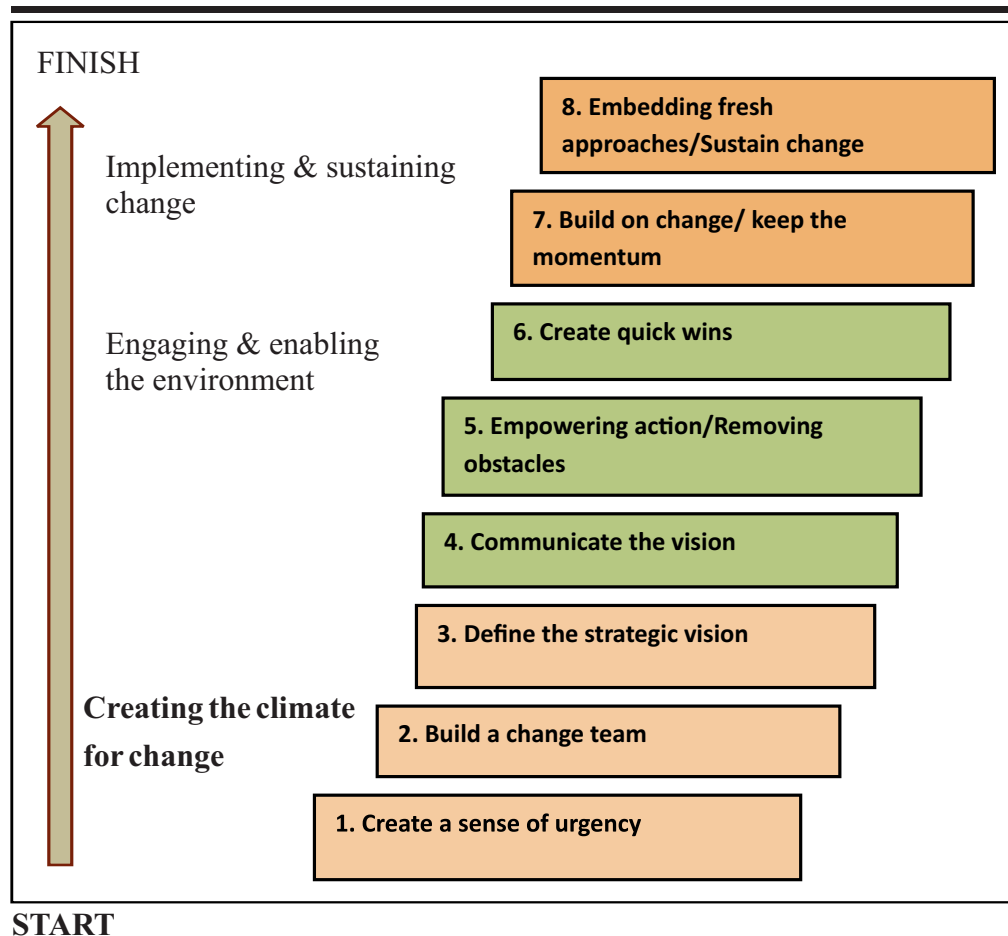
Theoretical framework

This paper is framed on Kotters' strategic eight step approach to change management model which provides a detailed version of Lewin's model and a holistic plan of managing change (Hamdo, 2021). The model provides a useful methodology for explaining the nexus between SSE implementing agencies, SSE implementation practices and the management of the SSE processes. The eight-step process model (Fig. 1) stems from three broad tenets namely, creating the climate for change; engaging and enabling the organisation; implementing and sustaining the change.

Creating the climate for change achieves change through establishing a sense of urgency as the basis of the transformative process, creating a trusted and competent guiding coalition team and developing a vision and strategy with clear measurable terms (Pollack & Pollack, 2015; Sittrop & Crosthwaite, 2021; Thanh, 2022). Engaging and enabling the whole organisation involves communicating the vision, empowering the action through mobilization of individuals and creating short term wins to keep the momentum. Implementing and sustaining the change involves consolidating gains and producing more change and anchoring new approaches in the culture.

Kotter's strategic eight step approach to change model

Figure 1 illustrates Kotter's strategic eight step approach to change model



Source: Adapted from Thanh, 2022; Thu & Thu, 2022

Objectives of the study

This paper intends to:

1. Determine the implementing agencies (school heads, heads of houses, teachers and school inspectors) readiness level to implement and manage SSE.
2. Determine how the inspectorate and pastoral policy systems support SSE in selected secondary schools in Botswana.
3. Establish approaches to SSE implementation.
4. Examine the strengths and challenges facing SSE.

Literature review

Literature available to the reader interrogates the SSE reform in relation to the readiness level, implementation and management, strengths and challenges surrounding the discourse and support systems.

Readiness for implementing school self-evaluation

From an empiricist stance and using a mixed method approach, 50% of the organisations studied by Kotter failed to create a climate of readiness for change (Thanh, 2022). Cobbinah & Eshun (2021) qualitative study conducted in Ghana revealed that teachers' understanding of the concept of SSE was very limited, diverse and confusing. SSE was mistakenly confused with School Performance Appraisal Management hence understanding the SSE concept in the context of Botswana is critical. Fushimi (2014) holds to the view that the 'right' school culture, the role of school leadership and staff attitude significantly influences SSE practices since such practices are shaped by specific contextual and human factors. Thanh (2022) confirms that leadership effectiveness carries at least 80% change while management attracts only 20%. Therefore, the extent to which school leadership effectively drives SSE remains at the heart of the emerging SSE discourse.

