

**Implementation of School Self-evaluation in Secondary Schools:  
Teachers' Perspective**

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

in

Education

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

August 2010

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## **Abstract**

The study investigates how teacher administrators and teachers in Hong Kong secondary schools experienced the implementation process of School Self-Evaluation (SSE), perceived the effects of SSE and described the implementation approach of SSE from the perspectives of policy implementation within the policy studies in education. Given that this area is under-researched in Hong Kong context, the study aims to add to the knowledge base of implementation process, perceived effects and implementation approach of SSE and inform policy administrators of SSE in the government and the schools.

The purpose of this research is three-folded. First, it aims to study the complex and organic interaction of SSE in the school contexts with reference to uniqueness of Policy, Place and People. Second, it intends to provide a new perspective for the theoretical debate between the managerialists and the critical performativists on the perceived effects of SSE on school improvement or managerial control. Third, it aims at providing an answer to the theoretical debate on the implementation approach of SSE from the top-down, bottom-up or hybrid approaches in policy studies. In this regard, this study presents three research questions:

1. From the perspective of teacher administrators and teachers, how was SSE implemented in the three sample schools?
2. From the perspective of teacher administrators and teachers, what were the perceived effects and/or consequences of SSE?
3. Given these implementation experiences and perceptions, how could the implementation of SSE be accounted for from the perspectives of policy implementation within the policy studies in education?

**This study was qualitative in nature. Only 3 selected secondary schools experiencing**



a complete cycle of External School Review (ESR) or Quality Assurance Inspection (QAI) and SSE were studied. The use of descriptive and exploratory approach was adopted. Qualitative design of the study provided a platform for closer exploration into their description of implementation process, perceived effects and implementation approaches of SSE.

There were three arguments made in this study. First, it argued that the implementation of SSE was an organic and complex interaction of the Policy to be implemented, Place where the policy embedded, and the People who implemented the policy. Second, this study argued that the debate between the managerialists and critical performativists might not be applicable to the Hong Kong context. Instead, it was found that the implementation situation of the school, the biographical and professional background of teachers in which they grew up and socialised and the position of a teacher shaped the perception lens of teachers, through which they perceived the effects of SSE on school improvement or managerial control. The last contribution of this study was to provide interpretations to account for the implementation of SSE. It was argued that the implementation of SSE was neither accounted by the top-down, bottom-up or hybrid approaches, but the complexity of the implementation context including the Policy to be implemented, the Place and the People who implemented the policy.

The research has theoretical implications for the literature of policy implementation, literature of school administration, literature of perceived effects of SSE. Furthermore, this research has policy implications for policy instrumentalisation, policy alienation and instrumental rationalism and policy localisation at schools. Finally, this research ends with practical implications for

school administrators.

## 論文摘要

本研究旨在調查香港中學的行政教師及教師如何經歷「學校自我評估計劃」(自評)之實施過程；如何理解自評政策的影響；及從教育政策研究的實施角度，如何描述自評實施的方式。有鑑於上述研究範圍甚少出現於以香港為情境的研究中，因此，此研究旨在為自評的實施過程、自評政策的影響以及自評政策實施之方式這三方面的知識基礎作出貢獻，並為政府及學校負責自評政策的官員及行政者提供參考資料。

本研究目的包括三方面。首先，本研究旨在根據「政策」(Policy)、「地方」(Place)及「人物」(People)的獨特性，探討自評政策於學校實施時所出現的複雜有機的相互影響。第二，本研究希望從「管理主義學派」(Managerialists)就自評政策的影響所提倡的「學校改進論」(School Improvement)及「批判主義學派」(Critical Performativist)所駁斥的「管理控制理論」(Managerial Control)的理論爭論中，展示出一個新的方向。第三，本研究旨在就不同的自評政策實施方式，包括「從上而下」(Top-down approaches)、「從下而上」(Bottom-up approaches)或「混合方向」(Hybrid approaches)之理論層面的辯論中提供答案。因此，本研究的三個研究問題為：

- 一、就三間研究學校的行政教師及教師的經歷，自評政策如何於他們的學校實施？
- 二、他們如何理解自評政策的影響？
- 三、有鑑於上述自評的經驗及理解，他們如何從政策實施的角度去解釋自評政策的實施方向？

本項研究屬於質性研究，選取三所已完成校外評核或質素保證視學及自評之中學參與研究。本研究採用描述性和探索性方向進行，當中的質性研究設計為他們就自評政策實施過程、對自評政策影響的理解及自評政策的實施方式提供一個平台，作進一步探討。

本研究包括三項論點。第一，本研究認為自評政策實施乃一個受「政策」、「地方」及「人物」所影響的複雜且有機的相互關係。第二，本研究將指出目前於理論層面上「管理主義學派」所提出之「學校改進論」及「批判主義學派」所反駁之「管理控制論」的兩極「二分」影響，並不適用於香港的教·育情境。相反，本研究發現，香港的行政教師及教師對自評政策影響的理解，會受他們所屬學校的自評實施情況、教師的專業背景和社教成長以及教師的職位之三種「理解鏡」(Perception Lens) 所影響。最後，本研究會為自評政策實施的方向提供闡釋，指出自評政策之實行並非受理論層面的方式如「從上而下」、「從下而上」或「混合方向」而限制。相反地，自評實施的方式乃受「政策」、「地方」及「人物」複雜且有機的相互關係而影響。

本研究期望能為政策實施、學校行政及自評政策影響這三方面的文獻提供理論上的貢獻。此外，本研究亦會為「政策工具化」(Policy Instrumentalisation)、「政策異化」(Policy Alienation)、「工具理性化」(Instrumental Rationalism) 及「學校政策本土化」(Policy Localisation at schools) 方面作出貢獻。最後，本研究亦會為學校行政人員提供「實質考慮要點」(Practical Implications)。

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Term/Name</b>
3Ps	<i>Policies, Places and People</i>
AM	<i>Assistant Master/Mistress</i>
AO	<i>Administrative Officer</i>
AP	<i>Assistant Principal</i>
APASO	<i>Assessment Program for Affective and Social Outcomes</i>
ASGM	<i>Assistant Senior Graduate Master/Mistress</i>
ASI	<i>Actual School Inspection</i>
ASP	<i>Annual School Plan</i>
CDI	<i>Curriculum Development Institute</i>
CMI	<i>Chinese as Medium of Instruction</i>
CPD	<i>Continuing Professional Development</i>
CSSA	<i>Comprehensive Social Security Allowance</i>
CUHK	<i>The Chinese University of Hong Kong</i>
DfEE	<i>Department of Education and Employment</i>
ECA	<i>Extra-Curricular Activity</i>
ECR 7	<i>Education Commission Report No. 7</i>
ED	<i>Education Department</i>
EDB	<i>Education Bureau</i>
EMB	<i>Education and Manpower Branch</i>
ESR	<i>External School Review</i>
F	<i>Form</i>
FI	<i>Full Inspection</i>
FoI	<i>Focus Inspection</i>
GCE 'A' level	<i>Advanced Level General Certificate of Education</i>
GCSE	<i>General Certificate of Secondary Education</i>
GL	<i>Generation Len</i>
GM	<i>Graduate Master</i>
HKALE	<i>Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination</i>
HKCEE	<i>Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination</i>
HKSEN	<i>Hong Kong Schools Self-evaluation Networks</i>
HMCI	<i>Her Majesty's Chief Inspector</i>
HMI	<i>Her Majesty's Inspectorate</i>
ISIP	<i>International School Improvement Project</i>
IH	<i>Integrated Humanities</i>
IL	<i>Implementation Len</i>
KLAs	<i>Key Learning Areas</i>
KPM	<i>Key Performance Measure</i>
L&T	<i>Learning and Teaching</i>
LEA	<i>Local Education Authority</i>
M&O	<i>Management and Organisation</i>
Med	<i>Master of Education</i>
MOI	<i>Medium of instruction</i>
NET	<i>Native English Teacher</i>
NPM	<i>New Public Management</i>
NPRM	<i>New Public Reform Movement</i>

NSS	<i>New Senior Structure</i>
NSSC	<i>New Senior Secondary Curriculum</i>
NUT	<i>National Union of Teachers</i>
OECD	<i>Organisation for Economic Cooperation</i>
OFSTED	<i>Office for Standards in Education</i>
OIR	<i>On-line Interactive Resources</i>
OL	<i>Organisational Len</i>
PAS	<i>Principal Assistant Secretary</i>
PI	<i>Performance Indicator</i>
PL	<i>Positional Lens</i>
PLK	<i>Po Leung Kuk</i>
Post-I	<i>Post-inspection</i>
PPBS	<i>Program Planning Budgeting System</i>
Pre-I	<i>Pre-inspection</i>
PSEM	<i>Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower</i>
PSR	<i>Public Sector Reform</i>
PTA	<i>Parent-Teacher-Association</i>
PTU	<i>Professional Teachers' Union</i>
QA	<i>Quality Assurance</i>
QAD	<i>Quality Assurance Division</i>
QAF	<i>Quality Assurance Framework</i>
QAI	<i>Quality Assurance Inspection</i>
QAM	<i>Quality Assurance Mechanism</i>
QAP	<i>Quality Assurance Processes</i>
QMM	<i>Quality Management Movement</i>
RE	<i>Religious Education</i>
REOs	<i>Regional Education Offices</i>
RQ	<i>Research Question</i>
S	<i>Secondary</i>
SAM	<i>Senior Assistant Masters/Mistresses</i>
SAP	<i>Schools' Action Plan</i>
SARS	<i>Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome</i>
SBM	<i>School-based Management</i>
SBS	<i>School-based Support</i>
SDA	<i>School Development and Accountability</i>
SDC	<i>School Development Committee</i>
SDET	<i>School Development and Evaluation Team</i>
SDF	<i>School Development Framework</i>
SDP	<i>School Development Plan</i>
SES	<i>Socio-economic Status</i>
SGM	<i>Senior Graduate Master/Mistress</i>
SHS	<i>Stakeholders' Survey</i>
SIL	<i>School Implementation Lens</i>
SMC	<i>School Management Committee</i>
SMI	<i>School Management Initiative</i>
SP	<i>Student Performance</i>
SR	<i>School Report</i>
SSA	<i>School Self-Assessment</i>
SSB	<i>School Sponsoring Body</i>
SSE	<i>School Self-evaluation</i>
SSPA	<i>Secondary School Places Allocation</i>

SSSE	<i>Student Support and School Ethos</i>
SWOT	<i>Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat</i>
SVAIS	<i>Schools Value Added Information System</i>
T	<i>Teacher</i>
TGL	<i>Teacher Generational Lens</i>
TPL	<i>Teacher Positional Lens</i>
TQM	<i>Total Quality Management</i>
TSA	<i>Territory-wide System Assessment</i>
TWGH	<i>Tung Wah Group of Hospitals</i>
VP	<i>Vice-Principal</i>
WSE	<i>Whole School Evaluation</i>

## Acknowledgements

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to many people who have made this thesis a reality.

My first gratitude goes to Professor Wing-kwong Tsang, Professor Leslie Lo and Professor Allan Walker of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, who have been the members of my supervisory committee, offering me with great insights, advice, support and encouragement, which were indispensable and most valuable to the completion of this research. My special thanks are owed to Professor Wing-kwong Tsang, whose timely, critical and patient guidance was essential in conducting this research with the contrasting critical perspective of managerial control. Moreover, I am also greatly indebted to Professor Leslie Lo for his supportive guidance, especially in offering me a new perspective of management of educational quality and school improvement. I am truly thankful to Professor Allan Walker for his insightful guidance, which enhanced my sensitivity in educational administration and leadership, understanding research methodology and defining the potential contribution of this research.

Although for ethical reasons the three sample schools that formed case studies of this research must remain anonymous, I extend my faithful thanks to the seventeen interviewees who participated in this research. Their participation and cooperation offered me with crucial insights into my understanding of teachers' perspective of School Self-Evaluation (SSE).

I take this opportunity to thank my friends, especially Candy Chu, Ray Leung, Mandy Li, Suki Li, Jason Yip, Yolanda Wong for all the time we spent together and for the insights and help that they have given me in my research.

I owe a special debt of thanks to my wife, Emily Chan. She has managed my home so well that my first kid, Joshua Wong and my second kid, Christo Wong, can feel the love and care of a family in the midst of my busy life. I am also grateful to my mother, mother-in-law, aunt, uncle, Christian mentor, Kam To, and my fellowship members in sharing my moments of joy and supporting me in times of hardship.

Finally, thanks to my God Jesus Christ for the love, guidance and support in times of urgent need and my fragility.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into four sections, with the first being the research background, the second being the research purposes and the third one being the significance of the research questions and significance and the fourth being the major arguments of this study.

### 1.1 Research Background

In this section, the context of educational reform in school management in Hong Kong will be discussed.

#### Public Sector Reform (PSR)

The origin of education reform in school management in Hong Kong lay in the PSR in February 1989. In February 1989, the Finance Branch of the Government Secretariat published the report *Public Sector Reform* with two major themes--- managerialism and commercialisation. Following this first and foremost report on PSR, the second report was published on the delegation of authority in the Marine Department. Then, the third report was published on the trading funds in the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. In 1990, a pilot study was commissioned to redefine the relationship between a policy branch and a department. This pilot study specifically focused on the relationship between Education and Manpower Branch (EMB) and Education Department (ED).

There were five reasons behind the launch of the PSR (Lee, Cheng & Anthony, 1995: 4-5). First, there was a rapid growth of the public sector and public expenditure from 14.2% in 1975-1976 to 18.8% in 1992-1993. Second, there was an increasing size and complexity of government activities. Third, there was an enhancement of efficiency and resources deployment. Fourth, there appeared the improvement of government services. Fifth, there was a greater say of the Legislative Council in scrutinising government budgets.

There were two reasons for EMB and ED to be chosen for the pilot study in 1990. First, ED was one of the departments granted largest amount of government expenditure. Second, the Secretary of EMB, Mr. K. Y. Yeung, was dedicated to test the principles set out in the *Public Sector Reform*. Hence, EMB and ED were given terms of reference in the pilot study. They were required to complete the following six tasks (Lee, Cheng & Anthony, 1995: 92):

1. to review the roles and relationships of the Education and Manpower Branch, Education Department and their main advisory bodies such as the Education Commission and Board of Education;
2. to study the policy objectives of the Education and Manpower Bureau and identify areas amenable to programme planning;
3. to help the Education Department prepare operational plans, define objectives for activities and identify performance indicators and develop suitable control and monitoring systems;
4. to examine the interface between planning and resources allocation;
5. to review the scope for delegations of authority to the policy secretary and his agency heads;
6. to consider the need for training in management and financial control in the

Education and Manpower Branch and the Education Department;

The above tasks were completed by a team of government officers. The team was comprised of a Principal Assistant Secretary of EMB, an Assistant Director of ED and other senior officials from the Finance Branch and the Treasury.

Five months later, the following seven recommendations were made (Lee, Cheng & Anthony, 1995: 98):

At EMB and ED level

1. the Secretary of EMB should approve the Director's programme with clear specification of the level of performance and the Director of ED should be accountable to the Secretary of EMB for the Department's performance (performativity and accountability);
2. a new monitoring and reporting framework should be introduced covering EMB and ED with clear clarification of responsibilities, provision of services, arrangements for financial planning and performance requirements, and principles for value for money and cost effectiveness (delineation of roles, responsibilities and performance requirements);
3. EMB and ED should produce a comprehensive statement of current policy aims and objectives to establish performance levels (produce annual plans with performance indicators);
4. ED should produce an annual operating plan to link the aims and the objectives set out in EMB Branch and provide an internal management tool for the Department (produce an operating and follow-up plan);

At School level

5. each school should produce an annual school plan with goals, formal means of evaluation, priority and resources allocation and be accountable for achieving



- the goals (annual school plan with performance indicators and accountability);
6. a *principal's manual* should be drafted by each School Management Committee (SMC) and the role of supervisor, principal and SMC should be reviewed (clear specification of school management and organisation);
  7. the school management frameworks should allow greater participation, with formal procedures, in decision-making for all teachers, the principal, the management committee, and parents and students with appropriate degree (greater participation in school management and be accountable to different parties);

With the aforesaid seven recommendations, the protocols for measuring performativity, accountability, responsibilities, efficiency and effectiveness were set out for both EMB and ED and schools in 1990. In 1991, School Management Initiative (SMI) was then launched to continue the thrust of the reform in school management after the completion of this pilot project.

### **School Management Initiative (SMI)**

In the early 1980s in the USA and Australia, the influence of the “self-managing school” (Caldwell and Spinks 1988), “School-based Management (SBM)” and “effective schools” was strong and popular. As an international city, Hong Kong was always keen on adopting and modifying government policies from the West. In such regard, before February 1989, the Hong Kong government had commissioned several studies on the application of reform concepts prevailing in the UK, the USA and Singapore. These studies specifically investigated the areas of financial and management changes. The findings and proposals of these studies revealed that there was a need to formulate the “School Education Policy” in Hong Kong.

In 1991, the Hong Kong government launched SMI. SMI was derived from the SBM in the above countries. SMI advocated a change in school management from the mode of central supervision (Pang, 2002: 188) to SBM. In SMI, there were basically six major recommendations out of eighteen minor recommendations made, namely:

1. the emphasis in Education Department's relations with the aided sector should change from detailed control to support and advice, with a framework defining responsibilities and accountabilities at all levels in the education system;
2. every SMC should be required, under Education Regulation 75, to prepare a constitution setting out the aims and objectives of the school and the procedures and practices by which it will be managed;
3. school management frameworks should allow for participation in decision-making, according to formal procedures, by all concerned parties including all teaching staff, the principal, the SMC and parents and students;
4. each school in the public sector should produce an annual school plan to guide all activities during the year;
5. each school should prepare an annual school profile covering its activities in the previous year and detailing school performance in a number of key areas;
6. while government grants should be sufficient for a school to provide an acceptable standard of education, schools should have more flexibility to tap sources of non-government funding for above standard items.

Under the policy of SMI, teachers and administrators who run schools were expected to follow the government instructions to implement SMI policies (Morris & Scott, 2003). The government was intended to create a devolved system of schooling

with increased diversity in types of schools available. It also aimed at emphasising parental choice and competition between schools (Whitty & Power, 2002: 46). In addition, one of its targets was to “weaken the status of the principals” or “the little emperor” from “external-control school management” to “school-based one” (Cheng, 2002: 50).

But the implementation of SMI was never easy. From 1991 to 1996, only 17.4% of government and aided schools joined SMI (Pang, 1997a). In 1998, about 84% of the aided secondary schools still rejected SMI reform. The implementation progress of SMI was indeed very slow (Pang, 1999: 15). Cheng also observed that “principals were reluctant to follow SMI” (Cheng, 2002: 51). Hence, this launch of SMI was not so successful. The change in educational management proposed by the government was hauled until the publication of Education Commission Report No. 7 (EC, 1997: 16) in 1997.

### **Publication of Education Commission Report No. 7 (ECR7)**

Subsequent to the first six Education Commission Reports concerning the quantity of education from 1984, the Seventh Education Commission Report concerned the quality matter of education management. In September 1997, Education Commission Report No.7 (ECR7) “borrowed from the reform in Scotland and in Australia” (Cheng, 2002: 54). ECR7 was highly critical of the schools in the current educational system. ECR7 also stated that the current educational system lacked “clear development plans, clear targets for both academic and non-academic achievement of students” (EC, 1997: 4). Moreover, ECR7 injected the notion of quality with quality indicators, quality assurance, quality management, quality incentives and quality teachers.

In addition, ECR7 reiterated its seven objectives (EC, 1997: xi) for improving education. They are stated as below:

1. to enhance community appreciation of the need for quality school education;
2. to inculcate a quality culture in the school system to contribute to the personnel growth of students, and the pursuit of excellence;
3. to provide a practical framework for key players in the school system to achieve the aims of education in an efficient, cost-effective and accountable manner;
4. to recommend an integrated strategy for quality assurance and development;
5. to provide incentives for quality performance;
6. to assist and remedy under-performing schools to encourage initiatives and continuous improvement;
7. to recommend a framework for raising the professional standards of principals and teachers and enhancing their professional education and development.

To achieve the above objectives, ECR7 recommended putting in place a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) with an internal quality mechanism and an external mechanism (Figure 1). The internal quality mechanism was to be achieved through school-based management in the spirit of SMI by the year 2000. The internal quality mechanism was also to be implemented through cooperation between key players and SSE not later than 1998 (EC, 1997: Ch 8, para. 8.7). For the external quality mechanism, it was to be achieved through the establishment of an integrated inspection team to carry out Quality Assurance Inspection (QAI). QAI would use the whole-school approach to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual schools and improvement measures. QAI also took appropriate action to assist those underperforming schools. (EC, 1997: Ch 3, para 3. 20).

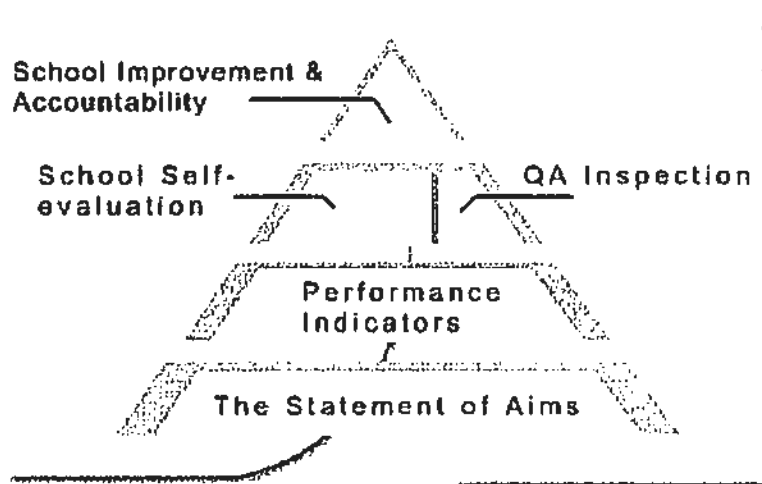


Figure 1: Quality Assurance Framework

### **The Launch of the Quality Assurance Framework**

Following the recommendations of ECR7 in 1997, four more booklets including Inspection Handbook (ED, 1997), Quality Assurance Framework (ED, 1997), Performance Indicators (ED, 1998a) and SSE (ED, 1997) were published. They aimed at delineating the Quality Assurance Processes (QAP) in which three levels were operating. The three levels were—First, internal SSE at school level; Second, external QAI by ED at territory level; Third, Quality Process Review by a panel of experts at international global level (Figure 2).

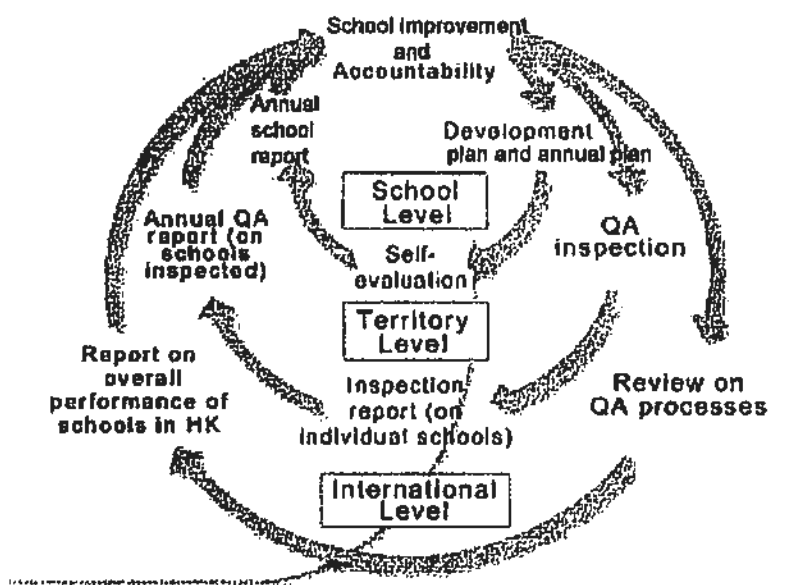
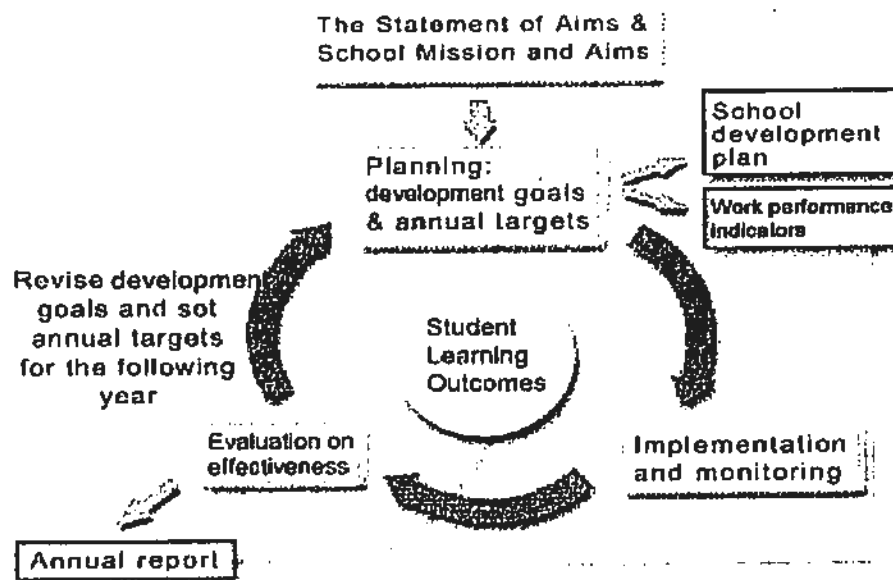


Figure 2: Quality Assurance Processes

To begin with, the first QAP was achieved through the internal SSE. SSE was conducted at the school level (Level 1). SSE hinged on the auditing and monitoring of the performance of teachers with the use of both process and output indicators to measure the “value-addedness” in the schools (Figure 3). The emphasis of SSE was on the development of SBM concepts such as clear school development plans, targets, proper appraisal systems, incentives and strong management directions. SSE encouraged schools to develop their own instruments to stimulate visions, strategies and management, and accommodate wider participation in decision-making in schools. Therefore, under SSE schools had to work out their development plans. The development plans should contain long-term goals and annual targets together with relevant performance indicators for evaluation based on the school aims. Schools then implemented the development plan devised and monitored the progress. Also, schools needed to conduct self-evaluation and produce an annual report towards the end of the year for parents’ information. Based on the evaluation results and other factors, schools could revise its long-term goals. Schools then worked out the targets revised for the following year.



**Figure 3: Major Features of SSE**

The second QAP was achieved through the external QAI (ED, 1998b). QAI audited school performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability at the territory level (Level 2). QAI included four procedures, including the Pre-inspection (Pre-I), Actual School Inspection (ASI), Post-inspection (Post-I) and Schools' Action Plan (SAP). QAI was responsible for conducting quality assurance inspections on 4 domains of the school (Figure 4). QAI aimed at providing an external review of the performance of the school. Then, the findings in QAI report would be uploaded for public reference. QAI was criticised as too “managerial-oriented” (Chan & Lai, 2002: 92) in the improvement of quality in school education. Under the 4 domains of the school, there were 17 areas of performance indicators. These included 6 areas under Management and Organisation (M&O), 4 areas under Learning and Teaching (L&T), 5 areas under Student Support and School Ethos (SSSE) and 2 areas under Student Performance (SP).

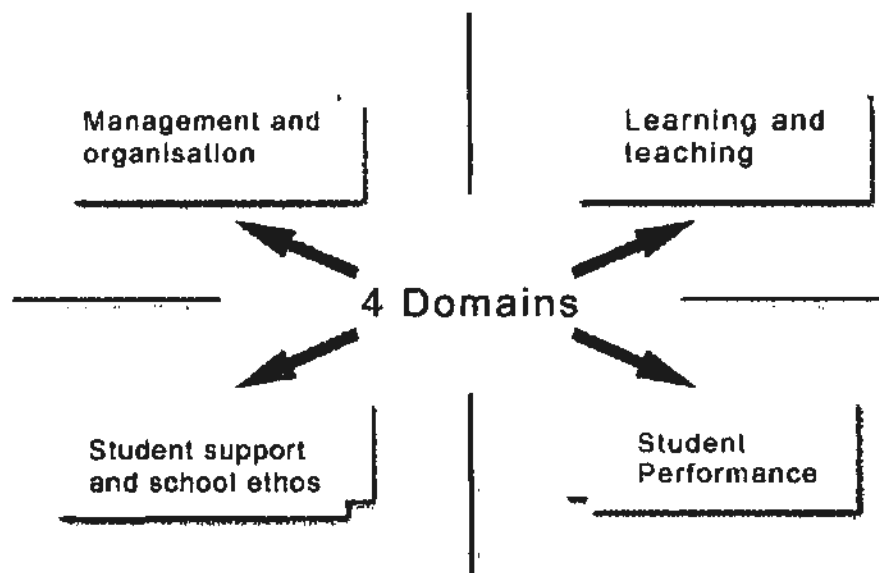


Figure 4: The 4 Domains of Quality Assurance Inspection

The last QAP process was the constant review of SSE and QAI by international experts at the international level (Level 3). This review ensured that SSE and QAI were pertinent to their purposes and well-implemented.

## **The Implementation of QAI and SSE from 1997 to 2000**

In 1997/98, the implementation of SSE was not well-received at school level. As shown in the QAI Annual Report 1997/98, the school performance in implementing SSE was criticised as “the weakest link in the domain of Management and Organisation”. Only 16% of the schools inspected were rated as satisfactory (ED, 1998b: 3). The report revealed that there was absence of “a coherent and systematic mechanism for SSE” on various aspects of school-work QAI Annual Report 1998/99 also stated that “there were no concrete tools and procedures” to facilitate the implementation of self-evaluation of programmes at both school and subject levels (ED, 1999: 4, 6).

In 2000, EMB stated that schools' knowledge of and performance in SSE were far from satisfactory. It stated that a structured SSE framework, a systematic evaluation process based on data and clearly defined success criteria with extensive staff participation at different levels “had yet to be put in place in most of the schools inspected” (ED, 2000b: 4).

In addition, the implementation of QAI was also difficult due to the limited number of inspectors in EMB. It might be due to the suspension of the recruitment of the Assistant Inspectors (Graduate) after the announcement of the frozen recruitment policy on civil servants in 1999. According to Pang (2003, 2005:4), who served on the advisory committee of QAI of Education Bureau (EDB), it was estimated that 10 years were needed to finish 1200 secondary and primary schools inspections in Hong Kong. In addition, after 5 years implementation of QAI, only 11.4% of total number of schools had been inspected at a rate of 50-60 secondary and primary schools each



year. In addition, this estimate did not consider those schools which had to be re-inspected for their under-performance.

### **The Preparatory Work for Introducing SSE and External School Review (ESR) from 2000 to 2002**

In December 2001, EMB proposed “external validation of schools”. This external validation became External School Review (ESR) later in 2003/4. The external validation was promoted so that “more schools can be benefited through external validation, ESR, than currently through QAI”. Though there was no formal announcement to replace QAI with ESR, ESR was strongly advocated by EMB. ESR was promoted as more auditing in nature and time-saving in enhancing school accountability and fostering schools’ continuous improvement (ED, 2002a: 125).” QAI, on the other hand, was transformed from the Full Inspection (FI) mode for all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) to Focus Inspection (FoI) mode for just one to two KLAs.

But before launching ESR, EMB knew it had to help schools establish a good SSE mechanism first. Hence, in September 2002, EMB commissioned a one-year pilot project on “*School Development through SSE*”. There were 21 schools participating to support evidence-based and data-oriented SSE in the development of SSE tools and processes. At the same time, EMB took a firmer stand towards the implementation of SSE and ESR. EMB was critical of the fact that nearly 40% of the inspected schools were rated as unsatisfactory in implementing SSE (EMB, 2003a: 5). To strengthen the policy context, EMB then published and disseminated a complete set of performance indicators for schools in Hong Kong.

## SSE and ESR Came into Compulsory Policy Directives in 2003

On May 2003, SSE and ESR were made compulsory as internal evaluation mechanism and external evaluation mechanism to assure education quality. EMB sent a letter entitled '*Enhancing School Development and Accountability through SSE (SSE) and External School Review (ESR)*' to all schools. On 12 June 2003, this letter then became a formal EMB circular 23/2003. The circular announced that there was a revision of QAF to the newly launched Enhanced School Development and Accountability (SDA) framework (Figure 5).

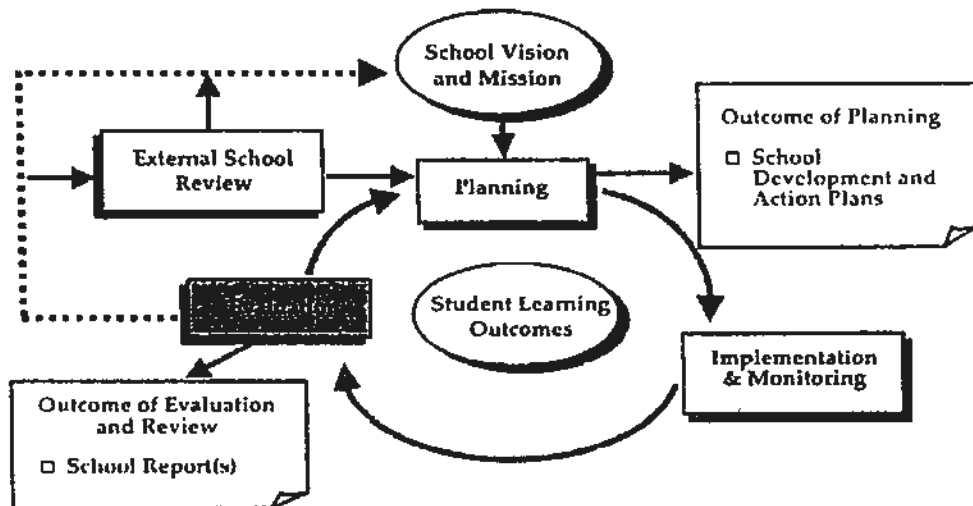


Figure 5: Enhanced School Development Framework

Under the SDA framework, all schools would have to be monitored by two quality assurance processes, the internal SSE and the external ESR. For the internal SSE, schools were given measurement tools from July to September 2003. These included guidelines for SSE, templates on school plans and reports, the Stakeholders' Survey (SHS) to teachers, students and parents, the Key Performance Measures (KPM) and the Assessment Program for Affective and Social Outcomes (APASO). Schools were required to conduct their annual evaluations and School Reports (SR) to EMB. Among the 23 KPMs, 11 were selected for reporting on the web in the 2003/04 reporting cycle (Figure 6). They were listed below.

1. composition of SMC
2. teachers' professional development (including principals' continuing professional development)
3. teachers' qualification and experience (including Language Proficiency Requirement)
4. number of active school days
5. lesson time for the 8 KLAs
6. students' reading habit
7. destination of exit students, including early exits (for secondary schools)
8. Hong Kong Attainment Test
9. Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination results (for secondary schools)
10. Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination results (for secondary schools)
11. students' attendance

Management & Organization	Learning & Teaching	Student Support & School Ethos	Student Performance
1. <u>Composition of SMC</u>	6. Teachers' and students' views on learning and teaching	11. Teachers', students' and parents' views on school culture	15. <u>HKAT</u>
2. Staff's views on school leadership	7. <u>Number of active school days</u>	12. Parents' views on home-school partnership	16. BCA
3. <u>Teachers' professional development (including principal CPD)</u>	8. <u>Lesson time for the 8 KLAs</u>	13. <u>Destination of exit students including early exits</u>	17. <u>HKCEE</u>
4. <u>Teachers' qualification and experience (including LPR)</u>	9. <u>Students' reading habit</u>	14. Students' attitudes to school	18. <u>HKALF</u>
5. School expenditure on learning and student support	10. Provision of co-curricular activities		19. Academic value-added performance
			20. Student participation in inter-school events
			21. Student participation in uniform / community service groups
			22. <u>Students' attendance</u>
			23. Students' physical development

Figure 6: Underlined KPMs for Reporting

In September 2003, a reference manual on evidence-based and data-oriented SSE was disseminated to schools. Schools were expected to produce their School Development Plan (SDP), Annual School Plan (ASP), and School Report (SR) and conduct their own SSE with the aforesaid tools. On 16 October 2003, EMB issued another circular 269/2003 to disseminate the procedure details of reporting and data collection of the above KPMs.

For the external ESR, its first cycle started from February 2004 to the end of 2006. ESR served as an external audit to verify and validate the authenticity of schools' own results and progress of SSE. From May to December 2003, the Regional Education Offices (REOs) of EMB initiated the district collegiate groups for professional sharing and learning of SSE in phases. EMB organised seminars, reference manuals and guidelines of SSE for schools. EMB also offered templates on school plans and reports, KPMs and SHS to schools about the requirement of conducting systematic and rigorous SSE. In February 2004, ESR was formally commenced.

### **Commencement of SSE and ESR cycle for Schools**

In EMB circular 23/2003 dated 12 June 2003, EMB stipulated the commencement of SSE and ESR cycle for schools. Schools needed to finalise their SDP between July and August 2003. Schools were required to submit the SDP and compile the SR in September 2003. Schools should upload in their school websites the SDP and SR after seeking endorsement from the SMC by November 2003. On 8 June 2004, EMB further wrote a letter to all schools entitled *'Enhancing School Development and Accountability through Self-evaluation and External Review:*

*modification of implementation requirements*'. The letter allowed schools to upload the KPM report on the school web at their own discretion. Yet, schools still needed to report the school performance to their key stakeholders. In addition, ESR would be suspended in the fourth quarter of 2004 in order to allow schools to share their implementation experience. This letter became an EMB circular 129/2004 later.

Yet, EMB still lashed out at the implementation of SSE through the publication of QAI reports. EMB claimed that “nearly half of the schools” did not make full use of the evaluation information to improve their work efficiency or refine their programme plans for the following school year. EMB also stated that “the stakeholders were not fully informed of the school effectiveness in a small amount of the schools (EMB, 2004: 11)”. On 20 December 2004, EMB required that SSE results of schools should be reported to school stakeholders, including SMCs, teachers, parents and students, via their school websites, newsletters or any other channels in EMB circular 292/2004. If the schools did not observe such policy requirements, they would be subject to investigation. They might be requested to upload all their performance and information on EMB website in subsequent years. EMB also informed schools that it would upload the 99 ESR reports on EMB website by the end of December 2004 for public access.

Four months later, in EMB circular 68/2005 dated 8 April 2005, EMB launched the E-platform for the SDA. It was to promote a one-stop solution designed to expedite schools' collection and management of school data such as APASO and SHS. On 29 July 2005, EMB further relaxed the requirements for schools. EMB did not require the schools to rate their own performance from “1” to “4” marks on the 14 Performance Indicators (PIs) Areas in the School Self-Assessment (SSA) reports.

- Similarly, ESR teams would not provide ratings in their assessment of the 14 PI Areas. In addition, schools were allowed to use their own qualitative and quantitative descriptors to conduct SSE with reference to their own school contexts. For the length of the SSA report, it was limited to 20 pages only. Schools were exempted from uploading their ESR reports for the first ESR cycle.

On 23 June 2008, EDB issued circular 33/2008 to announce the *Workshops on the Revised SSE tools for Continuous School Improvement* for schools. EDB also issued another circular 82/2008 to revise the PIs and to simplify the related SSE tools including the KPM and SHS. In EDB circular 13/2008 dated 3 July 2008, EDB detailed the simplified version of the PI Areas from 14 Areas to 8 Areas and from 29 PIs to 23 PIs (Figure 7). The revised PIs provided schools with clearer content to support holistic reviews of school key tasks by school personnel as well as the modification of the KPM and SHS. To better facilitate schools, templates of SDP, ASP, SR, writing guidelines were offered. These measures resolved teachers' puzzlement in conducting SSE for the second phase of the SDA from 2008/2009 to 2013/2014. In addition, EDB stepped up the dissemination of good practice and experience sharing among schools through the On-line Interactive Resources on Enhancing School Improvement through SSE and ESR.

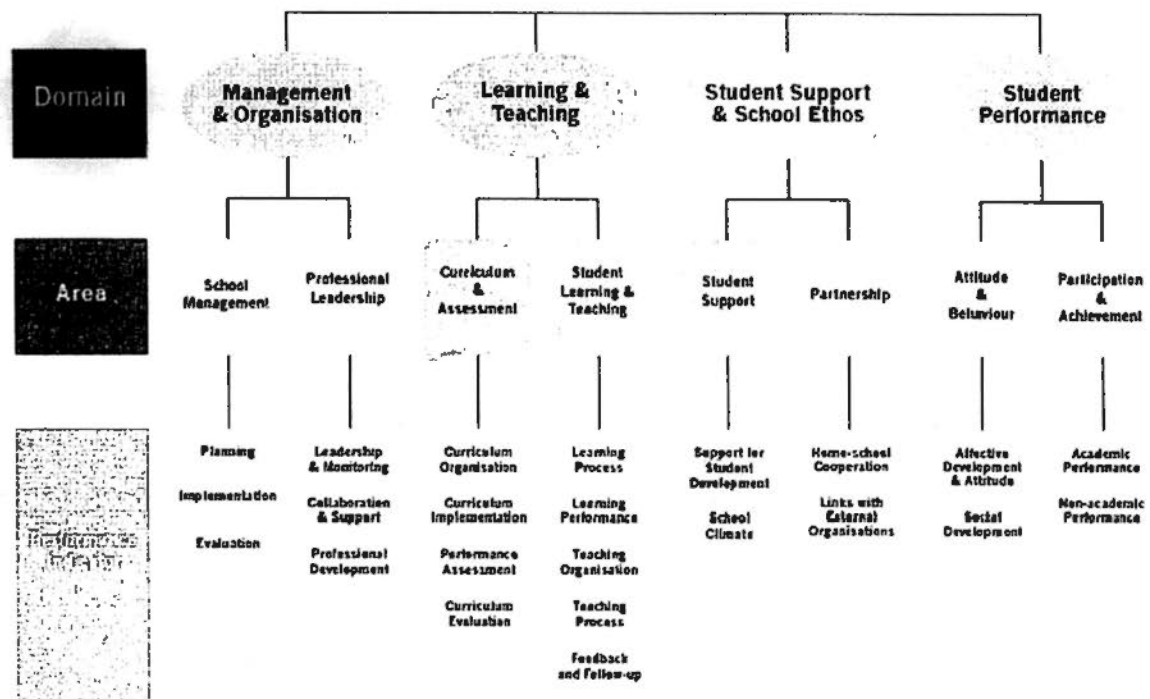


Figure 7: Revised Performance Indicators in July 2008

## **Feedback from the Education Sector Pertaining to SSE and ESR**

From the statistics published by EMB, 75% of the teachers surveyed reported that the data obtained in the process of SSE was useful for school improvement. 73% of them believed that ESR would be useful to school improvement. To summarise the different views of the scholars and teachers on SSE and ESR, their views were listed in the following paragraphs.

### **Feedback from Positivist Managerialists**

Feedback from the scholarly field was dichotomised. For scholars supporting SSE, they were mainly positivist managerialists. The positivist managerialists strongly believed that there was a proven means-ends factual causality in education when implementing SSE. Education was a production process with machinery input and output. The positivist managerialists held the view that education was similar to the natural science, therefore the input, process and output of education could be

controlled easily in a systematic way. They also deeply believed that schools should be fully, if not greatly, accountable for the output of education. The positivist managerialists thought that there were managerial tactics to enhance schools' effectiveness and efficiency. The following scholars were the key representative figures in the camp of positivist managerialists.

Cuttance (1989) believed that SSE could bring better education outcomes by monitoring and developing clear work plans, detailed strategies and perfect evaluation systems. Cheng (1994) also supported the use of quality indicators to measure input, process and output of schools. MacBeath and McGlynn (2002) claimed that SSE and ESR were fundamental in safeguarding educational quality from their experience in the United Kingdom. Kyriakides and Campbell (2004) proposed that a sense of ownership and commitment would arise if all school partners were actively involved in SSE. They added that SSE would provide empirical data to develop teacher learning and to satisfy stakeholders' needs or even go beyond their expectations. Fullan (1991) also believed that teachers working in a meaningful and purposeful way were more likely to remain in the profession. It was because they felt valued and supported in their work. Devos & Verhoeven (2003) asserted that SSE could serve as a driving force to push learning in schools and teachers by making collaboration possible. Meuret & Morlaix (2003) also believed that SSE could improve human relations and enhance commitment within the organisation.

For local scholars supporting SSE, Lam (2004) believed that SSE could catalyse the devolution of decision-making power and signify a clear departure from bureaucratic centralised control towards flexible and innovative staff empowerment,



greater effectiveness and stronger organisational motivation. Pang (2004a) asserted that the policy aim of SSE was correct though he believed that SSE should be more evolving and internal-driven rather the drastic external-driven one.

### **Feedback from Critical Performativists**

For those who saw the negative side of the policy, they were mainly critical performativists. The critical performativists demanded a cautious attitude towards implementation of SSE. The critical performativists believed that education was a fluid process and open system, within which no factors could be controlled easily. For example, the performance of a school, such as its academic achievement, was not only attributed to the input of schools like teachers' efforts, but also the family background of the students, the regions or society. Also, they opposed to measurement of academic achievement as schools' performance only. This was because students should not be treated as raw input materials but a holistic person.

The critical performativists believed that the educational ideal should be placed with priority over the superficial measurement of students' achievement. Otherwise, no teachers would be willing to teach the un-teachable or students who did not make improvement easily. They also predicted that the socially-unprivileged would be ignored or given up under such managerial measurement system. This was because the academic performance of the unprivileged students might be relatively weaker than that of privileged students from middle class families. The critical performativists strongly advocated for social equality and opposed to the managerial system. They demanded that the society stop the suppression of the unprivileged by introducing the unfair managerial system of SSE. The critical performativists hoped that the unprivileged could free from the stereotyped, power-hypostatized and

ideologically-frozen society. The following key figures of critical performativists had made influential in counter-balancing the impacts of the positivist managerialists.

Kleinhenz & Ingvarson (2004) claimed that teachers were not accustomed to evaluating their own teaching practices and lacked the skill to implement SSE in their schools. Meuret and Morlaix (2003) commented that SSE was promoted in France with only 5% of the schools adopted it. It was because teachers and senior management of the schools had no time to entertain the policy administrators in the measurement of educational outcomes. Such measurement of educational outcomes was considered as an attack against liberty and dignity by some teachers in France. Webb & Vulliamy (1998) also held the view that the internal-driven model of SSE in Finland without coercive power from policy directives would be a better way than the English SSE model of procedures and disciplines. Kyriakides & Campbell (2004) further added that the data collected in the process of SSE might reflect the poor performance of principals rather than teachers.

With reference to the views of local critical performativists, Chiu (2003) was one of them who were critical of SSE. Chiu (2003) thought that SSE would bring counter-effects to school improvement. For example, schools could not publish "sensitive data" such as the socio-economic status (SES) of the students and the intake banding of students even though they wanted to illustrate other factors that might affect the performance of students other than the efforts of teachers. Moreover, Chiu (2003) also claimed that the data obtained in SSE would lead to misinterpretation by the public and an avalanche of documentation for teachers. Tsang (2006) regarded SSE as a surveillance mechanism among schools. Cheng (2004) feared that SSE would cause over-standardisation of schools and the loss of

school characteristics. Cheng (2003) predicted that SSE would not be successfully launched as schools were not ready to learn. Lam (2004) also observed that some famous and well-established schools played a significant part in resisting changes. It was because these schools wanted to maintain the status and culture of their own and avoid the loss of these key elements. Cheng & Chan (2000) commented that the heavy workload resulted in administrating SSE like numerous meetings and staff development days would deter schools from joining SSE or SMI. In addition to the dichotomised viewpoints of both positivist managerialists and critical performativists, teachers' feedback on SSE and ESR were discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **Teachers' Feedback towards SSE and ESR**

SSE and ESR were very controversial and political among the teaching profession. SSE and ESR were one of the key policies that triggered strong opposition from the Professional Teachers' Union (PTU) towards EMB in Hong Kong. For those teachers who showed their support for SSE, they shared with other educational practitioners their implementation experience of SSE in SSE pilot scheme in territory-wide seminars organised by EMB. These teachers reflected that SSE could lead to school improvement. This key message was repeatedly conveyed in the territory-wide seminars organised by EMB and SSE network schools. However, there were a considerable number of schools reported that their teachers were anxious and fearful of the implementation of SSE and ESR.

Owing to the increasingly fierce responses from schools and the "anxiety syndrome" (MacBeath & Clark, 2006: 9) among teachers, EMB made compromise in the implementation requirements of SSE. On 29 July 2005, EMB amended the policy requirements of SSE as follows:

1. no requirement for schools to provide ratings on the 14 PI s Areas;
2. latitude for schools to use other qualitative and quantitative descriptors relevant to their development stage;
3. reduction of the SSA report to 20 pages;
4. SMC continues to receive copies of the report but not required to upload ESR reports to EMB website for the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of implementation of the SDA framework.

The amendments in SSE policy requirements aimed at alleviating the pressures exerted on teachers arising from the implementation of SSE such as documentation and extra administrative workload.

In late 2005, the Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower (PSEM), Fanny Law made provocative comments on the issue of teacher suicide and teacher competence. She said that if the cause of the teacher who committed suicide was due to the pressure of the educational reform, there should have been many teachers who committed suicide already in Hong Kong. Such provocative comments triggered nearly 15,000 teachers demonstrated on the streets for her resignation. These teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with the education policies in anger. They attributed the plight in the teaching profession to the poor governance of the PSEM. These teachers repeatedly demanded for her resignation. They claimed that they could no longer tolerate the policies of the education reform. They stated that SSE and ESR was the major culprit of their pressure.

Facing such strong opposition from teachers, the Chief Executive, Donald Tsang, had no choice but replaced Fanny Law with Raymond Wong as the PSEM. At the same time, Donald Tsang also replaced Arthur Li with Michael Suen as the Secretary

for Education. Such replacements of two key officials in EDB were made to reduce the political tensions from teachers. In view of the political instability and strong opposition from teachers, EMB then announced that there would be an extension of ESR cycle from a 4-year cycle to a 6-year cycle since March 2006.

Upon the arrival of the new Secretary for Education, Michael Suen, in July 2007, EDB simplified the PI Areas from 14 to 8 and PIs from 29 to 23. Teachers were supportive of such simplification. Quite a number of teachers were positive to the modification of the KPMs and the SHS. They also expressed that the templates of SDP, ASP, SR uploaded by EDB were useful. These teachers appreciated the writing guidelines offered by the EDB. They were satisfied with the cancellation of SSA report. They believed that the tools were effective for them to conduct SSE for the onset of the second phase of SDA from 2008/2009 to 2013/2014. In addition, teachers thought that the On-line Interactive Resources on Enhancing School Improvement through SSE and ESR was more time-saving and user-friendly. All in all, EDB was successful in securing teachers' support in the second phase of SSE and ESR by launching the above modifications. Having understood the research background of the study, the theoretical background, research purposes, research questions and significance and major arguments will be discussed.

## **Theoretical Background**

In view of the research background above, there are three theoretical issues to be addressed in this study. The first theoretical issue is that how the evolution of SSE was implemented in Hong Kong secondary schools. Such evolution was characterised with three protocols of SSE. The first SSE protocol was the SMI in 1991. The second was the SSE and QAI in 1997 stipulated in the ECR7. The third

one was the commencement of SSE and ESR in 2003. These three protocols also became the three guiding principles in selecting the three types of sample schools in this study. The first guiding principle for the first type of schools was that the sample school(s) should have implemented SMI in around 1991. The second principle for the second type was that the sample school(s) should have implemented SSE in around 1997. The third principle for the third type was that the sample school(s) should have implemented SSE in around 2004. These three critical milestones in implementation of SSE would provide the temporal contrast for the three types of schools studied.

The second key theoretical issue is that how teachers in secondary schools in Hong Kong perceived the effects of SSE on schools. These perceived effects included the positive side on school improvement as the positivist managerialists proposed. The detailed description of these perceived effects on school improvement will be delineated in chapter 2.1 in the literature review. On the other hand, these perceived effects of SSE encompassed the negative side on managerial control as the critical performativists believed. The detailed description of these perceived effects on managerial control will be discussed in chapter 2.2 in the literature review. These two dichotomised perspectives of school improvement and managerial control would be the second key theoretical issue this study aimed to address.

The third key theoretical issue to be addressed is that whether SSE was implemented in secondary schools in top-down approach, bottom-up approach, hybrid approach or policy learning through puzzlement, as theorists in the study of policy implementation. Detailed discussion of these debates is investigated in chapter 2.3 and 2.4 respectively in the literature review.

## **1.2 Research Purposes**

As stated above, the research purposes of this research were three-fold. First, it aimed to investigate the implementing experience of SSE with reference to the description of teacher administrators and teachers. Second, how the teacher administrators and teachers perceived the effects of SSE on school improvement and managerial control would be studied. Third, the nature of the implementation process of SSE from the perspectives of policy implementation within the policy studies in education would be investigated.

## **1.3 Research Questions and Significance**

The nature of this study was qualitative in nature. The use of qualitative study aimed at exploring the implementation experiences of SSE by the teacher administrators and teachers. The use of qualitative study was effective in capturing their perceptions and feelings of SSE. The use of qualitative study was contributive to delineate the nature of policy implementation within the policy studies of education. Hence, the use of descriptive and exploratory approaches (Punch, 2005) would be appropriate.

Moreover, the qualitative design of this study provided closer exploration of the perceptions, feeling and description of perceived effects of SSE depicted by teacher administrators and teachers, whether on school improvement, managerial control or both. As Miles and Huberman (1984: 9-10) suggested, the researcher's role in qualitative study was to serve as a "measurement device". The qualitative researcher in this study needed to present a "holistic overview of the context" of the three

sample schools to the readers. The qualitative researcher in this study had to capture the perception of teacher administrators and teachers of SSE “from the insider approach” through interview and empathetic understanding. In addition, the qualitative researcher should be sensitised to the themes of the study grounded in the literature review when analysing the discourse of the informants and documents. Also, the qualitative researcher in this study was required to theorise the data with an established framework. In the process of theorising, the qualitative researcher might need to assemble words, sub-clustered, broken clauses and semiotic segments.

There were two limitations in this study. First, this study did not aim at making generalisability or transferability of the findings. It was because only three sample secondary schools which experienced both SSE and ESR were studied. Although there would be deep, rich and thick description in this qualitative study, the findings obtained were confined to the particular historical, cultural and social contexts of these three sample schools.

Second, there were sampling restrictions in the study. This study employed a snowball chain sampling method. Therefore, only the first participant of each school was self-selected. Other participants would be recommended through the first participant of each school. Hence, the participants recommended might be those who had certain perception of SSE as school improvement or managerial control. In addition, the participants recommended were teachers who were willing to express their views for an hour or more in the interviews.

Having understood the nature of this study, it is important to focus on the three research questions:



1. from the perspective of teacher administrators and teachers, how was SSE implemented in the three sample schools?
2. from the perspective of teacher administrators and teachers, what were the perceived effects and/or consequences of SSE?
3. given these implementation experiences and perceptions, how could the implementations of SSE be accounted for from the perspectives of policy implementation within the policy studies in education?

The contribution of the first research question lied in capturing the qualitative process of the lived experiences of teacher administrators and teachers on the implementation of SSE in the three sample schools. Indeed, there were previous quantitative studies pertaining to the impacts of SSE in Hong Kong (MacBeath & Clark, 2005 & 2006; Pang, 2003 & 2004a). These quantitative studies were very informative and quantitative in their nature in depicting different domains of SSE. In Europe, MacBeath, Meuret, Schratz & Jakobsen (1999) commissioned a perception study at systemic level to capture teachers' attitude towards self-evaluation. They studied 101 European secondary schools. The findings showed that only a third of teachers and school staff who had positive perceived effects of SSE. In addition, there were hierarchical modelling analysis (Goldstein, 1986; Bryk & Raudenbush, 1987) and value-added approaches (MacBeath, 2005) to measure the improvement in pupils' academic performance (Saunders, 1999a) in the UK.

However, the above quantitative studies studied the effects of SSE at systemic levels and organisational levels. They were not qualitative enough to reflect under what conditions and what context SSE was implemented by the teacher administrators of the school. In implementation studies, the 3Ps---the Policies, Places

and People (Honig, 2006) were all vital elements in our analysis of policy implementation. Honig (2006: 2) even added that “implementation research should aim to reveal the policies, people, and places that shape how implementation unfolds and provide robust, grounded explanations for how interactions among them help to explain implementation outcomes”. This study, therefore, aimed at offering more context-rich information on the 3Ps for the implementation of SSE.

This study would firstly investigate the policies of the three sample schools in detail. There were detailed question prompts depicting the policies of SSE including the policy goals, targets and tools at the three sample schools. Second, this study would study the places of the three sample schools in detail. There would be thick descriptions on the historical and institutional context of the places including the parents and students. Third, this study would investigate the people of the three sample schools such as the leadership, the middle managers and the general teachers. The organic and complex interaction of the 3Ps would be studied.

The second contribution this study aimed to make was to capture the teacher administrators and the teachers’ perceived effects of SSE as school improvement or managerial control or even both. Some quantitative research had been conducted to study the impact of SSE on schools in Hong Kong. For example, Lam & Pang (2000: 16) indicated that there was surveillance of education from the government. SSE was one of the surveillance policies which brought a lot of teachers’ workload and stress. This was because only limited resources and support were available to teachers for the implementation of SSE (Lam & Pang, 2000: 16). In Ireland, a project called Whole School Evaluation (WSE) was conducted. The purpose of the WSE was to study the impacts brought about by SSE at school levels. The findings concluded that

senior teachers and head teachers were extremely positive, affirming and supportive towards the policy of SSE. The senior teachers and head teachers reported that SSE provided a focus for schools to improve when they prepared for the external inspection. SSE was found to promote teachers' cohesion and collegiality (McNamara and O'Hara, 2006). In this study, the commonalities of those teachers who perceived effects of SSE on school improvement and managerial control would be studied.

In the UK, Jeffrey and Woods (1998) conducted an ethnographic study on internal school evaluation and external school inspection. The two authors studied 6 contrasting case-study primary schools over a three-year period. The research findings revealed that there was quite a large divergence in the perception of inspection between inspectors of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and teachers inspected. Inspectors of OFSTED perceived inspection as a means to safeguard the quality assurance of teaching quality (Jeffrey & Woods, 1998: 26) and validation (Jeffrey and Woods, 1998: 30). The teachers studied, however, perceived OFSTED inspection as surveillance (Jeffrey & Woods, 1998: 69) and breaking attachments (Jeffrey & Woods, 1998: 75). The teachers inspected believed that inspection led to a culture of blame, guilt and failure (Jeffrey & Woods, 1998: 79), the colonisation of the life, body and individuality (Jeffrey & Woods, 1998: 98). The teachers inspected also thought that inspection led to professional uncertainty, loss of self, and a change of commitment (Jeffrey & Woods, 1998: 133). Jeffrey and Woods' study was a very informative one. Yet, it seemed to over-emphasise the negative side of the OFSTED inspection. The positive side of OFSTED inspection that might occur such as school improvement in curriculum development was undermined. Jeffrey and Woods' study tended to dichotomise teachers as anti-inspection and

inspectors as pro-inspection. In reality, there were indeed divergent views among teachers towards inspection. This study would the factors under which teachers were likely to perceive the effects of SSE on school improvement or managerial control in Hong Kong.

Ethnographic studies like Carlyle and Woods (2002) and Troman and Woods (2001) were conducted to capture teachers' experiences of stressful lives and loss of professional identity. Carlyle and Woods (2002) studied the emotional lives of 21 secondary teachers. The study found that the emotion of the 21 teachers was severely affected by instrumentalism, accountability and managerialism (Carlyle & Woods, 2002: 26) resulted in SSE and OFSTED. The study also revealed that the 21 teachers were losing their own professional identity (Carlyle & Woods, 2002: 79). On the other hand, Troman and Woods (2001) investigated the job satisfaction of 20 teachers. They found that managerialism of OFSTED led to teachers' low job motivation, low morale (Troman & Woods, 2001: 32), feeling of shame and failure (Troman & Woods, 2001: 51). Again, these studies were rather "one-sided" and focused on the negative effects of OFSTED inspection on teachers. In contrast, there were another series of "one-sided" quantitative study which investigated the positive effects of inspection on teachers. One of them was conducted by Pang (2004a) in Hong Kong.

Pang (2004a) investigated the difficulties of developing schools through the implementation of SSE in 10 primary and 10 secondary schools. He studied the strategies of initiating organisational change through SSE in 23 primary and 27 secondary schools. The findings were rich and highly reliable. However, due to the research design, Pang's study focused on the positive side of SSE as a means to school improvement only. He did not cover the highly controversial debate among

theorists in the USA and the UK ----“effects of SSE on managerial control”. In other words, Pang’s study did not provide alternative perspective of SSE such as “effects of SSE on managerial control” other than “effects of SSE on school improvement”. Therefore, it was the aim of this study to provide both contrasting perspectives of SSE---- “effects of SSE on school improvement” and “effects of SSE on managerial control” in the field.

The last contribution this research attempted to make was to capture how teacher administrators and teachers perceived the nature of implementation of SSE in the three sample schools. They were asked to indicate whether they perceived the implementation of SSE as a top-down approach, bottom-up approach, or learning through puzzlement processes. Pang (2005: 9) studied 10 primary schools and 10 secondary schools on the implementation of School-based Evaluation and School-based Performance Indicators. The study included 18 interviews of principals and 900 surveys from participating teachers. The study revealed that schools were not accustomed to SSE. It was because SSE was a new concept demanding drastic change in school administration and school normative activities. Most teachers and principals surveyed preferred implementing SSE in stages. The study investigated systemic factors and organisational factors on the implementation of SSE. The systemic factors encompassed an array of factors such as policy aims and lack of resources, whereas the organisational factors included conflicting ideas and power struggles in the organisation. Yet, this study was only a quantitative study. The unit of analysis was school. It did not explore the lived perception of teacher administrators and teachers on the implementation of SSE. It did not find out whether they perceived implementation of SSE as top-down approach, bottom-up approach or learning through puzzlement process.

In the UK, MacBeath (2005) were very comprehensive in describing the implementation of SSE at school levels with its gigantic data-base. Unfortunately, the policy implementation journey of SSE was not captured. In Hong Kong, MacBeath and Clark (2005) conducted a large-scale and territory-wide impact study on the implementation of SSE, which was funded by EMB. The impact study evaluated the Phase I Implementation of SSE and ESR in 99 schools. It investigated quantitative data from questionnaires and surveys with written comments. The impact study was also complemented by qualitative data. Eight case studies and eleven focus group interviews were involved. The findings revealed that the implementation of SSE in Hong Kong was uneven and unsystematic before 2003. But the implementation situation was improved in 2005. In 2006, MacBeath and Clark (2006) continued their second round of investigation on another 139 schools through questionnaire surveys, case studies and cross-school focus group interviews. This time, their findings revealed that front-line teachers lacked confidence in the use of SSE tools in their day-to-day work. It was because SSE was perceived as another policy initiative rather than an extension or refinement of what the teachers had gone before (MacBeath & Clark, 2006: 4). In short, MacBeath's study was very comprehensive in describing the implementation of SSE at school levels. Yet, it failed to describe how teacher administrators and teachers perceived the nature of the implementation of SSE from the perspective of the policy implementation.

#### **1.4 Major Arguments of this Study**

For the first major argument of this study, it is argued that the context of Policy, Place and People interacted with one another and became an organic complexity for

the implementation of SSE. In view of the three sample schools, it was found that the implementation of SSE is a complex and organic interaction among the context of Policy to be implemented with policy learning through puzzlement, the context of Place in which the policy was supposed to take hold and the context of People implementing it.

When it comes to the second argument of this study, it is argued that the policy effects of SSE are as not as clear cut as theorists in the two camps, school improvement and managerial control, suggested in the literature review. The perceived effects were not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of teachers in the Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers made sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts. It was revealed from the data that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be an organic interaction among the School Implementation Lens (SIL), the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL) and the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL) of them. It was discovered that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by the implementation of school-based SSE. This effect is called School Implementation Lens (SIL). Moreover, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by their biographical and professional-socialisation in the times they grew up in. This effect is called the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL). Furthermore, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by the position of teachers in the schools. This effect is called the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL).

Regarding the third argument, it is argued that neither the top-down, bottom-up or hybrid approaches could be used to account for the implementation of SSE in the

eyes of teachers in the three sample schools. Instead, teachers made sense of SSE as the complex and organic interaction of SSE implementation with reference to the 3Ps model (Honig, 2006) including the policy to be implemented with policy learning through puzzlement, the place in which the policy was supposed to take hold and the people implementing it. In addition, the perceived effects of SSE were not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of the teachers in the Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers make sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts. It was revealed from the data that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers were that of an organic interaction among the SIL, the TGL and the TPL.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter described the research background, the research purpose, the research significance and the major arguments of the implementation of SSE from teachers' perspective. In the next chapter, a wide range of relevant literature related to this study would be discussed. In chapter 3, the methodology used for this study would be explained in detail. The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters would present the findings of the research. Conclusions of the study and implications of the research will also be discussed in the sixth chapter.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, four main areas of literature would be reviewed. In the first part of the literature review, how SSE was used by positivist managerialists in the New Right Movement as a tool to monitor educational quality and a strategy to promote positive impacts on school improvement would be delineated. In the second part, how critical performativists responded to such “managerial” mentality and how they criticised the drawbacks brought about by the implementation of SSE would be exemplified. In the third part, policy implementation including top-down approaches, bottom-up approaches and hybrid approaches would be discussed. In the fourth part, policy learning through puzzlement would be introduced. In each part of the literature review, the contextual explication, perspective implication and implications to research questions would be highlighted.

#### **2.1 SSE on School Improvement**

In the first part, how SSE was used by positivist managerialists in the New Right Movement as a tool to monitor educational quality and a strategy to promote positive impacts on school improvement would be delineated.

##### **2.1.1 Contextual Explication of SSE on School Improvement**

The literature of SSE firstly sprung from the concept of quality control from the successful experience of Japanese enterprises from 1950s to 1970s. In 1984, a New Public Reform Movement (NPRM) was promulgated by Ronald Reagan. The

NPRM aimed at reducing public expenditure drastically to retreat the US from the welfare state policy. In such regard, the NPRM marked the retreat of the welfare state in the US. Quality control was then widely promoted as a means to increase governmental and organisational effectiveness and efficiency. As public expenditure on schools was enormous, the concept of quality control was introduced in the positivism research paradigm on school effectiveness. In 1980s, the research on school effectiveness was widely reviewed and studies on SSE were widely promoted in the UK till now. SSE was then transformed into the national policy in quality education in the UK and around the globe.

### **Concept of Quality Control from Successful Experience of Japanese Enterprises**

The idea of SSE originated in the concept of quality control and standards in manufacturing industries in Japan in the 1950s, which was promulgated by the seminal figure Deming (1986). Deming promoted the concept of quality assurance and the importance of creating a quality culture. He advocated the new definition of quality from expert-based to customer-based. Since the mid 1970s, the majority of Western school systems faced demographic and economic contraction. The role of schools had been challenged by the new demands of the society. Schools were also asked to produce “quality” students as if factories produced quality goods. Schools were required to produce their “quality” students according to the need of the society. It was believed that this factory-production schooling model could solve the problem of youth unemployment.

Moreover, in the eyes of the Western world, the success of Japanese enterprises was attributed to the success of the Japanese education. In the late 1970s, the Western countries were shocked by the robust economic power of their Japanese counterparts.

Therefore, the Western countries and their researchers sought a quick fix to discover the mysterious successful experience of the Japanese enterprises. The Western researchers were successful in drawing up their conclusions in the classical book *In Search of Excellence* (Peters & Waterman: 1982). This classical book was one of the management classics which clearly defined the core essence of the Japanese enterprises. The book concluded that being reflective and evaluative were the key successful elements in the Japanese enterprise. The book was well-received by the American community. Since then, the reflective and evaluative elements of quality control became the origin of the concept of SSE.

### **Sparked by the Rise of New Public Movement**

When did the concept of SSE blossom? In 1979, the Conservative government in the UK came to the political stage. Unlike its predecessors, the Conservative government challenged the ideologies of the Welfare State. The Conservative government promoted the new concept of “Retreat of the State”, which was advocated by the New Right economists. The New Right economists assured the public that the outcome-based market solutions would be superior to the established public provision of welfare benefits. The New Right economists also predicted that public expenditure and the taxation would be greatly reduced after the “Retreat of the State”. The New Right economists advocated the new public choice theory by introducing a competitive framework into the public sector. Under the influence of the New Right economists, the “free-market” rhetoric was so dominant in the entire public sector including the field of education. Under such political climate, local authorities in the UK had to develop a new focus on services and customers. The local authorities had to find ways to evaluate the quality and impact of their services.

In the US, Ronald Reagan entered the White House around the same period. The US faced a huge fiscal deficit in his first administration. In order to comfort the American society and reverse the deficit trend, Ronald Reagan echoed and embraced the Public Reform Movement of the UK. He wanted to transplant the Public Reform Movement to the US. He believed that the role of a bureaucratic government should be changed. The bureaucratic government should be degenerated to strategic governance for justification of the use of resources only. He thought that the use of managerial measurement tools could lead to the justification of the effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector. Hence, managerial measurement became the golden rule of thumb in public movement and public sectors in the US.

To strengthen the New Public Movement, Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph in the UK founded the Centre for Policy Studies. They advocated the key ministers should adopt the ideas of right-wing thinkers such as Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek. In the US, the former Kennedy School of Government was also established to train new managerialists to administer governments. The New Right economists decried the state-invention political and economic strategy. It was because they believed that the administrative and bureaucratic structures of the government were inherently inferior to markets as a means of allocating resources. This New Right “free-market” belief had been dominant and prevalent for nearly 30 years till the outbreak of financial tsunami in the global financial market in 2008. As a result, numerous performance indicators and pledges were stipulated to measure the cost-effectiveness of the government departments, school services and private enterprises. These movements laid down the foundation of managerial performance for justification of organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

## **Anchored in Positivist Research on School Improvement and Effectiveness**

Along with the blossom of the New Public Movement from 1982 to 1986, the UK and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation (OECD) countries such as Australia, Canada and Denmark embarked on their academic research studies on school improvement and effectiveness. Relevant research studies such as the *International School Improvement Project (ISIP)* and *The Creativity of the School Project* were conducted. These studies aimed at exploring the strategies for school improvement and school effectiveness that changed schools at the meso-level. The working groups were comprised of policy-makers from the OECD at both cross-national level and local level. The ISIP was set up in an aim to study the policy effects of the School-based Review. With such gigantic cross-national projects, the idea of SSE was anchored in the academic field. As a result, SSE became key research topics in school effectiveness studies and school improvement studies.

## **SSE Became National Policy in Quality Education**

In the early 1990s, SSE became the national policy in education. The UK and Victoria in Australia reformed their education systems with quality assurance mechanisms. The UK established the OFSTED to monitor the quality assurance of schools. The Victoria in Australia set up the Office of Review to supervise the quality assurance of schools. These two countries became the pioneers in implementing SSE in education.

## **Establishment of the OFSTED in the UK**

In 1988, the Education Reform Act was passed in the UK. The Audit Commission issued a report identifying six “rewarding roles” for new Local Education Authorities (LEA) (Woods & Cribb, 2001):

1. a leader articulating the vision of what the education service was trying to achieve;
2. a partner supporting schools and colleagues;
3. a planner of facilitates for the future;
4. a provider of information to help people make informed choices;
5. a regulator of the quality assurance function;
6. a banker channeling the funds.

These six roles were promoted as the first step to transform the role of LEAs and trim their power. In 1992, the Education Reform Act further diminished the role and power of the LEAs. The Education Reform Act removed the power of the LEA in school inspection. Instead, a central regime called the OFSTED was established as an independent non-ministerial government department. The OFSTED was headed by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI). The main objectives of the OFSTED were three-fold. First, it was to set up a new system of school inspection. Second, it was to maintain a sufficient number of qualified inspectors. Third, it was to fulfill the requirements of each inspection cycle. In the same year, the Education (Schools) Act introduced a system of competitive bidding in recruiting school inspectors. Contracts for school inspection could be awarded to registered inspectors or their employers.

In late 1993, the first inspection cycle of secondary schools commenced. In early 1994, the first inspection cycle of primary and special schools was earmarked. In 1996, the inspection criteria were revised. The inspection cycle was adjusted from four to six years, depending on the nature of the schools. In 1997, the Education Act made partial provision for the inspection of LEAs assisted by the Audit Commission. In the same year, the new Labour Government came to the political stage. The new

Labour Government followed the essence of New Public Management (NPM) stated in the White Paper *Excellence in Schools* in 1997. The new Labour Government set out the comprehensive roles of the LEAs in raising the standard of achievements of the schools. From March 1997 to September 1998, the secondary schools and the primary and special schools were re-inspected. In 1999, “light touch” mode of school inspections were devised. In January 2000, the inspection frameworks were revised and the new inspection systems commenced. In 2001, a consultation was conducted on further revisions for inspection framework. In 2003, the third round of inspection cycle began. Till now, the revised inspection framework is still in use in the UK. In short, the establishment of OFSTED signified the key milestone for adopting SSE as a Quality Assurance Mechanism (QAM) in education.

### **School Charter in Victoria, Australia**

Another key milestone in adopting SSE in education was the education reform in Victoria province in Australia in 1997. It was called *Schools of the Future*. The Victorian government launched the accountability framework on curriculum, people and resources in the reform. The reform framework was based on the past studies on self-managing schools. The reform framework was featured as the setting up of the Office of Review to supervise quality assurance mechanism. Schools were first required to submit their three-year School Plan to the Office of Review. Then, the schools needed to submit the Annual Report with school self-assessment to the Office of Review for the coming three consecutive years. After receiving three years of Annual Report, the Office of Review would conduct a triennial review to verify the school’s self-assessment. This cycle of quality assurance was also called the quality circle in education. The Australian model of Quality Assurance (QA) was another key milestone in adopting SSE in education.

## **Comparing and Contrasting Implementation of SSE in the UK and in Australia**

### **Similarities in Implementation of SSE**

There were six similarities in implementation of SSE in the UK and Australia. First, both places involved the collection of data about the curriculum and student performance, staff opinion, parental views and students' views (Ferguson, 2002: 113). Second, both places employed standardised instruments such as outcomes measured in Key Stage in the National Curriculum and external examination (GCSE and GCE 'A' level) in each school. It was because the results reported could be compared with "schools with similar results" and also "schools with similar profiles". In other words, both places used the data for managerial benchmarking (Camp, 1996). Third, both the UK and Australia adopted the liner model of transformation of outputs and inputs in measuring education. Both places seldom investigated the possible reasons for performance differences among schools. The measurement instruments measured mainly on outcomes rather than the input and the process of the schooling. Fourth, both places revised their measurements by adding more process data such as staffing, financial data, geographical area and school size after a few years of implementation. Fifth, both places involved follow-up mechanism in monitoring quality assurance.

### **Differences in Implementation of SSE**

There were two differences between the UK and Australia. First, when implementing SSE, Victoria had devised a self-governing regime. The regime was lesser degree of central prescription. In the UK, the SSE appeared to be moving to greater degree of central prescription (Ferguson, Earley, Fidler & Ouston, 2000: 119). Victoria's triennial review highly focused on improvement written in the Charter in the past cycles whereas in England, the SSE focused more on performance in SDPs.



In Victoria, the district office personnel would intervene if there was disagreement between school reviewers and school members to balance external independence with teachers' professionalism. On the other hand, the LEA in England took a "very passive role in conflict" between the inspectors and the teachers (Ferguson, Earley, Fidler & Ouston, 2000: 128).

Second, the level of penetration of the School self-review in Victoria did not touch at the classroom level generally. It was because there was no direct lesson observation by school heads on teachers at classroom level. In England, school heads might even sit and observe teachers' teaching. Hence, teachers faced greater pressure from the school heads and the OFSTED. In Victoria, teaching support staff would be excluded from the process of SSE while in England, they would be included in the process.

### **Contextual Features for Implementation of SSE in the UK**

There were four features in implementation of SSE in the UK. First, SSE in the UK borrowed a lot from the successful experience of SSE in Scotland. In 1995, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) of Scotland commissioned a study of SSE. The study was to discover whether SSE model used in Scotland "could be applied or redeveloped in an English/ Welsh context" (MacBeath, 1999: viii). Hence, the resulting publication '*Schools Speak for Themselves*' was widely circulated in January 1996. The publication was sent to every primary, secondary and special school in England and Wales. In the same year, MacBeath put the case for SSE to both the Labour Party and the Conservative Party for the monitoring of educational quality.

Second, the movement of SSE secured the political support of the UK government. On 2 May, 1997, the new Labour government won in the election. The new Labour government quickly endorsed SSE in months after the publication of the White Paper *'Excellence in Schools'*. Michael Barber was appointed to head the Standards and Effectiveness Unit of the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE). In July 1997, copies of the NUT's recommendations were sent to the Government Task Force on Standards. The copies were distributed to its members in 1998. The impact of *'Schools Speak for Themselves'* was "not simply at a national level" (MacBeath, 1999: 72). In two years after its publication, *'Schools Speak for Themselves'* had been translated into Italian, Danish and Thai. The book was presented at places in which conferences, presentations or extended workshops had been held.

Third, SSE in the UK brought drastic changes in schools. It was found that 58% of schools had changed their teaching styles after external inspection and self-evaluation (Cullingford, 1999: 18). Of which 54% of schools admitted large or medium scales of improvement in their teaching styles had been made (Cullingford, 1999: 145).

Fourth, OFTSED in the UK would make known the inspection report to the public through its publication. The OFTSED inspection report revealed that there were a large number of incompetent teachers who were rated overall the lowest score range. This naming and shaming practice was also then adopted in Hong Kong with the uploading of ESR reports for public reference. In this connection, teachers in the UK admitted that, willingly or unwillingly, external inspection was helpful in sharpening their teaching (Cullingford, 1999: 77). The idea of adopting SSE was to

bring the external inspection into the school (MacBeath, 1999) with 10 performance indicators:

1. school climate
2. relationships
3. classroom climate
4. support for learning
5. support for teaching
6. time and resources
7. organisation and communication
8. equity
9. recognition of achievement
10. home-school link

### **Implications of SSE Experience in the UK to this Study**

There were three implications which could be derived from SSE experience in the UK to this study. First, the researcher of this study was to discover how and what teacher administrators and teachers in the three sample schools had experienced in the implementation of SSE. Relevant SSE policy details and tools in the UK would serve as sensitising devices in setting question prompts for informants in the first research question. Second, the researcher would explore the perceived effects of the teacher administrators and teachers on the implementation of SSE in terms of school improvement and managerial control. Relevant teachers' and inspectors' responses towards on SSE and OFSTED in the UK would serve as sensitising devices in setting question prompts for informants in the second research question. Thirdly, the researcher intended to investigate how the policy learning occurred in the three sample schools. Fullan (1991) believed that in the absence of changes, sharing and

team-learning for the improvement, any policies “would deem to have failed”. Hence, the policy learning approaches in the UK such as the top-down approach, bottom-up approach and the learning through puzzlement approach would be served as sensitising devices in setting question prompts for informants in the third research question. In addition, Fullan (1991) also thought that successful learning experience of schools would enable schools to survive in the “implementation dip” and bear fruit in the “institutionalisation” stage.