International research by McKinsey shows that transformations have a failure rate of 70% with 39% of these failures attributable to employee resistance to change; 33% to managers' lack of support for change and only 14% to inadequate resources and other reasons (Bekmukhambetova, 2021). Brown et al. (2021) maintain that a positive attitude towards an initiative depends on the way it is introduced, and that it is more likely to attract disapproval if imposed abruptly. Little to no study has been conducted on the attitude of school inspectors and other supervisors at school level towards SSE. O'Brien et al. (2017) assert that the effectiveness of SSE depends on the evaluation capacity of those who steer it in schools. The European commission (2020) similarly confirms that the capacity of local administrators, school heads, teachers and other stakeholders to gather, analyse, interpret and use a range of qualitative and quantitative data to develop clear strategies for school development are vital. This technicist approach to SSE implementation needs scrutiny in Botswana.

The implementation and management of school self-evaluation

Several studies suggest that teachers perceive the focus of evaluation as being top down and skewed towards accountability (O'Brien et al., 2022; Murphy as cited in McNamara et al., 2022). McNamara et al. (2022), for example, observe that teachers' capacity to lead improvement in their local contexts is constrained by the 'prescriptivist and sometimes repressive interpretations' of management teams. School improvement literature is however awash with the notion that extending leadership responsibility beyond the principal is an important lever for developing effective professional learning communities in schools (Education Development Trust, 2016). Fushini (2014) argues that a situation where encouraging stakeholder participation in SSE requires leaders to surrender some of their traditional authority, control and power presents a paradox. Relatedly, Chapman and Sammons (2013) question the leadership's appetite to uncouple the centrality of leadership through an internally driven, bottom-up approach to self-evaluation to promote student and professional learning. Examining Botswana's approach becomes topical in this sense.

Vanhoof and Petegem (as cited in Cobbinah & Eshun, 2021) argue that the likelihood of SSE failure is high if the SSE process is not approached in a properly thought-out manner and in line with overall school policy. In parallel, Chapman and Sammons (2013) firmly hold to the view that an appropriate mechanism for SSE can only achieve its purpose provided those tasked with developing the SSE process possess a detailed understanding of their context at a range of levels. This connects well with Todnem (as cited in Gayef, 2014) submission that poor success rate is possibly a function of a fundamental lack of a valid framework of how to implement and manage organizational change. A study by Madikida (2016) from a South African context highlights that the challenge regarding the management of SSE lies with failure to make follow ups on the implementation of school improvement plans.

Strengths and challenges surrounding school self-evaluation

SSE is premised on three competing logics namely, the improvement logic, the accountability logic and the economic logic (Chapman and Sammons, 2013; Harvey, 2015; Kurum & Çinkır, 2019; McNamara et al., 2021). The improvement logic is premised on quality assurance as guided by standards while the accountability logic dictates that schools must provide proof to key

stakeholders and the government that they are providing value for money (OECD, 2013; Chapman & Sammons, 2013; Ryan et al., 2013; Brown, 2013; Education Bureau, 2018). From the economic rationality stance, SSE is promoted as a free or cheaper alternative to school inspection which provides a once off snapshot (Brown, 2013; Fushimi, 2014; Capperucci, 2015; Brown et al., 2021).

Capperucci (2015) argues that with self-evaluation, schools can develop their own agendas for evaluation. In this way, SSE has the merit of being immediate, responsive to the school's specific circumstances and “owned” by the school staff itself (Nusche et al. 2012). Paradoxically, a community of scholars has questioned the autonomy of SSE as compounded by the blurring of externality and internality debates (Chapman & Sammons, 2013; Harvey, 2015; McNamara & O'Hara as cited in Brady, 2016).

Studies conducted by McNamara et al. (2020) and Harvey (2015) in Ireland converge to the fact that resistance to the SSE change was mainly a function of too many initiatives rolled out in schools. Apart from this reform fatigue, SSE as an 'amateur enterprise' is confronted with practical challenges in terms of context-specific tools development (Brown et al. 2021) coupled with issues of credibility, reliability and trustworthiness (Fushimi, 2014). Correspondingly, implementing agencies have limited capacity in terms of skills and knowledge to handle large volumes of quantitative data to provide empirical evidence (Nusche et al., 2012; Sampaio & Leite, 2017; Education Bureau, 2018; Brejc et al., 2019; Brown et al. 2021).

In South Africa, for example, a study by Madikida (2016) observed lack of departmental support in terms of capacity and training schools, lack of resources, non-implementation of the school improvement plan and lack of appropriate follow ups as challenges surrounding SSE implementation. Qualitative studies indicate that school evaluation whether internal or external brings about tension and fear to teachers. Where a culture of performativity prevails, evaluation tends to be technicized through measurement or judgement; thus, shifting the focus of those evaluated from performance to the anxiety of judgement (Hennessy & McNamara, 2013; Sampaio & Leite, 2017; van Wyk & le Grange, 2017; Brady, 2019; Brady, 2020; European Commission, 2020). Brady (2019) describes this as 'conflict' between anxiety of performativity and anxiety of performance with regards evaluation. Drawing on these submissions, the case of Botswana requires further exploration on the same.

School self-evaluation support systems

McNamara et al. (2021) purport that the availability of systems to support the launch of a new initiative helps to ease the anxieties of those expected to implement it. From a similar dimension, the European Union (2020) highlights that supporting SSE and development can be understood and developed from two angles. First, the conditions that need to be in place at policy level and school level to promote and sustain meaningful SSE and development. Secondly, the support relates to how SSE and development can be supported through quality assurance policies and practices, notably external evaluation (European Commission, 2020). Bayeni and Bhengu (2018) argue that while policy and practice co-exist, they are usually polar opposite, that is, policy intentions are not always mirrored in policy-practice. This relationship inevitably perpetuates complexities, contradictions and paradoxes. According to Pansiri (2011), Bush (2011) and Brown (2013) uncritical policy borrowing is not contingent to context thus failing school improvement change initiatives. The school pastoral policy in the context of Botswana logically needs a revisit.