### **Contextual Features for Implementation of SSE in Australia**

There were three features in the implementation of SSE in Victoria, Australia. First, it adopted an external verification approach through triennial school reviews. The Office of Review (1997) in Victoria stipulated three elements in an accountability framework: School Charter, school annual report and triennial school review. School Charters were schools’ commitments to the public for three years with a restricted range of priorities according to the school’s profile and context. If schools were able to meet the pre-set attainment in the past three years, their School Charter would be renewed. This accountability framework compelled schools to publish their annual reports for two consecutive years with yearly follow-up. Schools then compiled their School self-assessment report in the third year and wait for independent verification for further improvement from the state government. During the four days of independent verification, school principals, presidents of school council, leading teachers and specialists were required to be included in the process of SSE. If the school performance was satisfactory, the School Charter would be renewed. At the end of the review, the reviewer would produce a report between 16 to 25 pages. At the same time, the Office of Review would send a copy to the corresponding regional office to follow up the improvement. Then in the next cycle,

the Office for Review would verify the School self-assessment by verifier or reviewer.

Second, schools receiving government subsidies with similar profiles would be compared against one another with the same indicators. In the framework of School self-assessment, performance indicators such as:

#### **Students**

- achievement in external assessment
- achievement as assessed against the Curriculum and Standards Framework
- destinations
- attendance
- welfare

#### **Staff**

- professional development activities
- absence

#### **School**

- curriculum performance
- parental satisfaction
- staff opinion (Gurr, 1999)

were included. Moreover, schools of similar profiles such as similar proportions of students and receiving similar amount of government financial assistance would be measured against one another. These comparisons among similar schools indicated the “relative position of the school compared to its peer” (Ferguson, Earley, Fidler & Ouston, 2000: 124).

## **Implications of SSE Experience in Australia to This Study**

There was one implication which could be derived from SSE experience in Australia to this study. In this study, the researcher would ask the informants in the three sample schools for their perceived effects of SSE including their perception towards the PIs in Hong Kong. The comparison between “similar schools” could be served as sensitising devices in setting prompts for the informants when the research question two on perceived effects of SSE was asked.

### **2.1.2 Perspective Implication of SSE on School Improvement**

In the last section, we discussed the context behind the rise of SSE. This section, on the other hand, provided us with four fundamental concepts of SSE. They were the definition, purpose, research paradigm and effects of SSE on school improvement.

#### **Definition of SSE**

SSE was defined a bit differently in various places. In the UK and Europe, SSE or School self-inspection (Ferguson, Earley, Fidler & Ouston, 2000:6) was defined as the monitoring of school’s working by its key stakeholders such as its teachers, students and parents (Meuret & Morlaix, 2003: 53-71). In Scotland, the definition of SSE was defined as four fundamental questions by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (HMI) in the document *‘How Good is Our School?’* (1997):

- how are we doing in this school?
- how are we doing in this classroom?
- how are we doing in this department?
- how are we doing in this team? (HMI, 1997: 1)

These four questions laid down the core foundation for the essence of SSE for the English model.

Therefore, SSE in the English model was defined as a process which involved five sub-processes (McLaughlin, 1991). The first one was to define one's aim. The second one was to establish criteria for success. The third one was to determine the most appropriate methods for judging the effects of one's actions. The fourth one was to provide careful observation and analysis of actions. The fifth one was to encourage interpretation of the consequences of those actions and learning from them.

In the US, SSE was referred to as School-based evaluation (Nevo, 1995). In Australia, SSE was called School self-review (Ferguson, Earley, Fidler & Ouston, 2000: 113). In Hong Kong, Pang (2004a: 4) defined SSE as "a mechanism through which schools can help themselves review the quality of education, improve continuously and develop themselves into effective schools" to fulfill the stakeholders' expectations (Pang & Cheung, 2005). ED in Hong Kong defined SSE as "a systematic process through which a school continuously reviews the quality and effectiveness of its work so as to facilitate its self-improvement and further development, leading to the provision of quality education for its students" (ED, 2000a: 1).

To integrate the above definitions, SSE was a feedback system. SSE served as an important way to improve education. SSE increased the amount of valid feedback and decreased the amount of misleading feedback. SSE increased fair comparisons

and decreased disinformation such as the over-interpreted generalisations and opinions offered by inspection and the disinformation of inadequate models. SSE was the most “vital task” of the next decade (Fitz-Gibbon, 1996: 87) in quality assurance. SSE became the key aspect of the new OFTSED inspection framework (Office for Standards in Education, 2005). The value-added measure of SSE in school effectiveness was useful in informing SSE processes and activities of the schools with the approach of “both qualitative and quantitative school feedback” (Department of Education and Skills, 2006).

### **Purpose of Establishing SSE**

SSE is a long-lasting self-renewal process for schools to pursue improvement. As SSE requires more stakeholders to play a full part in the process, it is a lasting and sustainable process too (MacBeath, 1999). The purpose of SSE is three-fold. First, it is to “improve the knowledge and skills” of school members to “diagnose the problem by themselves”. The aim of SSE is to make the school become “a learning community” (Pang, 2004a: 4). SSE is an approach to analyse the existing practice. SSE allows teachers to take more responsibility for their own learning, make decisions about professional progress and attain the conditions for achievement of learning outcomes. SSE allows a school to reflect critically on external criteria and to set these against its own internally derived criteria (Buchanan and Jackson, 1998). SSE allows a school to consider the relative merits and appropriateness of both the internal and external criteria (MacBeath, Boyd, Rand & Bell, 1996: 11).

Second, SSE highlights the internal process-approach of participation of stakeholders from students, teachers, parents and communities. These stakeholders are given chances to figure out the strategies to school evaluation and improvement.



They are given opportunities to explore ways to “make their school better”. As all parties are involved, rapport and collegiality will therefore be built up throughout the process of SSE. In addition, SSE serves as a process for communicating, building support and developing a shared vision among the school community.

Third, SSE counter-balances the limitations of the inspection process (Ferguson, Earley, Fidler & Ouston, 2000). It helps people identify where they are going, how to improve the journey and whether they have arrived (Herman & Winters, 1992: 9). In addition, it helps teachers to provide effective learning experiences with hands-on experience rather than just relying on findings derived from the research only (Elliott, 1996: 211). Fullan (1991: 18) believed that the mixture of both external inspection and SSE were both important for school changes to happen. Barber (1997: 13) proposed that the idea of both “support and pressure” should always be the core issues of government policies in maintaining educational quality.

The above three purposes of SSE were actually grounded in the research findings of the positivistic scholars. The positivistic scholars emphasised the notion of school efficiency and effectiveness. Their studies had dominated the school effectiveness research for decades. They marked the positivistic research paradigm in the school effectiveness research since 1960s.

### **Research Paradigm of SSE**

Scholars generally accepted that school effectiveness research originated as a reaction to the Coleman Report in 1966 in the United States. The Coleman Report was a ground-breaking document. The report repeatedly emphasised that social background had a far bigger effect than the differences between schools. In addition,

the report depicted the impact of poverty and racial oppression on school attainment. Since 1966, there was a surge in studies exploring school effectiveness and approaches to school improvement. Early works of school effectiveness research included Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston and Smith (1979)'s *Fifteen Thousand Hours* in exploring school effectiveness and Reynolds (1976; 1982)'s work in depicting the characteristics of effective schools. Some scholars also claimed that this "top-down" model of school management was the revival of the Taylorism.

In 1970s, the school effectiveness research was featured with a highly prescriptive sense in listing factors for the success of the effective schools. They were characterised as using statistical models in their methodology of evaluation. They were featured as flow-charts and must-dos for schools to follow in changing organisation into outcome-oriented schools. These studies played a vital and significant role in setting the agenda for the improvement projects in many parts of the English-speaking world.

In 1980s, school effectiveness and school improvement were further enriched with process-based indicators. They were enriched by the advanced statistical models and qualitative description in methodology. Coincidentally, under the context of the Thatcher Government's mercerisation of education (Morley & Rassool, 1999: 12-13; Rea & Weiner, 1998: 22), the administrators believing in quasi-market and effectiveness researchers were working together to search for quick fix to raise attainment and school performance. They hoped that parents or customers could "choose" high performing schools. At this very moment, Peters and Waterman (1982)'s management classic '*In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*' was published. The authors examined 62 successful companies

via McKinsey's global business network. They identified 8 characteristics common to them. They suggested that the traditional rational model of scientific management should be replaced with a doctrine of quality management.

Under the dual influence of the Public Reform Movement and the quality management, a new area in education research studies—school effectiveness and school improvement was gradually established among OECD countries such as Britain, the US, Netherlands and Australia. Subsequent studies on school effectiveness and value-added comparisons were published and flourished (Gray, Jesson and Jones, 1984, Gray & Jesson, 1987). Research on school effectiveness and school improvement was also popular in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong in early 1990s. Among the numerous studies on school effectiveness and school improvement, several classical studies were listed below.

There were many classical studies on school effectiveness and school improvement. To list a few, the UK researcher Mortimore (1998) defined 11 factors of effective schools. Creemers (1991), Scheerens (1991) and Stringfield and Slavin (1992) contributed to the multi-models of school effectiveness. Jesson and Gray (1991) formulated the requirements for stipulating performance indicators for the contemporary times. All these models investigated the variables at school level and classroom level. Key publications on quality improvement (Parsons, 1995), Total Quality Management (TQM) (West-Burnham, 1992; Sallis, 1993) and the management of change (Fullan, 1991) were well received in decades.

The best-known research on school effectiveness was Sammons, Hillman & Mortimore (1995)'s 11 factors of effective schools. It was the first-rated school

effectiveness classics. Sammons studied many schools and concluded that a school could make a significant difference to students' outcomes regardless of its background factors such as age, sex and social class. He believed that if schools possessed the 11 factors, they were deemed to be successful. Gray (1995) further elaborated the modification of performance indicators. To summarise the major school effectiveness research of the UK scholars, Reynolds, Sammons and Stoll (1997: 126) categorised them into four foundational bases:

1. high level of methodological sophistication was adopted, in which the utilisation of a cohort design, matched data on individuals at intake and outcome were revealed;
2. the use of multiple measures of pupil outcomes was developed such as locus of control, attendance, delinquency and academic outcomes;
3. the use of multiple measures of pupil intakes into school was included, such as utilising prior achievement measures or detailed socio-economic data upon background;
4. the development of advanced conceptualisations and findings about the role of the school level in potentiating or hindering adolescent development was established.

This UK tradition of school effectiveness and school improvement was the protocol base of SSE. In 1995, the OECD and the scholars of school effectiveness advocated SSE as one of the four principal means of formal evaluation. These school effectiveness studies were highly positivistic in nature. They were derived from a lot of statistical models adopted in the natural hard science. Also, the positivistic managerialists and researchers always assumed that school systems were relatively mechanistic in nature. They believed that schools could be peeled off into different

layers to analyse. However, as time passed, some quantitative researchers discovered that the quantitative researchers were limited in capturing the educational processes. Among the few, Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) could enrich the school effectiveness research by introducing a qualitative research methodology to capture the dynamics of organisational processes.

Although some school effectiveness researchers could identify the limitations of the quantitative studies, the mainstream of the school effectiveness research was still quantitative one. Following the proposition of Sammons, Mortimore and Hillman (1996) promulgated the essence of SSE. He proposed that schools could reflect critically with internally-derived criteria and consider the relative merits in the process of SSE. In 1999, MacBeath published his *'Schools Must Speak for Themselves'*. He promoted his framework for SSE. He believed that SSE was useful and was more beneficial to schools than the traditional school inspection. He commented that the traditional inspection relied heavily on external forces. Thus, MacBeath proposed that a greater emphasis on SSE should be put in evaluating school quality. He also argued that quality assurance should start in school with external review for verification. In Europe, Meuret and Morlaix (2003) conducted a project on SSE in 2003. They noted that the process of SSE should be a participating one rather than a technical one. They claimed that SSE should not be at the operational level only, but also at conceptual level and at monitoring level as well. Other scholars like Devos and Verhoeven (2003) proposed that the quality of school education could be revealed in the process of SSE.

However, other scholars like Saunders (1996) observed that SSE was not as perfect as proposed. He understood that SSE was perceived by schools as a threat to

impose an accountability-oriented framework and external scrutiny on them. Saunders also observed that SSE would lose vitality and engagement. SSE might become an annual event to be dutifully administered.

### **2.1.3 Effects of SSE on School Improvement**

After discussing the research paradigm of SSE, it is now time to delineate the positive effects of SSE. Through the effective implementation of SSE, a climate of trust, openness and collaboration (Kyriakides & Campbell, 2004: 38) could be built up to pursue “quality excellence” (Peters and Waterman, 1982). To summarise and analyse the positive effects brought in the process of SSE, the following eight improvements were revealed in the literature:

1. enhancing teaching and learning (Joyce, 1991, 59; Ferguson et al, 2000: 47 &152; MacBeath, 2000: 105);
2. improving leadership and management (Mortimore, 1998: 283; Poster, 1999: 12);
3. developing staff capacity (Mortimore, 1998: 295; Thrupp, 2003: 101; MacBeath, 2000: 106);
4. strengthening of evaluation culture of schools (Hopkins, 2002: 18);
5. improving the School-based curriculum (Nevo, 1995: 104);
6. building professional and interactional relationships among colleagues (Hoy, Bayne-Jardine & Wood, 2000: 95; Terry, 2003: 33; Barth, 1990: 45);
7. raising the teachers’ and students’ expectations on achievement (Mortimore, 1998: 297; MacBeath, 2000: 103);
8. inducing resources allocation and securing external networking (Gray, Hopkins, Reynolds, Wilcox, Farrell & Jesson, 1999: 81)

To explicate the above eight improvements, the following paragraphs explained

why SSE could lead to the improvement in detail:

**1. Enhancing teaching and learning (Joyce, 1991: 59; Ferguson et al, 2000: 47 & 152; MacBeath, 2000: 105)**

SSE contributed to school improvement by inducing the enhancement of teachers' teaching effectiveness and students' learning (MacGilchrist, 2004: 18). SSE increased teachers' sensitivity to learning styles (Gray et al., 1999: 69), facilitated lesson preparation and organisation (Harris, 2002: 32, 88; Terry, 2003: 125) and improved pedagogical strategies (Joyce, 1991, 59; Ferguson et al, 2000: 47 & 152; MacBeath, 2000: 105). SSE could promote students' engagement in lessons (Woods, 1999: 123). For teachers, they had an objective tool to understand how well they taught from the students' perspective (Nevo, 1995: 136). Hence, the feedback of students served as "diagnostic data on student progress". Students' feedback was also formative information for planning future interventions. Students' feedback could be a means to broaden the scope of "teaching and learning" (MacBeath, 2004:18). In addition, teachers could "evaluate the quality or effectiveness of teaching". Teachers could initiate dialogue with students on learning and teaching. Teachers could use data of SSE for "self-appraisal" (MacBeath, 2004:19). Moreover, teachers would strive to teach better as their job performance "would be assessed on a continuous basis including classroom observations by principals, and other administrators, rating scales, evaluation by students and the student achievements" (Nevo, 1995: 140).

SSE facilitated students' learning. With the evaluation tools of SSE such as SHS, students were given opportunities to express their views on teachers' teaching performances, pedagogical methods and teaching attitudes. Students could be aware of their own achievement (Nevo, 1995: 95) in various forms of assessments such as

pencil examination, portfolios and exhibitions. Students could decide on the next step of their learning. Moreover, students could evaluate their learning quality in different classrooms and contexts (MacBeath, 2004:19). Hence, students would have greater motivation to learn (Nevo, 1995: 86).

## **2. Improving leadership and management (Mortimore, 1998: 283; Poster, 1999: 12)**

SSE served as a catalyst for school improvement. It transformed schools into self-managing schools at system and at school levels (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992: 47). SSE provided schools with data-driven information to identify problems, stipulate strategies and work out solutions. At school management level, the information the school heads obtained would serve as an aggregated data to evaluate the teaching effectiveness and improvement of the school. School heads could use the information for future curriculum planning. Moreover, school administrators could “evaluate the quality of teaching across the school” and “evaluate differential effectiveness class by class or department by department” (MacBeath, 2004:19) to promote academic excellence. Through SSE, school leaders could demonstrate firm and purposeful action-planning (Ferguson et al, 2000: 61) and adopt a participative approach in decision-making (Mortimore, 1998: 283; Poster, 1999: 12). School leaders could delegate power (Hopkins, 2001: 18, 98), could be willing to take risks and could motivate teachers (MacGilchrist, 2004: 29). SSE would then favour school improvement with its economic competitiveness-driven nature (Sahlberg, 2006: 275).



**3. Developing staff capacity (Mortimore, 1998: 295; Thrupp, 2003: 101; MacBeath, 2000: 106)**

SSE ignited the fire for school improvement through developing staff capacity. Teachers were undoubtedly the most valuable assets in school. It was because they were important change agents (Pang, 2005: 13). Moreover, improvement in teachers' qualifications would benefit schools too. In the process of SSE, the stakeholders including teachers, parents and students would compel school heads to recognise the importance of systematic professional learning (Mortimore, 1998: 295; Thrupp, 2003: 101; MacBeath, 2000: 106) and school-based staff development (MacGilchrist, 2004: 29). Stakeholders' demand ensured that there was constant renewal and sustainability of the schools (Hopkins, 2001: 18).

**4. Strengthening of evaluation culture of schools (Hopkins, 2002: 18)**

SSE led to school improvement with the strengthening of the evaluation culture of schools. With the introduction of data-driven SSE, the methodology of collecting and analysing school data was different (Nevo, 1995: 163). School heads needed to grasp a holistic picture in evaluating a school's performance and information. School heads should conduct evaluations actively and inform planning and learning (Harris, 2002: 31) with ample evidence for self-justification. In many schools, not just data-driven evaluation was conducted, but also theory-rich (Hopkins, 2002: 18) action research was commissioned to improve school effectiveness and school improvement (Joyce, 1991: 59). SSE provided a platform for dissemination and utilisation of good practice (Hopkins, 2002: 18). SSE promoted the review of the evaluation mechanism (Nevo, 1995:129). It was because schools had to analyse the information obtained, to redefine performance indicators and to offer deep dialogues for teachers and school administrators.

## **5. Improving the school-based curriculum (Nevo, 1995: 104)**

SSE would improve school-based curriculum in two aspects. First, SSE could help teachers and principals “assess the quality of instructional materials available”. Therefore, teachers and principals could choose suitable materials that best met the needs of their students. Second, SSE was an integral part of any attempt of the school at “developing its own curricula materials” and “combining materials or adapting available materials” (Nevo, 1995: 104) to the special needs of the school. Through the implementation of SSE and the result obtained, teachers and principals could “figure out what resources were required” (Nevo, 1995: 107) and assure “the proper implementation” of school-based curriculum and “the review of documents and available data” (Nevo, 1995: 108, 113).

## **6. Building professional and interactional relationships among colleagues (Hoy et al, 2000: 95; Terry, 2003: 33; Barth, 1990: 45)**

SSE contributed to school improvement through building professional and interactional relationships among colleagues. School culture was dynamic and created through the interactions of people (Gray et al., 1999: 83). School culture was a “nexus of shared norms and values” that expressed “how people make sense of the organisation” (Gray et al., 1999: 76). With the introduction of SSE, school administrators were aware of the importance of developing cohesive and professional relations within and beyond schools. Hence, school administrators could improve the culture, relationships or intense interaction (Hopkins, 2001: 99; Pang, 2005: 8) among students and teachers. School administrators would be able to suppress the micro-politics between teachers and students (Pollard, 1985: 115), to maintain teachers’ morale, to create opportunities for collaboration and collegiality (Hoy et al, 2000: 95; Terry, 2003: 33; Barth, 1990: 45) and to build vision (Nevo, 1995: 158).

This was because vision-building might not be emphasised without the results of the SHS and the compulsory reform of SSE.

**7. Raising the expectation on achievement (Mortimore, 1998: 297; MacBeath, 2000: 103)**

SSE stimulated school improvement by raising the expectation on achievement. It was because higher expectations always resulted in better self-esteem (Mortimore, 1998: 297; MacBeath, 2000: 103). This golden rule held true for both teachers and students. If students were well-informed of how they performed (Harris, 2002: 31, 89) through SSE, they would have a greater ownership of their own studies (Gray et al., 1999: 77, 79). Students would strive to their very best to commit to the unrelenting focus on the quality on achievement (Hopkins, 2001: 18). In the same way, if teachers were involved in the process of SSE, they would be involved in the loop of continuous improvement--Plan Do, Check, Act (Deming, 1986: 12) in different aspects. Moreover, if they were involved in stipulating the school-based performance indicators, they would have a greater sense of achievement under this ongoing review (Hoy et al., 2000: 90). They would be more willing to be accountable to school, parents' satisfaction, judgments of school inspectors, accomplishments of school graduates, and awards earned by the school (Nevo, 1995:160).

**8. Inducing resources allocation and securing external networking (Gray et al., 1999: 81)**

SSE led to school improvement by inducing resources allocation and securing external networking. Throughout the process of SSE, the weaknesses of a school become would be made known to school stakeholders and the public during the discussion among parents, teachers and school management. As the core essence of

SSE was to stimulate the organisation to give concrete strategies, to provide with flexible resources allocation (Gray et al., 1999: 81) and to address the problem observed. SSE provided more room for discussion for the use of resources such as budget, space and equipment (Nevo, 1995: 159). In addition, SSE provided a platform for better cooperation between home and school. This enhanced communication was regarded as one of the most effective ways to improve school (Terry, 2003: 20; Woods, 1999: 139). Parental and community involvement and empowerment in school life would be placed with greater importance. Under the mechanism of SSE, parents were legitimised as stakeholders and were given SHS to express their views on the school management. Hence, the ability of schools to establish external partnerships with parents, community representatives, regional education offices, business fields and higher education (Hoy, et al., 2000: 89) would be measured in the PIs stipulated by EDB too. Hence, schools have to “secure a good relationship with external bodies” (Joyce, 1991: 59; Murphy, 1992: 94), no matter voluntarily or involuntarily.

### **Implications of Effects of SSE on School Improvement to My Research Questions**

The reasons to summarise the genealogy of SSE and its impacts to school improvement are two-fold. First, the literature strengthens the sensitising devices of the researcher in this study. It helps the researcher in capturing the perceived effects of SSE on school improvements. The informants of this study would express their perceived effects of SSE in their terminology. With the summary of the perceived effects into 8 areas mentioned above, the researchers would be able to ground the perceived effects of SSE on the literature review in a systematic way. Second, the researcher would be able to understand the description of the informants in the three

sample schools on the perceived effects of SSE on school improvement.

## **2.2 SSE on Managerial Control**

In last section, the 8 effects of SSE on school improvement advocated by positivist managerialists were delineated. In this section, how other scholars, known as critical performativists, responded to these positivistic managerialists would be discussed. These critical performativists challenged a lot to their propositions.

### **2.2.1 Contextual Explication of SSE on Managerial Control**

Apart from the 8 positive effects of SSE on school improvement advocated by positivistic managerialists, the negative effects of SSE were discovered by other scholars known as critical performativists. The critical performativists disagreed with the positivistic managerialists' stance in adopting formal and purpose-rational rationality in the implementation of SSE. The critical performativists commented that economic rationalism (Welch, 1996) in the context of rising competition state by policy engineers. A number of critical performativists had expressed their dissatisfaction towards the "reductionism of school effectiveness" (Wrigley, 2001: 11). They argued that the managerial goals would shift the attention of educators away from curriculum and pedagogy. Francis (1980: 19) also highlighted the problem of methodological simplification of school effectiveness and argued that "school effectiveness takes no account of the nature of the situation in which these variables are identified and measured." Francis (1980: 19) added that "what we really want to know is how these variables and the many others that we could think of are interrelated for a particular child in a complex real-life *Fifteen Thousand Hours* story". This type of critique was raised periodically (Angus, 1993; Grace, 1995;

White & Barber, 1997; Rea & Weiner, 1998; Morley & Rassool, 1999). Exworthy and Halford (1999: 6) gave the label “new managerialism” to describe the school effectiveness camps mentioned in the last section.

The reason why such outspoken criticism flourished in the 1990s was because the New Public Reform Movement shifted the focus of education from educational ideals to performance attainment and from a caring and trusting community to an accountability and distrust machinery. The critical performativists also believed that nothing could compensate for such shifting of focus, not even the numerous successes achieved in the public reform. In addition, teachers and students were regarded as physical resources which can be disposed of at any time under the influence of managerialism. In this connection, some sociologists were opposed to this mentality of managerialists in an attempt to pursue the human-oriented mentality in public management.

### **2.2.2 Perspective Implication of SSE on Managerial Control**

With reference to the major critics of critical performativists towards the school effectiveness research, most of them hinged on the attempt of school effectiveness research to mimic traditional models of natural science in establishing linear input-output relationships and line-management. This mimic of natural science models exhibits eight problems of logic and methodology (Wrigley, 2001: 15):

1. schooling has many outcomes and there is no objective way of deciding which to focus on. Thus, the school effectiveness research veers towards measurable outcomes and especially test scores;
2. student development is affected by multiple factors within and beyond school which relate to each other in complex ways. A one-to-one causal link

- of outputs to outputs fails to represent the complex inter-relationship and mutual reinforcement and interference of specific actions;
3. it is a mistake to assume that statistical correlation amounts to causality. Only careful qualitative investigation with case study schools can establish which factors truly influence outcomes rather than just being associated with them. It creates a high surveillance, low trust ecology that is not favourable for sustainable development (Mahoney & Hextall: 2000: 102);
  4. school effectiveness research tries to distinguish “malleable” factors (Scheerens, 1998: 1099) which schools can control from those which they cannot such as socio-economic factors;
  5. many factors are better seen as intermediate factors or process variables. On one level, good attendance is a necessary input of schools, but it is also an outcome because pupils are more likely to go to school if they enjoy the place and if they feel they are succeeding;
  6. the greatest problem is the vagueness of the language used to define the key characteristics of effective schools. The characteristics of effective schools are rarely capable of precise delineation. Scheerens (1998: 1110-3) also conceded that “it is not easy to assess the exact empirical basis of the list of factors as most reviews do not state the statistical significance nor the size of the facts of the various factors in terms of association with adjusted achievement results;
  7. the positivism of effectiveness research leads to the moral reductionism in education. Even the school effectiveness researchers Teddlie and Reynolds (2000: 70-71) acknowledged that the pragmatists working in the school effectiveness research whose belief that efforts to alter the existing relationship between social class and student achievement by bringing about

broad societal changes are naïve, perhaps quixotic”;

8. the school effectiveness researchers are neo-liberal in its nature and should be replaced with humanistic approach. The paradigm of education as product, as efficient consumer goods, as proactive workforce should be replaced with education as public good, as entitlement and as equity (Gunter, 2001: 19).

To sum up, quite a number of scholars responded to the research paradigm of SSE for its oversimplification of educational processes. Mahoney and Hextall (2000: 72) claimed that SSE would cause commodification of schooling through the language of “profitability, productivity, efficiency, value-addedness and value-for-money or best-value”. Apple (1993) claimed that the pre-packaged effective curriculum compensated teachers for a lack of preparation time. But in the long term the pre-packaged effective limited the intellectual and emotional scope of teachers. Darling-Hammond (1988) criticised the managerialism in education because it compelled policy-makers to invest heavily in managerial systems rather in enhancing the preparation, professional development and motivation of teachers.

### **2.2.3 Effects of SSE on Managerial Control**

SSE was claimed to be effective in school improvement according to the school effectiveness scholars. Likewise, it was also labeled as a strategy which was subjected to the pervasive market ideology and its corresponding regulatory structure (Stromquist, 2002). SSE is also said to be an attempt in “the erosion of old narrative of knowledge” (Elliott, 1997: 59), “falsifying evidence to prove the policies of technocratic control are working” by the Blair government (Wrigley, 2007),



promoting a “machinery of surveillance nobody was interested in and teachers’ took no responsibility, causing destruction of democracy in the UK education through “surrogating sales figure” (Norris, 1993) and “providing a potentially elusive conceptual (Gray, 1990) framework for judgments as quality education. To summarise, SSE was highly criticised for the six following drawbacks:

1. a strategy of managerialism and performativity (Ball, 1998a: 273; 2003: 215; Chan & Lai, 2002: 90; Luke, 1998);
2. a strategy of instrumentalism (Ball, 2003: 216);
3. de-professionalise teachings by name and shame (Ball, 2003: 220; Rea & Weiner, 1998: 23);
4. highly empirical-analytical science-based (Taylor, 1911) in epistemological foundation;
5. pushing schools to quasi-market by steering at distance (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998);
6. confessional and fear animals in power foundation (Foucault, 1975: 59) under panoptic performativity (Perryman, 2006: 148).

- 1. A strategy of managerialism and performativity (Ball, 1998b, 273; 2003: 215; Chan & Lai, 2002: 90; Luke, 1998: 86)**

SSE was said to be a kind of “managerialism, surveillance evaluationism, performativity—a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employed judgments, comparisons and displayed as means of incentive, control, attrition and change (Ball, 2003: 216)” or “the discipline managerialism” (Tsang, 2006). It was said to borrow from the US, the UK and Australia and could be traced back for its genealogical line (Luke, 1998: 86). SSE was also labeled as “monitoring systems which demanded the production of appropriate market signals, both for the benefit of

the consumers and as a form of state control at arm's length" (Ball, 2003; Brown & Lauder, 2003). SSE was believed to create the production of information and "monitoring systems" (Ball, 2003), "terrors of performativity" (Choi, 2005: 245) and "under-performing schools" (Choi, 2005: 246). SSE was believed as one of the education reforms that "took away preparation time of teachers" (Sze, 2002). In addition, SSE was seen as a wrong way to measure quality, to create competition made between schools, to weed out of the weak and to distort the ideals of education (Lui, 2003: 9). SSE was regarded as a tool to facilitate surveillance by education administrators as mechanisms and strategies to control schools.

The policy engineers commented on the focus of SSE in adopting formal and purpose-rational rationality (Habermas, 1970) in the absence of the communicative rationality (Habermas, 1970: 10). Hanna (1997) warned policy administrators (p.19) not to treat organic schools as lifeless pieces of machinery. Scholars such as Bauman (1996: 22) lambasted SSE as a mentality of "working on people instead of working with people". Schon & Rein (1994: 167) believed that the "working on people mentality" should be reframed by a reflective practitioner of policy designers, especially in an irremovably pluralistic, democratic and civilian society.

In short, the managerialism of SSE was derived from the emergence of Quality Management Movement (QMM) and the public reform movement, which penetrated from the money-steered market sphere into the power-steered state sphere. Within the money-steered market sphere, SSE employed discourse such as "to increase our competitiveness" and "employability" (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006) used in a competition state. Gidden (1990) highly advocated policy makers of SSE to seek pragmatic resolution and to build consensus with teachers and schools, which would

deserve more public respect and secure more public trust in “reflective modernity”. Weiler (1993) claimed that “reflective modernity” would be beneficial to the maturity of the civil society and a vehicle for democracy.

## **2 A strategy of instrumentalism (Ball, 2003: 216)**

SSE was also introduced as a tool for instrumentalism. The misconception of proclaiming the sole relevance of education for work was also being criticised as full of the discourse of performativity, power and money (Ball, 2003: 216). Superficially, the ideology of treating the performance of the school as an atomic unit seemed appealing in grasping the impression of the school. Yet, this claim-to-be value-free discourse indeed tried to camouflage its agenda to formulate hard-science rules that they think can be universally applied (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003: 51). In Hong Kong, Hau (1997: 1-5) criticised measurement of education as a complex concept and was difficult to quantify. Otherwise, it would cause unplanned side-effects and did not help enhance teaching. Hau also claimed that quality schools and value-addedness did not necessarily have a causal relationship. Perryman (2006: 150) further added that teachers lost autonomy when they were forced to “adhere strictly to a rigid and pre-determined recipe for success”.

## **3. De-professionalise teachings by name and shame and doubt of self-identity (Ball, 2003: 220; Rea & Weiner, 1998: 23)**

SSE was regarded as a strategy to de-professionalise teachers by its naming and shaming practice. Ball (2003: 220) asserted that SSE led to baffling array of figures, indicators, comparisons and forms of competition. Hence, teachers’ souls were full of internal conflicts including questioning of their self-worth, value of their work, the priority of their efforts, feelings of self-doubt and personal anxiety. Under the

mechanism of SSE, schools which measured below the norm in the performance indicators would be labeled as low performing schools. This narrative or the “storyline” of “shame and blame” (Rea & Weiner, 1998: 23) provided and constructed the legitimacy and discourse for different interpretative communities such as the public and the parents to criticise teachers.

In other words, SSE encouraged the public and the non-professionals, to guide the professional teachers in what to do and when to do it after the circulation of the publicised and staged school information within a network society (Castells, 2001). This in turn became a root for de-professionalisation (Bauman, 1996:20). Carlyle & Woods (2002) insisted that teachers would receive lower and lower public respect and lose their “emotional security”. Hargreaves (2002: 397) claimed that an avalanche of reforms would suffocate teachers to the extent that they feel betrayed, which might further result in the recruitment crisis in the UK. Perryman (2006: 150) also noted that the audit culture seemed to regard any deviation from the standard recipe for success as “failing strategies” and ignored the “individual socio-economic contexts” in which schools were located.

#### **4. Highly empirical-analytical science-based (Taylor, 1911) in epistemological foundation**

With reference to the epistemological foundation, SSE was treated as highly empirical-analytical science-based (Taylor, 1911). SSE was also highly characterised for its means-end causalities (Dahl & Lindblom, 1992: 57). In addition, SSE was criticised as a kind of “cerebral management” (Mintzberg, 1990), which lied in the positivism fallacy (Booth, 1995: 101) for its wrong assumption of linear model of causality in school (Hamilton, 1998: 14). Habermas (1984) believed that this

scientific-technological epistemological foundation seemed to grow even stronger and dominated many enterprises, the state and even the market. Grace (1995: 118) claimed that such domination became one of the major paradigms in educational research.

### **5. Pushing schools to quasi-market by steering at distance (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998)**

SSE was highly downplayed by some scholars as pushing schools to become a quasi-market for parentocracy (Tsang, 2006) by steering at distance. LeGrand and Bartlett (1993) believed that with the uploading of measurement tools, the education authority could further push the schools to the quasi-market sphere to face parent's choices and selection or parentocracy-consumerism as if in a voucher system and privatisation of public schools. This was attributed to the unbalanced, manipulated and staged publicity by the education authority.

Thus, at the surface level, SSE was characterised by self-managing nature of school. But in deeper structure there was never "retreat of state" but a transformation of managerial control by "steering at a distance" (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). SSE made schools felt like "someone was watching me there" (Hadiz, 2006; Perryman, 2006: 154). This was achieved through managerial tactics such as superficial decentralisation (Caldwell, 1990), "regulations as sticks", "economic incentives as carrots" and "information as public influence and sermon" (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). SSE was also criticised as "taking very little account of school context" (Brighouse & Woods, 1999: 93). Harris (2000) was also critical of the undifferentiated approach of SSE to schools with varying socio-economic circumstances such as culture and catchment areas.

**6. Confessional and fear animals in power foundation (Foucault, 1975: 59)**

SSE was claimed to exert government's strong state power "to realise its own will in a communal action, even against the resistance of others (teachers) who are participating in the process (Weber, 1948:180). The critical performativists explained that the education authority acted on schools to compel them to upload their performance obtained in the form of the SSE report to "confess their own mistakes" (Foucault, 1975: 59). This confessional act which schools "would not otherwise do" (Dahl, 1957: 203) as proposed in one-dimensional of power (Lukes, 1974: 20). This transformation from A (the education authority) acting on B (the schools) to B (the schools) acting on B (the schools) itself demonstrated how successful was the panopticon (Foucault, 1979). The panopticon was also reinforced with the establishment of value-added information, publication and uploading of OFTSED report and the surveillance of one's own self.

As a result, schools felt like they were losing their public support in the public sphere and succumbed to the power of the education authority under this climate of fear and isolation (Arrowsmith, 2001: 39) by eroding the autonomy of the schools (Sikes, 2001: 88). The school information became visible through the net (Foucault, 1979: 201) and forced teachers and schools to be a "confessing animal" (Foucault, 1990: 59) under this third dimensional of power (Lukes, 1974). Perryman (2006: 148-149) also used the term "panoptic performativity" to describe the vigilant eye of inspection on schools and their performance in pupil outcomes, classroom observations and personal statements.

## **Collapse of Life-world along with the Omni-presence of System-world**

Other than the above drawbacks brought about by SSE, Sergiovanni (2000) further added three elements in counter-balancing the colonisation of the managerial control of SSE. First, the system-world administrative perspective valuing effectiveness and efficiency is important. However, Habermas's life-world, which is concerned more about trust and respect, should not be ignored. With both the system-world and life-world, a balancing and symbiotic relationship in school reform could result (Sergiovanni, 2000: 4). Second, schools should be affective communities. Teachers' relationships with students, relationships among teachers and the relationships between school administrators with teachers should be featured with affection, collective orientation, particularism, ascription, diffuseness, substantive and altruistic love (Sergiovanni, 1995: 31). Third, moral authority should be the genuine driving force of teachers' professionalism. Teachers should be motivated as much by emotion and beliefs because self-interests and collegiality as a professional virtue (Sergiovanni, 1995: 197).

### **Drawbacks of Advocacy of Life-world over System-world**

Sergiovanni's three dimensions of life-world in schools, including Culture---knowledge, beliefs and norms; Community--- connected social groups, affections, obligations and form of collective live; and Person---individual competence, personal identity, meaning and significance were criticised by scholars as too idealistic. Advocaters of SSE such as MacBeath and Reynolds warned that over-reliance on teachers' self-discipline and lacking of monitoring with external force are deemed to be failures in assurance of educational quality.

## **Implications of Effects of SSE on Managerial Control to My Research Questions**

The review of literature of SSE as managerial control sharpened the researchers' sensitivity towards informants in three ways. First, it helps the researchers to understand the negative impacts of SSE on schools. Second, it elicits researcher's understanding towards teachers with different definitions of "success" and "learning community" instead of just embracing single definition of school effectiveness advocated in administrative system-world perspective. Lastly, the literature review enables the researchers to be sensitive to the importance of context for the success or failure of policy implemented. For example, if teachers refuse to view students as inanimate products, they will be more likely to oppose to SSE. On the other hand, if teachers believe they should be good producers with high performance, they would comply with the implementation of SSE more readily.

### **2.3 Policy Implementation**

#### **2.3.1 Contextual Explication of the Implementation Literature**

After discussing the two contrasting perspectives of SSE, SSE on school improvement and SSE on managerial control, it is time to understand implementation theories and different approaches towards policy implementation, such as top-down, bottom-up, hybrid approaches or policy learning through puzzlement in the relevant literature. In order to position the rise of implementation literature with reference to its societal context, this section will illustrate the three key phases in the society: the government interventionism from the 1930s to the 1970s, the government retrenchment from the 1980s and the 1990s and the pragmatism model from the 1990s to the contemporary times. With such three phases, the historical background



for the rise of top-down, bottom-up, hybrid approaches or policy learning through puzzlement to policy implementation could be understood more easily.

### **Government Interventionism from the 1930s to 1970s**

In the early 1930s, the US was facing great economic crisis due to the bankruptcy of the financial institutions. The American President, Franklin Roosevelt, launched his New Deal to revitalise the economy and national confidence through heavy investment in public works including employment programmes and social policy measures. In addition, the US federal government promoted social welfare and spent a lot in both the government sector and the private sector in a bid to prepare for the World War II. Therefore, even after the World War II, an ideology of strong government was still prevalent so as to boost the national confidence in the presidencies of Truman and Eisenhower.

With the anxieties of the cold war and the fear of being overtaken by Russia, Americans had no choice but to keep on investing heavily on the development of science and the provision of education to nurture scientists and economists to build the community. In 1961, President Kennedy aimed at attracting the most intellectual and elitist people to build a Great Society for the US. The next President, Johnson, embraced his direction of governance and declared a “war on poverty” to reduce income and class inequalities (Zarefsky, 1986). Johnson invited policy engineers such as Robert McNamara to be the Secretary of Defense and the Rand Corporation to introduce the “Programme Planning Budgeting System” (PPBS) in public administration.

To align with the policy aims, civil servants were academically trained in the application of policy analysis techniques in the Graduate School of Public Policy in Berkeley and in the John F. Kennedy School of Government in Harvard after its transformation from the Littauer School of Public Administration. Hence, what the policy engineers were concerned about was how industrialisation, planning and consumption could stimulate the national strength in a “thinking-from-the-top” model. The Americans understood they had to build the society and reconstruct their country while the entrepreneurs rewarded their employees with stable and moderate incomes. Moreover, the vow to fight poverty was actualised through the building of the social security system for the most under-privileged. All these factors contributed to the success of the Keynesian model of economy.

From the 1960s to the early 70s, there was a rise in the number of poor students entering higher education. At this very time, Pressman and Wildavsky in 1973 carried out their study *Implementation* to explore why some policies were successful in Oakland but failed in Washington. Other top-down approach scholars were outspoken in these times of government intervention.

### **Market and Corporate Government from the 1980s to the 1990s**

In the 1980s, two determined right-wing politicians, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, the former Prime Minister of a Conservative government in Britain in 1979 and the former American President in the US in 1980s, changed the administration of the two governments. In addition, they also altered the rules of public management in the 1980s. Large structural changes were initiated in central government, local government, the health services and the public utilities. Business models were introduced into government with waves of privatisation or contracting

out and performance measures. All these were catalysed by the deepening crises of public expenditure in the mid 1970s. John Major, succeeding Margret Thatcher in 1990, added new elements to the ideology of corporate government by establishing his 'Citizen's Charter'. He set standards for the quality of public service in terms of prompt actions, delivery dates, courtesy and compensation if necessary.

Since then public servants have become managers who should govern the output of their services. This form of contractual agreement on output of services caused the civil servants to lose the interest in "how outputs were produced" to "what outputs were produced". These "administrator-turned-public-managers" had a legitimation to de-link the "policy" from "implementation". In the US, Ronald Reagan claimed that government itself was a problem and was more difficult to change. He then privatised government offices and services and highly valued the rhetoric of a market ideology. This retrenchment philosophy was also very prevalent in business corporations. Milward (1996) described the extent of the downsizing of the US government by Reagan as the "hollowness" of the state, in which the use of funds was regarded as a strategy to control output.

In the early 1990s, President Clinton and vice President Gore launched the National Performance Review to advocate civil servants to do the things they were good at and leave the operational side to others. This line of thought further intensified the separation of policy and implementation by hiring of agencies with the government "steering at a distance". The aforesaid "hollowing out the states" and "steering at a distance" strategies drastically changed the hierarchical control nature of government and replaced it with contractual relationships with agencies which rested between the government and the citizens.

Under such a political context, some bottom-up theorists such as Dunsire (1995) reacted to the separation of policy and implementation. They stated that such separation would lead to policy failures. Moreover, Dunsire proposed that the policy makers should negotiate with the street-level bureaucrats first before launching their policies. Implementation was not just seen as fulfillment of policy objectives, but as a bargaining process in which perceptions of street-level bureaucrats were catered to (Dunsire, 1995: 18).

### **Pragmatism from the 1990s to the Present**

In the mid 1990s, the Blair government in the UK and the Bush government in the US embraced the line of new public reform movement. The two governments rejected the dogmatic commitment to either privatisation or centralisation. Instead, they favoured a relatively pragmatic approach in public policy. The two governments regarded “the best value” of public policy implementation was to establish a system of reporting back to central government. Intervention should be allowed only if the services were below-standards. These mixed approaches of positive non-interferenceism gave rise to the hybrid approaches of the public implementation and integrated the traditional top-down and bottom-up debates.

### **2.3.2 Perspective Implication of the Implementation Literature**

As shaped by the three key societal phases, including the government interventionism from the 1930s to the 1970s; the government retrenchment from the 1980s and the 1990s; and the pragmatism model from the 1990s to the contemporary times, the corresponding three main schools of thought to policy implementation were prevalent in these three periods. These three main schools of thought included

the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach and the hybrid approaches. In this connection, this section will delineate how these three implementation approaches were formed with reference to these three periods of social contexts.

## **Top-down Approach**

The literature of policy implementation began to flourish in 1975 with the first publication of the implementation theory in 1975 by Pressman and Wildavsky. They studied the policy success and failures in the United States from the perspective of policy engineers. As mentioned earlier, the US society was still affected by the mindsets of policy engineers and the Great Society. In this regard, the emphasis of the top-down models was put on the ability of decision makers in government to produce unequivocal policy objectives and on controlling the policy outcomes in the implementation stage (Pulzl & Treib, 2007). The top-downers aimed at fidelity and attainment of pre-set formal objectives, and creativity was regarded as unnecessary and deviating. The top-downers researched from the perspective of political decisions to administrative execution. They valued prediction and upheld strategic model of policy process. They placed emphasis on hierarchical guidance from an elitist model. The top-down approach also features a strong sense of rational model in positive social science and was instrumental in nature.

Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) introduced the idea of “implementation deficit”, “chain of command” and “analysis of implementation in a mathematical manner”. Their main contribution to the field, with its subtitle ‘*How Great Expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland*’, was that they studied and started the field of “implementation studies” with an analysis of inhibiting factors and case studies. Their assumption was that a good policy formation would lead to good

implementation automatically. In other words, if the policy failed, it was not the policy formation stages that were responsible, but the implementation parts which were accountable. Pressman and Wildavsky assumed the process of policy formation should be independent of policy implementation. They believed that the role of the administrators was to get policy done. If policy failed, it might be attributed to the process of communication among multiple departments or the insufficiency of the resources allocated to the program (1973, xv). In other words, if action depended upon a number of links in an implementation chain, the degree of cooperation between agencies required to make those links had to be very close to a hundred percent for a successful policy implementation. On the other hand, if a situation was not to occur, it was due to a number of small deficits which were cumulatively creating a large shortfall.

Meter and Horn (1975: 451) regarded Press and Wildavsky's work as lacking theoretical perspective. They developed their theoretical theory with the integration of three bodies of literature, including organisational theory and organisational change, impact of judicial decisions and inter-governmental relations. Meter and Horn hypothesised that "implementation will be most successful where only marginal change is required and goal consensus is high" (1975: 461). Thus, they suggested a model of policy-implementation (1975: 463) with six variables: including policy standards and objectives (1975: 464), resources and incentive, quality of inter-organisational relationships, characteristics of implementation agencies (1975: 471) and disposition or response of implementers (1975: 472). Meter and Horn took a positivist methodological approach. Hill and Hupe (2002: 45) classified Meter and Horn as "system builders in the top-down writers" who contributed to the top-down perspective with multi-factor analysis.

Other top-down writers like Jenkins (1978) further elaborated on the variables of policy environment so that resistance could be minimised in this one-way cyclical policy implementation logic. These top-down writers tended to conduct their research from the perspective of policy designers and to measure the implementation of the policies by counting how many objectives were attained. What they were concerned about most was whether the policy objectives were fulfilled and what factors were accountable for the success or failure of the policy. Also, they assumed policies could be implemented automatically. They relied heavily on causal theory.

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) tried their very best to address the problem of how to promote the effectiveness of implementation. They made a very clear distinction between policy formation and policy implementation (1980: 22, Q1-3). Sabatier and Mazmanian claimed that though policy formation was a distinct and separation process from policy implementation, policy designers had to elicit the support of legislators and interest groups (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983: 22). They took a check-list approach and established an implementation process modelling for effective top-down implementation by offering six “sufficient conditions of effective implementation”:

1. the enabling legislation or other legal directives mandates policy objectives which are clear and consistent or at least provides substantive criteria for resolving goal conflicts;
2. the enabling legislation incorporates a sound theory identifying the principal factors and causal linkages affecting policy objectives and gives implementing officials sufficient jurisdiction over target groups and other points of leverage to attain, at least potentially, the desired goals;

3. the enabling legislation structures the implementation process so as to maximise the probability that implementing officials and target groups will perform as desired. This involves assignment to sympathetic agencies with adequate hierarchical integration, supportive decision rules, sufficient financial rules, and adequate access to the policy supporters;
4. the leaders of the implementing agency possess substantial managerial and political skill and are committed to statutory goals;
5. the program is actively supported by organised constituency groups and by a few key legislators (or a chief executive) throughout the implementation process, with the courts being neutral or supportive.

To align with perfect implementation, Sabatier and Mazmanian recommended policy makers to minimise the effects of three independent variables, namely, the tractability of the problem, the ability of statute to structure implementation and the non-statutory variables.

To sum up, the top-down policy scholars emphasised the importance of enhancing the efficiency or effectiveness of implementation by “suggesting the framing of tighter policy statutes (Ingram & Schneider, 1990)”, “improving legal structuring” (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1981) and “improving the links between the organisational entities responsible for implementation” (Sabatier, 1986; Dunsire, 1978). The top-downers also tended to indicate that “the most influential variables such as:

1. lack of clear policy objectives;
2. multiplicity of actors and agencies involved in implementation;
3. inter-and intra-organisational value and interest differences between actors



and agencies; problems of differing perspectives and priorities affecting policy interpretations and motivations for implementation;

4. relative autonomies among implementing agencies; limits of administrative control (Barrett, 2004: 252)

were controllable by the top or centre of the system” (O’Toole, 2004: 314). The top-downers often “expressed themselves clearly in support of a representative regime”. They also expressed clearly for the consistent execution of choices made by the political leaders and viewed any other positions as a hijacking of the democratic principle” (O’Toole, 2004: 314). In short, the top-downers tend to assume once the policy is formulated and legitimated at the top or centre, it will be translated into operating instructions for execution as it moves down the hierarchy to operatives at the bottom of pyramid.

### **Problems of the Top-down Models**

The main problems of the top-down models are highly-criticised for their over-simplification of the dynamic and fluid processes involved in policy implementation. In addition, the top-down models assumed unrealistic perfect conditions for successful implementation of the policy and the positivistic approach in the epistemological foundation of knowledge. Bowen (1982) criticised the gap between policy formation and policy implementation as being over-simplified. Such over-simplification became a “black box”, “missing link”, “apolitical but technical process” and hence an “implementation gap” was left.

Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 199-206) stated that there should be a perfect communication among and co-ordination of the various elements involved in the program. Hogwood and Gunn recommended that those in authority might demand

perfect obedience, which, however, they believed to be “unattainable”. This is because of the implementation limits in physical, political and resources, understanding of the problem, implementation agencies and dependency, on-site discretion and improvisation (Hogwood & Gunn, 1997). Dunsire (1990) stated that implementation failure would likely to occur due to an inappropriate implementation strategy, government agencies, faculty bureaucracy, miscommunication, problems at operation level and the unexpected response arouse.

### **Bottom-up Approach**

Bottom-up challenge arose as an opposition to the prescriptive top-down approach of implementation. Bottom-up approach focused on “mobilising the energies of disparate stakeholders” to make sensible choices in congealing problem-solving around “a complex, context-specific and dynamic policy issue” (O’Toole, 2001:10). In the 1980s, more and more democratic voices cried out against the importance of being descriptive, objective and free-from oppression from power.

Under such a context, bottom-up critics viewed local bureaucrats in executing policy as the main actors in policy delivery. The bottom-up critics conceived of implementation as negotiation processes with networks of implementers (Pulzl & Treib, 2007). The bottom-up critics started their research from individual bureaucrats and moved to administrative networks with a strong sense of description and explanation. They tend to possess a fusionist approach with decentralised and problem-solving characteristics. A participatory approach is developed with initial focus on local implementation structure. The evaluation criterion of this approach was arbitrary with relevance to the policy issue. The evaluation criterion also focused

on multiple actors with strategic interaction in a policy network. This bottom-up approach also enriched interpretive model on understanding and emotion-intuitive and expressive action.

Representative scholars like Michael Lipsky published his street-level bureaucracy (1980) by studying the behavior of front-line staff in policy delivery agencies, whom he calls “street-level bureaucrats”. He argued that the decisions of “street-level bureaucrats”, the routines they establish and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures effectively become the public policies they carry out (1980:xii). Lipsky added that to cope with the pressure on them, street-level bureaucrats would develop methods of processing people in a relatively routine and stereotyped way. The street-level bureaucrats would adjust their work habits to reflect lower expectations of themselves and their clients (xii).

Lipsky’s contribution was to add his explanation of “street-level bureaucrats” who perceived themselves as cogs in a system. They were delegated a great deal of discretionary freedom and autonomy but were indeed “alienated” (1980: 76). This is because the work they did was just “segments of the products”. There was no control over “outcomes” and “the pace of work”. The street-level bureaucrats faced uncertainty about what personal resources were necessary for their jobs. They alleged failures from the top bureaucrats. Lipsky challenged the traditional top-downers for their assumption of total fidelity to the policy objectives. This is because street-level bureaucrats were “exercising discretion under intolerable pressure”. They attempted to control hierarchically, simply increased their tendency to stereotype and disregarded the needs of clients. Likewise, Lipsky challenged the assumption of the traditional top-down approach, which believed that strictly

adhering to the policy objectives without offering a view to the practical scenario was perfect.

Hjern and Hull (1982) studied “interactions between several different organisations”. They advocated the importance of considering the recipients of the policies and the opinion of the network of teacher administrators. Hjern and Hull argued that implementation structures formed from actors “within pools of organisations” and “formed through process of consensual self-selection” (Hjern and Porter, 1981: 220) at local, regional and national level. They suggested that implementation research could raise questions about new mechanisms of accountability.

Hjern and Hull believed that the implementation research took the importance of “network and organisational theory” and “implementation structure” which involved challenging hierarchical perspectives on the way organisations work. They indirectly challenged the traditional view of top-downers that only the elected politicians had the right to formulate policy whereas all other parties, bodies and bureaucrats should implement the policies stipulated. In addition, Hjern and Hull associated their bottom-up approach with a view to espousing a micro-political perspective such as emphasising consensus building, influence and exchange process like persuasion, positive-sum negotiation, zero-sum negotiations and power bargaining.

Elmore (1980: 602-603) described the inherent logic of the top-down approach as “forward mapping” and the bottom-up implementation as “backward mapping”. He emphasised that policy was mostly defined by behavior of implementers. Elmore

argued that the assumption of top-down implementation which “could be controlled from the top” was “a myth” (1980: 603). Elmore proposed a different mapping logic that could “serve the interest of policy makers”. As he noted, backward mapping began with a “statement of the specific behavior at the lowest level of the implementation process that generates the need for policy” (1980: 603).

Therefore, policy making, following the logic of backward mapping, was not informed by a “statement of intent” by policy makers, but rather by an understanding of the “discrepancy between the actual and desired practice” which the policy message would seek to close. Elmore’s key contribution was to understand the complexity of organisations, local characteristics and local environments and the behavior of street-level bureaucrats. Taking the SDA framework as an example, the school administrators and teachers are the street-level bureaucrats as they execute the SSE in their respective schools.

Bardach (1977) explained the bottom-up implementation with game theory. He described policy implementation as a process of assembling elements to produce policy outcomes with a mixing of loosely inter-related elements and programs. Bardach described the bottom-up implementation as a dynamic process of bargaining and negotiation and a process which people would come to gather to form groups of interests or even alliance.

Barrett and Fudge (1981) studied the relationship between policy and action. They studied and showcased the range of research studies being carried out within the newly established School for Advanced Urban Studies at the University of Bristol. Barrett and Fudge also emphasised much action depended on compromises between

people in various parts of single organisations or related organisations (1978: 262). They quoted Strauss and Corbin's (1990) notion of "negotiated order". Barret and Fudge argued that policy could not be regarded as constant, but a process being mediated by actors who may be operating with different assumptive worlds from those formulating the policy. Inevitably, the implementation process underwent various interpretations and modifications and in some cases subversion (1981: 251). Barret and Fudge challenged the traditional top-down theorists for de-politicising the policy-action relationship.

In 2004, Barrett (2004: 250) reviewed the implementation literature in the past three decades and elaborated how different perspectives of implementation result in different perceptions. She then injected "the notion of how policy was putting into effects as implementation" and "the importance of inter-organisational value perspective in policy interpretation" (Barrett, 2004: 250). So, she argued for continuing political processes occurring throughout implementation. Barret argued it was difficult to separate implementation from policy formation. In short, she challenged the prior assumptions about "the existence of hierarchical relations between policy making and implementation". She suggested that implementation should be regarded as "an integral and continuing part of the political policy process" rather than "an administrative follow-on". Barrett also regarded policy-action as "a dialectic involving negotiation and bargaining" between those "seeking to put policy into effect" and "those upon whom action depends" (2004: 253).

The aforesaid perspective of bottom-up analysis successfully shifted the attention of focusing on formal organisational hierarchies to "power-interest structures", "relationships between participating actors and agencies" and "the nature

of interactions taking place as key factors shaping the policy/implementation outcomes” (Barrett, 2004: 253).

### **Problems of the Bottom-up Models**

There were two main criticisms directed towards the bottom-up models. First, the bottom-uppers tended to argue that the “contextual or field variables were more important but not on matters of research method” (O’Toole, 2004: 314). The bottom-uppers over-emphasised on the periphery of implementation and the street-level bureaucrats. They abjured the virtues of structural perception and representational schemes. The bottom-uppers focused on the discretionary choices of actors in particular case studies could not help generate theory in systematic factors to explain phenomenon.

Second, the bottom-uppers challenged the top-down approach by claiming the real process of policy implementation was full of power struggles and political compromise. They ignored the perspective of policy makers in formulating the policy. The bottom-uppers placed too much value on the importance of policy performance rather than on policy conformance, which would lead to inconsistencies in policy implementation. The perspective of the bottom-uppers tended to be more descriptive rather than prescriptive in nature from that of the top-downers. Yet, criticism towards the bottom-uppers hinged on the over-sympathy of the bottom-uppers towards the front-line implementers. This would further affect the decision of the public policy endorsed by the public will. Moreover, the bottom-uppers challenged the legitimacy of the policy designers to design the policies, which would also lead to crisis in public administration.

## Hybrid Approach

The debate between the prescriptive top-down and the descriptive bottom-up literature did not end in a dichotomy between “prescription and understanding the complexities of policy implementation” and ‘achieving conformance and performance’ (Barrett & Fudge, 1981). Instead, Sabatier’s Advocacy Coalition framework (1986), Winter’s Integrated models (2003), Scharpf (1978), Knoke (1990), Klijn (1997)’s networking approach and Goggin, Bowman, Lester and O’Toole (1990)’s communication models were the four main approaches in the hybrid approach. The hybrid approach also aimed at describing under what factors implementation process go smoother (Fullan, 1985; McLaughlin, 1987).

Sabatier (1986: 39)’s Advocacy Coalition framework advocated that actors from a variety of public and private institutions at all levels of government sharing a set of basic beliefs come together to manipulate the rules, budgets, and personnel of governmental institutions. They did so in order to achieve these goals over time. This framework, in short, combined individual’s policy beliefs, administrative agencies, legislative committees, interest groups, researchers, and intellectuals from multiple levels of government into an advocacy coalition. Such coalition aggregated the behaviour of individuals and organisations in a policy subsystem for policy implementation. Sabatier and Weible (2007) further elaborated the effects of policy-oriented learning, external shocks and internal shocks and hurting stalemate in developing the updated version of coalition framework.

Winter’s (2003) integrated model of implementation process placed heavy emphasis on the effects of socio-economic context in affecting the implementation process. He advocated the effects of organisational, inter-organisational



implementation behavior, street-level bureaucrat behaviour and target group behavior on policy performances and outcomes in implementation results.

Scharpf (1978), Knoke (1990) and Klijn (1997) approached the implementation literature from the perspective of networking. They emphasised that “it was unlikely, if impossible, that public policy of any significance could result from the choice process of any single unified actor”. They claimed that policy formulation and policy implementation were “inevitably the result of interactions among a plurality of separate actors with separate interests, goals and strategies” (1978: 347). They stressed that the top-down approach tended to work with a notion of unitary goals developed by individuals or consensual groups. They stated that the bottom-up approach stressed interaction. They also focused on the nature of networks that might be formed upon the resources dependencies and exchanges that facilitate the process.

Goggin, Bowman, Lester and O’Toole (1990) proposed “their systematic research” by offering “communication models” for implementation analysis. They emphasised the factors accounting for the acceptance or rejection of messages (communication) between layers of government and for the scientific analysis of independent variables. Such independent variables included federal-level inducements and constraints and state-level and local-level inducements and constraints. Other intervening variables included organisational capacity and ecological capacity and feedback.

To summarise the hybrid approach, scholars of hybrid approaches studied the conditions in which the implementation process went smoother. Fullan (1985) and McLaughlin (1987) listed eight factors for successful implementation conditions:

1. ambitious efforts were effective in stimulating teacher interest, engagement and involvement;
2. “How change effort was conducted” was more important than “what the policy was”;
3. high quality, proven effective programs worked better;
4. both top-down and bottom-up initiation could work and sometimes top administrators are more able to involve teachers’ commitment;
5. central office support such as money, time, personnel resources, schedule activities as well as site administrator’s support, commitment and knowledge matter;
6. teachers’ participation in designing implementation strategies mattered;
7. extensive, intensive, on-going training was critical;
8. teacher commitment was crucial.

These factors could somewhat served as sensitising devices to tap informants’ sharing of implementation of SSE.

### **Implications from Policy Implementation to My Research Questions**

The perspective of top-down and bottom-up implementation shed light on the research questions in three aspects. First, it helped researchers to identify the importance of teacher administrators in implementation of SSE as they were at the top in the school and the general teachers were relatively working at the bottom level. Unlike the policy terrain in the UK and Scotland, the policy of SSE in Hong Kong was never the policy embraced by the political parties with strong civil support. In fact, SSE was never discussed by the Legislative Council. In this connection, the policy formation of the SSE was not seriously discussed by the political body,

professional bodies such as the PTU and even the sponsoring bodies like Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGH) and Po Leung Kuk (PLK). The policy of SSE was then requested to be implemented in schools by principals with puzzlement by administrative directives.

Second, it enabled the researchers to capture the effects of school historical and institutional contexts on the implementation of SSE in different schools. As SSE was firstly introduced by EDB, the organisational ethos, attitude and the cooperation of School-based Support (SBS) implied a lot to the success of the implementation of SSE. All these historical and institutional contexts had an impact on the conditions for successful implementation of SSE. Those conditions included the implementer's status, expertise, power and efforts, the implementation strategies, support from Regional Office of EDB. Other conditions included grants given for implementing SSE, time allowed, personnel resources and teachers' commitment and participation (Odden, 1991: 306).

Third, the literature will inform the researchers of the potential dynamic and complicated negotiation and compromise process within schools and the actual actions of SSE as practice. These dynamic negotiation and compromise processes are more than a one-way linear model of rationality. Instead, they are more of a fluid and political one in which actions and ideals were compromised.

## **2.4 Policy Learning through Puzzlement**

### **2.4.1 Contextual Explication of Policy Learning and Learning Community Literature**

This section will further explain how “street-level bureaucrats” (Lipsky: 1980) such as teacher administrators and teachers learn when facing policy puzzlement in implementing a new policy. Before coming to this point, a brief reference to the social context of the 1970s’ absolute fidelity to policy procedures would be discussed. Such absolute fidelity gave rise to the rise of perfect compliance. Later in the 1980s, the emphasis was on policy outcomes. Such shift of focus paved the way for the rise of learning through puzzlement.

#### **Absolute Fidelity to Policy Procedures in the 1970s**

During the period of the Great Society in the 1970s, it was still the time of hierarchy power from policy engineers to ensure the administrators did not deviate from original policy aims and procedures. Such absolute fidelity to policy aims and procedures hinged heavily on a traditional Weberian model. In this regard, policy learning was not important and necessary as absolute power and compliance were demanded in the context of a zero-sum game setting. In view of such an elitist model, a unitary, centralised, monolithic state was dominant. There was no need for policy administrators to think how they accomplished the task. This was because the street level bureaucrats were given a very detailed set of procedures and guidelines to follow. Hence, under such strong central control of the state, a single homogeneous public service ethos was prevalent. Policy learning was seldom mentioned and not necessary.

## **Steering-at-distance in the 1980s**

The rise of the New Public Reform in the 1980s shifted the traditional role of government to governance. Power was diffused from government officials to street level bureaucrats. With such paradigm from centralisation to decentralisation, the role of government turned to governance with segmented executive and blurred lines of accountability for provision of heterogeneous service (Richards & Smith, 2002). In this connection, the accountability demanded from the public further forced the “street-level bureaucrats” to think about how to accomplish directed orders policy administrators with budget constraints and broad guidelines. This context led to the rise of studies towards policy learning through puzzlement. The policy learning through puzzlement also included the issues of internal and external networking with a cluster of resources, complex organisations in a dynamic and adaptive strategic alliance.

### **2.4.2 Perspective Implication of Policy Learning and Learning Community Literature**

Past literature concerning policy learning was relatively rare except the following works. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) worked on the Advocacy Coalition Approach to policy implementation and learning. Such approach emphasised the importance of bureaucratic discretion and consequent differential effect of implementation, as a result of this discretion. Rist (1994) made the distinction between policy evaluation and learning. He used the concept of a policy cycle as a framework to study political learning. Leeuw, Rist and Sonnichsen (1994) try to solve the problem of “can government learn” by also using the cycle specific stages.

Yet, no one in the above offered a clearer definition of policy learning than Hecló (1974). Hecló combined the ideas of knowledge acquisition and its subsequent use. He highlighted the scenario of “men collectively wondering what to do” or puzzlement. To him, policy learning was a deterministic response to the environment. He believed that policy learning was necessary for “political learning” within governments. Hecló also thought that policy learning was a response to the external policy environment.

Deutsch (1966: 154) used a military analogy when he described the “middle level of communication and command”. He also studied the capacity for policy, political and social learning (1966: 151) via information (1966: 151) through networking. Deutsch’s contribution to the field was characterised by his introduction of “learning capacity”. He believed that policy learning occurred by a gradual and very long evolving policy dissemination, re-interpretation and adaptation.

Other scholars also contributed to the field policy learning. Walker (1983) discussed the diffusion of knowledge as a process in policy learning. Rose (1991), Ingram and Schneider (1990) also delineated how governments learn from each other’s experience by the “systematic pinching of ideas”. Linder and Peters (1989), Greenberg and Robbins (1986) and Sabatier (1986) believed that policy learning was instrumental for its aim to make implementation better. Other scholars like Dryzek (1990), Lindblom (1990) and Reich (1988) thought that policy learning denoted an enlightenment function.

Schofield (2004) also presented a model of Learned Implementation to integrate

some of the organisational learning literature. He elaborated how public managers had to learn from a range of ten new and detailed techniques in order to implement the ambiguous policy directives from policy administrators. With his model of Learned Implementation, Schofield also described how the managers routinised these detailed job tasks and procedures to day-to-day solutions with puzzlements. Hence, the policy initiative was operationalised through their organisational learning.

Rein (1983: 117) also proposed that what followed policy implementation was not only a matter of power, but of “puzzlement” and of “men collectively wondering what to do.” This perspective of bottom-uppers highlighted the fact that “subordinates may failed to comply with their leaders’ directives because they did not know what was required of them. This was because these subordinates were asked either to pursue uncertain or evolving goals or to reconcile incompatible requirements” (Rein, 1983: 117). These subordinates also faced the problem of “insufficient resources at hand for the task” and “their lack of knowledge and skills to take action”.

In this connection, when the purposes of policy were unclear and incompatible, each successive stage in the process of implementation provided a new context and challenge for “seeking clarification”. Rein then pinpointed one of the consequences of “passing ambiguous and inconsistent legislation”. It was the fact that that “the everyday practitioners became the ones who resolved the lack of consensus through their concrete actions”. Rein (1983: 117) believed that many key groups and individuals were excluded from the arena “in which policy was formulated”.

In short, the everyday practitioners had to modify the implementation phase to

suit individual or group interest. Rein also added to Lowi's legal imperative, which was the imperative to do what is legally required by offering two more imperatives--the rational bureaucratic imperative and the consensual imperatives (Rein, 1983: 119). The rational bureaucratic imperative (Rein, 1983: 120) was the imperative to do what was rationally defensible whereas the consensual imperative was the imperated to do what can help to establish agreement among influential parties who have a stake in the outcome (Rein, 1983: 122). Rein spotlight the actors' role in handling these three "potentially conflicting imperatives".

Rein stressed that these three imperatives might not necessarily be in harmony when operating and translating policy into practice. For example, legal imperative was affected by (1) the strength and prestige of the legislative committee in which a bill originates; (2) the expertise of the committees' members; (3) the extent to which areas of disagreement were squarely faced and clarified; (4) the level of support for the law among both lawmakers and the local communities. In this regard, the legal imperative tended to be "vague" so that "controversial issues were often left open and ambiguous" in order to avoid confrontations. Such confrontations could threaten support for "the successful passage of a bill" in the policy formation stage.

With such vagueness in the policy formation stage, the bill was then passed and came to civil servants' hands. The civil servants had to judge whether the policy to be implemented conformed to bureaucratic rationality. Such bureaucratic rationality included the consideration of "consistency of principles" and "workability". The bureaucratic rationality was also a sense of judgment from professionals and managers administering the policy.



When the policy to be implemented passed from the hands of bureaucrats, the interest groups affected under the policy would try their best to fight back or adjust it to the point they felt reasonable and negotiable. Rein also highlighted the puzzlement in the implementation process. Such policy puzzlement included the puzzlement of the policy designers towards the unpredictable or un-resolvable conflicts in the context of implementation, the puzzlement arising from the limited resources, and the puzzlement of how to accomplish the tasks by lacking the necessary skills and expertise to work the policy out.

### **Implications of Policy Learning through Puzzlement to Research Problems**

When schools were asked to implement SSE, they faced a lot of policy puzzlement. Their puzzlement encompassed common questions including what SSE was, how the annual school plans were written, how the PIs were stipulated, how Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat (SWOT) analysis was conducted and how follow-up plans were actualised. In this connection, the literature will sensitise the researcher when conducting this study. First, the researcher would sensitise in capturing teachers' lived experiences in acquiring the relevant skills for SSE through workshops, seminars and services from outside providers. Second, the researcher would focus more on how teachers or schools establish intra-organisational networks of learning communities. Third, the researcher would sensitise how schools and teachers built inter-organisational networking of resources in implementing SSE. Fourth, the researcher would understand more how teacher administrators and teachers, in Schofield's term "the professional and managers", routinised their discretion at operation level when implementing SSE.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

After the discussion of research background and relevant literature review in chapter one and two, this chapter will delineate the research questions and the research design of the study.

#### **3.1 Research Questions**

Based on the literature review in chapter 2, this study anchors and reformulates its three research questions firmly on the three key substantial and theory-driven concepts of this paper. These three concepts are---- 1. implementation of SSE, 2. perceived effects of SSE on school improvement or managerial control, 3. policy learning through puzzlement. With these concepts being the focus, the three research questions are listed as follows:

1. From the perspective of teacher administrators as well as teachers, how SSE was implemented in the three sample schools?
2. From the perspective of teacher administrators as well as teachers, what are the perceived effects and/or consequences of SSE?
3. Given these implementation experiences and perceptions, how the implementations of the SSE could be accounted for from the perspectives of policy implementation within the policy studies in education?

## **3.2 Rationale and Assumptions**

There were three critical milestones in the evolution of SSE policy promoted by the government. The first one was in 1991, when SMI was implemented as the protocol for SSE. The second one was in 1997, when ECR7 was published to promote the QA and SSE. The last one was in 2003, when SSE and ESR were made compulsory policy by the EMB for all schools. Correspondingly, there were three entry points of implementation of SSE for Hong Kong schools. Accordingly, three secondary schools have been selected for the study. In School 1, the entry point of SSE was in 1991. In School 2, it was in 1998. In School 3, it was in 2006.

The three research questions hinged on three important concepts in the implementation of SSE. The first research question hinged on the implementation experience of SSE of teacher administrators and teachers with reference to the relevant contexts of the three sample schools. The second research question focused on the perceived effects of SSE by teacher administrators and teachers such as school improvement, managerial control or others. The third research question studied the nature of implementation process of SSE, such as top-down approach, bottom-up approach, hybrid approach and learning through puzzlement approach, from the perspective of policy implementation within the policy studies in education. These three research questions were grounded on and guided by the theoretical-arguments of the experiences and perspectives of policy implementation, perceived effects of SSE as school improvement and managerial control, and implementation approaches in policy learning literature.

### 3.3 Framework of Study

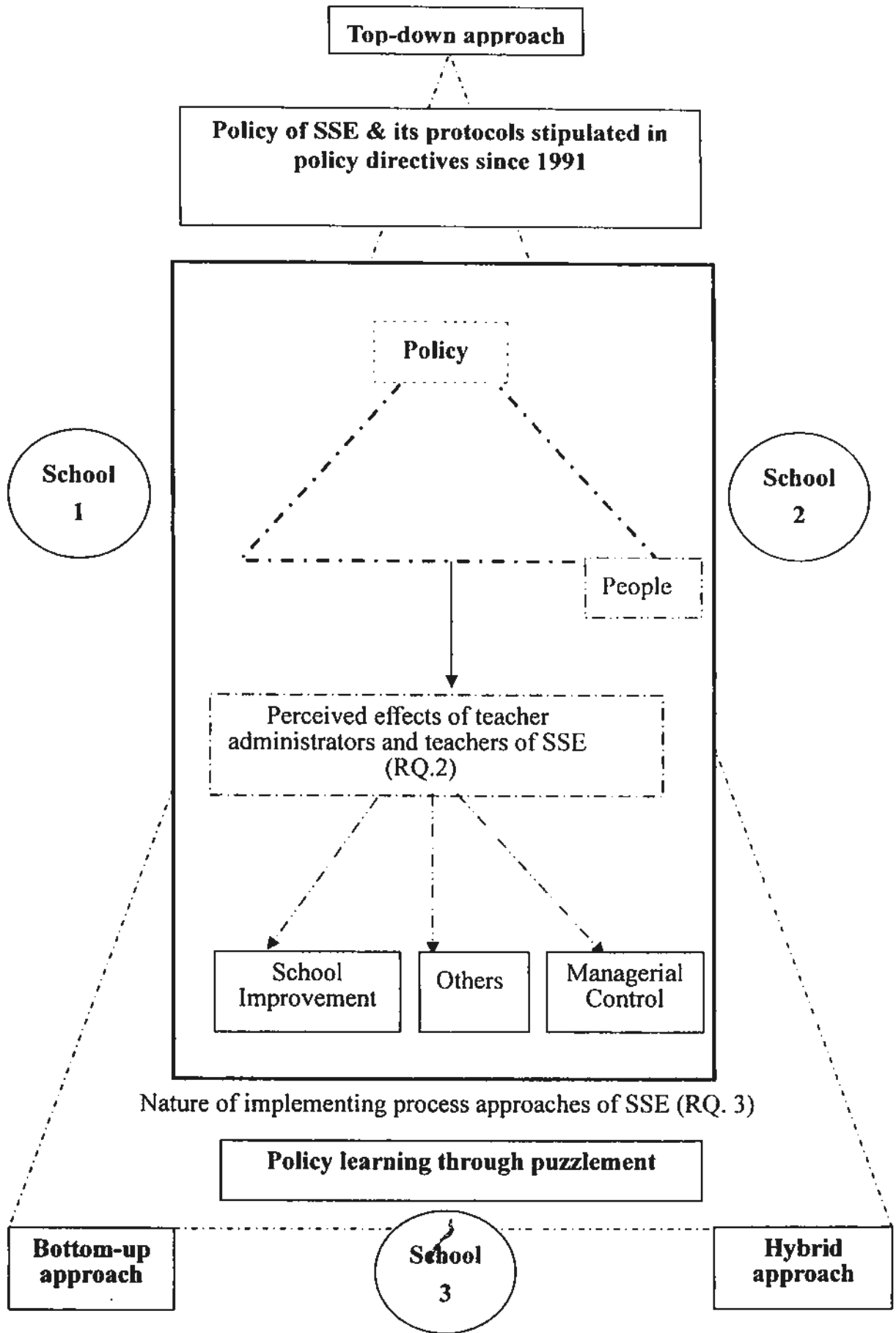


Figure 8. The Framework of the Study

Figure 8 denotes the framework of and the three research questions in this study. First, the policy of SSE and its protocol became a policy directive in Hong Kong secondary schools since 2001. Then SSE had been implemented in the three sample schools by teacher administrators such as principal, vice-principal or academic master in a school setting. In order to implement the policy of SSE (Policy), the teacher administrators have to take into consideration of the context of the Place (Place) such as the socio-economic status (SES) of the parents and the students and the People (People) of the schools including the principal and the leadership, the middle managers and the general teachers. In short, the teacher administrators had to take into consideration of 3Ps in policy implementation within the three sample schools. The first research question of this study would study the implementation experience of SSE with reference to the 3Ps model. This explains the first triangle of 3Ps in research question 1.

When the policy of SSE was about to be introduced into the school context, it became a school policy and would be implemented by teacher administrators and teachers. Subsequent to the implementation of SSE, teacher administrators and teachers would have different perceived effects of SSE. Some might perceive effects of SSE on school improvement while some might perceive effects of SSE on managerial control or some even both. The second research question investigated these two dichotomised effects of SSE revealed in the literature. This explains the three possible perceived effects of SSE on school improvement, managerial control or both in research question 2.

Given these implementation experiences and perceptions, the third research

question studied how the implementations of SSE could be accounted for from the perspectives of policy implementation within the policy studies in education. Special discussion of the question would be on the nature of implementation model such as top-down approach, bottom-up approach, hybrid approach or policy puzzlement and learning. This will provide answers to the nature of policy implementation approach in research question 3 as shown in the outermost triangle.

### **3.4 Qualitative Research**

This research is a qualitative research. Qualitative, rather than quantitative, research was chosen because of two reasons. First, this research did not aim at generalisation of the implementation of SSE, the teachers' perceived effects of SSE on school improvement and managerial control, and the nature of implementation model of SSE in secondary schools in Hong Kong. Therefore, no structural hierarchical model was built up to testify hypothesis or to explain phenomenon. Second, this study aimed at tapping the thick description of perceived effects of SSE on school improvement and managerial control. All these information were quality-rich and highly-descriptive rather than simply yes/no, numerical rating or agree or disagree level questions. Therefore, this research adopted a qualitative approach.