Recent research conducted among European Union countries shows the increasing integration of SSE and SI through a parallel model approach (Chapman & Sammons, 2013; Capperucci, 2015). Indra et al. (2021) similarly argue that the reciprocal and mutual relationship between SSE and SI is geared towards improving quality and accountability. Thus, Brown et al. (2018) argue that emphasising on either accountability or improvement function would impair the co-existing relationship between SSE and SI hence the need for a binary approach. Aligning the SSE framework to the external evaluation framework may however dilute the notion of the 'self' in SSE practices since the latter needs to come in only to validate the former. The mutual relationship between SSE and SI lacks fair empirical evidence from an African context. De Grauwe and Naidoo (as cited in Fushimi, 2014) purports a tensional relationship between SSE and SI which they term the "complex couple". Nusche et al. (2012) echoed the same line of thinking when asserting that tensions between improvement and accountability functions of school evaluation still exist. The current paper assumes a subtle tensional relationship, intended or unintended, between SSE and SI in the context of Botswana.

Research methodology

The methodological framework adopted by this paper focuses on the study research paradigm, research approach, research design, data collection methods

and data analysis. Central to the framework is an outline of the three data collection methods as informed by the concurrent nested mixed method research design involving focus group discussions, survey questionnaire and documentary analysis. The mixed method approach adopts a QUAL(quant) approach wherein the Qualitative (QUAL) component has relative primacy over the smaller quantitative (quant) component (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Research paradigm/philosophy

Boru (2018) defines research paradigms as philosophical assumptions or orientations underpinning the manner in which we understand the world or the nature of reality and how we approach it to understand it. The three main research paradigms are the positivist (quantitative), interpretivist (qualitative) and the pragmatic paradigm. The research methodology for this paper situates itself within the pragmatic paradigm which is a hybrid of the positivist and interpretivist though with more emphasis on the latter.

Research design

This particular paper situates itself within the hybridized concurrent nested mixed method design. In selecting the mixed method approach, due consideration was given to the relative priority (weight) of the approaches in relation to the research questions/objectives (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Clark & Ivankova as cited in Dawadi et al. 2021). In this sense, the paper adopted a QUAL(quant) mixed method research design wherein quant was embedded within the primate QUAL component (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Deciding on when to 'mix' two data sets according to Creswell and Clark (2011), is contingent to four possible stages namely at the level of design, during data collection, during data analysis, and during data interpretation.

For purposes of this study, the researchers mixed Quant (qual) data sets at the analysis phase. Data was however collected at the same time through focus group discussions and the survey questionnaires. Qualitative data was able to validate quantitative findings which usually present complex or contradictory survey responses (Bradt et al. 2014). SSE is relatively new, so a predominantly QUAL approach was deliberately employed to tease out issues of implementation at site through a dialogic and relational approach involving the researcher and the participants.

Population of the study

Taherdoost (2016) points out that the first stage in the sampling process is to clearly define the target population. There are 10 junior secondary schools and 1 senior secondary school in Kgatleng so the researchers decided to target 5 junior secondary schools and the only senior school in the region to participate in the study. The focus group discussions targeted a total of 28 participants made up of 6 school heads, 6 heads of houses, 12 teachers and 4 school inspectors. Quantitatively, the target population was 319 comprising 6 secondary school heads, 17 heads of houses, 292 teachers and 4 school inspectors.

Sampling and sampling techniques

This study adopted Creswell and Clark (2018) multistage sampling procedure where the researcher first identifies clusters or groups; obtain names of individuals within the clusters and then sampling within them. The nature of the mixed method research design dictated that purposive sampling and purposeful random sampling techniques be applied. Purposive or judgemental sampling according to Taherdoost (2016) is a strategy in which the researchers deliberately include cases or participants in the sample because they believe that they warrant inclusion. From a qualitative perspective, purposive sampling technique was used. This technique allowed the researchers to deal with people who are expectedly bestowed with SSE stewardship, knowledge and experience. From a quantitative stance, purposeful random sampling technique was applied. The technique afforded respondents (especially teachers) an equal chance to participate in the study thus reducing the element of bias. Sampling was further extended to documentary sources where school inspection reports were accessed.

Sample

Creswell and Clark (2018) advise that individuals participating in the QUAL sample should as well participate in the QUAN sample in a mixed method research design for purposes of corroborating the two sets of findings. Using different samples within the same study possibly brings in a lot of complex technical problems and contradictions during the data analysis phase. Drawing on such logic, the researchers included focus group discussion participants into the survey questionnaire sessions as respondents. The sample size from a QUAL

perspective consisted of 28 participants with 6 secondary school heads, 6 heads of departments, 12 teachers and 4 school inspectors. From a QUAN perspective, the sample size was 70 respondents consisting of the same 28 participants from the focus group discussions. The sample comprised 6 school heads, 12 heads of houses, 48 teachers and 4 school inspectors as possible respondents of the survey questionnaire.

Instrumentation & data collection procedures

Designing appropriate instruments according to Bagaya (2020) does not only address the research questions but it also determines data accuracy and reliability. As part of the rigorous data collection approach, the researchers combined focus group discussions, survey questionnaire and documentary analysis and collected data concurrently.

Focus group discussions

A focus group discussion (FGD) according to Kabir (2016) is an in-depth field method of data collection that brings together a small homogeneous group (usually 6 to 12 persons) to discuss a specific topic. Participants (school heads, heads of houses, teachers and school inspectors) were engaged on 4 separate sessions according to their position and the proceedings were recorded in prose and audio. Kabir (2016) advises that each session usually lasts between one to two hours so all of our 4 sessions were conducted within the two hours' intervals. A total of 4 school heads out of the expected 6 participated while 3 out of the expected 6 heads of houses participated. The target for teachers was 12 and only 6 participated while 3 of the 4 school inspectors participated in the discussions.