#### **Epistemological Foundation of Qualitative Research**

Before conducting this research, an epistemological basis should be given. In epistemological foundation, there is a knower (who to know), self-conscious use of methods (how to know), the known (the thing or people the knower want to discover) and cross-validation of knowledge. Figure 9 denotes the epistemological foundation

of this research:

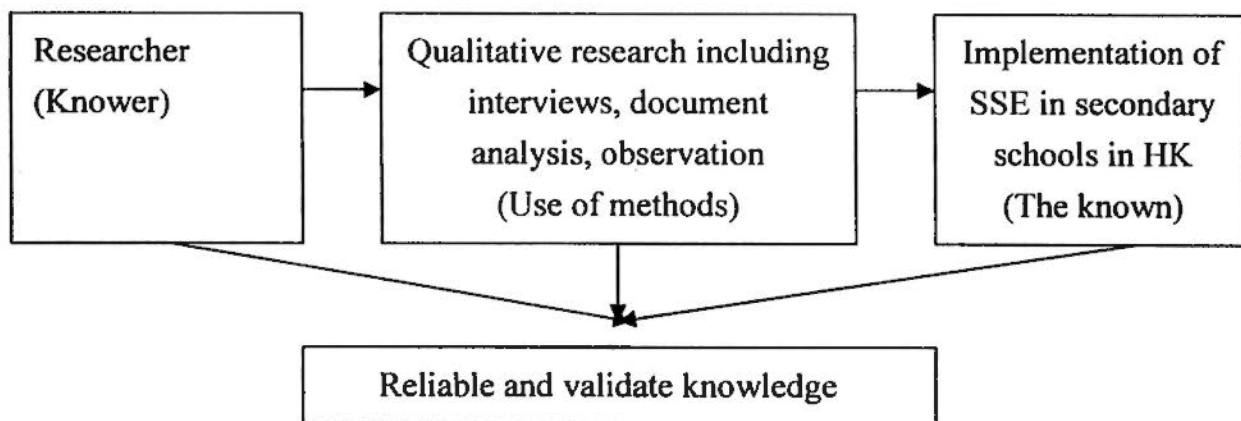


Figure 9: The Foundation of Research (Tsang, 2006)

With reference to the epistemological foundation, Habermas (1968) categorised three interests of human beings. They were the technical rationalities and cognitive interest (Ball, 2003: 217), practical cognitive interest and emancipatory cognitive interest. Correspondingly, these three types of interests for science were derived from empirical-analytical science, historical-hermeneutic sciences and critical social science.

In this research, it was not empirical-analytical science-based (Taylor, 1911). It did not aim at exploring means-end causalities (Dahl & Lindblom, 1992: 57) or linear model of causality (Hamilton, 1998: 14). In this connection, this study will not adopt the empirical-analytical quantitative modeling. Likewise, this research did not aim at being critical social science study to remove the so-called “tutelage” imposed on teachers (Kant, 1784/1959). Rather, this research did not pre-assume any one-sided value judgment of SSE such as SSE on school improvement and managerial control. On the contrary, this research aims at discovering the implementation of SSE in the three chosen schools as case studies only.

Moreover, this research aims at “grouping observation into patterns or stories (DeVaus, 2001: 6)” and “developing rudimentary theory that composed of categories, patterns” and “relationships that may inform more complete theory development in future”(Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this study, the researcher adopted the “funnel approach” (Wiersma, 1995: 219). It meant that the study would move from “the general questions that initiated the study to the specific phenomenon and focused conclusions (Wiersma, 1995: 220). Through such data collection, the researcher wished to conceptualise the pattern of implementation of SSE in secondary schools, the perceived effects of SSE and the implementation approach of SSE, to interrelate the pattern with reference to the context and the sponsoring bodies of the schools.

## **Research Design**

In this part, four parts including sampling design, data collection, data analysis and research ethnics would be included.

## **Sampling Design**

### **Sampling Strategies of Schools**

The following paragraphs described the sampling strategy of schools in this study. In this study, the primary data used was based on three critical cases of schools. Flyvbjerg (2001) believed that theory-driven research and critical cases could be used as a base through which patterns of regularities could be captured. The selection of three critical cases of schools was governed by the evolution of SSE in Hong Kong. Such evolution was characterised with three protocols of SSE. The first SSE protocol was the SMI in 1991. The second was the SSE and QAI in 1997 stipulated in the ECR7. The third one was the commencement of SSE and ESR in 2003. These



three protocols became also the three guiding principles in selecting of three types of sample schools in this study.

The first guiding principle for the first type of schools was that the sample school(s) should have implemented SMI in around 1991. The second principle for the second type was that the sample school(s) should have implemented SSE in around 1997. The third principle for the third type was that the sample school(s) should have implemented SSE in around 2004. These three critical milestones in implementation of SSE would provide the temporal contrast for the three types of schools studied.

Owing to the three guiding principles above, only three sample schools were selected in this study. This was because the three guiding principles limited the selection of the sample schools in the study. Regarding the first guiding principle for the first type of schools, the sample school(s) should have implemented SMI in around 1991. However, only around 20 schools implemented SMI in 1991 in SMI pilot project launched by ED. This was due to the poor response from schools at that time. In addition, the detailed record of these 20 schools was difficult to trace in the government documents of ED. This is because the SMI pilot project was launched about 19 years ago. The information available for access was rare, even for the researcher who is working in EDB. In this regard, only 1 school was selected, which implemented SMI in 1991.

For the second guiding principle, the second type of schools should have implemented SSE in around 1997. Again, the number of schools which implemented SSE in 1997 was rare and even unknown to the public. In this connection, only 1

school was selected, which implemented SSE in 1998.

Concerning the third guiding principle, the third type of schools should have implemented SSE in around 2004. As in 2004, SSE and ESR were made compulsory policy by EMB, the number of schools which fulfilled the criteria was ample. Yet, in order to make consistent comparison for the number of case studies, it was decided that only one school was selected.

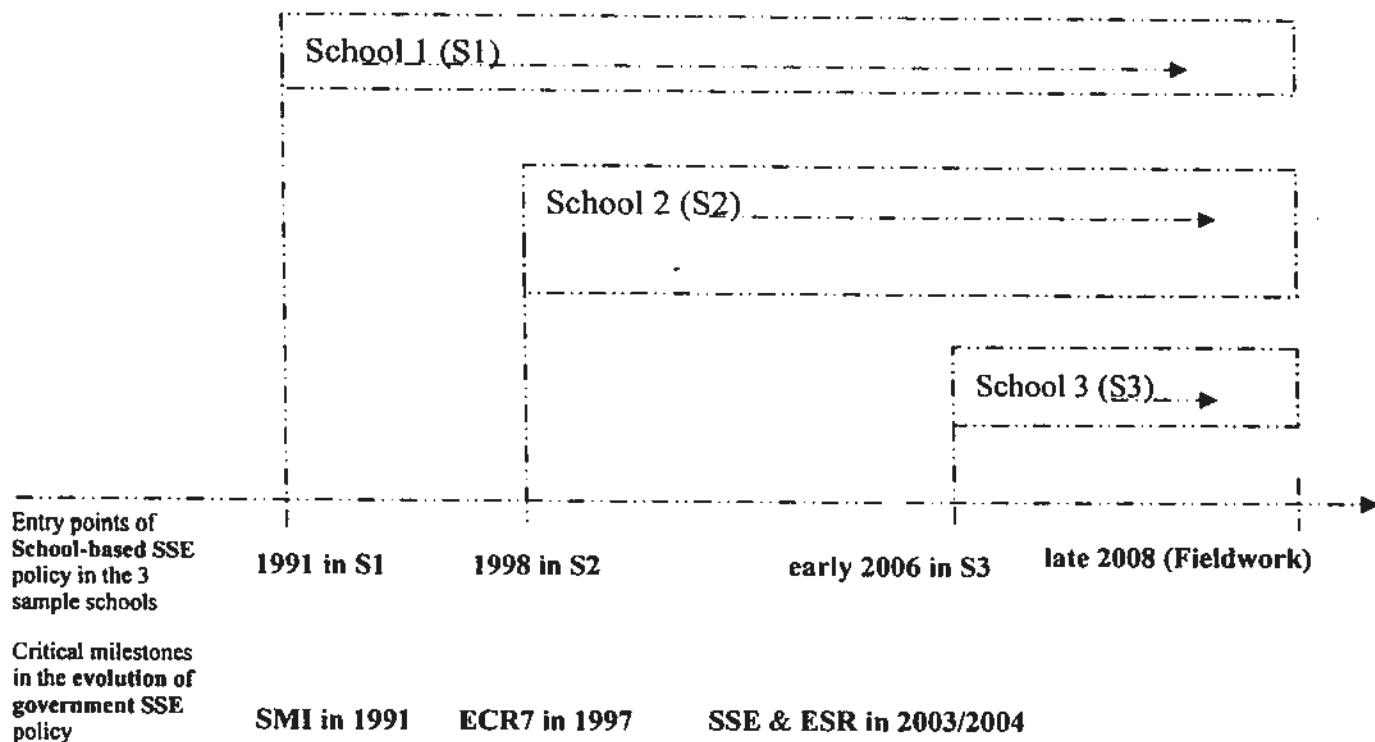
In view of the above selection process, three sample schools which met the above guiding principles were selected. Typical case strategy (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 28) was used to highlight the implementation experience of SSE in these three sample schools with reference to the three entry points of implementation of SSE. School 1 implemented SMI in 1991 and experienced ESR in 2006. School 2 implemented QAI in 1998 and experienced ESR in 2004. School 3 implemented SSE in 2006 and ESR in 2006. The following paragraphs presented the brief profiles of the three sample schools.

School 1 is a traditional secondary grammar school situated in an old public housing district in Kowloon East. It has been established in 1982 for 26 years. It is managed by a traditional Chinese religious School Sponsoring Body (SSB). The banding of secondary 1 student intake is around 2.1 out of 3 in the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System. It is a co-educational school and uses Chinese as the Medium of Instruction (CMI). It is one of the best CMI-schools in the district.

School 2 is a traditional secondary grammar school. It is situated in a district in the New Territories with many old public housing estates, subsidised housing and

private buildings. School 2 has been established for 58 years since 1950. The banding of student intake in School 2 is around 2.5 out of 3 in the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System. It is a co-educational school under the purview of a Christian School Sponsoring Body (SSB) and uses Chinese as the Medium of Instruction (CMI).

School 3 is a traditional secondary grammar school. It is situated in an area in the New Territories East. It is surrounded by newly-built public-housing estates. It is a new immigrant-populated area. The parents' educational attainment is relatively low and is mainly from primary to junior secondary. School 3 has been in operation since 1977 (i.e. for 31 years by the time of the field work in 2008). The banding of student intake is around 3.2 out of 3. It is under the purview of a Protestant School Sponsoring Body (SSB) and is a co-educational school which uses Chinese as Medium of Instruction (CMI). Figure 10 denoted the three entry points of SSE implementation for the 3 sample schools.



**Figure 10: Entry Points of School-based SSE Implementation for the 3 Sample Schools**

### Sampling Strategies of Teachers

Regarding the sampling strategy of teachers adopted in this study, this study adopted “snowball or chain” strategy (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 28) to identify information-rich informants. In this study, the two target types of informants were teacher administrators and teachers. Teacher administrators were those who were responsible for the school administration roles in the implementation of SSE. Examples of teacher administrators included the vice-principals, assistant-principals, committee heads of SSE and panels. Teachers included general front-line teachers and those teachers who had no leading roles in the implementation of SSE. However, it had to be stated very clearly there was no rigid demarcation between teacher administrators and teachers. Rather, the two roles of teacher administrators and teachers were at both end of a long continuum. For instance, some panel heads played dual roles at different times along with the internal re-deployment of staff

within their school context. In addition, the looser categorisation of the school administrators and teachers gave more flexibility to the data collection process in schools. To present the specific selection of teachers in the three sample schools, the following paragraphs offered described description of the process.

### **School 1**

The researcher first contacted and interviewed the vice-principal of School 1 (VP1). VP1 was the teacher administrator in School 1 who had served School 1 for over 24 years. VP1 then referred Teacher 12 (T12), Teacher 13 (T13) and Teacher 14 (T14) to the researcher who had served for over 14, 11 and 16 years respectively. After finishing the interview with T12, she introduced assistant-principal (AP15) to the researcher. AP15 was another teacher administrator in School 1 serving for over 24 years and experienced the implementation of SMI in 1991. Further to the interview with AP15, he solicited Teacher 16 (T16) who had served for over 5 years for having interview with the researcher. In School 1, a total of 6 interviewees were interviewed through this “snowball or chain” strategy.

### **School 2**

The researcher first contacted and interviewed Teacher 26 of School 2 (T26). T26 was a general teacher in School 2 who had served School 2 for over 10 years. T26 then referred Teacher 21 (T21), Teacher 22 (T22) and Head of the SSE committee (H23) to the researcher who had served for over 10, 10 and 20 years respectively. H23 had established the SSE mechanism in School 2 from scratch after the publication of ECR7. After finishing the interview with T21, she introduced Teacher 24 (T24), who had served for over 10 years to the researcher. Further to the interview with H23, he solicited Teacher 25 (T25) who had served for over 25 years

for having interview with the researcher. In School 2, a total of 6 interviewees were interviewed through this “snowball or chain” strategy.

The researcher first contacted and interviewed Teacher 33 of School 3 (T33). T33 was a middle manager in School 2 who had served School 3 for over 15 years. In addition, he was likely to be promoted to the vice-principal in School 3 in future. In this regard, he was well-connected in School 3. His strong networking was very important to the selection of teachers in School 3. This was because SSE was poorly implemented in School 3 in the eyes of the teachers and the ESR team of EDB. In this connection, most teachers rejected to participate in some qualitative studies conducted by other tertiary institutions pertaining to SSE and school administration.

T33 then referred Teacher 31 (T31) and Teacher 34 (T34) to the researcher as they are the Heads of the SSE committee. T31 and T34 had served in School 3 for over 25 and 20 years respectively and therefore were appointed as the two Heads of the SSE committee under the bi-head system in School 3. T33 also introduced T32 who had served over 10 years in School 3 to the researcher. After finishing the interview with T32, both T33 and T32 solicited Teacher 35 (T35) who had served for over 10 years for having interview with the researcher. In this regard, a total of 5 interviewees were interviewed in School 3 through this “snowball or chain” strategy. As the implementation of SSE and ESR were both rated by teachers and ESR team of EDB as very poor, no more teachers were willing to be interviewed despite numerous attempts in months. This was because most teachers were worried about the sensitive nature of this study.

For the total number of interviewees in this study, the researcher interviewed 6

interviewees in School 1. In School 2, another 6 interviewees were interviewed. In School 3, 5 interviewees were interviewed. Hence, altogether 17 teacher administrators and teachers were interviewed. All interviewees were asked for their implementation experience of SSE, perceived effects of SSE on school improvement or managerial control and the implementation approach of SSE in their relevant contexts.

## **Data Collection**

It is common that qualitative studies combine several data collection methods over the course of study. In this study, both primary and secondary data would be collected. For the primary data, the researcher collected data from the 17 interviewees. For the secondary data, the researcher studied the school documents offered from the three sample schools and the information released to the public. Confidential documents such as the ESR report of the three sample schools were provided by the three schools to the researcher, with strictest restriction to the researcher only. These ESR reports were not allowed to be published for their highly sensitive data included.

## **Interview**

With reference to the instrument of the research, the researcher himself was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. This was because qualitative data are mediated through human instrument than other instruments (Creswell, 1994: 145; Punch, 2000: 57). In qualitative research, the researcher was the research tool to record “about human groups, cultures based on social structure and individual behaviors about descriptions and interpretations” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Moreover, qualitative research is also used as a process “of providing descriptions of

educational systems, processes, and the phenomena within their specific contexts (Wiersma, 1986). In other words, all data available are only meaningful for the three unique contexts in the three sample schools or the contexts with high similarity (Cheng, 1994). In the 17 interviews in this study, semi-structured questions (Merriam, 1988) with open-ended questions and question prompts derived from the three research questions were used. For detailed question prompts, please refer to semi-structured question lists attached in Appendix 1.

The 17 interviews were conducted at informants' school or a designated places requested by the informants from October 2008 to January 2009, for a period of 3 months. The interviews were conducted both inside and outside the working hours of the school in response to the request of the 17 interviewees. All interviewees requested to conduct one-to-one interviews in a reserved room or a place where they felt secure to speak their innermost feelings and relaxed. They expressed that as the study involved their genuine description of the SSE, the perceived effects of SSE and the implementation approach of SSE of their own contexts, which might involve their criticism of the teachers concerned. Therefore, most of them were willing to offer 45 minutes to 1 hour for the interview. Moreover, as the researcher was not well-known by most of the interviewees. In this regard, most of them accepted one round of interview.

## **Documents**

Regarding the secondary data, it served the function of content analysis by scrutinising the school documents in an unobtrusive and non-reactive manner (Berelson, 1952: 18). General school documents such as minutes of staff meetings, staff development programmes, school reports, teachers' handbook were shown to



the researcher. In addition, the SSE report and ESR report were studied to help the researcher “fill the gap” of information obtained from the 17 interviews (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989). To summarise, the following types of documents were shown to the researcher:

- a) Minutes of staff meeting
- b) School Development Plans (SDP)
- c) School Report (SR)
- d) Teachers’ handbook
- e) SSE and ESR report
- f) Results of SHS

It is important to note that not all aforesaid documents were shown to the researcher by all the three sample schools. This was because the above documents were highly sensitive. Except for the SSE and the ESR report, different amount of documents were provided by school in relation to the trust built along the interviews.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

During the process of data reduction, “data was simplified and transformed into written-up transcriptions, then displayed in an organised, compresses manner that permitted conclusion” (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, the data reduction in this study was a painstaking process. Furthermore, the process of “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appeared in the written-up field notes or transcriptions” was indeed a marathon demanded persistent endurance.

In this study, the data analysis lasted from February 2009 to May 2010, for a

period of 15 months. The main data source of this study was the interview tapescripts of the 17 informants. The related documents of SSE, such as the ESR report collected from the website of EDB of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the programme plans, minutes and other documents collected from the three sample schools, served as sources of the data.

In terms of data analysis, the researcher experienced 4 stages. The first stage was the codification of the interview scripts of the 17 informants with reference to the concepts and the constructs generated from the guiding framework of this study. The second stage was the generation of conceptual themes for later analysis, including the implementation situation of SSE in the three sample schools, namely the Policy, Place and People of each school, the categorization of perceptions of teachers by generational backgrounds, positions in schools and implementation situation of the schools. This process can be called as "data condensation". In this connection, pre-existing theoretical framework derived from literature was of utmost importance (Tesch, 1990). This was very true when the researcher teased important themes out of the transcripts by underlining and picking up the key points and coding.

In the third stage, the researcher built up respective typologies with the conceptual themes generated from the coded data. Subsequently, these particular themes and patterns were identified and emerged through the process of "clustering, partitioning and categorising" (Tesch, 1990: 45) in this study.

Finally, in the fourth stage, the researcher derived numbers of thematic arguments with typologies and conceptual themes obtained from the previous stage

and applied them to answer the three research questions, which this study was set out to investigate.

During the process of data analysis, method of triangulation among data collected from different sources was used. The main data source of this study was of course the transcripts generated from in-depth interviews with teachers. Data generated from other sources had been used to cross-examine and cross-validate with the information collected in interviews. Nevertheless, there was no obvious contradictory information among various data sources.

### **3.6 Research Limitations and Research Ethics**

#### **3.6.1 Generalability-validity Dilemma**

Like other qualitative research, this study faced the dilemma of reliability-validity. The qualitative study enjoyed high validity for the field where the researcher conducted the research. Yet, it is being criticised as low generalisability because all the contextual mix would be hard to replicate and copy. In this connection, all data obtained and conclusions made were difficult to lead to same generalisation in other cases of different contexts.

#### **3.6.2 The Truthfulness of the Information Obtained**

“Good rapport between the interviewer and interviewee and the interviewer’s interviewing skills” are particularly important in ethnographic interview of qualitative research (Powney & Watts, 1987: 18). In this regard, the researcher kept humble and faithful attitude in keeping the confidentiality of the information provided by the informants. The researcher attempted to “help the interviewee

express his or her own concerns and interests without feeling unduly hampered” (Powney & Watts, 1987: 18). The researcher understood the informants might give untruthful information if they felt insecure and unfaithness during the interaction with the researcher.

### **3.6.3 Ethical Responsibility to Speak for the Informants**

It was the ethical responsibility of the researcher to speak something for the informants, the teacher administrators and teachers. However, informants’ consent had to be obtained. In addition, confidentiality and anonymity should be safeguarded at their request to avoid the identification of the 17 interviewees and the three sample schools. This ethical sense of justice was in the mind of researcher. In addition, honesty and trust between the informants were important. Therefore, in some cases, the researcher respected the informants’ openness to the questions and accepted their adjustment of the interview time. In order to enhance the reciprocity, the 17 interviewees received \$50 book coupon for the compensation of time for the interview.

## **3.7 Trustworthiness of the Research**

As this research employed the qualitative approach instead of the positivistic approach, qualitative criteria should be used in ensuring its trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985), Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested four standards in assessing qualitative research. They are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These four standards are comparable to the four assessment criteria of quantitative researches such as internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. To illustrate them precisely, credibility is its truth value. Transferability is

the conclusions could be generalised into other contexts. Dependability addresses whether the process is consistent and reasonably stable over and across methods. Confirmability is “the extent to which the data and interpretations of the study are grounded” in events rather than the inquirer’s personal constructions (Lincoln & Guba; 1985: 324).

### **Credibility**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed techniques to enhance credibility of the qualitative research like triangulation and cross validation. Triangulation refers to such multiple sources of investigation as face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews and document analysis. The cross validation refers to diverse methods in data collection like direct and indirect questioning and different degrees of structure of the interview schedules.

Audio recording of the interviews in the research was another technique for enhancing the research’s credibility. In this study, the three sample schools with different entry points for the implementation of SSE were selected. It was because the three sample schools represented three phases of schools in the implementation of SSE. Such variations in phases were contributive to the contribution of this study. Finally, reduction of bias of the researcher and the 17 interviewees was practised by the self-reflection of the researcher throughout the interview process.

### **Transferability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985: 316) admitted that transferability in qualitative researches is “impossible” in strict sense. At most, “the naturalists can only set out working hypothesis together with a description of the time and context in which they

were found to hold.” In this connection, it is the task of the naturalist is to provide thick descriptions and rich data to enable others in judging the degree of similarity between the case context and their own context.

In the present study, a rich description of implementation experience of SSE, the perceived effects of SSE on school improvement and managerial control and the implementation approach of SSE were provided as the three case contexts. With such grasp of context, this study gave rooms to readers to judge and “transfer” the research findings according to the degree of similarities with the three sample cases.

### **Dependability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested using the “audit trail” as a way of improving the dependability of a qualitative research. This “audit trail” technique verifies the process, the fairness of the representation, the product of the research and the accuracy of the findings. To verify the accuracy of the findings, the following six categories should be included:

1. raw data (e.g. field notes and documents);
2. data reduction and analysis (e.g. notes with condensed and categorised themes);
3. data reconstruction and synthesis products (e.g. notes with categorised and sub-categorised themes);
4. process notes (e.g. theoretical and operational notes);
5. materials relating to intentions and dispositions (e.g. self-reflection tools);
6. instrument developmental information (e.g. interview prompts).

In this study, to fulfill the aforesaid categories, a good record of recorded tapes, field notes and documents (point 1) was well-kept. Moreover, the researcher

condensed and categorised the notes into unitised information (point 2). The researcher also linked up the sub-categorisation into categorisations and drew conclusions from them (point 3). In addition, the researcher kept clear code, theoretical and operational notes (point 4). He also clarified intentions of research by self-reflections (point 5). Finally, the researcher designed interview schedules, preliminary interview and question prompts (point 6).

### **Confirmability**

Two techniques listed by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 324) were used for confirmability in this study. These two techniques were the auditing procedure and triangulation. In this study, the auditing procedure was observed. Triangulation in both sources and methods was practised. Specifically, the description of the 17 interviewees was triangulated with one another. In addition, the informal dialogues of the interviewees and the researcher served as another source for triangulation. Moreover, relevant school documents, information on school websites, SSE and ESR report, school development plans, school reports, minutes of meeting and programme plans etc served multiple sources for triangulation for the researcher. These two were mechanisms to ensure confirmability of this study.

Furthermore, confirmability in the final analysis is “the extent to which the data and interpretations of the study are grounded in events rather than the inquirer’s personal constructions” (Strauss & Corbin; 1990). Strauss & Corbin raised 7 criteria for testing the empirical grounding of a study. These 7 criteria listed below were used as reminders for this study as standards to be observed:

1. are concepts generated?
2. are the concepts systematically related?

3. are there many conceptual linkages and are the categories well developed?
4. do they have conceptual density?
5. is much variation built into theory?
6. are the broader conditions that affect the phenomenon under the study built into its explanation?
7. has process been taken into account?
8. do the theoretical findings seem significant and to what extent?

## **SUMMARY**

To recapitulate, this chapter has argued for adopting a naturalistic or qualitative approach to the investigation of implementation experience of SSE, the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers and the approach of implementation process in implementing SSE. Sampling methods, data collection and data collection and analysis were discussed in this chapter. Theoretical sampling was used. The 17 interviews and document analysis constituted the main sources of data collection. In the data analysis section, explanation was given on open, axial and selective coding as well as memorising and diagramming. These were to facilitate the breaking of data into categories, and then sub-categories and finally categories and themes. Finally, the trustworthiness of the research as reflected in the four criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were also addressed.



# CHAPTER FOUR

## IMPLEMENTATION OF SSE—COMPLEX ORGANIC INTERACTION AMONG POLICY, PLACE AND PEOPLE

### 4.1 Chapter Summary

It is argued that the implementation process of SSE is not a linear process as theorists suggested. Rather, implementation of SSE is a complex interaction among the policy to be implemented, the place where the policy embedded and the people implemented the policy. In this chapter, the complexity of SSE policy implementation described by teacher administrators and teachers in the three sample schools will be delineated. Subsequent explication will be organised into the three contexts of Policy, Place and People according to the model conceptualised by Honig (2006) as shown in Figure 11.

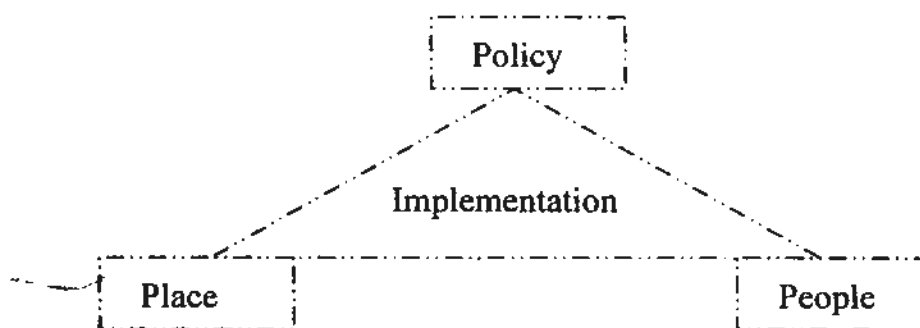
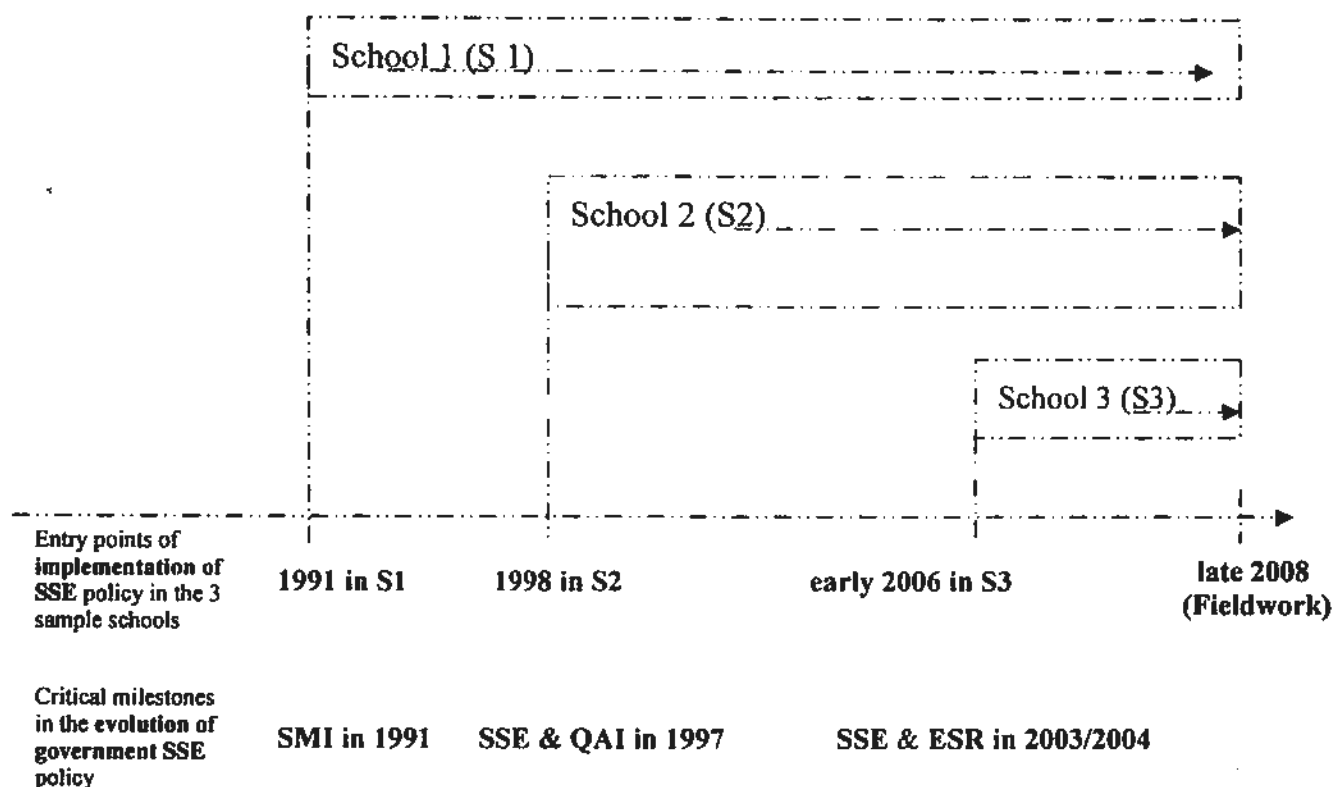


Figure 11: Theoretical Framework for Implementation of SSE

In addition to the 3Ps contexts, the perceptions of the teacher administrators and teachers will also be put in the temporal context. There were three critical milestones in the evolution of SSE policy promoted by the government. The first one was in 1991, when SMI was implemented as the protocol for SSE. The second critical

milestone was in 1997, when ECR7 was published to promote SSE and QAI. The last one was in 2003, when SSE and ESR were made compulsory policy by EMB for all schools. Correspondingly, there were three entry points of implementation of SSE for Hong Kong schools. In this connection, three schools were selected for this study. In School 1, SMI was implemented in 1991. In School 2, SSE was implemented in 1998, a year after the publication of ECR7. In School 3, SSE was implemented in early 2006, 2 years after the compulsory implementation of SSE and ESR.

In addition, the fieldwork for this study was conducted in late 2008. Consequently, the results to be reported were the outcomes of the implementation of SSE policy in the three sample schools as they appeared in 2008. Figure 12 summarised the above description as follows:



**Figure 12: Entry Points of School-based SSE Implementation for the 3 Sample Schools**

## 4.2 School 1

### The Background of the School

School 1 is a traditional secondary grammar school situated in an old public housing district in Kowloon East. It has been established in 1982 for 26 years. It is managed by a traditional Chinese religious School Sponsoring Body (SSB). The banding of secondary 1 student intake is around 2.1 out of 3 in the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System. It is a co-educational school and uses Chinese as the Medium of Instruction (CMI). It is one of the best CMI-schools in the district.

### Interviewees of School 1

There were a total of 6 interviewees. Their respective posts and teaching experiences are listed in Table 1:

Interviewee code	Post	Years of service in School 1	Role in implementing SMI and subsequent SSE policies in School 1
VP1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Vice-principal</li><li>➤ Head of School Administration Affairs</li><li>➤ Head of the SSE Committee</li></ul>	>24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Policy chief-leader and implementer in SMI and SSE</li></ul>
T12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Vice Chinese Panel Head</li><li>➤ Head of Student Union</li></ul>	>14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Policy promoter and middle manager</li></ul>
T13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Vice English Panel Head</li><li>➤ Head of Career Committee</li></ul>	>11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Policy promoter and middle manager</li></ul>
T14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Geography Panel Head</li><li>➤ Head of Discipline Committee</li></ul>	>16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Policy promoter and middle manager</li></ul>
AP15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Chinese History Panel Head</li><li>➤ Assistant-principal</li></ul>	>24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Policy leader and implementer in SMI and SSE</li></ul>
T16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Chinese Teacher</li><li>➤ Moral and Civic Education Teacher</li></ul>	>5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ General teacher</li></ul>

Table 1: Details of the 6 Interviewees in School 1

The implementation experiences of SSE in School 1 to be reported are organised into

the contexts of Policy, Place and People (Honig: 2006) in the following sections.

#### **4.2.1 The Context of Policy**

##### **1991 - 1997**

In 1991, the idea of SSE policy was first introduced in the government document as School Management Initiative (SMI). It was construed as an initial move towards the stipulated practice of school-based management and SSE in HK public schooling system by ED. In 1991, SMI was just a policy idea. No SSE policy details, such as performance indicators (PIs), were stipulated by the government. In order to implement SMI policy, ED deployed a number of Education Officers (Administration) to establish a new section known as the School-Based Management (SBM) Section. By that time, ED wanted to establish a network of “successful SMI pilot schools” so that SMI policy could be further promoted to other schools. Therefore, around 20 government and aided schools were invited to join the pilot scheme for SMI.

The policy intent of the document was to address the school management problem in Hong Kong. SMI was published in 1991 following the internal circulation of a document called “*Public Sector Reform*” in early 1989 by the government. SMI drew on experiences of school management from Australia, Singapore, the UK and the USA (EMB & ED, 1991:25). SMI document revealed that the composition of the SMC in aided schools was unclear (EMB & ED, 1991:12). There was a lack of corporate identity for the SMC. SMI document also reported that “principals were little emperors” with “dictatorial power in the school” (EMB & ED, 1991:14). In addition, SMI document stated that “teachers were excluded from the decision-making process in the school” and new teachers were left to “sink or swim

with minimal help from more experienced colleagues” (EMB & ED, 1991:15).

In terms of performance measures, SMI document stated that there was “almost total absence of performance measures in aided schools” (EMB & ED, 1991:15). SMI document admitted that “no central guidelines had been provided on system development” (EMB & ED, 1991:24). It summarised by saying that “few schools had a formal and operationally useful statement of their educational goals. In other words, a formal procedure for setting policy, clearly-defined roles for supervisors, principals, the SMC was missed. Moreover, performance indicators for school performance, good morale for school improvement, training plans for principals and teachers, formal staff reporting procedures were not established by most schools (EMB & ED, 1991:26, Table 4).

SMI document then concluded with 18 recommendations for schools to adopt.

Excerpts of some of the recommendations were listed below:

- Recommendation 1: *“The emphasis in ED’s relations with the aided sector should change from detailed control to support and advice”* (EMB & ED, 1991:33);
- Recommendation 4: *“The roles of those responsible for delivering education in schools should be defined more clearly”* (EMB & ED, 1991:34);
- Recommendation 5: *“Every SMC should be required, under Education Regulation 75, to prepare a constitution setting out the aims and objectives of the school and the procedures and practices by which it will be managed”* (EMB & ED, 1991:35);
- Recommendation 8: *“The role and responsibilities of the principal should be set out in a principal’s Manual”* (EMB & ED, 1991:37);

- Recommendation 9: *“Formal staff reporting procedures should be required in all aided schools”* (EMB & ED, 1991:37);
- Recommendation 10: *“School management frameworks should allow for participation in decision-making, according to formal procedures, by all concerned parties including: all teaching staff; the principal; the SMC; and (to an appropriate degree) parents and students”* (EMB & ED, 1991:37);
- Recommendation 16: *“ a pilot scheme should be defined, and implemented from September 1991 in a cross section of schools of different types, catering for students of different ability ranges, and operated by various sponsoring bodies”* (EMB & ED, 1991:40);
- Recommendation 17: *“Each school in the public sector should produce an annual School Plan to guide its activities during the year”* (EMB & ED, 1991:41);
- Recommendation 18: *“Each school should prepare an annual School Profile covering its activities in the previous year and detailing school performance in a number of key areas”* (EMB & ED, 1991:42).

However, SMI document did not provide clear policy formalisation, policy procedures, policy instruments and work specifications for schools to follow. As a result, the public’s response was not favourable. ED then took the lead to implement a pilot project on SMI with around 20 schools in September 1991, as suggested in Recommendation 16.

After understanding the context of Policy from 1991 to 1997, the brief history of School 1 was discussed. School 1 was established in 1982. The first principal served only from 1982 to 1984 and resigned for personal reasons. The second

principal began his principalship in 1984 and left in 1997. He is thereafter called “the former principal” in this paper. The third principal began his principalship in 1997. He is still serving and is thereafter called “the new or serving principal” in this paper.

After 7 years of service in School 1, the former principal was invited to join SMI in 1991. When the former principal joined SMI pilot project in 1991, SMI was vague in policy specifications, formalisation, instruments and networking. Being a former Administrative Officer (AO) in the ED, the former principal agreed to participate in SMI pilot scheme in 1991:

*“Yes, we were the first batch of the pilot schools of SMI... because he (the former principal) was familiar with SMI and he was an administrative officer and was well-networked in the Education Department.” (VP1, p.1)*

*“When he (the former principal) served as the principal in our school, he was invited by the Education Department, together with other government schools, to be in the first batch of SMI schools in Hong Kong.” (VP1, p.1)*

*“In the past (1991) we emphasised (principal's) own observations and analysis (when conducting evaluation)... Most importantly, the former principal could see the problems. Yet, it (SMI) was still superficial and impression-based.” (VP1, p.1-2)*

However, SMI document only stated what the schools should do in the 18 recommendations. But it did not provide solutions to schools on how they could achieve the said recommendations. There were no policy specifications, no policy formalisations, no policy instruments and no policy templates provided by ED. For instance, no templates for annual school plans were provided. Also, the cyclical process of planning, implementation and evaluation in SMI was not clear to the schools.

*"There was no (specific indicators for success)." (AP15, p.7)*

*"The triennial practice in the past was not very clear." (AP15, p.1)*

*"Self-evaluation by the student union was not that definite." (T12, p.5)*

*"Yes, we evaluated (in SMI), but not in the form of a 3-year cycle. It was just for the reference for the next year.....we did not set performance indicators in implementing (SMI)." (VP1, p.1)*

*"As far as I could recall, annual school plans were not yet popular when SMI was first put in place." (AP15, p.6)*

Under such vague policy specifications and policy instruments, most schools were hesitant to join SMI, for fear of being the "white mouse" of the trial scheme. In School 1, the policy needs for joining SMI were unclear to teachers. The policy reason for School 1 being the pioneer in SMI was not well-understood. SMI was a totally new policy which was implemented in puzzlement:

*"(In 1991) Apart from schools, there was no atmosphere of conducting SMI in the society. How many of our colleagues knew there was a need to implement SMI?" (AP15, p.8)*

*"But colleagues would wonder why our school was the first batch to implement it (SMI), because we were one of the earliest schools [participated] in SMI." (AP15, p.8)*

*"Perhaps that (SMI) was not yet fully formalised (in formalisation and documentation) (in 1991) whereas now (SSE) is more formalised (in formalisation and documentation). Regardless of subject panels or committee heads, they have to conduct mid-term evaluation with concrete plans now (in SSE)." (VP1, p.8)*

*"When joining SMI, our school was initially not that used to supervision, and we could only grasp the details of SMI gradually." (AP15, p.7)*



From 1992 to 1993, the former principal began to formalise SMI in School 1. School 1 was invited by the ED to share their successful experience with other schools after just one to two years of implementation of SMI. Policy formalisation of SMI began in School 1 when teachers were invited to share with other schools their successful experiences. They formalised the cycle of Plan, Do, Check, Act and injected the notion of means-ends strategy in reviewing school policy.

*“While other schools did not know what was going on, we had put it (SMI) into practice, and even shared our experience with fellow workers (in other schools) in a year or two after implementation. ” (AP15, p.8)*

Policy documentation and policy specifications were gradually in place when the goals, guidelines and procedures were stated in writing. Teachers in School 1 believed that good policy documentation facilitated policy sustainability among colleagues. The former principal insisted on formulating good policy documentation and specification of SMI. Teachers’ manuals, job descriptions and guidelines were required to be developed from 1991 to 1997. Teachers felt strongly about the need to stipulate and write-up the plans from scratch. From 1991 to 1997, teachers had policy puzzlement about how to write the guidelines and procedures. Therefore, the former assistant-principals and the former principal had paid lots of attention to designing a program plan to submit to ED. Moreover, the evaluation conducted in SMI in School 1 was subjective and top-down:

*“Our belief at that time was: if you no longer worked there (in School 1), your successors would still know what to do. So although it seemed demanding, the thought behind it was noble..... Therefore, this message was very strong even when SMI was implemented in our school.” (AP15, p.8)*

*"One of the things in the implementation of SMI colleagues might find demanding was to write and stipulate job description (teachers' handbook)." (AP15, p.7)*

*"How should students be disciplined? What were the goals and guidelines? As far as I recall, these requirements were unnecessary before SMI was implemented." (AP15, p.7)*

*"At the beginning of SMI, the assistant-principal needed to formulate a program plan. He urged us to formulate a goal every year and then [formulated] a program plan for submission to the Education Department." (T14, p.5)*

However, policy networking and coordination and policy dissemination among committees was weak. The school plan was a compilation of work from various departments rather than a strategic and coordinated plan among different departments. Staff participation was low. General teachers were not given chances to participate in the implementation of SMI. Most teachers were green and relatively inexperienced. Consultation was rare and the implementation of SMI was top-down. Only the leadership knew how to implement SMI. Also, in the era of SMI, there was a weak atmosphere of public accountability. Teachers did not have the sense of accountability for the students' results. They were not used to monitoring and measurement of educational outcomes:

*"Basically, decisions were made by the principal, two vice-principals and one or two colleagues." (AP15, p.6)*

*"ESR required questionnaires to be filled-in under an atmosphere of accountability. Such mode (of SSE) was not adopted by the school in the era of SMI." (AP15, p.3)*

*"What the whole school provided was only a conglomeration of content offered by each subject panel with regard to the school theme for the year,*

*instead of a detailed annual school plan comprising goals, implementation, measurement approaches, implementation approaches and evaluation of effectiveness (required by SSE).” (AP15, p.7)*

*“Therefore, the meeting agenda of each subject panel had to be submitted. Someone would be assigned to collect them for merging (under SMI). No one was assigned to coordinate the process.” (AP15, p.6)*

The policy instrumentalisation of SMI was lacking from 1991 to 1997. SMI policy instruments needed in School 1 were developed mainly according to the former principal’s observations and feelings. For instance, the former principal defined poor teachers as “those who failing to maintain student discipline” instead of setting up objective performance indicators for teachers to follow. Teachers lacking classroom management skills were regarded as “poor teachers” by the former principal.

This was because School 1 was still new in the district when compared with other schools since its establishment in 1982. When School 1 implemented SMI, it had been established for only 9 years. Hence, student discipline in School 1 was the key development item to promote the school ethos and reputation:

*“I remembered that the English panel head had been “reprimanded” (by the former principal).....the former principal had many opinions, corrections and requirements for her (the English panel) subject program plans, and required her to report to him regularly. The principal was a bit dissatisfied. Therefore, I don’t rule out the possibility of any (principal’s) subjective or personal issues (in the evaluation of her performance). ” (AP15, p.5)*

*“Our former principal paid extra care to classroom management out of a belief that education does not take place in a mismanaged classroom.” (AP15, p.2)*

*"So, if the principal needed to conduct observation, it should have been something to do with classroom discipline." (AP15, p.2)*

*"I remember that the former principal did the investigation of teachers' performance himself over a certain period of time. The investigation went into great details." (AP15, p.2-3)*

## **1997 to 2002**

In September 1997, the Education Commission Report No.7 (ECR7) was published. ECR7 reinstated the ideas of SMI in 1991. ECR7 then injected the notion of aims of education and quality indicators such as school context and profile indicators, process indicators, output indicators and the participation of front-line educators. ECR7 proposed to put in place the policy of quality assurance in territory-wide scale mandatorily, including the internal quality assurance, school-based management, co-operation of key players in the school system, SSE and QAI. The ECR7 also raised the professional standards of principals and teachers. It brought in the continuous professional education of principals and teachers and participation in school work. In addition, other themes such as provision of suitable support, appraisal and promotion, the strategy and time frame for implementation for the 56 recommendations were included. Excerpts of some of the recommendations are listed below:

- Recommendation A1-10: *"Setting goals and developing indicators"* (ED, 1997:50);
- Recommendation B1-11: *"Putting in place a quality assurance mechanism"* (ED, 1997:51);
- Recommendation C1-12: *"Providing funding flexibility"* (ED, 1997:53);
- Recommendation D1-6: *"Providing incentives to encourage quality school education"* (ED, 1997:53);

- Recommendation E1-8: *“Raising professional standards of principals and teachers”* (ED, 1997:56);
- Recommendation F1-9: *“Implementing related reforms”* (ED, 1997:57).

In 1998, the Quality Assurance Inspection (QAI) (ED, 1998b) was established by ED under Branch 5 of ED to inspect the quality of schools under the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). QAI was established to audit school performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability at the territory level. QAI procedures were elaborately characterised into four stages. The four stages included the Pre-inspection, Actual School Inspection, Post-inspection and Schools’ Action Plan. QAI was responsible for conducting quality assurance inspections on 4 domains of the school.

QAI aimed at providing an external review of the performance of the school. In this connection, the findings in QAI report would be uploaded for public reference. Under the 4 domains of the school, there were 17 areas of performance indicators (PI). These included 6 areas under Management and Organisation (M&O), 4 areas under Teaching and Learning (T&L), 5 areas under Student Support and School Ethos (SSSE) and 2 areas under Student Performance (SP). In short, QAI policy became much more specified, formalised and instrumentalised.

Hence, starting from 1997, “educational quality” and “performance indicators” became popular concepts in schools after the publication of ECR7. As promoted in ECR7, the schools in Hong Kong were strongly encouraged to serve its stakeholders such as parents, students, and teachers through offering quality education.

In 1997, the former principal resigned and served as a school supervisor for another school under the SSB. One of the former principal's close sub-ordinates was selected to succeed his principalship through an open recruitment. The new principal started his duties duty in 1997. The new principal was a teacher who had been working in School 1 since 1984 for 13 years. The newly-appointed principal knew it was important to strengthen the policy instruments of SMI in School 1.

From 1997 to 2002, all program plans and teachers' professional development records were progressively supplemented with performance indices or success indicators (Figure 13). The new principal facilitated a lot of policy instrumentalisation. Some other documents with performance indices were shown to the researcher but they were restricted to read only in confidence:

*"There were something called indicators, which were not mentioned beforehand (in the era of SMI). The program plan contained a format dedicated to annual goal. Even teachers needed to submit a form to the principal individually, with one of the items dedicated to current-year achievements. Under the column of achievements, questions were asked about the performance indicators for those achievements." (T14, p.1)*



external evaluation mechanisms to assure educational quality respectively. EMB sent a letter entitled '*Enhancing School Development and Accountability through SSE and ESR*' to all schools. On 12 June 2003, this letter became a formal EMB circular 23/2003. The circular announced that there was a newly-launched Enhanced SDA framework.

Under the SDA framework, all schools would have to be monitored by two Quality Assurance (QA) processes, the internal SSE and the external ESR. For the internal SSE, schools were given measurement tools from July to September 2003. These included guidelines for SSE, templates for school plans and reports, the SHS to teachers, students and parents, the KPM and the APASO. Schools were required to conduct their annual evaluations and school reports and submit them to EMB. There were altogether 23 KPMs given by EMB to schools (Figure 14)

List of Key Performance Measures

Management & Organization	Learning & Teaching	Student Support & School Ethos	Student Performance
1. <u>Composition of SMC</u>	6. Teachers' and students' views on learning and teaching	11. Teachers', students' and parents' views on school culture	15. <u>HKAT</u>
2. Staff's views on school leadership	7. <u>Number of active school days</u>	12. Parents' views on home-school partnership	16. <u>RCA</u>
3. <u>Teachers' professional development (including principal CPD)</u>	8. <u>Lesson time for the 8 KLAs</u>	13. <u>Destination of exit students including early exits</u>	17. <u>HKCEE</u>
4. <u>Teachers' qualification and experience (including LFR)</u>	9. <u>Students' reading habit</u>	14. Students' attitudes to school	18. <u>HKALE</u>
5. School expenditure on learning and student support	10. Provision of co-curricular activities		19. Academic value-added performance
			20. Student participation in inter-school events
			21. Student participation in uniform / community service groups
			22. <u>Students' attendance</u>
			23. Students' physical development

Figure 14: List of Key Performance Measures



Among the 23 KPMs, 11 KPMs were selected for reporting on the web in the 2003/04 reporting cycle:

1. composition of SMC
2. teachers' professional development  
(including principals' Continuing Professional Development (CPD))
3. teachers' qualifications and experience  
(including Language Proficiency Requirement)
4. number of active school days
5. lesson time for the 8 Key Learning Areas
6. students' reading habits
7. destination of exiting students, including early exits (for secondary schools)
8. Hong Kong Attainment Test
9. Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination results (for secondary schools)
10. Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination results (for secondary schools)
11. students' attendance

In September 2003, a reference manual on evidence-based and data-oriented SSE was disseminated to schools. Schools were expected to produce their SDP, ASP, and SR. Schools were required to conduct their own SSE with the aforesaid tools. On 16 October 2003, EMB issued another circular, 269/2003, to disseminate the procedure details of reporting and data collection of the above KPM.

For the external ESR, its first cycle started from February 2004 to the end of 2006. ESR served as an external audit to verify and validate the authenticity of

schools' own results and progress of SSE. From May to December 2003, the Regional Education Offices (REOs) of EMB initiated the district collegiate groups for professional sharing and learning of SSE in phases. EMB organised seminars, reference manuals and guidelines for SSE. EMB also offered templates on ASP, School Reports, KPM and SHS to schools related to the requirement of conducting systematic and rigorous SSE. In February 2004, ESR was formally initiated.

In late 2003, the new principal, or the serving principal, strengthened policy networking of SSE. He promised the school senior administrators that no teachers would be "punished" as a result of the data found in SSE. When some teachers expressed the concern that they did not know how to follow up the data obtained, the principal waived them from handling sophisticated data analysis. He employed two teaching assistants to conduct the data analysis of SSE. Teachers were given the analysis of the findings for their interpretation only. The principal wanted SSE to be for "school improvement" only. He did not want SSE to be a "fault-finding process". Yet, he emphasised that the result of ESR & SSE was vital to the reputation of School 1 in the district. This was because poor results of ESR report would be uploaded by EDB for public and media access. For this reason, the new principal, teachers and other staff were very conscientious in preparing for SSE.

*"When SSE was launched in 2003, all staff of the school felt SSE might be a life-or-death situation to the school. Therefore, all colleagues, be it principal or janitors, felt the pressure. At the very beginning, we attached great importance to SSE by having a coordination committee (School Development Committee) and teachers dedicated to SSE-related work." (AP15, p.11)*

The principal then established a special committee called the School Development Committee (SDC) to steer the implementation process of SSE. The

composition of the SDC included the school administrators, middle managers and other general teachers with relevant expertise. The formation of the SDC was both position-based and expertise-based. The size of the SDC was around 5-6 teachers. Under the SDC, sub-committees were also established to prepare for the school-based questionnaires:

*"In 2003, we established a committee (called the School Development Committee at that time) ... Our committee designed questionnaires for the school, followed by setting some questions for individual committees." (T13, p.1)*

The principal was very supportive towards the implementation of SSE. The principal's commitment of resources, both manpower and physical, and his support for the implementation of SSE was not limited to just the onset of the policy. His commitment continued throughout the whole implementation process. The principal also steered the direction the SDC to prepare for SSE. However, the principal knew the implementation of SSE should be modified to fit the school's own context. The positive attitude of the principal towards SSE was due to his professional training in educational administration. The SDC also helped the principal safeguard the quality of the committee development plan or and the program plan. The SDC helped the principal observe teachers' lessons:

*"After 2003, the vice-principal arranged observation for each subject. The vice-principal lined up experienced teachers for some subjects, including me, and two English teachers, allowing mutual-observation among three teachers. We needed to be seriously involved in the pre-observation meeting, design our classroom plans, and take part in the post-observation meeting..... We would discuss and propose solutions and how to conduct the lesson." (T13, p.4)*

In order to resolve the policy puzzlement of teachers, the principal in School 1 aimed at strengthening the policy networking. He invited university partners such as the School Development and Evaluation Team (SDET) in the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and Hong Kong Institute of Education to offer SSE training for the teachers. The SDC also invited sharing from affiliated schools. Most teachers felt that the SDC helped other committees stipulate SSE strategies:

*"Yes, I remember two occasions – one involved the principal of a XX secondary school while another involved principal XX of our SSB. The latter case involved not only our school. It seemed to involve all secondary schools under the SSB." (T12, p.12)*

*"We once tried to invite a CUHK lecturer to give a full-day talk on self-evaluation encompassing objectives, structure, rationale, implementation approach, as well as introduction of questionnaires for such stakeholders as parents, students, teachers, and even janitor and school office staff.....I remember the annual plan of that year (2003) placed the setting up of a self-evaluation mechanism as one of the first priority." (T12, p.7)*

*"Therefore, as far as I recall, these experts came to the school as we bought up the whole package (offered by CUHK). They came to our school systematically to help colleagues in their ESR preparation through each of the stages." (AP15, p.14)*

The ESR report also confirmed School 1's participation in the above training:

*"School 1 joined the CUHK's self-evaluation project in 2003, and had participated in school-based SSE workshops for teachers and joining workshops and seminars organised by EMB and educational bodies to enhance teaching staff's knowledge of self-evaluation." (ESR report, p.3)*

In 2003, the new principal strongly reinforced the implementation of SSE. This was because he wanted to align SSE policy in School 1 with the compulsory

requirements of EDB. At that time, EDB issued an administrative instruction to all schools to conduct SSE. The new principal introduced and reinforced the policy indigenisation of SSE in School 1, especially in these few years. The rationale behind the implementation of SSE was clearly remembered by the teachers:

*“Theoretically every school had to conduct SSE and evaluate the targets they set so as to make improvement in future. We had to evaluate, then adjusted the progress and analysed the data to draw up our school plan next year... ..such as the planning, targets, implementation and evaluation and year-end evaluation.” (VPI, p.1)*

The SDC also drafted school-based questionnaires for different committees, processed data and identified problems in the process of conducting SSE. The SDC also provided sophisticated policy tools for subject panels. There were a total of 10 school-based policy instruments for implementation of SSE:

- a. templates for formal evaluation for subjects and committees in each term
- b. templates for submission of annual school plans, year-end evaluations, major concerns for the next three years (Figure 15)
- c. templates for procedures of implementing SSE by committee heads (Figure 16)
- d. templates for shared preparation and common free periods
- e. templates for professional development in formal appraisals
- f. templates for school-based questionnaires for different subjects (Figure 17)
- g. templates for lesson observation and book-checking exercise
- h. templates for statistical tools analysis

#### 強項

1. 本校定位清晰，以淳樸校風及嚴謹紀律，在區內擁有良好校譽。
2. 家校關係良好，家長熱心參與學校活動，並對校政鼎力支持。
3. 教師資歷優良，能奮進學習，具備教學熱誠和團隊協作精神。
4. 學生循規蹈矩，積極投入學校活動，師生關係融洽。
5. 校舍環境寬敞，設施齊備，是進德修業的理想園地。

#### 弱項

1. 每班的學生人數過多，加上學習能力差異，教師必須經常補課以追趕教學進度，影響了學生參與課外活動的機會。
2. 部份學生的語文基礎薄弱，對創意思維及批判性思考模式態度被動，甚或欠缺明確的學習目標。
3. 過半學生來自社經地位較低的家庭，普遍缺乏自信心和生活體驗，甚或構成負面的自我形象及人生觀。
4. 鄰近運動場，個別教室長期受噪音滋擾，影響課堂教學成效。

#### 契機

1. 政府投放資源發展教育，令學校的教學設施更臻完備。
2. 新高中學制推行在即，老師積極修讀各式課程，配合個人事業和學校發展所需。
3. 教統局推行校本管理、學校自評和校外評核，有助學校善用資源，提升教育成效。
4. 本校的管理人士變動極少，在協作和政策推行的效率上，均表現理想。
5. 教師積極鼓勵學生參與義工服務、製作校園短片、培育公民意識和籌辦聯校活動等，提升學校知名度，並培養學生的多元智能。

#### 危機

1. 教統局政策不斷更新，教師的行政工作倍增，未能專注於教學事務，更減少和學生相處的機會。
2. 學校步向創校銀禧紀念，超過廿載教齡的中層以上的管理人員數目日增，學校要解決行政及教學職務更替的接班人問題日益迫切。
3. 本區出生率下降，學生來源日減，加上新校的競爭，區內學校將面對縮班的壓力。

#### 未來三年學校發展計劃

Figure 15: Templates for Submission of Annual School Plans, Year-end Evaluation, and Major Concerns for the Next Three Years

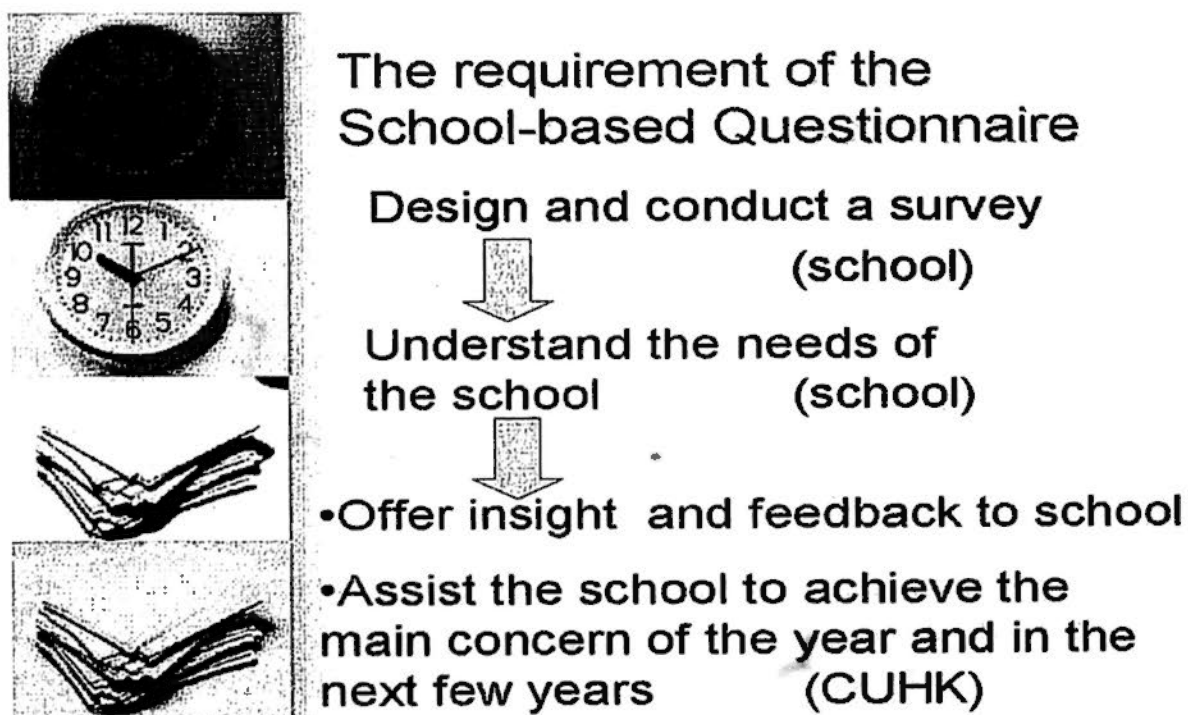


Figure 16: Templates for Procedures of Implementing SSE by Committee

#### Heads

School 1  
 「學生對本校追求學術卓越的意見」  
 Students' views about striving for Academic Excellence at School  
 問卷 Questionnaire

<p><b>指導須知:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 本校設計了這份問卷，供學校透過不記名的方式，收集你的學校的意見，以幫助學校發展。</li> <li>• 請按圖例的劃線或標法，選出一個最能表達你意見的選擇，並用鉛筆或黑色原子筆畫黑答題紙上所選擇的圓圈。</li> </ul> <p>例：                  非常同意 ○      ○      ○      極不同意 ○</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 每題只劃或上一個圓圈。</li> </ul>	<p><b>Guidance Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has designed this questionnaire for use by schools, through anonymous returns, to collect your views on your school to assist its development.</li> <li>• Based on your observation or perception, please select the choice which best reflects your views. Use either a pencil or black ball pen to <u>blacken</u> the circle on the answer sheet.</li> </ul> <p>e.g.                  Strongly agree ○      ○      ○      Strongly disagree ○</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply <u>one</u> choice only for each item</li> </ul>
<p><b>Domain 1 Classroom Teaching &amp; Learning Effectiveness</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">課堂內的教學效能</p>	
<p>1. 課堂上，我明白老師的講解。</p> <p>2. 課堂上，老師經常幫助我解決學習困難。</p> <p>3. 課堂上，老師經常向我們提問。</p> <p>4. 老師教學認真。</p>	<p>1. I understand the teachers' explanations and instructions in the class.</p> <p>2. The teachers often help me solve my learning problems in the class.</p> <p>3. The teachers often ask us questions in the class.</p> <p>4. The teachers are serious in teaching.</p>
<p><b>Domain 2 Wider Aspect of Teaching &amp; Learning Effectiveness</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">更廣泛層面的教學效能</p>	
<p>5. 老師願意在課堂以外的時間幫助我解決學習上的問題。</p> <p>6. 我對學習很有興趣。</p> <p>7. 我經常主動自覺地學習。</p> <p>8. 除課本外，我經常參考其他的資料，幫助學習。</p>	<p>5. The teachers are willing to help me solve my problems in the studies beyond class time.</p> <p>6. I am very interested in learning.</p> <p>7. I often take the initiative to learn.</p> <p>8. Apart from the textbooks, I often refer to other reference materials to assist my studies.</p>
<p><b>Domain 3 Assessment on Academic Performance</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">學術表現評估</p>	
<p>9. 我認真地完成課業。</p> <p>10. 老師能清楚地指出我在習作上的錯誤。</p> <p>11. 老師經常給予我意見，讓我了解自己的學習進展。</p>	<p>9. I complete my assignments seriously.</p> <p>10. The teachers can point out my mistakes in the assignments clearly.</p> <p>11. The teachers often make comments on my performance to help me understand my learning progress.</p>

Figure 17: Templates for School-based Questionnaires for Different Subjects

Some teachers recalled that in around 2005 to 2006, teachers were fully aware of how to conduct SSE. After a few years of hard work, School 1 was inspected by ESR team of EDB in May 2006. School 1 was rated as having good staff participation in the process of SSE. The subject panels and committees were appraised as proficient in using indicators and evaluation tools for SSE. In terms of school-based development of SSE in School 1, it was rated as good. Teachers also witnessed the change in policy networking and staff participation, especially during the lesson study and the common free periods:

*“I think that it was after 2003 or 2004. Around 2005 or 2006, we all fully understood how to conduct SSE, before ESR team of EDB was about to inspect us (in May 2006).” (T14, p.6)*

*"But after 2003, the vice-principal responsible for timetable setting would set aside a time slot for the English subject every cycle for us to talk down the issues of the week. Some questions were definitely asked, such as the progress and the difficulties encountered in the course of teaching. We shared on these matters first." (T13, p.4)*

ESR report of School 1 also served as corroboration:

*"Since the launch of self-evaluation, all teachers of School 1 had taken part in it at either subject or school level. A culture of self-evaluation had gradually set foot." (ESR report, p.3)*

*"In respect of subject-based self-evaluation, the subject panels could devise annual school plans in accordance with their own work and the school's major concerns, and could mostly select appropriate evaluation tools and set up successful indicators.....The subjects and committees could evaluate the progress of their major concerns in both the middle and the end of the academic year in a serious manner." (ESR report, p.3)*

*"The school had been actively involved in implementing self-evaluation, developing the self-evaluation mechanism and building up a culture of self-evaluation. The school's annual school plan could take its own situation into account while being in line with relevant development projects in its three years' plan, helping propel the school's long-term development." (ESR report, p.12)*

#### **4.2.2 The Context of Place**

The policy of SSE was spelt out for School 1 in 1991. The subsequent implementation of SSE was unavoidably shaped by the concrete community environment of School 1 in which School 1 is embedded. School 1 is a traditional secondary grammar school situated in a public housing district in Kowloon East. When School 1 was established in 1982, the student intake was low. Teachers did not expect much from their students in the public examinations because of the



Socio-Economic Status (SES) of students.

*"In fact at that time, our school was quite new and student quality was low. Therefore, pressure from public examination was not a strong motivating factor for colleagues' work." (AP15, p.2)*

The SES of the students' families in School 1 is relatively low. School 1 is located at a public housing district with an ageing population. Students in School 1 are mainly local district residents. Parents do not expect much from their children. They just want School 1 to "take care of their children well". When School 1 was newly-established in the early 1980s, most students were with low banding:

*"As our district is ageing and many families do not have high income. So, their economic status should be below average.....Maybe we refrain from expecting too much on their academic achievement. In the past, we expected more on them for.....their non-academic aspects." (VP1, p.6)*

Parents in School 1 are from the low-income group. The intellectual, social and cultural capital of parents in School 1 is not high. They are not active in monitoring the performance of teachers. Quite a number of them are housewives. Yet, they are willing to serve in School 1 as volunteers. Parental involvement in school policy is weak even though they are given chances to participate in SSE. The parents cannot exert their influence in monitoring the performance of School 1 and its teachers. It does not match with the policy aim of SSE to include parents as strong monitoring stakeholders to monitor the school's and teachers' performance. Despite this, parents in School 1 are willing to respond to the survey of SSE:

*"Our parents are not well-educated.....Our Parent-Teacher Association mainly consists of housewives." (T14, p.16)*

*"Previously, teachers from the Counselling Committee have conducted a*

*questionnaire survey on discipline and counselling style for parents, who have been asked on how many resources they have spent on their children.” (T14, p.18)*

*“We arranged different activities on Careers Guidance for students, followed by a detailed questionnaire on how such activities were run as well as how students performed. Parents also filled in the questionnaire... .. as we also organised activities for parents.” (T13, p.14)*

The student intake is just average. Their performance in public examination is just average. Yet, their results are still better than their counterparts in the territory-wide comparison. Students are passive in participating in school policy and administration. They are co-operative in learning and obedient. Their social exposure is limited. They have limited knowledge in education. Students do not know how to monitor the performance of teachers such as by studying the marking quality of their teachers. They exert weak pressure on their teachers and their school. They do not even know how what SSE is for when they complete SSE process. Students' academic performance is just fair. However, students' non-academic performance is very good. They are willing to participate in various extra-curricular activities. School ethos in School 1 is very good. Students generally have a sense of belonging in School 1:

*“(The students) do not know it (SSE). The teachers briefed (the students) before distributing the questionnaires, but (the students) neither tried it nor knew what was going on. ... (The students) completed more than 90 multiple-choice questions, only feeling that they had completed them. (The students) do not feel that self-evaluation is meant to improve school culture.” (T14, p.11)*

As the interviewees felt it was too sensitive if they disclosed too much information on the context of Place, the following quotes from ESR report serve as

strong corroboration:

*"In the past three years, students achieved better than their day-school counterparts in 5 subject passes or above and 14 points for the best 6 subjects in the HKCEE. For the best 6 subjects, students performed satisfactorily at expected level in the past three years with reference to their S1 intakes." (ESR report, p.11)*

*"Students are interested in learning, pay attention to teachers' presentation, responded to teachers' questions, and are happy to take part in classroom activities and group discussions on teachers' instruction. They cooperate with one another. But they seldom do pre-class preparation. Most of them learnt rather passively." (ESR report, p.8)*

*"In inter-school competitions, our athletics, men's football and women's table tennis teams performed particularly well. Students also performed well in Art, competing in a wide range of inter-school contests on music, speech, dancing, drama and graphic design and notching multiple awards. Students took part in community service enthusiastically amid the school's push for volunteerism." (ESR report, p.11)*

*"The school is of decent ethos with a strong sense of discipline. The students are courteous and obedient while developing brotherly affection among peers and a sense of belonging to the school. ... The teacher-student relationship is one of amicable, and students can take teachers' care and dedication to the heart." (ESR report, p.10)*

To summarise, the parents and students in School are not aggressive and articulate in monitoring the school's and the teachers' performance. This is because the intellectual, cultural and social capital of the parents and students is not strong. Teachers do not think they are monitored in the implementation of SSE. The parents and students in School 1 fail to exert the monitoring effects on teachers' and school's performance due to their limited intellectual, social and cultural capital, which is not as predicted in the government SSE documents.

### 4.2.3 The Context of People

To better understand the people of School 1, the following three dimensions will be discussed. First, the evolution of leadership including the leadership legitimacy, continuity and style of the principal will be described. Second, the team-building between the principal, middle management and the teachers will be delineated. Third, the concerted effort of the leadership and the team-building will be unfolded will be outlined.

The former principal was strong and autocratic when SMI was implemented in 1991. The former principal had served in School 1 since 1984. He was a former administrative officer. He had worked in the ED as a senior government official before joining School 1. He was the second principal in School 1 since its establishment in 1982. His legitimacy as a strong leader in the school was mainly invoked from his strong bureaucratic career working in government. He was efficient and very experienced in school administration and policy in the eyes of the teachers who were mostly newly-graduated teachers then:

*"(Our former principal) was capable, highly efficient and had experience working for Education Department, helping to enhance the school's administrative efficiency and achieve the desired outcomes expeditiously for all the measures implemented." (AP15, p. 3)*

*"This is because our former principal joined our school in 1984 at his 55. He led efficiently. The school was in its third year (since its establishment in 1982). At that time, many colleagues were quite green in the field. These inexperienced youngsters were less educationally exposed than him." (AP15, p.3-4)*

He was forceful and determined in implementing SMI in 1991. In addition, he was smart, efficient, autocratic, experienced and well-connected. In contrast, his subordinates were then relatively very young, inexperienced and weak. They were an aggregate of young and energetic teachers who subsequently matured to be experienced and effective middle and senior management at the time of the study. The former principal believed in accountability. He would criticise the teachers who had poor teaching performances. The former principal established his own inner cycle for political consideration. The pro-principal teachers, such as the former vice-principals, became his important subordinates. Such an autocratic principal leadership style had led to a few dissenting voices gradually:

*"The former principal was mature in terms of age and experience, and led with a strong hand." (T12, p.11)*

*"As you have mentioned, our former principal attached great importance to the Administrative Officer (AO) culture of accountability..... He might scold teachers who did not teach well." (T14, p.9)*

*"The former principal was authoritative and supreme in position, while the rank and file (basic rank staff) was lowly-rated." (AP15, p.9)*

*"They (principal and the vice-principal) were quite authoritarian.....The rank and file were seldom consulted. There were only few occasions for discussion. They were perceived as authoritative and dictatorial." (AP15, p.9)*

*"Front-line teachers and less experienced ones only worked as instructed. They appeared unqualified and unable to doubt the school's practice. The school was not used to consultation. The gap between the upper and lower echelons was wide.....Colleagues' opinions were not to be respected." (AP15, p.9)*

*"The former principal...could scold people either publicly or privately. He was good at polarisation. He managed to get good people around himself*

*while ignoring others." (T14, p.8)*

*"The principal and the two vice-principals who were experienced teachers had some ideas in mind in respect of the approach and key to school development. These seasoned educators had their own thoughts on school initiatives." (AP15, p.3)*

*"In fact, our former principal set his mind on the launch of some initiatives years before retirement. This brought forth some consequences." (T12, p.11)*

In 1997, the former principal resigned from School 1 and became the school supervisor of another school under the SSB. He nominated one of his close middle managers to succeed him as the new principal. The new principal is currently still in the same position. The new principal had been a teacher in School 1 since 1984. There were some dissenting voices towards the former principal for his dictatorial leadership style in the last 3 years of his leadership. During these three years, the new principal was the mediator between the middle managers and the former principal when conflicts arose. He then became the entrusted one between both parties. So, his legitimation base was accumulated during his service as a mediator between the former principal and other teachers. In addition, he had already worked in School 1 for 13 years when he began his principalship. His familiarity with School 1 also served as the legitimation base of his principalship.

The new principal was open to teachers' opinions. Teachers were offered autonomy within the guidelines given during his administration. He was visionary, people-attracting and sociable. In addition, he was able to ask others to help him by showing appreciation to his subordinates. Concerning the new principal, he had already had 28 years of teaching experience with 11 years as a principal when the field study was conducted in 2008. He had served as an instructor in the CUHK on

courses for aspiring principals. He has a Master's degree in Public Administration.

He was well-articulated and well-connected with field practitioners:

*"In the first few years, he was good at delegating work to those around him and didn't grudge praises to them." (T14, p.9)*

*"He was also awarded Master of Public Administration from Poly U. He believes in public management theories. What's good is that he has been a teacher, so he won't copy this theory and directly applies to education and schools." (VP1, p. 5)*

*"He certainly accepts (SSE) as he wants to know how well the school is doing in a scientific manner. Thus, he invited the SDET from CUHK to assist implementing school-based SSE through establishing the SSE committee." (VP1, p.4)*

The ESR report also confirmed the skillful leadership of the principal:

*"Taking the helm for nearly a decade since 1997, the principal was an aspirant educator. He also attached great importance to a harmonious working environment and communication among teachers." (ESR report, p.4)*

He also showed effective leadership in curriculum development. In addition, he was intelligent, tactful and knew how to solve the problems of the teachers without having conflicts with them. He was approachable and believed in positive non-interferism with regard to school policy.

*"The principal knew clearly that people had different problems, but he would not be on unfriendly terms with them because of these problems." (T14, p.9)*

*"We could enter the principal's room to talk with him any time. He adopted a free-hand approach and didn't mind varieties... There was not much opposition." (T12, p.11)*

*"The new principal has strong affinity, be it to students or teachers. So, colleagues don't need to present their views in line with him, and ideas are presented intuitively. The principal and teachers communicate well in this regard...The new principal was promoted from among colleagues. Those in the middle tier are experienced teachers having served the school since establishment (in 1982). Having got along with one another for a long time, they communicate well and are in good terms. Some have even developed friendship among themselves." (AP15, p.11)*

The ESR report also confirmed the same observations of teachers:

*"The principal was good at strategic planning and spearheading curriculum development. He could lead effectively and monitor progress of different initiatives." (ESR report, p.4)*

*"When it came to policy implementation, the school kept its mind open to consult teachers' views." (ESR report, p.10)*

The principal chose to delegate power to the senior managers and the middle managers. His delegation of power was also found to be effective in building staff relationships and trust towards middle management. The principal was good at collecting teachers' feedback in informal settings. Multiple channels were provided for vertical communication. Informal communication channels were also widely used:

*"At least teachers dare to speak out their feeling in the informal setting. Our principal also listens to their voice and will lessen the requirement accordingly. In other words, he knows the practical situation." (VP1, p.6)*

*"So I feel that he can collect much information as he always comes to the staff room to talk with colleagues. Naturally, colleagues can make some influence on school policy, albeit not in a decisive manner." (AP15, p.10)*

*"During recess, the new principal always comes to the staff room to talk with teachers on everything. He does not confine himself to the principal's*



room." (AP15, p.10)

He valued harmony, consensus and rational decision-making. Consensus building and rationalisation of policy were encouraged. He knew when to show his authority so that teachers would obey and attain the pre-designated requirements:

*"(The leadership) value consensus and respect others. They don't lead with strong hands. Even though they demand us to do something with strong hands, they offer many reasons and ground works for you to accept and understand their rationale." (T12, p.10)*

*"So, I think the school pursues harmony in essence rather than as a slogan. Harmony contributes to the whole school." (AP15, p.15)*

*"I don't think there are colleagues who are deaf to warning and have to be subject to tough actions.....Tough actions will give rise to white terror, which you can act tough on many other colleagues if one is being tough. Harmony begins to deteriorate" (AP15, p.15)*

*"In its evaluation on staff, the school puts much emphasis on development. It doesn't want to take appraisal as a tool to act tough on teacher staff." (AP15, p.14)*

Yet, sometimes he allowed negotiation when facing opposition. He allowed some hesitant subject panels to be exempted from conducting the school-based SSE at the initial stage. He strategically implemented the policy indigenisation of SSE in phases to avoid strong opposition from panel heads. But his perseverance in implementing SSE was recognised by the teachers:

*"We attempted to expand (the implementation of) SSE to other subjects, but finally we could expand to Physics and Integrated Science only....." (VP1, p.4)*

*"At first not, then later we had (school-based questionnaires) at Chinese, English and Maths.....Then later we had Maths and Physics. Our principle was that we did not force our subject panels to conduct SSE but let them initiate themselves." (VP1, p.4)*

*"The principal's role (in self-evaluation) is prominent. Teachers also feel the school will do some kinds of things. So teachers become more aware, knowing that they need to make their work known to others." (T13, p.16)*

He also served as an appointed district councillor on the District Board. His interpersonal skills were excellent. The principal tended to avoid conflicts in staff management. Some teachers expressed their concern over this mild and loose staff management. But the overall comments from colleagues on the new principal were very positive.

*"The principal stated clearly that he would not act tough, like issuing letters or verbal warning, because of this (the result of SSE)." (T14, p.5)*

*"But the principal had explicitly stated the goals for us when conducting self-evaluation. We know clearly what to do and what to achieve." (T14, p.7)*

*"In fact the principal supported (self-evaluation) very much. He asked about situation in either mid-year or year-end evaluation every year." (T13, p.3)*

From 1995 to 1996, there was a brain drain of principals in Hong Kong due to the re-unification of Hong Kong with China. The former vice-principals and the assistant-principals left School 1 to become principals in other schools. Hence, the vice-principals and the assistant-principals in 1997 were newly-promoted around that period. They were indeed the "new teachers in 1984 in School 1" and "of the same generation or colleagues at that time" of the new principal.