Questionnaire design

The researchers designed a 5-point Likert scale with items based on a scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2 and Strongly Disagree = 1 for purposes of rotating views (Ololube, 2018). The prepared questionnaire had 27 items that were divided into three broad categories. The first category (readiness towards SSE) consisted of 11 items; the second category had 2 items particularly on the effectiveness of rolling out SSE to schools and the last category had 14 items which broadly addresses issues of SSE implementation and management in relation to the support role offered by the inspectorate and pastoral policy. Random numbers were created to give

potential respondents equal chances of participation. A total of 70 self-completion questionnaires were physically distributed to the respondents and a total of 66 questionnaires (94%) were collected for analysis. A total of 5 out of 6 school heads participated, all the 12 heads of houses participated, 45 out of 48 teachers participated and all the 4 school inspectors participated.

Documentary analysis

Documentary analysis was employed to review not only existing literature but also sampled inspection reports published between 2013 and 2022 for the same schools that participated in the study. Inspection reports for a total of 4 of the 6 participating schools inspected between 2013 and 2022 were analysed on the basis of SSE implementation and pastoral policy effectiveness.

Data analysis and interpretation

The data analysis approach was premised on the inductive/deductive hybridized thematic analysis wherein themes were inductively generated from collected data concurrent with themes deductively emerging from literature as predetermined by the theoretical framework (Proudfoot, 2022; O'Brien et al. 2022). An analysis of the SSE collected data followed “prefigured” categories or themes (Creswell, 2013) which resulted from Kotter's change management theoretical constructs or broad categories (creating the climate for change, engaging and enabling the environment, implementing and sustaining change). Creswell (2013) advises that researchers should be open to additional categories emerging during the analysis phase than limiting the views of the participants to the use of “prefigured” codes or categories. In this sense, the researchers probed the data and made sense of the relationship between predetermined themes and emerging themes as they relate to focus group discussions. The two data sets (QUAL and quan) were analysed independently then merged by nesting or embedding quan data into the larger Qual component (Creswell, 2018).

From a qualitative approach, data was analysed following Braun and Clarke six step approach to thematic analysis involving data familiarisation, generation of initial codes, reducing data to themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report (Xu & Zammit, 2020; Harvey, 2015; Scharp & Sanders, 2018; O'Brien et al. 2022). The researchers first familiarized themselves and made sense with the collected SSE data. Verbal data and audio taped data

from focus group discussions were transcribed into text after carefully reading through the transcripts and repeatedly listening to the audio to make sense of the participants' voices. This was followed by the generation of initial codes where Kotter's change management theory driven and current focus group discussion data driven codes were developed.

The researchers developed a frequency count analysis instrument to establish the number of times participants echoed a particular code. Codes emerging from focus group discussions data were later reduced and translated into themes through an open coding system. The researchers compared and contrasted the themes thereby establishing connections between similar and dissimilar themes. This was followed by defining and naming of themes for producing a report. Quantitatively, data was analysed descriptively through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.0 using cross tabulation. A total of 66 questionnaires were collected and checked for completeness. One (1) questionnaire was half completed and as such it was withdrawn from the statistical analysis process.

A code book entailing variables on SSE was developed followed by the creation of a data base where responses were coded into SPSS spreadsheet. The questionnaire gave a cronbach reliability index of 0.764 which indicates high reliability. Responses to survey data were later converted into percentages for interpretation on respondents' feedback. Deductively, analysis followed Kotter's three broad categories of change management theoretical framework. Transforming Quan data into QUAL data required comparing the focus group data set through frequency counting and the cross-tabulation data set for mixing. An analysis of the embedded data indicated more similarities than variations between research participants' responses. Mixing the two data sets helped the researchers to validate quan data with qual data thus giving richer insights about SSE.

Validity and reliability of instruments

The main study was preceded by an initial pilot study in Palapye where the only 3 junior secondary schools and the only 1 senior school were engaged to pilot test the prepared FGD interview guide. A total of 20 participants was purposively targeted with 4 school heads, 4 heads of houses, 9 teachers and 3 school inspectors. The results of the pilot study helped the researchers to make some adjustments and inclusion of some items that were not previously catered for by

the interview guide hence validating the instrument. In parallel and from a quantitative stance, another pilot study engaged 3 junior school heads, 1 senior secondary school head, 4 heads of departments, 8 teachers and 3 school inspectors; all purposively and randomly sampled.

The results of the pilot gave a Reliability Index/Cronbach Alpha Coefficient value of 0.684 which is acceptable on a scale ranging between 0 to 0.9; a value which was weakened by 7 of the 27 items during the main study. The researchers followed Nawi et al. (2020) advice that some items weakening the Alpha (α) should be eliminated since their relevance and impact in the study is questionable. A total of 7 items were removed from further analysis and this improved the reliability index to 0.764. Hence, a high internal consistency of the main study.

Findings and discussions

School leadership, teachers and inspectors' readiness to implement and manage school self-evaluation

Participants' responses from focus group discussions and questionnaire consistently show that the climate for readiness to implement and manage SSE only exist to a very limited extent. This is consistent with Marques et al. (2020) qualitative study findings that change initiatives have 25% to 30% success rate due to lack of readiness.

Knowledge and understanding of school self-evaluation concept and the local model

Focus group discussions' findings show that participants' knowledge is limited to simply defining SSE as a concept. Teachers synonymously labelled SSE as SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis which is a performance management approach usually done during results analysis, accounting and strategy development. Participants showed elements of uncertainty, confusion, contradiction, limited knowledge and understanding of the model used by Botswana's education system to evaluate schools. For example, one school inspector commented that: "*Schools were told that that there will be no inspection without SSE first*". Similarly, one school head indicated thus; "*I am not aware of any particular model; I only know of the inspectorate and financial audits....*".

From the survey conducted, 35 (81.4%) of the teachers either strongly disagreed, disagreed or were neutral on their understanding of Botswana's model of evaluation while the majority of the heads of houses, 7 (41.6%) assumed a neutral position on the issue. There were variations between school heads and school inspectors' responses on the one end confirming knowledge about SSE while heads of departments and teachers on the other showed low level of knowledge. Two misconceptions emerged from understanding Botswana's model of evaluation. First, SSE was confused with SWOT analysis. In the same vein, this misconception compares well with the findings of Cobbinah and Eshun (2021) qualitative study in Ghana where teachers and head teachers confused SSE with the school performance appraisal management (SPAM). Secondly, the parallel model of evaluation where SSE runs side by side with SI was confused with the sequential model in which SSE feeds SI.

Competency to engage with the school self-evaluation processes

The study revealed that participants lack the technical competencies to engage with the SSE process and as such SSE implementation prove to be a daunting task. This is in spite of the fact that some workshops were conducted for school heads, heads of departments, school inspectors and other regional officers between 2019 and 2022. Cascading of SSE as otherwise planned had not yet reached out to the teacher level in schools. This was confirmed by one teacher stating that, “.... I learnt about it through my personal reading”. Correspondingly, one head of house indicated that, “We were just given a document to study and divided into areas of responsibility but no forum to break it down. I don't understand it fully”. From the survey, 50 (76.9%) respondents indicated that they did not receive training on conducting and monitoring SSE with 18 (27.7%) strongly disagreeing and 32 (49.2%) disagreeing. The majority of heads of houses, 10 (83%) and teachers, 40 (90.9%) were mainly affected by this lack of training thus disapproving their confidence and readiness level to implement SSE. This is in agreement with the notion that the capacity of local administrators, school heads, teachers and other stakeholders to gather, analyze, interpret and use a range of qualitative and quantitative data is critical (European commission, 2020).

School heads, heads of houses, teachers and school inspectors' mind-sets about SSE

Focus group discussions revealed that implementers' mind sets inhibit the climate of readiness to implement SSE. Results show a common culture of mistrust between school leadership, teachers and the school inspectors characterised by blame shift, limited ownership and negative attitude towards SSE implementation. An example of such a blame shift culture was raised by one inspector who indicated that; “... *Schools were work-shopped and given deadlines for cascading but did nothing, nobody bothered to follow them up so they are not ready*”. Another school inspector argued that schools were seemingly practicing passive resistance towards SSE implementation by commenting thus; “.....*Schools don't say they can't do it but in practice they are not doing it, they argue that they have a lot in their offices, so it is additional to them*”. School heads unanimously pointed out that teachers perceive SSE as another clerical and additional reform. Studies conducted by McNamara et al. (2020) and Harvey (2015) in Ireland similarly converge to the fact that resistance to the SSE change is mainly a function of too many initiatives rolled out in schools. As such reform fatigue seemed a very real factor impinging on the respondents' attitude towards SSE. Conversely, teachers were of the view that the level of resistance was premature to judge since the main issue was not resistance per se but rather understanding SSE first. One teacher decried lack of urgency from the school side and highlighted that, “.....*schools do it for the region and there is no sense of ownership, they say it is the region's baby*”.

From the survey results, 50 (76.9%) respondents were of the view that their attitude towards SSE was positive with only 13 (20) teachers showing negative attitude. School inspectors and school heads indicated 100% positive attitude towards the implementation of SSE. Findings of the focus group discussions have revealed 'passive resistance' towards SSE while the survey results indicate 'high appetite' towards SSE change. Such contradiction is not uncommon from a mixed method stance. Previous studies have shown that employee resistance accounts for 39% of change or transformation failure, 33% is attributable to managers' lack of support while inadequate resources and other reasons only account for 14% (Bekmukhambetova, 2021). A quantitative study using a cross-sectional design by Mavromatidis, (2016) in Greece has revealed a positive correlation between teacher attitude and SSE implementation.

Relative priority of school self-evaluation in the school/regional agenda

Participants were generally of the view that SSE remains peripheral in the school and regional strategic plan. School inspectors and teachers disapproved leadership support of SSE while school heads and heads of departments were of the view that support was sufficiently given. A concern was raised to the effect

that the regional education office leadership support of SSE should have started at the birth of the reform. One school head argued that; *“The regional office only came in by asking how far we were with implementation...”*. Overall, 23 (35.4%) respondents claimed that SSE received support from the leadership, 17 (26.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 25 (38.5%) respondents, which forms the majority remained neutral. Survey results show uncertainty and disagreement of support especially from the heads of departments, 7 (58%), teachers' 31 (70.5%) and school inspectors 3 (75%) with school heads only making 20% indicating their confirmation of supporting SSE change.

That SSE remains peripheral in the school and regional strategic plan not only raises concern relating to the immaturity of the SSE reform but also the limited leadership support of the reform. This is consistent with Thanh (2022) view that the effectiveness of leadership carries at least 80% of change success. The results are therefore in agreement with Kotter's model of change which places leadership stewardship at the heart of change. Madden (2017) similarly maintains that significant educational change initiatives take off due to staff readiness as determined by the leader.

The implementation and management of school self-evaluation

Findings of the study revealed that SSE was not properly rolled out to implementing agencies hence failure to internalize it into the schools' developmental practices. The common cry was that sustaining SSE should have been done at the birth of the program than at the implementation phase. Such a suggestion provides another dimension to Kotter's model of change.