As a result, when the new principal was promoted, he deliberately delegated the newly-appointed vice-principals and the assistant-principals power in making decisions for school policy. The 4 senior administrative teachers also proactively assisted the principal. They started their teaching careers in School 1 between 1984 and 1986. At the time they entered School 1, they were new university graduates. But in 1997, they were experienced school administrators with growing legitimacy. They monitored teachers' performance and also bridged the communication gap between the top and the middle managers and teachers. One vice-principal (VP1) was well-trained in educational administration and was the Head of the SSE committee. Another assistant-principal was proactively assisting the implementation of SSE for VP1. She contacted the subject panels and steered the development of SSE. In 2008, the four senior administrators were the "veterans" of SSE policy:

*"It should be based on my position....my professional training..... Yes, I have taken courses such as ESR & SSE. I have taken them when I studied my Master of Education (MEd) in Educational Administration..... Certain courses touched on (SSE)." (VP1, p.3)*

*"A vice-principal was more involved in SSE..... He contacted the Heads of the Chinese, English and Mathematics subjects and then discussed it in teachings' meetings. Or he explained it to all colleagues publicly in staff development meetings. Down to the subject-based level, we added explanations in accordance with the situation of individual subjects." (T12, p.3)*

The ESR report also confirmed the 4 school administrators were effective in assisting the principal:

*"As helping hands to the principal, the four school administrators can perform their duties, coordinate, initiate and monitor the work of relevant subject divisions, and serve as a bridge between teachers and the leadership." (ESR report, p.5)*

There was a strong team of middle managers. The middle managers started their teaching career in School 1 between 1984 and 1997. In 1997, they were moderately experienced school managers with developing legitimacy. At the time they entered School 1 in 1984, they were new university graduates. In School 1, implementation of SSE was partly attributed to a strong team of these middle managers. They valued team performance rather than individual performances of the teachers. They were effective leaders and communicators. They were empowered by the new principal. The relationship among the Senior Graduate Master/Mistress (SGMs) was good. They were effective in building consensus and “selling policy” to teachers. They valued harmonious consensus. The SGMs also knew how to avoid conflicts with teachers:

*“We have some senior teachers who can exchange information among themselves. Should there be any problems, they will discuss and handle it proactively.” (T12, p.11)*

*“Since we are a team, no one ask about (the performance) of individual teachers of the same form. We consider individual evaluation discouraging and unfair” (T13, p.7)*

*“Those in the middle tier are experienced teachers having served the school since establishment. Having got along with one another for a long time, they communicate well and are in good terms. Some have even developed friendship among themselves.” (AP15, p.11)*

*“We trust one another. We did not want a pyramidal management approach. We only hope to reach consensus through multiple informal group discussions and negotiations.” (VP1, p.6)*

*“I believe the subject panels had discussed with their teachers. We trained the subject panel and the committee head on the aspect of SSE as they are middle managers. Then they further explained to their teachers.” (VP1, p.9)*

The ESR report also confirmed the same observations of teachers:

*"Subject heads' performance is generally up to standard. They can lead members effectively to initiate and complete projects. They perform well in communication and monitoring." (ESR report, p.5)*

*"The principal is in good terms with teaching staff, open-minded, able to delegate power appropriately and trust managers in the middle-tier." (ESR report, p.4)*

An atmosphere of support was built up among panels. Teachers welcomed and respected their subject panels. For example, most of the teachers were supportive in the English panel. Mild monitoring was also found in the Chinese panel.

*"The English Committee is of a supportive ambience. Some colleagues like to share with others. 80% of the committee members are supportive." (T13, p.12)*

*"And our (Chinese) panel head does not demand too much from us. She understands us very much. She only expects up-to-standard performance, and will not have unreasonably high expectations for everything to our displeasure. She does not require 100% compliance to school policy. We just need to try our best. She is tolerant and not picky with regards to implementation of school initiatives (SSE)." (T12, p.4)*

*"(I) and the subject panel lead out of the belief that colleagues are doing their best. Once the quantitative requirement is met, there is room to discuss the qualitative side. We don't want to be picky, but to have mutual-observation. So, teachers are not resistant" (T12, p. 4)*

Teachers were diligent in School 1. The resignation rate in School 1 was very low. There were quite a number of teachers leaving School 1 in 1984 due to the arrival of the former autocratic principal. So, there was a large batch of newly-recruited teachers joining School 1 in 1984. They had served in School 1 for a long time. Since 1997, teachers' culture had become more harmonious, supportive,

positive and proactive. They had a strong sense of belonging. Greater participation in school policy was encouraged. It was the choice of the school leadership in School 1 to be mild towards under-performing teachers because School 1 aimed at safeguarding the general development of the school:

*"I think teachers of the school are highly motivated in general." (AP15, p.18)*

ESR report of School 1 also served as corroboration of the above quote:

*"Under the leadership of the principal and vice-principal, teachers share the same goals and carry out their work in good team spirit, ensuring stable development for all aspects. Teachers have generally developed a sense of belonging to the school amid a harmonious working relation between the leadership and staff." (ESR report, p.5)*

*"The teaching staff identify with the school's direction. They work responsibly and seriously, and they are in good terms supporting each others. They take a positive view towards trends in education and exhibit teamwork." (ESR report, p.10)*

Most teachers were obedient. Teachers in School 1 were co-operative, harmonious and close. Both informal and formal communication channels were widely adopted. Verbal communication and encouragement were chosen and adopted by the school to avoid a fearful and oppressive atmosphere:

*"You may say this is collective responsibility. This means teachers will agree to the changes proposed by the leadership. The atmosphere of cooperation in the school is strong." (T12, p.10)*

*".....such as dining, casual accouterment. These informal gatherings work even better than formal discussion with greater flexibility..... At least teachers dare to speak out their feeling in the informal setting....." (VP1, p.6)*

*"Apart from the description provided by the central source, we also do a lot of penetration in the form of causal talking, be it during lunchtime or in the corridor .....a kind of informal discussion in private settings." (T12, p.10)*

ESR report of School 1 also served as corroboration of the above quotes:

*"The school has many channels in place to enhance top-down and inter-subject communication and collaboration." (ESR report, p.5)*

Like every organisation, there were some not-so-proactive teachers in School 1. There was a sub-culture of "staying with the norm" and "refusing to pursue excellence in teaching" among them. Some teachers felt that the harmonious culture was the shield against teachers' open conflict. Yet, the problems of "under-performing teachers" were not common in School 1. When encountering different views, teachers could control themselves and be rational about the issue:

*"The current teachers of this school wanted to fulfil the job requirements only (instead of pursuing job excellence)." (T16, p.4)*

*"No, they don't refuse. Usually if you assign a task, they do for you though they may ask you for reference.....they won't refuse to complete the task. It's not the way we run in our school, at least something will be submitted." (VP1, p.11)*

*"It should be committee heads, who are usually more resistant to SSE..., so some committees did the questionnaires while some didn't." (VP1, p.4)*

*"Actually, we did not request other subjects to implement SSE. Yet, for Chinese, English and Maths, we have requested them. But if these subjects were given chances not to implement SSE, they would have opted for not joining it. (VP1, p.4)*

*"I think this is still under control, and colleagues do not act rashly..... He gives us a lot of freedom under the scope he has control of." (T12, p.11)*

Implementation of SSE in School 1 was actually an interactive process of negotiations, compromises and adjustments by the principal, senior management, middle managers and the general teachers.

As an example of negotiation and compromise, the following story is described below. From 1991 to 1997, there was little negotiation between the leadership and middle management as the former principal was autocratic. From 1997 to 2002, the implementation of SSE was mainly on the policy instrumentalisations such as development of the school-based indicators. This development was reported during the informal dialogues between the researcher and the interviewees. Such technical development did not trigger opposition from panel heads. Hence, there was little negotiation in School 1.

In 2003, as the new principal wanted the subject panels to use the newly-developed tools, there was some opposition from the middle managers. Therefore, the school management made compromises in the implementation of SSE. Some panel heads threatened that, if the questionnaires were conducted at the individual teacher level, they would boycott SSE questionnaires. The principal then adopted a soft attitude and made compromise with teachers in exchange for their support for the policy. At that time, the principal aimed at school improvement only rather than fault-finding to minimise the political resistance. But the principal demanded that all teachers had to participate in SSE:

*"You have to do as required by the principal. In fact, if the principal has nothing to demand, no one will do anything." (T14, p.7)*



The vice-principal could not persuade all the panel heads to conduct SSE easily. The school-based questionnaires were only used in some subjects. The senior management faced the resistance of some middle managers in conducting SSE. In this regard, the principal adopted a mixed approach----some panels used the school-based SSE questionnaires while some were temporarily exempted from using them. The data obtained was not seriously considered. The principal then established the School Development Committee which helped reduce the resistance of some panels when conducting SSE:

*"It should be committee heads, who are usually more resistant to SSE..., so some committees did the questionnaires while some didn't." (VP1, p.4)*

*"Apart from setting up a School Development Committee, the principal also invited colleagues with rich experience and strengths in this aspect (SSE) to join it." (AP15, p.14)*

*"We have set up a dedicated committee (the SDC) comprising experienced teachers with administrative exposure. Naturally, some members of the SDC are aspirants. There should be about five to six members, including the assistant-principal." (AP15, p.11)*

*"They (The SDC) set up action plans and stipulate the questionnaire. A sub-committee has been set up (under the SDC) later on, where a few middle-tier colleagues are responsible for writing the questionnaire." (T12, p.2)*

*"Colleagues from the Academic Committee communicate with subject heads about the self-evaluation mechanism as well as teachers' role in self-evaluation....." (T13, p.13)*

*"When the assistant-principal in charge of ESR needed updated information, the SDC could submit it quickly to the day-to-day meeting for our discussion. If there was any need to expand the scope of the meeting, we would do so. We might even extend it as a meeting for all staff members." (AP15, p.12)*

The principal chose to measure the performance of the teachers on form-basis rather than on individual-basis only. Some panels and teachers held doubtful attitude towards students' evaluation. They tended to protect the feeling of teachers. As the data was on the form-basis, no individual teachers would be spotted. As a result, teachers did not feel being monitored and became less resistant to SSE:

*"But teachers had some fear and resistance. First, they did not want to get involved. Second, they doubted whether it was for future evaluation. In general, some teachers had this mindset, but they had followed it (SSE) as this is the trend." (T12, p.3)*

*"I don't feel any colleagues who resist to SSE strongly as it is a routine only. Evaluation is one of the items in our meeting which penetrated in our work...Below 10% are relatively negative....." (VP1, p.11)*

*"The school's expectation is not high. It does not require us to look for problems of every student in detail.....I only do some superficial work." (T12, p.18)*

The principal in School 1 also avoided linking SSE to sensitive issues such as dismissal, appraisal and promotion in order not to upset teachers. Some teachers felt that the current practice of SSE was satisfactory:

*"10% are neutral, and no one says no. First, no one dares to say no. Second, there is no point to say no, as it can exist without causing any consequences..... If it involved such issues as ... appraisal, promotion or contract renewal, 90% would say no... as it would disrupt their work. Who wants to be scolded or criticised?" (T14, p.19)*

*"We don't think teachers have much query when putting it into practice. They do it as instructed." (T12, p.6)*

Regarding the negotiations between the panels and teachers, the panels chose to design and endorse the school-based questionnaires along with teachers. The vice-principal pointed out that the subject panels had to work with their teachers. They obtained their consent in endorsing the school-based questionnaires. Discussion and explanation had been given by the subject panels to the teachers. Panels would explain clearly to the panel members about the implementation of SSE.

Hence, the managerial side on SSE was not emphasised. The panels were accommodating and not very critical of the results of SSE as long as teachers could complete the process of SSE satisfactorily. This was because the panels and Teachers were focusing on at school improvement only. Facing the occasional low performance of teachers, panels were lenient:

*"They collected from outside much information regarding the work, procedures and requirements of SSE and ESR implementation. What they had collected has been put onto the school's server for us to understand what main points other schools would include in their self-evaluation reports when self-evaluation was implemented. In other words, we collected information from outside and made it known within the school." (AP15, p.12)*

*"What I want to point out is that SSE is a good but bitter medicine that enhances both the school's reputation and student quality. (T14, p.18)*

To summarise, the context of Policy, Place and People interacted and became an organic complexity. To illustrate the complex interaction, Figure 18 offers delineation as follows:

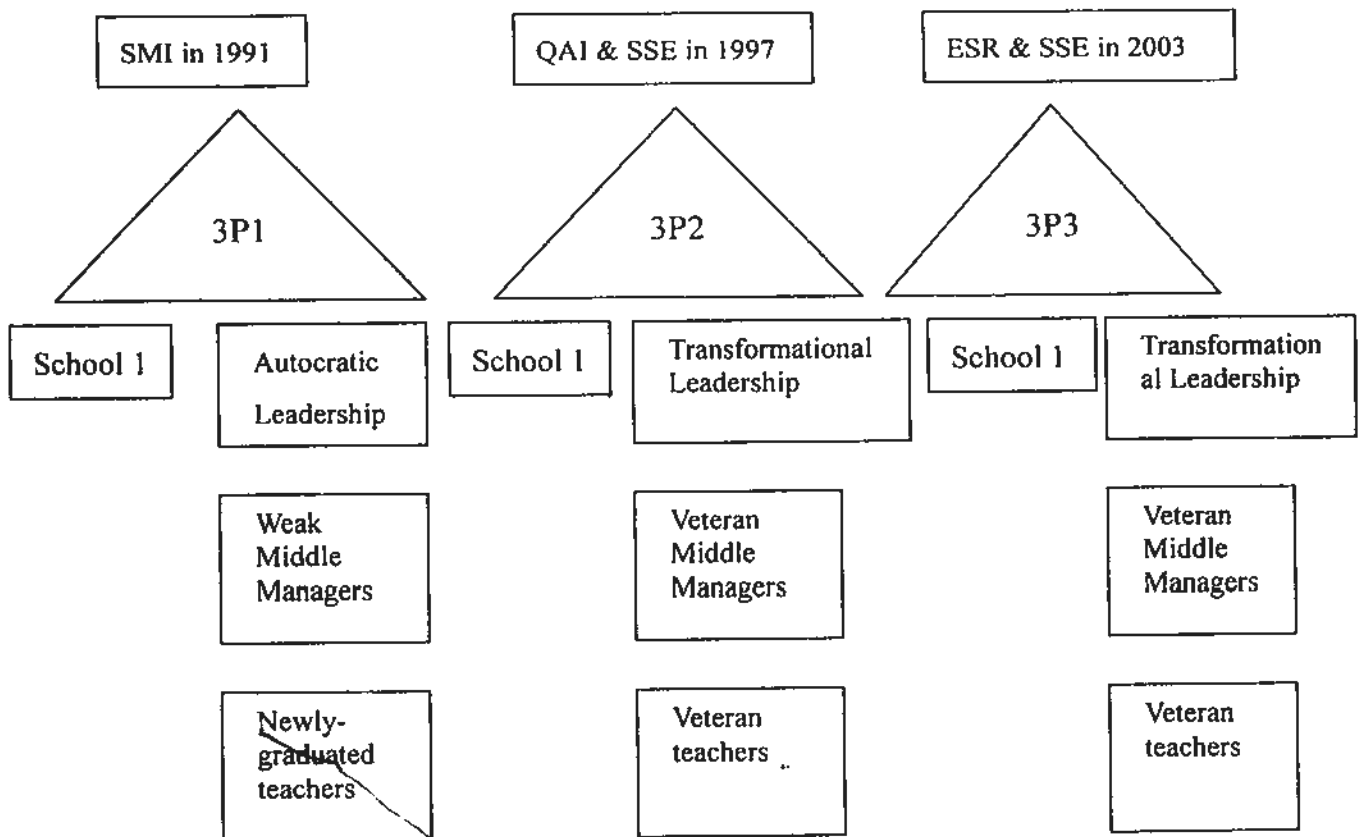


Figure 18: 3Ps Model for School 1

The context of Policy in School 1 was characterised into 3 stages: Stage 1:1991 - 1997; Stage 2:1997 - 2002; Stage 3: 2003 - 2008. In stage 1, SMI document did not provide clear policy formalisation, policy procedures, policy instruments and work specifications for schools to follow. But School 1 joined SMI in 1991 and started policy formalisation, policy documentation and policy specifications in 1992 and 1993. From 1991 to 1997, teachers had problems of policy puzzlement, policy networking, policy penetration, policy dissemination and policy instrumentalisation.

In Stage 2, QAI and SSE policy became mandatory and more specified, formalised and instrumentalised. The new principal resolved the problems of policy puzzlement by providing policy instrumentalisation, staff participation and consultation.

In Stage 3, SSE and ESR were complemented with measurement tools such as guidelines for SSE, templates on school plans and reports, the SHS to teachers, students and parents, the KPM and the APASO. There were altogether 23 KPMs given by EDB, among which 11 were selected for reporting on the web. Also, the first cycle of ESR started from February 2004 to the end of 2006. The new principal resolved the problem of policy puzzlement by policy networking and policy indigenisation.

For the context of Place, the intellectual, social and cultural capital of students and parents are limited. Their monitoring effects on teachers are not strong, which were not as predicted in the government SSE document.

For the context of People, the former principal started to serve in School 1 in 1984. He demonstrated strong governmental-bureaucratic know-how and established his autocratic leadership. In 1997, a new principal, or the serving principal, established his legitimation for his mediator role and familiarity of School 1. There was a strong team of middle managers. They became “veterans” in implementing SSE. Teachers were diligent in School 1. As a result, the progressive maturity of the principal, middle managers and teachers made the teamwork of School 1 strong. Hence, there was a concerted effort of the leadership, middle managers and the general teachers. This successful combination of people accounted for the successful implementation of SSE. Implementation of SSE had got hold in school 1.

## 4.3 School 2

### The Background of the School

School 2 is a traditional secondary grammar school. It is situated in a district in the New Territories with many old public housing estates, subsidised housing and private buildings. School 2 has been established for 58 years since 1950. The banding of student intake in School 2 is around 2.5 out of 3 in the SSPA System. It is a co-educational school under the purview of a Christian SSB and uses Chinese as Medium of Instruction (CMI).

### Interviewees of School 2

There were a total of 6 interviewees and their posts and teaching experiences are listed in Table 2:

Interviewee code	Post	Years of service in School 1	Role in implementing SMI and subsequent SSE policies in School 1
T21	➤ Senior Form English Teacher	>10	➤ General Teacher
T22	➤ Mathematics Teacher	>10	➤ General Teacher
H23	➤ Head of SSE Committee ➤ Biology panel Head	>20	➤ Policy chief-leader and implementer in SSE ➤
T24	➤ Senior Form English Teacher	>10	➤ General Teacher
T25	➤ Panel Head of Religious Studies ➤ Head of Civic Education	>25	➤ Policy promoter and middle managers
T26	➤ Liberal Studies Teacher ➤ Moral and Civic Education Teacher	>10	➤ General Teacher

Table 2: Details of the 6 interviewees in School 2

### 4.3.1 The Context of Policy

#### 1998 to 2002

Implementation of SSE in School 2 started in 1998. For the context of Policy for SSE and QAI in Hong Kong, please refer to Stage 2 of School 1 (see Section 4.2.3). Based on the key concepts offered in ECR7, School 2 launched SSE policy. School 2 developed policy formalisation and policy specifications in 1998. Formal meetings were frequently conducted to formalise SSE procedures:

*"In fact, the school had begun to do some form of self-evaluation long ago. It has been in place for more than a decade (since 1998). Over the past decade, it had become more systematic. With the implementation of External School Review in 2004, the school has been working to make the thing look better." (H23, p.1)*

*"We all knew nothing (about self-evaluation) in the initial period since its establishment (in 1998), so naturally we needed to meet formally to discuss it. But it was implemented with three years as a cycle .....There was no problem (in the implementation of SSE) when we alerted one another via the school intra-net." (H23, p.8)*

*"It was difficult to fix a time for meetings. Meetings were held in formal manner, thus making us uneasy. As we were all busy, it might be easy to set a date of meeting for one to two colleagues, but not so for three to four." (H23, p.7)*

In addition to the quotes above, ESR report of School 2 offers further corroboration:

*"The school has been working proactively to improve itself. Since mid-1990s, a self-evaluation mechanism has been gradually developed based on the school's direction of development and needs." (ESR report, p.3)*

In around 2000, SSE policy in School 2 was systematic and quite well-planned. Specifically, there was development of policy instruments for different KLAs.

Different KLAs rotated and became the major concern of the school in the implementation of SSE. Gradually, the norm of conducting SSE in different subjects was established. There was little resistance in the implementation of SSE in School 2 because middle managers and teachers in School 2 were obedient:

*"In the beginning, (self-evaluation) was conducted for other subjects once in three years. Say... it was conducted for Chinese language this year, Mathematics for next year, and Science for the third year. This meant each KLA became a major concern of SSE every year by rotation." (T21, p.3)*

*"The questionnaire reminded me that in reflecting children's response in the questionnaire, I needed to focus on trend of the SSE results, i.e. the feedback of the whole class, whole form or whole school. I might not take into consideration the views of one or two students." (T25, p.4)*

*"This is because I was worried about the use of the results from self-evaluation. The school might need to follow up the situation proactively after implementing self-evaluation. It would be a futile exercise if follow-up was inadequate and teachers did not reflect on it thoroughly." (T22, p.8)*

*"I don't think there was negotiation. Whatever we needed to do, we would discuss in the staff meeting and decide what we should do. It was a clarification process, not negotiation." (H23, p.2)*

*"In fact the government wanted us to do self-evaluation, and the principal wanted us to develop a self-evaluation culture. Therefore, we had done it (SSE) these years. SSE had to be carried out sooner or later, but the principal had explained many times for the benefits of self-evaluation or External School Review on teaching. So, we carried it out." (T26, p.5)*

*"If the opposite side (teachers opposing to SSE) had decided to make a response, the resistant teachers and I would get into trouble. There was a need to remind the resistant teachers." (H23, p.7)*

*"..the teachers had kept on asking, 'Why do we need to do it?' Actually asking this question would get them into trouble. So teachers just got it (SSE) done and that's it." (H23, p.4)*



From 2000 to 2002, the SSE Committee had further developed the policy indigenisation and policy instrumentalisations in accordance with the key SSE concepts stated in ECR7. According to the informal dialogues with teachers in School 2, the implementation of SSE went as follows.

To begin with, lesson observations were conducted twice a year to evaluate teaching effectiveness. The principal also observed teachers' lessons without prior notice. Book checking was conducted as part of SSE policy. Form meetings were organised by teachers from the same form 2-3 times a year. Formal and informal evaluation meetings were held for evaluating the teaching progress. The former were conducted 2 to 3 times a year whereas the latter were conducted on a regular basis. Frequent meetings were conducted using performance indicators to ensure teachers were able to keep track of their teaching progress. The reviewing of examination papers by the SSE committee also strengthened the quality of assessment at panel level. Submission of an annual school plan, a year-end evaluation, and major concerns was also routinised in School 2.

### **2003 to 2008**

By 2003, SSE policy in School 2 had already been implemented for 5 years since 1998. School 2 joined SSE project organised by the SDET in the CUHK to conduct a SWOT analysis and action plan. This helped reinforce the foundation of SSE in School 2.

In 2004, School 2 also started policy networking with other SSE pioneers in the Hong Kong Schools Self-evaluation Networks (HKSSSEN). The HKSSSEN was chaired by an EDB advisor on SSE, Archie McGlynn. McGlynn was the co-author

with John MacBeath of a series of SSE books in the UK and Europe. In 2004, ESR team from EDB came to inspect School 2. They gave a high appraisal of the implementation of SSE in School 2.

From 2004 to 2008, senior teachers in School 2 were sent to advanced SSE workshops and trainings organised by EDB. After this, they could implement SSE in School 2 tailored to their own context:

*"The principal was willing to put in resources. For example, the school had a self-evaluation network (HKSSSEN) in which he was also involved. So, there was more than enough support." (H23, p.3)*

*"Our school was a pioneer (in HKSSSEN). We were of the first batch to take part in External School Review in its first year of implementation (2003/2004 school year)." (T21, p.1)*

*"But ESR was new and unfamiliar to our teachers, so there was something to worry. The Education Bureau had also offered many workshops and seminars. I had joined nearly all activities. Support was adequate and useful. I had joined them in the company of some senior teachers. I somehow felt it's a collective undertaking and participation." (H23, p.3)*

ESR report of School 2 offers further corroboration of the above quotes:

*"The school has proactively taken part in self-evaluation. Over the past two years (2003/2004 school year), School 2 has joined the "Self-evaluation by Schools and School-based Performance Indicators Programme" organised by the CUHK to effectively collect data for its reflection and analysis, offering clear-cut indicators and action proposals for the school's development." (ESR report, p.3)*

In 2004, there was the development of performance indicators in school-based lesson observation during the period. The principal in School 2 formalised the use of

performance indicators with which lesson observations were assessed and completed the process of policy indigenisation of SSE. 80% of teachers agreed with his advocacy in time. There was also the development of school-based questionnaires. Every student in every class was given questionnaires from the SSE committee. The result of SSE would be announced to the panel head for further discussion with his or her panel members:

*"This was because the principal thought that with self-evaluation, some evaluation criteria could be used during classroom observation to assess whether teachers' teaching quality was up to standard. More than 80% of teachers were of a similar line of thought." (T26, p.14)*

*"A questionnaire survey was conducted for each student of every class. The SSE Committee was responsible for distributing the questionnaire and announcing the results to each panel head, who would discuss with us (teachers) the data and our overall performance. Performance of individual teachers was not mentioned in the general meeting." (T26, p.2)*

*"The time when we encountered puzzlement was the implementation of school-based and subject-based questionnaires in implementation of SSE. Teachers puzzled how much modifications they should make. But in fact, we gave them lots of autonomy to modify the subject-based questionnaires to fit the context of their own subjects. As long as the school-based and subject-based questionnaires were reasonable and reported in the panel meeting, we would probably accept the modification made (at panel or committee level)." (H23, p.2)*

This policy indigenisation of SSE (Figure 19) and school-based questionnaires penetrated through every KLA so that implementation of SSE could be deeply implemented. Some subjects, such as Religious Education (RE), were exempted from the implementation of SSE. This was because RE was not a subject for the HKCEE. Also there was only 1 RE lesson per cycle. Moreover, School 2 also offered technical support in processing data when colleagues did not know how to conduct SSE:

*"We conducted self-evaluation (for every KLA) with three years as a cycle. In self-evaluation, we set some subject-based questionnaires to address both teaching and learning issues and invited students to reflect on their own learning attitude..... Yes, every teacher had to be involved." (H23, p.1)*

*"As a non-HKCEE subject, Religious Education was taken out from our curriculum after the last examination held in 2000. It was difficult (to assess performance) and there was no HKCEE for it. There was only one lesson on it every cycle for classes. We did not take into account its value-addedness." (T25, p.1)*

*"Should colleagues encounter anything unclear in the operation or need support in data arrangement, our committee (the SSE Committee) would transfer their request to some IT clerks." (H23, p.2)*

School 2  
School Self-evaluation Committee  
Annual Plan (2008/2009)

**Roles of the committee:**

- (a) Assist school to undergo self-evaluation, so as to prepare for the next ESR on one hand and to promote students' learning on the other
- (b) Arrange to finish conventional and ad hoc school-wide appraisals, evaluations and surveys
- (c) Provide analysis of the appraisals, evaluations and surveys whenever necessary
- (d) Refine existing evaluation tools whenever necessary

**Plan of Tasks**

No.	Objectives	Classes involved	Resources Required	Success Criteria	Methods of Evaluation	People Responsible
1	Construction of Key Performance Measures (KPM) report To prepare for the next ESR.	11/08	N/A	Clerical support	Data and report are useful for school self-evaluation and improvement.	Accuracy of data collected
2	Following up the RLA cyclic self-evaluation policy: Subjects and teachers can base on the findings to take proper	9/08, 12/08	S.1-S.7	Clerical support	Implementation of the policy is facilitated	Punctuality of reminders issued

**Figure 19: School-based SSE Policy Indigenisation**

By 2008, after 10 years of hard work, SSE policy in School 2 was well-established. For the compliance of EDB requirements, SSE tools, Parents' surveys, Teachers' surveys and Students' surveys stipulated by EDB were used. Other concrete indicators, such as results of the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE), Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) KPM and Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) were also used as clear indicators of the teachers' performance.

*"I think stakeholder survey was more effective and worth preserving." (H23, p.7)*

*"But I knew (there was) a questionnaire on the principal, the vice-principal and the four assistant-principals which we had to be fill in every year." (T21, p.5)*

*"The overall performance of the panel committee hinged on the results in HKCEE and HKALE as well as the level of compliance to requirements of TSA performance indicators." (T22, p.3)*

*"As to our approach, we mainly followed the Education Bureau's directives to do some KPM-related data collection." (H23, p.1)*

*"After our first round of SSE and ESR, some points to be followed-up had been mentioned in the ESR report. These points were brought to the staff development meetings – while good aspects were to be maintained, things that required improvement would be tackled in staff development meetings." (T21, p.2)*

In addition to the above quotes, ESR report of School 2 also served as corroboration of the above quotes:

*"The school offers different channels for stakeholders including teachers, students and parents to assess its overall school performance." (ESR report,*

*"The school's self-evaluation was coordinated by the SSE committee. It collaborated with every subject committee to jointly develop an effective system to collect feedback on self-evaluation, review effectiveness of action plans. SSE committee also helped the school set up development proposals and staff training programmers." (ESR report, p.3)*

For the policy indigenisation of school-based SSE tools, subject-based questionnaires and indicators were developed. The panel heads would set a target or a mean score to be achieved in the school-based questionnaires. The panel heads would appraise or give feedback on the performance of the teachers. These practices penetrated into every panel. The principal and vice-principals were highly supportive in the process of school-based SSE. Moreover, there were other forms of school-based indicators, such as teachers' popularity among students, teachers' medium of instruction in class, and teachers' teaching approaches, for the teachers to refer to. The principal would also involve himself in lesson observation and evaluation:

*"In the agenda for the mid-year panel meeting, panel heads were required to report to the principal whether any special issue had been spotted in the current-year questionnaire, and whether any relevant follow-up measures could be carried out. Such measures were also required to be included in the next annual plan." (H23, p.1)*

*"We conducted self-evaluation for ourselves in the form of questionnaire. I remember that there was a table with a six-point scale where we could reflect on the level of achievement for each aspect... .. Yes, the subject head would make a response as he would evaluate your performance. He would evaluate what you could achieve and discuss it with you. For example, he would ask you why achieved four only out of six, or why you thought you could achieve five or six." (T24, p.1)*

*"A median set by panel heads was given to us (teachers) as a basis for what*

*we did." (T21, p.7)*

*"The panel head would praise colleagues for what they had achieved. Should be there something where improvement was needed, the panel head would talk to the colleagues involved in private. Of course, some issues were raised in the panel meeting to discuss ways to solve them." (H23, p.1)*

*"The principal required colleagues to prepare lesson plans. He gave scores to the plans, picked up some good ones, and required colleagues to share theirs with one another..... There was an item which required colleagues' input, such as areas for evaluation after finishing a topic of teaching. This was a form of evaluation." (H23, p.8)*

*"After the meeting, the SSE Committee took the issues to the executive meeting for further discussion with the principal, vice-principal and assistant- principals.....They then discussed ways to facilitate teaching and learning and approved them." (T21, p.2)*

*"A summary of statistics was prepared for teachers recording questions and results such as how many students believed that you were a good teacher; how many of your students reported the use of medium of instruction in your lessons; and how many percentage of students found your lessons interesting. Results were shown to you during mid-year meeting with the subject head or the assistant-principal." (T24, p.2)*

In addition to the above quotes, ESR report of School 2 also served as corroboration of the above quotes:

*"The school's self-evaluation mechanism is comprehensive, encompassing the levels of school, subject and individuals, thus enabling assessment of the school's performance from different perspectives. Students are also given the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of extra-curricular activities and individual subjects." (ESR report, p.3)*

To sum up, the implementation of SSE in School 2 had been in place because of the policy formalisations, policy networking and policy indigenisation and policy instrumentalisations of SSE. Examples of detailed SSE tools such as school-based

questionnaires and school-based indicators like teachers' popularity, teachers' presentation skills and teachers' medium of instruction in class were observed. In facing resistant teachers, the principals would "re-train" the teachers through staff development programmes. There were very few negotiations in School 2:

*"I don't think there was negotiation. Whatever we needed to do, we would discuss in the staff meeting and decided what we should do. It was a clarification process, not a negotiation one." (H23, p.2)*

*"Explanation was offered to teachers who had no idea or knowledge of it. If teachers pointed out that some areas were handled well by them, the principal would train them up through school development or staff development programmes. But this was mainly done in a top-down manner. Colleagues would then do as informed." (H23, p.3-4)*

*"There was also a need to keep abreast of the trend, such as whether there was any official change to the measures. The school's self-evaluation platform or software had to be updated to accommodate to the changes. In fact, many procedures and system (on SSE) had been established." (H23, p.7)*

#### **4.3.2 The Context of Place**

After understanding the context of Policy in School 2, the context of Place of School 2 needs to be explored.

School 2 is situated in a district in the New Territories surrounded by public housing estates, subsidised housing and private buildings. The SES of students' families in School 2 is between low and average. The banding of student intake of School 2 is around 2.5 out of 3 in the SSPA. The students are mainly local residents. Most parents in School 2 are working class. Some teachers believe that SES of students should be taken into consideration in the implementation of SSE.



*"ESR team did not make reference to students' SES and the culture in the district when they studied the value-addedness of the students of our school. To those who studied education, they should know there were SES factors affecting the performance of students" (T21, p.10)*

*"(Our students) are well-behaved with good character. Their (family) household income is below median." (T21, p.10)*

The educational attainment of the parents ranges from secondary to matriculation level. According to the informal conversations between the researcher and the interviewees, the intellectual, social and cultural capital of parents is not strong. Thus, their ability in nurturing the academic performance of their children is limited. In their daily lives, it takes 2 hours of commuting from the district to the urban areas. They have limited time to take care of their children. They are not articulate or aggressive enough in monitoring the school and teachers' performance. For the relationship of School 2 with its parents, School 2 is open to the concerns of parents through various channels. Generally speaking, parents place great trust in the teachers in School 2, as revealed in ESR report:

*"Parents trust and support the school. They are generally satisfied with its performance." (ESR report, p.6)*

In terms of the students' personalities, they rely heavily on the educational input from the teachers of School 2. Students are therefore not so critical of the teachers' teaching performance. Students in School 2 are willing to learn and respond to teachers' instruction. They are obedient but passive in learning. Thus, students are not aggressive in evaluating teachers' performance. Apart from academic aspects, the students perform quite well in non-academic areas such as community service. The teachers' expectation for the academic performance of their students was not high:

*"Our students are basically obedient and are willing to co-operate." (T26,*

ESR report of School 2 also served as corroboration of the above quote:

*"Some students are weak at learning motivation. They rarely ask questions and express their opinions. Their generic skills and self-learning ability need to be improved. (ESR report, p. 5-6)*

*"The students are attentive in class and are interested in learning. But their learning approach fails to make use of different learning strategies. Some students do not have strong motivation for learning. They seldom ask questions and express their views." (ESR report, p.6)*

*"The school needs to set up more clear-cut evaluation policy. Its expectation on senior-form students is low." (ESR report, p.6)*

*"Students lack confidence in learning and initiatives. Their self-learning and self-discipline needs to be strengthened." (ESR report, p. 5)*

*"The school is of a decent ethos and upholds respect for seniors." (ESR report, p.5)*

*"Students are given the opportunity to evaluate effectiveness of extra-curricular activities and teaching effectiveness of individual subjects." (ESR report, p.3)*

School 2 dedicated a significant amount of resources to enhance the moral education in School 2:

*"Our students have good personality. Their family income is below the mean income of the territory. But this does not pose any effects on their personal growth. In addition, our school devotes lots of time, energy, resources to promote their self-esteem and self-recognition....When they enter university, they would have adaptation problems because our school is a warm place to them (whereas the universities are not). They do not know they are relatively weak when compared with other students outside during their studies in our school." (T21, p.10)*

ESR report of School 2 also served as corroboration of the above quote:

*"The school attaches importance to students' non-academic needs and allows them to put their own potential into play and develop a spirit to serve." (ESR report, p.6)*

*"The school is highly acclaimed in the "Hong Kong Healthy School Award Scheme". In addition, it keeps in touch with the community and different associations, as seen in its achievement in an ambassador programme jointly organised with a district association to offer counselling services for the bereaved children." (ESR report, p.5)*

As mentioned previously, the parents' SES is not high. Their intellectual, social and cultural capital inhibits them from voicing their concerns and monitoring the school's and teachers' performance, as stated in the government SSE documents.

*"Basically, our students are obedient. Also, the students' questionnaires were easy to fill in. In this regard, most students were willing to co-operate to complete SSE questionnaire" (T26, p.14)*

### **4.3.3 The Context of People**

The **principal** in School 2 was in his late 50s. He has served as the principal of School 2 since 1992. In 1998, his leadership was already very well-established. He has a doctoral degree in education and has been involved in principal training and has also been a part-time lecturer at the local universities. He has also sat on various educational committees on teacher education and teacher professional development and served as a consultant on the University Grants Committee. The principal was strong and sensitive in gauging the response of teachers in executing school policy. His management style was top-down and strong. He was forceful and well-connected. His authoritative image was very obvious and well-established in School 2. The

relatively smooth implementation of SSE in School 2 was partly attributed to this experienced, strong and forceful leadership:

*"The principal's strong leadership is effective and commands respect from colleagues. At the same time, colleagues are co-operative and obedient, so no other problems arise." (H23, p.2)*

*"The principal leads effectively. Colleagues basically carry out what he has required. There is not much bargaining." (H23, p.2)*

*"The principal believes that if the resistance from teachers is not strong or not reflected to him, he goes on exerting pressure (on the policy implementation of SSE)." (T21, p.13)*

Because the principal was able to secure external resources, he was able to implement SSE with richer resources. There was a good development of school-based lesson observations for SSE. The principal in School 2 evaluated the lesson plans himself to demonstrate the implementation of SSE in instructional leadership. He allowed teachers to participate in the formulation of the school's major concerns. He also integrated his professional knowledge in education into his daily school administration:

*"This is because the principal was a trainer for aspiring principals in Hong Kong. With a vast network of people, he was invited as one of the first pioneers (HKSSSEN), and he accepted the invitation." (T21, p.13)*

*"The principal is a person who values theory as important. He made reference to the data from self-evaluation, and gave front-line teachers some theoretical ideas for improvement." (T22, p.7)*

*"There was no need to release (colleagues' pressure). We had to do as instructed by the principal." (H23, p.6)*

ESR report of School 2 also served as corroboration of the above quotes:

*"The principal is educationally aspiring, highly knowledgeable in the profession, forward-looking and up-to-date. With good external relation, he is able to secure abundant resources for the school. Striving for continuous improvement, he leads colleagues in realising the school's development targets." (ESR report, p.4)*

*"Teachers have been sufficiently involved in the setting up of development plans and issues of concern. The school has carefully considered teacher's opinions, and its policy is devised through discussion and integration." (ESR report, p.4)*

He provided adequate support in SSE network of School 2. School 2 was a member of the HKSSSEN. The HKSSSEN was chaired by an EDB advisor on SSE, Archie McGlynn. The principal was skillful in leading School 2 and managing his staff:

*"The principal was willing to put in resources. For example, there was a (territory-wide) self-evaluation network in which he was also involved. So, there was more than enough support." (H23, p.3)*

*"This was because the principal was more involved in some issues while taking some more lightly. In the first one or two years (1998-1999), he required colleagues to make more detailed explanation, but the requirement had become more relaxed in recent years." (H23, p.7)*

According to the informal conversations between the researcher and the interviewees, the principal in School 2 was appointed as the church administrator of the SSB on Hong Kong Island. He was actively in managing the church with his strong religious background. In addition, he was appointed as an educational consultant of the SSB. The SSB is devoted to establishing new schools as a means to preach the gospel. The principal thus enjoyed a high status in the church as an experienced church administrator and education professional. He offered valuable

educational and spiritual advice when the SSB operated new schools in Hong Kong. Hence, in the eyes of the teachers, he was also a spiritual leader. This established his religious legitimation of the leadership.

In addition, nearly all the teachers in School 2 were Christians. The teachers hence regarded the principal not just as a leader, but as a spiritual model and pastoral model. Such accumulation of religious legitimation provided also a firm foundation for the principal's leadership. However, as the interviewees wanted to keep this information confidential, they just disclosed such pieces of information during informal conversations.