Rethinking school self-evaluation implementation and management approaches

School heads decried that consultation on the SSE reform was limited; they were not taken through the practical component of SSE key processes; there was lack of monitoring at take off stage and no follow ups made thereto; the regional staff seemed to have challenges with SSE; there was no focal person coordinating the program; the approach was prescriptive and compromised ownership; the regional education office was only concerned with asking them SSE implementation progress status and they felt that they were rushed through the workshop to satisfy the requirements of the regional education office

performance reviews. These findings are in agreement with Brown et al. (2021) notion that a positive attitude towards an initiative depends on the way it is introduced, and that it is more likely to attract disapproval if imposed abruptly.

Teachers expressed common views that SSE was not yet introduced to them.

Feelings of discontent were further expressed that the training workshops that were organised had minimal impact as a result of the limited time given. One school head argued thus; “.... *ministry officials' workshop had its own limitations because you need to consult people thoroughly so I was not convinced since it was not done well, you don't just come up with solutions so you need a bottom up approach where even junior teachers are involved from the onset for ownership....*”. From the teaching staff perspective, one teacher stated that; “.... *For it to work start with students, parents then teachers for ownership*”.

The survey results show that 30 (46.2%) respondents were of the view that SSE was not effectively rolled out to the school community by the school leadership while majority 32 (49.2%) were neutral. Majority of teachers, 24 (54.5%) remained neutral and 17 (38.6%) disagreed. All the school heads and school inspectors (100%) disagreed that SSE was effectively rolled out by the school leadership and no head of department agreed with the statement. Participants generally decried that the top down approach to SSE implementation was adhoc, reactive, prescriptive and perpetuated an accountability than an improvement agenda. Essentially, school heads appetite to uncouple the centrality of the top-down approach to SSE stands out as a critical proposition that is inconsistent with Chapman & Sammons (2013) viewpoint as they question the leadership's appetite for an internally driven, bottom-up approach to self-evaluation. In order to reconcile the bottom-up and top-down continuum, Hopkins' (2014) argues that the key to managing system reform is to strategically re-balance “top-down and bottom-up” change over time for sustainability.

Procedure for conducting school self-evaluation

The study revealed that the implementation phase was still an abstract idea that had to be put into practice, pending the cascading of SSE. As such no participant could clearly spell out even the theoretical approach or key steps involved in SSE implementation. In this context, there was no laid down standard operating procedure followed by schools to implement SSE. One school head for example stated that; “...*Still done haphazardly, we are just using the strategy not school self-evaluation, it lacks rigor*”. The voice of one teacher summed up the concern

on SSE implementation by stating that: *“We can't talk of implementation methods and tools because it has not been introduced yet”*. There was a disturbing confusion observed regarding SSE instruments. It was not clear as to whether schools have to develop their own tools or align with inspection checklist and framework. Vanhoof & Petegem (as cited in Cobbinah & Eshun, 2021) argue that the likelihood of SSE failure is high if the SSE process is not approached in a properly thought-out manner and in line with overall school policy.

Benefits and challenges facing school self-evaluation implementation and management

School self-evaluation as an emerging program obviously has its own merits in spite of internal and external challenges that are confronting its implementation and management.

Benefits of school self-evaluation

Focus group discussion results show similarities in the way participants think of the benefits of conducting SSE. The benefits coupled with SSE ranged from the program being holistic in approach, school autonomy, no external pressure, cost effectiveness compared to school inspection, tracking of internal issues, frequent feedback that includes lower levels, promotion of teamwork, developmental aspect through continuous improvement and high level of ownership. This follows Capperucci (2015) argument that with self-evaluation, schools can develop their own agenda for evaluation.

In this sense, SSE is responsive to the school's specific circumstances and “owned” by the school staff itself (Nusche et al. 2012). One school head summed up the advantages of SSE as follows, *“....it can be done as many times as possible compared to external evaluation/inspection, there is decentralization/freedom hence no external pressure, self-management. When you are sick you know your pains than somebody coming from outside to provide/prescribe solutions then you address your weaknesses. When it is done externally you question their prescriptive approach and ownership becomes questionable, it is the owner of the pain who should provide the pain killer. You get feedback frequently and there is self-management”*. From the economic rationality stance, SSE is promoted as a free or cheaper alternative to school inspection (Brown, 2013; Fushimi, 2014;

Capperucci, 2015; Brown et al., 2021).

School self-evaluation internal challenges

From the focus group discussion results, it is evident that the implementation of SSE is confronted with challenges that are internal to the school system. Among others, participants cited limited and/or lack of autonomy, lack of resources, time constraints, lack of expertise, attitude/apathy, conflict of interest due to perceptions, limited supervision and accountability and working in silos as pressing internal challenges. One school inspector had this to say on the capacity to roll out SSE, *“Capacity to cascade by school heads is low so they can't mentor or coach, they need to be baby seated, they are not self-reliant, our senior school was trained but their school improvement plan was terrible since instead they just wrote strategies not a comprehensive SSE plan”*. One school head stated that there is, *“Lack of capacity; bias hence the need to be cross checked externally, I realized it during Covid-19 where we just became lenient with ourselves. There is a tendency that when you evaluate yourself you don't meet standards hence bias”*. Interestingly, one teacher questioned the level of school autonomy which is thought to come along with SSE by stating that, *“Schools are not fully independent, and resources come from the region, there is too much referrals to the region by schools hence limited powers”*.

School heads emphasised the fact that internal evaluation must be followed by external evaluation to validate the former. They believed that internal evaluations are susceptible to bias or conflict of interest hence lack of impartiality. Observations made by school heads resonate well with Mavromatidis, (2016) assertion that the main strength of SSE is also its main challenge, the prefix 'self' which creates a paradox of the self or independence as purported by Clarke (as cited in Baxter, 2014). In Kenya, it was found that teachers tended to achieve better results in self-evaluation than in school inspection, which raised some questions over the credibility of the former and the rigor of the evaluation process (Fushimi, 2014).

Results of this study provoked an interesting debate regarding the level of autonomy exercised by schools together with their leadership. A centred-periphery relationship between the regional office and the schools was believed to limit school powers. Correspondingly, Chapman and Sammons (2013) and Harvey (2015) have questioned the autonomy of SSE since it is seemingly compounded by the blurring of externality and internality debates.

School self-evaluation external challenges

The immaturity of SSE as obtained from focus group discussions is attributed to external threats that practically inhibit the implementation. These are but not limited to capacity, lack of monitoring and evaluation, lack of follow ups, financial constraints, and SSE progress not reported to the ministry and multiple roles performed by the inspectorate affecting the implementation and support of SSE. The main concern across levels was lack of monitoring and evaluation by the external agencies. One school inspector for example argued that there is, *“Lack of monitoring and evaluation by Ministry of Education and Skills Development, no reporting about SSE to ministry management”*. Another school inspector highlighted that, *“Multiple roles performed by inspectors affect implementation, and inspectors' core mandate is not respected”*. Studies conducted in South Africa by Madikida (2016) and Setlalentoa (2014) point to the fact that failure to effectively implement SSE is a result of lack of appropriate follow up after SSE has been conducted.

School self-evaluation support systems

Focus group discussion results show subtle but unintended tensions between SSE and SI though results of the survey indicate that a mutual relation should exist. Similarly, participants' views show that the school pastoral policy system is ineffective in facilitating SSE implementation. This picture is confirmed by the results of the questionnaire survey and those obtained through documentary analysis of the sampled inspection reports. Relatedly, Chapman & Sammons (2013) question the extent at which the structures and processes that are in place within the school system promote SSE.

The inspectorate role – Relational support or tensional support?

Results from the focus group discussion indicate that the support role played by the inspectorate in SSE is minimally felt since the inspectorate was described as being reactive than proactive. These concerns raise tensional relations between SI and SSE as observed by the participants. One school head argued thus on the inspectorate role, *“I can't see their role, during training they played no role so even now they are not featuring except the time when they asked if implementation had started so there is nothing in terms of support. I wonder if they have the capacity to do school self-evaluation. You can't come from outside*

and tell me where I should address the pain, I may differ with external people when trying to validate my findings". One head of House argued on the same matter that, "...they only appear when there is a crisis, not sure if they have any plan because we don't see them, so their role is insignificant. Inspectorate should work closely with schools to get the feel of the ground or reality".

One teacher on the other hand made a comment that, *"Inspection is used as a threat to teachers, the tempo set by inspectors is that of being feared which is not good and people sweat, and it does not build but damages and demoralizes, people are in trouble at their announcement, it is like they are marking for you but we should just know that they also account elsewhere".* One inspector however indicated that they are supposed to, *"Monitor and advise but can't because there is nothing taking place, inspectorate also has no capacity to do it. We lack the confidence and competency to advice schools on self-evaluation".* From the survey results, 46 (70.8%) respondents indicated that SI enhances SSE. The results further reveal that 5 (100%) of school heads indicated that SI enhances SSE; 9 (75%) Heads of houses confirmed the same; 30 (46.2%) teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement while 2 (50%) school inspectors confirmed the support. School heads and heads of houses are the ones who mainly indicated that SI supports SSE.

Results from the focus group discussions are in conflict with those of the survey since the latter showed that SI enhances SSE. Tensional than relational support role between the school community and school inspectors downplays the very role that the latter is bestowed with and occasions unintended consequences. De Grauwe and Naidoo (as cited in Fushimi, 2014) describe this uneasy relationship as the "complex couple". Qualitative studies conducted by Park (2013) and Brady (2019) indicate that internal and external school evaluation brings tension and fear to teachers. Brady (2019) has described this situation as 'conflict' between anxiety of performativity and anxiety of performance. This culture of performativity dictates the evaluation process to be more technicized through measurement thus downplaying the focus of those evaluated from performance to the anxiety of judgment (Hennessy & McNamara, 2013; Sampaio & Leite, 2017; van Wyk & le Grange, 2017; Brady, 2019; Brady, 2020).

School inspection and school self-evaluation support each other

In the midst of looming conflicts between SI and SSE, findings show an expectation of a mutual relationship between the two. For example, one school

head stated that when SSE is conducted, *“You would have achieved a lot before external inspection”*. A head of house on the other hand highlighted that, *“Evidence will be available to assist inspection, and it keeps the team informed of what is happening in the school”*. Another head of house indicated that, *“SSE is a good initiative, but it shouldn't replace the inspectorate”*. From the survey results, 52 (80%) of the respondents indicated that SSE and SI are complementary. All the school heads 5 (100%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 10 (83.3%) confirmed the same, 34 (77.3%) agreed/strongly agreed with the statement while 3 (75%) school inspectors also agreed with the statement. Participants believed that school self-evaluation provides baseline data for school inspection, internal and external practices become aligned, and that SSE should not replace school inspection.

This shows appreciation of the relationship that should prevail between SSE and SI in practice. In fact, a study conducted by Capperucci (2015) observed a direct correlation between school inspection and the quality and responsiveness of SSE processes, and therefore school effectiveness. Literature further demonstrates that a parallel process between SSE and SI provides hope of congruence since external evaluation acts like a 'critical friend' (Chapman and Sammons, 2013; Brown et al. 2015; Brown et al., 2018).

Pastoral policy system support to school self-evaluation

Focus group discussions revealed that the pastoral policy system at school level is ineffective. This was further proved by the results of the survey questionnaire and an analysis of the inspection reports involving the 6 sampled secondary schools. Part of its paralysis was attributed to lack of in-service training especially for heads of houses who are bestowed with the responsibility of ensuring that the house system works effectively through an effective pastoral policy system. From school heads and the inspectorate point of view, heads of houses roles are limited to issues of learner welfare and indiscipline. This approach to the pastoral policy system has neglected the academic component of the whole system. Otherwise, a fully-fledged pastoral policy system was expected to give direct support to SSE implementation. This is in line with the intentions espoused by the school inspectors' manual (2012) which saw pastoral policy playing a pivotal role in sustaining SSE.

One school head argued that, *“When launched in 2008 it was with vigor but now some components like academics are not attended to, lack of in-service training*

is killing these components slowly so it is not effective, very few teachers know how it operates". One teacher pointed out that, "There is no pastoral policy structure at our school so no mini schools, we are not complying, leadership is the problem and that is why our results are low because pastoral policy is not implemented". A school inspector reacted that, "It is ineffective, heads of houses don't have manuals to guide them, there are no workshops and the role is limited to giving learner permission and issues of discipline and no academics".

From the survey results, 19 (29%) of the 65 respondents were of the view that the pastoral policy system was not effective while 31 (47.7%) respondents indicated that the program was effective. Heads of houses, 10 (83.3%) and teachers, 31 (47.7%) mainly believed that the program was effective while 4 (100%) school inspectors disapproved the effectiveness of the pastoral policy. These variations in opinion especially for heads of houses have a bearing on who has the custody of the program.

Figure 2 summarises SSE implementation and management approach as drawn from the data analysis. The model, which is cyclical in approach is framed on participants' views that monitoring which is a form of support should come at the birth stage of SSE than implementation stage. As a result, sustaining SSE as per the model occurs at every stage for continuous improvement.

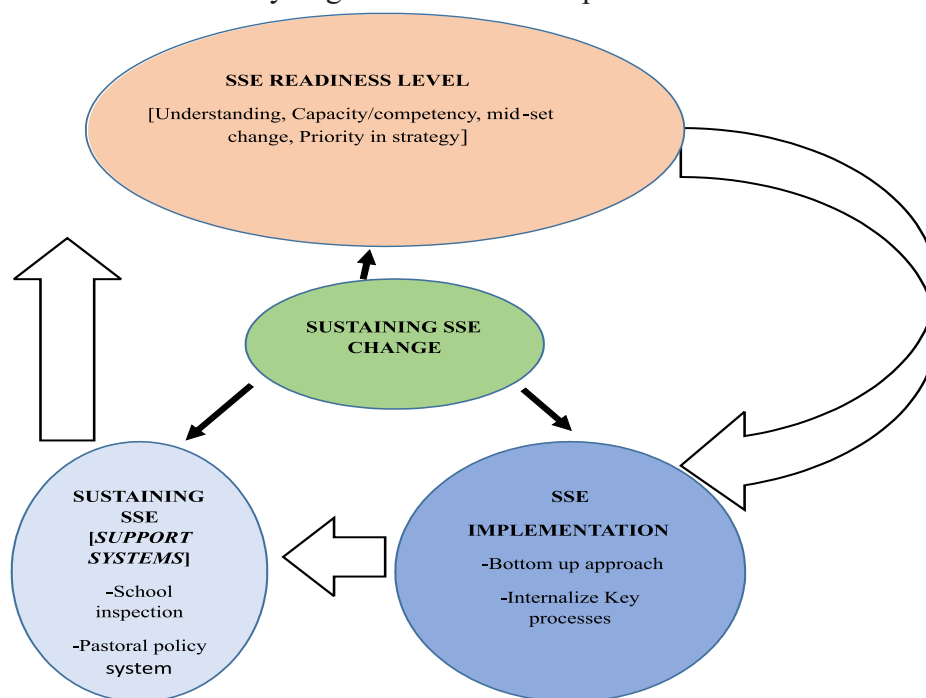


Figure 2: SSE implementation and management model (Adapted from Kotter's model)

Conclusions and recommendations

Informed by the study findings, the readiness to implement SSE is still lacking, SSE is not yet fully understood and contradictions are inherent in the understanding of Botswana's model of evaluation. The implementation of SSE is clouded by a culture of mistrust and blame shift tendencies, lack of leadership support and passive resistance since it is not part of the strategic plan. As observed by Brady (2016) the implementation of SSE is seemingly a debased practice since it only exists in theory. The bottom-up approach in terms of cascading SSE and practical training hence form the basis of introducing SSE. While SSE has its own strengths, its implementation is not without challenges that are internal and external to the school. The autonomy that comes with SSE and the fact that it can be done continuously is most celebrated across levels.

Other challenges include lack of expertise, internal bias, attitude, lack of monitoring, financial constraints and multiple roles played by the inspectorate. The role of the inspectorate in implementing SSE as perceived by school heads, heads of departments and teachers is insignificant. Teachers feel that school inspection substitutes the support role with the tensional and accountability role while school inspectors believe that their roles are weakened by multiple roles that they perform. The pastoral policy system which was meant to support SSE implementation is ineffective as unanimously confirmed by participants.

It is recommended that schools through their staff development structures and regional education office should organise change management workshops to ready schools for SSE change. The pastoral policy system needs resuscitation to lay a strong foundation for SSE implementation and management. SSE should be part of the regional strategic plan and/or annual performance plan for it to make an impact in the school improvement agenda. The inspectorate should provide continuous support to the SSE programmes through monitoring and evaluation. SSE should be introduced methodically in line with the school inspection framework standards from a more practical based training approach. The subtle but tensional relationship between school inspectors and schools must be reconciled through a relational approach.

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