For the school administrators, the assistant-principals were effective in bridging between the principal and the teachers:

*"The three assistant-principals and the vice-principal are more friendly. We requested them to reflect to the principal what we considered inappropriate. We were not trying to say no to the job request, but we just wanted to know which part of the work could be cut." (T21, p.12-13)*

There was a strong team of middle managers in School 2. The relative smooth implementation of SSE was partly attributed to a strong middle management team. Panels in School 2 delegated greater involvement in subject affairs to the front-line teachers. The panels were generally highly appraised and responsive to the need of the teachers. Most of the time, the middle managers demonstrated humanistic leadership. Yet, they would strictly follow what had been assigned to them by the principal. They were obedient and co-operative general teachers. With reference to the negotiations and compromises between principal and panels for the implementation of SSE, they were basically very limited. There was little room for

the panels to negotiate with the principal:

*"The subject panel is a person of understanding as well as an obedient subordinate. He carried out what the Principal and school administrators had required him to do." (T24, p.10)*

*"In recent years, the teachers had kept on asking, 'Why do we need to do it?' Actually asking this question would get them into trouble. So teachers just got it (SSE) done and that's it." (H23, p.4)*

*"This was because bargaining took no place in our school's culture. Colleagues were co-operative, and the principal led efficiently." (H23, p.2)*

Generally speaking, panels were responsible, professional and obedient. They would follow up on the problems identified in SSE. They were willing to listen to the concerns of the front-line teachers:

*"The school attached importance to the teaching and learning quality of key subjects (like Chinese, English and Maths). Should there be any problem found, relevant panel heads would be expeditiously consulted. The panel heads are responsible leaders. Any problem found would be followed up quickly." (H23, p.4-5)*

*"We had an opportunity to evaluate the panel heads' performance. We thought that if some policies were inappropriate and the panel heads knew it, such policies would not be in place next year after being implemented this year. As we worked to maximise gains for students, initiatives with low effectiveness would cease to continue." (T26, p.11)*

*"Apart from the large panel meetings held every semester, there were private meetings among colleagues. For example, the subject head would be informed if some teaching topics were proven to be so excessive and delayed the teaching progress." (T21, p.9)*

*"In fact, policy prepared by the panel was tabled for discussion in the meeting most of the time and would be implemented upon unanimous*

*approval. Issues that were not that important would be tabled for group discussion during the meeting. Opinions were gathered, or vote was cast at the end. For example, as panel heads had no preference on what elective subjects to choose for the new senior secondary curriculum, we were allowed to discuss among ourselves and cast vote on it." (T26, p.4)*

However, some panels were not so open to criticism:

*"I always saw questionnaires on the table, so it's very easy to peek at what others had written. No one expressed their views freely. Colleagues well understood the character of one of the subject heads – you had no choice but listened to what he said, or you would suffer." (T24, p.3)*

In facing opposition, the middle management would explain to the front-line teachers that they needed to accomplish the designated tasks assigned by the principal and school administrators. Otherwise, the opposing front-line teachers would suffer from the punishment of the school management. Such a top-down management style was well-accepted in launching school-based policies. The role of middle managers was to observe lessons, to study and follow SSE results, and to give positive and negative feedback to the teachers involved. It was also the role of middle managers to measure teachers' performance through quantitative measurement. This over evidence-based SSE could have lead to unfair judgment of the teachers' performance:

*"Policy mostly took a top-down approach. We would be asked whether policy should be implemented. Directives from EDB or the school would be mentioned in panel and staff meetings. If they were not followed, problems would arise some time." (T21, p.13)*

*"The panel head observed teachers' lessons or read the results from students' questionnaires to make a more thorough understanding of what to improve. The panel head would discuss with us either in meetings or individually. He encouraged us and urged us to improve." (T26, p.1-2)*



*"The school had a record in place for the subject heads and us to see. If an analysis was done on the time of departure of teachers from the school, you felt some pressure even though the principal did not tell you that he was evaluating you." (T24, p.5)*

*"The school only required me to submit composition and sentence-making exercises for checking, so I handed them in. The evaluation showed I scored low for one indicator. (The subject head) explained he did not see that I had prepared notes for students. I thought I was unfairly commented." (T24, p.7)*

*"My wrist got hurt as I needed to type the whole set of notes for form six. When you saw me, you always asked me what I was doing, and I would say I was typing the notes. Why did you give me such poor remarks in evaluation?" (T24, p.7)*

*"It also involved interpersonal relationship. Colleagues with a longer term of service or of a higher rank could take evaluation at ease, while new recruits, who had less bonding with people, faced higher expectations or harsh comments." (T24, p.7)*

Some panels would even over-use the well-developed SSE tools to measure teachers' performance. Some teachers were dissatisfied with such close monitoring:

*"A regular statistics has been made on the time and frequency of your departure, i.e. the number of leaves taken in a month, taken between 5 pm and 5:30 pm, and those taken after 7pm." (T24, p.4-5)*

Teachers in School 2 were generally obedient, co-operative and effective. However, sometimes they had to endure a heavy workload and did not dare to speak out. Their emotion was not well-addressed in School 2. Some teachers were not satisfied with the over-exploitation in the implementation of SSE. These teachers were not satisfied with the limited room and space for the teaching life. Some doubted the aim of implementing SSE. Generally speaking, the teachers were **not**

resistant towards the leadership of the principal, senior management and the middle managers, despite their heavy workload.

*"I think these colleagues were obedient. Even they were under pressure sometimes, they liked to keep it to themselves, or chose not to complain" (T24, p.6)*

*"There was not much need to release (colleagues' pressure). We had to do as instructed by the principal." (H23, p.6)*

*"When I chatted with colleagues or when I was not treated as the head of the SSE committee (in casual context), I could sometimes hear complaints. But when I gave them work to do, they would do it." (H23, p.6)*

*"When teachers exclaimed at the launch of another "staff development programmes", I felt sorry, too. This was like deforestation – there seemed to be no more wood to chop, but another round of deforestation had to be carried out." (T25, p.9)*

*"We had no room to develop bad feelings. There was already too much work to do, so having one more piece of work to do was no different." (T21, p.11)*

*"I had no time to meet students, but I had to spend two to three hours to 'be developed'. I also needed to be accountable to parents, and took part in CPD (Continuing Professional Development). You left the core jobs uncompleted while getting some peripheral matters accomplished." (T25, p.9)*

*"Some people clearly stated they did not want to work anymore, but they might need to come back to the school to continue their work on Saturday and Sunday." (T25, p.10)*

*"I was worried about the use of self-evaluation results. The school might need to follow it up closely after implementing self-evaluation. If follow-up was insufficient and teachers did not do enough reflection on it, it would be futile." (T22, p.8)*

Some teachers claimed that that SSE and ESR were “fatal” to them. They did not want to undergo the second round of SSE and ESR. Some teachers reflected their feelings towards the “hard-fact measurement” in monitoring teachers’ performance as “unfair” and “inaccurate”. Teacher 24 commented that measuring the time of departure of teachers was not so meaningful because teachers might stay at school for leisure instead of working there:

*“Judging a teacher with these indicators was unfair. Sometimes teachers had done many things that the school did not know. For example, the principal encouraged colleagues to leave no earlier than 5pm in order to care for the students or do other things. But some colleagues had to leave early and brought home their work because they needed to take care of their families. But staying at the school until 6 pm or 7 pm did not mean diligence. They might always go shopping or chatted with students and colleagues.” (T24, p.4-5)*

Some teachers even stated critically that the over-emphasis of SSE would have negative effects. They felt that over-measurement led to overlooking of the human aspects of education. They believed that over-measurement lead to over-standardisation and deviation from professionalism. They believed that over-measurement led to unfair and incomprehensive judgments. Teacher 24 also believed the measurement method of “good teachers” as problematic. She also quoted another example of over-measuring the “adequacy of homework”. She queried the “objectivity of SSE” as SSE was perceptual and relational-based.

T25 also believed that it was hard to measure the “Religious Education” in quantitative method. T22, on the other hand, thought that the definition of “good presentation skills” was hard to define and not so meaningful to standardise. Despite the resistant voices, around 40% of the teachers in School 2 generally believed in the rational approach of SSE and the scientific management and documents. However,

teacher 24 believed that over-measurement might be unfair to new teachers.

*"Some thank-you cards sent from parents were counted. Then a voting was cast. Office staff, janitors, teachers and students needed to cast their votes. The number of thank-you cards received were also counted (some were multiplied by two, some by one) to see which teacher was the most popular one. The Principal thought these could help assess whether we were a good teacher." (T24, p.5)*

*"For example, an indicator required was that for every 50 minutes of lesson conducted, 30 minutes of homework should be given by the teacher. This was just too demanding to the elite class I taught. If I could meet the performance indicator, I would be regarded as up-to-standard and was given a pass (in SSE)." (T24, p.5)*

*"I was willing to take on (additional work) most of the time. For example, I needed to prepare some revision worksheets before the exam not just for my class but also the whole form, and this might not be counted in SSE. As this was not homework and had nothing to do with classroom teaching, so I thought SSE ..... was not comprehensive enough to cover all aspects... I felt bad when some colleagues got a high score even though they did not do too much and only made copies of my notes." (T24, p.2)*

*"SSE also involved interpersonal relationship. Colleagues with a longer term of service or of a higher rank could take evaluation at ease, while new recruits, who had less bonding with people, faced higher expectations in job performance." (T24, p.7)*

*"I thought it was difficult, impractical and unnecessary to use an evaluation approach to religious matters. If the result was not good, did it mean I neglected my duty and did nothing? Knowing God was a personal matter. When I studied secondary school, I did not understand what the pastor said and appeared uninterested. Could the pastor be evaluated as done nothing at all? Did he need to be fired? No way." (T25, p.3)*

*"For example, some teachers liked interactive teaching, so the class was nosier. But the panel head might not agree to this approach. When conducting SSE or ESR, students might point out that classroom management was weak, and teachers were required to improve it. But the*

*teachers might not agree to another teaching approach and so would not follow it." (T22, p.8)*

*"About 40% of teachers welcomed matters with a scientific and document-based approach." (T22, p.9)*

Despite the above dissatisfaction, the teachers were still co-operative to the principal and raised no objections. Such suppressed undercurrent of overloading without discontent towards the leadership might be attributed to the strong Christian culture of the school, where being submissive to the authority figure is a standard a good Christian should achieve. The following are quotes of biblical teachings on submission to the superior. In addition, the intellectual and religious legitimation of the principal also played a significant role in the suppressed undercurrent.

*"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme. Keep all the laws of men because of the Lord; those of the king, who is over all." (1 Peter 2:13)*

*"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. Servants, take orders from your masters with all respect; not only if they are good and gentle, but even if they are bad-humoured" (1 Peter 2:18)*

*"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For it is a sign of grace if a man, desiring to do right in the eyes of God, undergoes pain as punishment for something which he has not done." (1 Peter 2:19)*

There was a Teachers' fellowship. Yet, it did not meet as frequently as before since teachers' workload had increased. Eventually the teachers' fellowship ceased to operate. Some of fellowship members observed that the teachers' relationships were more isolated than before. A teachers' absence might not even be noticed by other

teachers for a few days:

*"I think I could work with most of them. There might be a little conflict and jealousy among true believers, but they would be improved gradually after rounds of discussion. I am optimistic about it." (T24, p.6)*

*"Our teachers share the same faith and consider teaching a meaningful undertaking that can help students, instead of a means to make money. Sharing the same conviction makes co-operation easier." (T26, p.6)*

*"Since the launch of educational reform, both administrative work and workload had increased while communication had drastically reduced. There was a fellowship for teachers, but it had been cancelled because we were too busy." (T25, p.6)*

*"A group was formed by me and seven or eight of the colleagues. We visited colleagues' homes to share our faith and pray, but there is no more visit now. There are still birthday get-togethers. As we are getting older and having more things to handle, there is no room in the heart to maintain the fellowship." (T25, p.7)*

*"In fact you don't know if there is anyone here, because everyone is working silently. Sometimes, no one knows a colleagues has been absent for two to school days." (T25, p.10)*

When making general observations on the principal, middle managers and teachers, the following comments were reported. The principal's leadership was very robust and strong. Middle managers were obedient and effective. They were professional, harmonious and accommodating. For the general teachers, they valued communication and consensus-building. Teachers were tactical in obeying the principal completely. They knew that they could not resist and disobey the order of the principal. So, at most, teachers just asked experienced teachers to lighten their workload. Teachers would seek help from experienced teachers if they were really over-loaded. The team-work spirit was strong:

*"Negotiations took no place in our school's culture. Colleagues were cooperative, and the principal led efficiently." (H23, p.2)*

*"Things had to be done as required with no flexibility." (T24, p.6)*

*"I think that under the school culture of mutual trust, we could communicate with each others and dispel discontent and misunderstanding quickly. Unsolved issues would be raised and subject to coordination and fine-tuning by seniors." (H23, p.2)*

*"The so-called culture took a top-down approach. We reflected to the panel heads that our workload was heavy and there was no more room... We would have meetings with all teachers. A few of them would point out what was going wrong bravely. Another approach was to talk to the more friendly assistant-principals. We told him what was going wrong and asked him to reflect this to the principal. We were not trying to say no to the job request, but we just wanted to know which part of the work could be cut." (T21, p.12-13)*

*"The principal and school administrators required SSE to be done every three years for each KLA (a questionnaire that measures teachers' teaching performance), but our panel head required SSE every year. Colleagues could not say no to it." (T21, p.11)*

*"We respected the opinions of each others. Majority decisions presided over minority ones and no one insisted on his/her own views." (T26, p.4)*

*"In recent years, the teachers had kept on asking, 'Why do we need to do it?' or 'Why do we get ourselves into trouble?' So they just got it done and that's it." (H23, p.4)*

Apart from the above quotes, ESR report of School 2 served as another sources of evidence:

*"Teachers have enough professional knowledge, conduct their lessons in a clear and systematic manner, keep an open mind, and respect students' opinions." (ESR report, p.5)*

*"Colleagues are in good terms. The school develops continuously through self-evaluation over the past few years." (ESR report, p.4)*

To demonstrate the strong team spirit in School 2, the following example is given. From 1998 to 2000, School 2 had experienced opposition in the implementation of SSE. There were dissenting voices from teachers towards SSE. Some teachers even used the term "fatal" in describing ESR. Some teachers doubted the necessity of conducting SSE:

*"I think self-evaluation was to show people that something had been done. For example, it focused on whether teachers had reached the standards or not. The government aimed to show the public it had done its job. Evaluation is a means to monitor teachers' performance. Whenever a proposal was raised to increase subsidy to reduce teachers' workload, their workload would increase in some subtle ways (by more documentation in return)." (T24, p.8)*

*"We did not want to do it (ESR) at all. We believed that much work was involved in such self-evaluation, we did not expect to have a critical second round (ESR)." (T21, p.11)*

*"If the questionnaire was set to overpower and find faults with teachers, e.g. it was used as basis for contract renewal for teachers, I could not accept it." (T22, p.4)*

From around 2002 to 2003, the mindset of the teachers gradually changed. This change was attributed to the forceful implementation of SSE by the principal. The policy formalisation, policy specifications, policy networking and policy documentation initiated by the principal gradually took effect. Teachers accepted the implementation of SSE more readily. Time also allowed the dissatisfaction and dissenting voices to be reduced:



*"This was because self-evaluation was well-intentioned to help the school and teachers advance. But from my personal experience, teaching had already made me very busy most of the time. I thought self-evaluation was acceptable and positive." (T24, p.1)*

*"After completing the questionnaire in the workshop (on SSE and the school-based performance indicators scheme), we would be given a report on our strengths and weaknesses. This was really helpful. The workshop also allowed colleagues to understand what self-evaluation and external review were, or what would happen in future, helping us to make better preparation." (H23, p.3)*

*"If the questionnaire could prompt some experienced teachers or panel heads to help teachers being rated as under-perform by students to improve their teaching, I welcomed it." (T22, p.4)*

For those who were opposed to the school management in their mind, they would still observe the policy requirements as a necessary formality at the hand level:

*"I think these colleagues are obedient. Even they are under pressure sometimes, they like to keep it to themselves, or choose not to complain" (T24, p.6)*

With reference to the teachers' worries and opposition to SSE, one teacher shared her experience of being forced to adopt focus marking in senior forms. She felt that teachers' peer evaluations were subjective and relationship-based. She was too insecure to voice her opinions in the questionnaires. Furthermore, she feared that she would offend the interest groups or the experienced teachers in the English panel when assessing their job performances and marking qualities candidly.

In School 2, there was policy indigenisation of SSE. The over-developed and the over-use of SSE tools triggered the implicit resistance of some of the teachers in

School 2. Luckily, conflicts were not made public in order to protect the harmonious culture. To present a case demonstrating the conflicts management process, Teacher 24 quoted her experience of implementing detailed marking or impressional marking. When she decided to adopt detailed marking, she suffered. The experienced teachers complained about her adopting detailed marking and destroying the norm and culture of the English panel. As a result, she was strongly criticised by her experienced fellow colleagues:

*"This was because experienced colleagues with long years of service thought detailed marking was unnecessary as they did not want to have more workload. But put it bluntly, I would say, "It's none of their business, as the school had no policy barring detailed marking." I went an extra mile, but it turned out that I was blamed for it." (T24, p.10)*

*"If detailed marking was adopted for composition, you had to pick up all errors not only in terms of grammar but also usage. It took a lot of effort. Some experienced colleagues might not want to do it, but they would feel pressure if you did it. They would reflect it to the subject head that my practice of detailed marking set up a bad precedent." (T24, p.8)*

*"Quite a lot of them scorned at it, saying that, if I were you, I wouldn't do it." This was sometimes reflected in attitude." (T24, p.10)*

*"Students in senior forms had to prepare for HKALE, and they were very willing to learn. You needed to think whom you were accountable to. If it's God, you should continue. Sometimes, the subject head came to talk to you (for the issue of detailed marking), and I felt pressure." (T24, p.11)*

Despite the minor conflicts noted in the English panel, the general team-building spirit in School 2 was strong. SSE was firmly anchored in School 2. Policy formalisation, policy specifications, policy documentations, policy networking and policy indigenisation were smoothly developed.

To conclude, the implementation of SSE in School 2 was an organic and dynamic interaction of context of Policy, Place and People. To illustrate the complex interaction, Figure 20 offers delineation as follows:

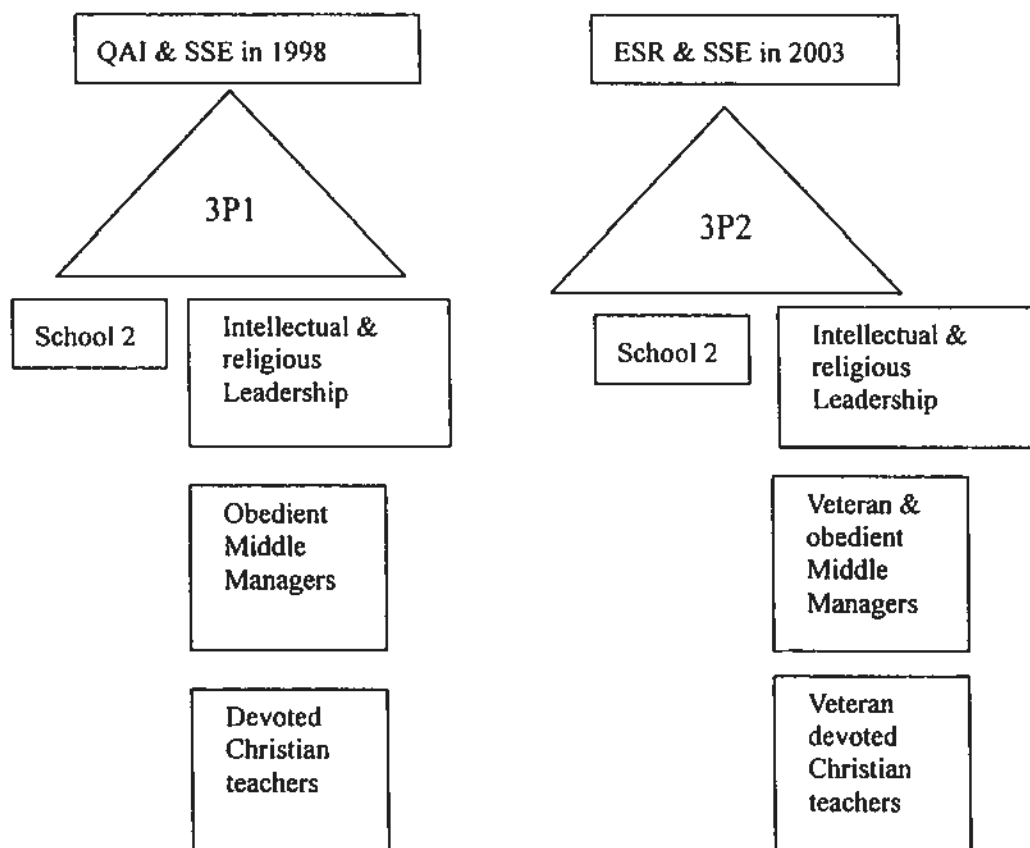


Figure 20: 3Ps Model for School 2

For the context of Policy, School 2 implemented SSE in 1998. In 1997, QAI & SSE were made compulsory policy in Hong Kong as stated in ECR7. The policy specifications and policy formalisation of SSE promoted in ECR7 was much detailed than SMI in 1991. For instance, QAI & SSE in 1997 involved the setting of goals and developing of indicators, the establishment of a quality assurance mechanism, the enhancement of professional standards of principals and teachers and the time frame for implementing related reforms.

Under such policy context, School 2 started the implementation of SSE in 1998 and developed policy formalisation and policy specifications in 1998. From 2000 to 2003, the SSE Committee developed the policy indigenisation and policy instrumentalisation in accordance with the key SSE concepts stated in ECR7. In 2004, School 2 developed policy networking to facilitate the implementation of SSE in School 2. From 2004 to 2008, the policy indigenisation was further strengthened with the use of school-based performance indicators and KPMs.

Second, the context of Place of School 2 does not exert great pressures on monitoring the performance of teachers and the school. The students and parents are of relatively low social, intellectual, cultural capital. So, their monitoring effects as stakeholders of the schools are relatively weak and are not strong as stated in SSE government documents.

Finally, for the context of People, there was a robust principal leadership in School 3. The principal enjoyed intellectual legitimation from 1992 to 2008. He also received religious-legitimation from 1998 to 2008 when he was appointed by the church as the church administrator.

Other than the principal, there were obedient senior, middle managers and general teachers from 1998 to 2008. Negotiations and compromises in School 2 were very limited between the principal and the middle managers. This was due to the strong authority of the principal. Only under special conditions, the assistant-principals would bargain a bit for the middle managers and the general teachers to alleviate their workload in other aspects.

Middle managers were experienced policy administrators. For the negotiation between the panels and the teachers, they were rare too. This could be attributed to the common belief of Christianity. In Christianity, being submissive and obedient to the superior was an important biblical teaching. Hence, most teachers tended to endure the workload without discontent even though some of them were burnt out already. To be brief, the team-building force was strong and facilitated the implementation of SSE in School 2.

## 4.4 School 3

### The background of the School

School 3 is a traditional secondary grammar school. It is situated in an area in the New Territories East. It is surrounded by newly-built public-housing estates. It is a new immigrants-populated area. The parents' educational attainment is relatively low and is mainly from primary to junior secondary. School 3 has been in operation since 1977 (i.e. for 31 years by the time of the field work in 2008). The banding of student intake is around 3.2 out of 3 in the SSPA System. It is under the purview of a Protestant SSB and is a co-educational school which uses CMI.

### Interviewees of School 3

There were a total of 5 interviewees. Their respective posts and teaching experiences are listed below in Table 3:

Interviewee code	Post	Years of service in School 1	Role in implementing SMI and subsequent SSE policies in School 1
T31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ English Panel</li> <li>➤ Head of the SSE Committee (Bi-Heads system)</li> </ul>	>25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Policy chief-leader and implementer in SSE</li> </ul>
T32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ D.T. Panel</li> <li>➤ Head of General Affairs Committee</li> </ul>	>10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Policy promoter and middle manager</li> </ul>
T33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Business and Economics Panel Head</li> </ul>	>15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Policy promoter and middle manager</li> </ul>
T34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Chinese History Panel</li> <li>➤ Head of SSE Committee (Bi-Heads system)</li> </ul>	>20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Policy chief-leader and implementer in SSE</li> </ul>
T35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maths Teacher</li> </ul>	>10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ General Teacher</li> <li>➤</li> </ul>

Table 3: Details of the 5 Interviewees in School 3

#### **4.4.1 The Context of Policy**

##### **Before early 2006**

Implementation of SSE in School 3 started in early 2006. For the context of Policy for SSE and ESR, please refer to Stage 3 of School 1 (see Section 4.2.3). Up to early 2006, SSE documents such as the SDP, ASP were not prepared or available in School 3 although these EDB's requirements were fulfilled by most schools in Hong Kong. SSE policy formalisation was not known about by most colleagues. There was no teacher participation. The subject committees could not match their development with the major concerns of the school. SSE had always been a Pandora's box in School 3. Despite the presence of the SSE Committee, it did not function well and its existence was not even noticed by teachers:

*"In the past, the practice of SSE was not clear. SSE mechanism was not as clear as now (2008). Now, we have a to-do list to follow. Every colleague knows what's going on" (T33, p.7)*

*"As an ordinary teacher, these messages (on self-evaluation) were not easy to get." (T32, p.5)*

*"The network (of SSE committee) was neither mature nor well-connected. Not all colleagues knew it well." (T32, p.4)*

Before early 2006, School 3 did not establish policy networking though it joined SSE training organised by the SDET, CUHK. However, School 3 was unable to transform the knowledge into their hands-on experience. Other than the CUHK project, there were no other trainings given to teachers in School 3:

*"We took part in the SDET...organised by the CUHK ...but I thought it's not useful to us. I did not think it's useful, and I did not know how to follow it up. Every year, they showed us how to prepare Schools Value Added Information System (SVAIS) figures. Though it had been done every year,*

*the format of presentation was still unclear. Since SVAIS' first year of implementation, those figures had been poorly presented and hardly understandable. As we were not trained in the streams of mathematics and science, it was especially challenging to us." (T31, p.9)*

*"But there was no formal training to them. SSE-related information was included in teachers' development day." (T31, p.9)*

There were no school-based SSE questionnaires developed and thus no policy indigenisation. If teachers were interested in SSE, they had to design SSE questionnaires and possess the data obtained themselves. For EDB-stipulated SSE tools, they were described as an "unborn child". This was because the student questionnaires stipulated by EDB were made voluntary to teachers only. The principal and school administrators did not require teachers to use the tools mandatorily. In addition, no policy support was given to teachers who wanted to conduct the EDB or school-based SSE:

*"We had not set any school-based questionnaire for students to express their opinions on teachers. If teachers wanted to know how students comment on them, we encouraged them to decide the school-based questionnaire themselves. We would not get involved." (T31, p.1)*

*"Student questionnaires? It had been optional all the way, so it was not something that ended midway, but something not even started indeed like an "unborn child." (T33, p.18)*

*"As teachers were responsible for designing, distribution and possessing the SSE questionnaire, so I did not know (how many of teachers conducting SSE)." (T32, p.2)*

*"In our school, it was optional for students to evaluate teachers. It was not a must." (T31, p.2)*

*"At the beginning of SSE, we did not know how to conduct SSE. Not only the middle managers, but all colleagues did not know either. We did not*



*know how to begin our work.” (T34, p.1)*

*“No one would teach you. At most, I could see the data and the analysis. But no follow-up was made. What the School gave us were EDB stipulated questionnaires only.” (T35, p.17)*

It was estimated that only 10% to 20% of the teachers knew what SSE was. SSE policy was not data-driven but impression-based. Most general teachers did not even know about the school-based SSE policy. The coordination of SSE policy was weak.

*“I think only about 10-20% of colleagues had known self-evaluation. Yes, I guess that those who were in charge of the SSE may know SSE more clearly, but those who were being evaluated or were asked to provide data might not.” (T32, p.11)*

*“Self-evaluation in the past was based on feeling and observation instead of data.” (T33, p.12)*

*“There was no such thing as (self-evaluation mechanism). Even though there was, it appeared that there was no need to carry it out.” (T32, p.4)*

*“The quality assurance mechanism was not that clear.” (T32, p.4)*

*“There was document to follow. But no single colleague helped middle managers implement SSE. We needed to discover ourselves” (T32, p.2)*

## **February 2006 -2008**

In February 2006, ESR team of EDB informed School 3 of their upcoming ESR visit in May 2006. School 3 had no other choice but to implement SSE hastily to prepare for the upcoming visit of ESR. In around May 2006, according to the Inspection Annual Report 2003/04, 2004/2005 & 2005/2006 of EMB, around 239 out of 521 secondary schools underwent an ESR. In other words, 45.87% of secondary schools had completed their preparation for SSE so that their performance could be audited by ESR team of EDB. As there was just three months left before the visit of

ESR, School 3 had to rush through making all SSE policy specifications, formalisation, and documentation:

*“In my observation, it’s EDB which exerted pressure to make something known on the internet (through uploading of the ESR report). It was because when the ESR team came to our school, we had no choice but submitted SSE documentation required. The school administrators’ instruction was that we had to reach a consensus with colleagues of the lower tier, and we had to do SSE (for the ESR team of EDB). So I thought ESR was an external force. If it was only the school requesting to conduct SSE, I thought colleagues probably did not consider SSE necessary.” (T31, p.3)*

Teachers in School 3 knew ESR team would come in 3 months’ time. Therefore, the teachers knew they had to have something on hand. They then looked for a final and simple “instruction” of what to do from the vice-principal and the two SSE heads.

*“I guess that I contacted the vice-principal more often, because everyone wanted to find out the final ... solution. I thought that the vice-principal made a simple command only.” (T32, p.5)*

But as revealed in informal conversations with T31 and T34, the vice-principal did not even know what to do for SSE. He asked the two SSE heads and teachers to tell him what to prepare for SSE.

In these three months, teachers were offered templates to copy so as to fulfil the requirements of EDB in ESR. They rushed making up SSE documents for EDB. However, SSE guidelines were not written to satisfy the requirements of EDB. Some technical problems such as whether “one-man-band subjects should conduct SSE or not” were not addressed. Quite a number of teachers were still puzzled as what to do:

*"I told them (subject heads) what to do, gave them samples (to copy), and found out some good examples from other schools for their reference. If they were told about these, they could do it." (T31, p.9)*

*"We needed to prepare all documents beforehand, because we needed to collect some documents as record. If there was no such record, we needed to make it up." (T31, p.1)*

*"We needed to review documentation spanning three years and put something in record. If part of it was lost, we had to find it out. It's tough." (T31, p.1)*

*"I am responsible for academic affairs. I sometimes needed to write a lot annual reports and programme plans. In addition to my own subject panel, I also needed to oversee other subject panels and other matters. How could I write them better? How could I meet the requirements? Initially, the management did not have any clear guideline. What was good and what was not good?" (T31, p.8)*

*"I agreed with what the school had said. For example, how could self-evaluation be done in a one-man panel? I did not give myself bad comments, so was SSE really implemented at all? Was he still going through all the right track for you? That's a question." (T31, p .10)*

The ESR report also confirmed the same observations above:

*"To facilitate the implementation of the "School Development and Accountability" structure, the school in recent years has tried to use EDB's stakeholder questionnaire and its APASO evaluation tools to collect data for self-evaluation. It remains unclear as to the progress of implementation and evaluation as well as the criteria of success." (ESR report, p.3)*

These made-up SSE data and procedures were discovered by ESR team of EDB. EDB knew teachers just began their implementation of SSE in early 2006, as revealed in ESR report:

*"The school's development plan for 2003/04 to 2005/06 and its 2003/04 annual plan were mainly hastily devised by the principal without teachers' involvement. So the subject panels failed to make appropriate arrangement to address the school's major concerns." (ESR report, p.3)*

*"At teacher level, since 2006 teachers have had to evaluate their own teaching performance and talk face-to-face with the principal before the end of the semester in order to seek improvement. However, this arrangement has just begun and its effectiveness has remained to be seen. Such SSE-related arrangement has not yet been formally included as part of teachers' performance and in the teachers' professional development plan. It remains to be seen as to how the two can be merged." (ESR report, p.3)*

*"As teachers are not quite familiar with the concept and skills of self-evaluation, members of the SSE committee and teacher development Committee have plans to enhance teachers' knowledge in self-evaluation and ensure its effective implementation through a teacher development workshop held in the following academic year (2007)." (ESR report, p.3)*

As a result, the school-based SSE in School 3 was rated as "poorly implemented" by ESR team of EDB. ESR report revealed that the successful performance indicators of the ASPs were not focused and lacked objective criteria. Also, School 3 regarded SSE as an ad-hoc project rather than as a genuine evaluation for the school. Some ASPs were not followed up on with reference to the findings of SSE. ESR report rated teachers as "not able to grasp the core essence of SSE".

*"The criteria of success devised in the School's and the panel's Annual Plans are in general piecemeal and not objective. The evaluation mainly focuses on the projects implemented and fails to effectively review the overall efficiency of the areas of concern. Some projects in the Annual Plan are not devised based on the evaluation results of the previous academic year." (ESR report, p.3)*

*"It remains unclear as to the progress of implementation and evaluation as well as the criteria of success." (ESR report, p.3)*

*"In addition, there is variation within the panel's working plans. Some subject plans do not relate closely with the school's major concerns. The school should strengthen monitoring and follow-up to ensure that the subject concerned is in line with what the school has been doing." (ESR report, p.3)*

Other than ESR report, the following quotes from teachers showed that SSE was poorly implemented in School 3 despite the mature instrumentalisation offered by the government.

*"It (EDB) provided many guidelines, which were not provided previously (before 2003/2004). However, there was no monitoring before (before SSE and ESR in 2003/2004). However, now (EDB) made use of other means and tools to monitor (school performance). So, it is now more serious than before. (T31, p.2)*

School 3 was reported by teachers as having poor policy formalisations, policy networking, policy documentation, policy instrumentalisations and policy indigenisations.

*"Initially, the senior school management did not have clear guidelines (policy formalisations). What were good and bad?" (T31, p.8)*

*"At the beginning (2006), we did not have the concept of SSE (policy formalisations). Also, the atmosphere of implementing SSE was not so good. But now (late 2008), we did not have the problem of student enrolment. Also, we get used to SSE. So, we did not feel too resistant towards the implementation of SSE." (T32, p.8)*

*"The number of colleagues who did not know the purpose and procedures of implementing SSE (policy formalisations) outnumbered those knew the purpose and procedures." (T32, p.8)*

*"In these two years (2007 & 2008), we did not have the pressures of ESR. Also, we have conducted SSE several times (after the departure of ESR team). Therefore, we thought the pressures had been reduced. We also get*

*used to SSE (policy formalisation) and saved our effort from the unnecessary workload in SSE. In addition, as we became more experienced in SSE, we could make use of the data more easily. We might be in the exploration period still. But we were gradually aware of the use of SSE. (T32, p.3)*

*"Overall speaking, did the colleagues in the English panel conduct the students' questionnaires (designed by EDB) voluntarily?" "Very few". (policy networking) (T31, p.10)*

*"Only 10% of colleagues (policy networking) understood SSE while others were not so clear. I guess these 10% colleagues were those who evaluated the colleagues. For those who were being evaluated, they did not know SSE clearly" (T32, p.11)*

*"We had to submit the documentation to (EDB) (policy documentation). For our own evaluation, we could not proceed until we had time. But if we could not stop for a while, we would quickly forget" (T32, p.12)*

*"ESR team visited us in 2006. How was their comment on SSE in your school?" "ESR team thought our SSE was feeling-based. They demanded us concrete examples (to justify their judgment). But they thought our examples were not strong and relevant indeed (policy instrumentalisations)." (T34, p.3)*

*"As I had mentioned before, the culture was the problem. You kept on evaluating. I insisted on keeping my own way of practice. If I did not follow your evaluation findings, what would happen to me? Most important thing was we did not have any consequences if we did not comply with the evaluation results (policy indigenisation). At that time, unless we had to endure lots of pressures, otherwise we would not make change. If the pressure was not so great, we would keep our own practice and you would have nothing to do with me" (T33, p.3)*

*"In reality, the (teacher) establishment protected those people (those who refused to make changes after receiving the evaluation results). You could not influence them (policy indigenisation). So, no matter how you evaluated, it would be meaningless. (T33, p.9)*

*"I felt that SSE was not so useful. There would be no consequences after SSE (policy indigenisation). It made no differences whether you implement SSE or not in our school." (T33, p.17)*

*"It depended on individual teachers. Some treated SSE as a game (policy indigenisation) while others regarded SSE as own teaching performance indicators." (T34, p.8)*

*"How many of teachers thought there would be no consequences for SSE in your school?" "I thought over half (policy indigenisation)." (T34, p.8)*

*"Over 50-60% of teachers were serious (when ESR team visited), while others, approximately 20-30% of teachers deemed SSE as games (policy indigenisation). Very few teachers treated SSE as meaningful event." (T34, p.9)*

*"We had possibilities of having such groan. I believed there was groan. Teachers might think the poor SSE results would be due to their reprimand for students' misbehaviour. So, the students took revenge and poorly rated the teachers. I think the situation was possible (policy indigenisation)." (T35, p.12)*

To sum up, SSE was poorly implemented in School 3. It was attributed to the weak policy formalisation, weak documentation, weak bureaucratisation, weak networking and weak indigenisation in School 3.

#### **4.4.2 The Context of Place**

School 3 is situated in a part of New Territories East where new immigrants and low-come families are densely-populated. School 3 was established in 1977 and so had been operating for 31 years when the fieldwork was conducted in 2008. Quite a number of the students' parents are un-employed and are receiving Comprehensive Social Security Allowance (CSSA) from the government. Single parent families are common in the district. Some parents do not even have money to participate in the Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA) activities. Therefore, teachers spend a lot of time

in soliciting sponsorship for school activities. This makes their administrative load heavy. Parents even find it difficult to provide picnicking and transportation fees for students. In other words, fund-raising activities organised by the School are poorly-received. Teachers in School 3 are aware of students' problem when they prepared for the school or committee development plans:

*"Some students come from single-parents family. They lack parental care. So, it affects their learning motivation. In recent years, students' qualities and behaviour are of great degradation. Their self-initiatives and self-discipline are low. Their self-learning ability is low." (School 3, Discipline and Counselling Committee, School Development Plan, 04-07, p.93)*

*"Some parents are not able to participate in Parent-Teacher-Association activities because of financial needs." (School 3, Parent Teacher Association, School Development Plan, 07-08, p.140)*

*"Students financial ability is weak. They do not have interest in school fund-raising activities" (School 3, Social Services Committee, School Development Plan, 04-07, p.128)*

*"Students in our School are very poor. Therefore, the school activities and the interest classes should not charge high. Our school council advises to waive transportation fees for students. We encourage students to apply for the holistic fund from the Jockey Club"*  
*(School 3, Student Council, School Development Plan, 05-06, p.137)*

*"Many students in the New Territories East are single-parents. Their SES does not enable them to go out of the classroom to learn English. Even the fee for picnicking is difficult for them. In order to cater for their financial needs, teachers need to write proposals for subsidy. After the proposal, they need to write the evaluation of the programmes and the remedial measures, decide the allocation of the subsidy, the use of the subsidy such as admission fees, transportation fees. Such administrative work burdens out teachers a lot" (T31, p.7)*



ESR report of School 3 also served as corroboration of the above quotes:

*"The school has a good external relation. It arranges different kinds of voluntary activities to widen students' exposure in community service."  
(ESR report, 2006, p.10 )*

The educational attainment of parents is not high. As revealed in the informal conversations between the researcher and the interviewees and the media coverage, family violence and community problems are prevalent in the community of School 3. Some students even have the problem of drug abuse. In terms of time for parenting, parents in School 3 are not able to devote much time to their children. Parents have relied heavily on the School to teach and take care of their children. Teachers in School 3 know the above situation very well. In March 2006, it was the first time for parents to participate in the process of SSE:

*"Weakness--Parent's educational attainment is low. They do not manage to discipline their children though they want to do so. Parents and students are weakly communicated. Difficulties are always encountered in the improvement of the students' academic affairs." (School 3, Academic Committee, School Development Plan, 04-07, p.93)*

*"Parent's educational attainment in our school is low. Their family education and support are not enough" (School 3, Life Education, School Development Plan, 04-07, p.103)*

*"(Would the low SES of the parents deprive them of time to look after their children?) I think it is related. I estimate that not many parents understand what is going on in our school" (T34, p.10)*

*"(The parent questionnaire) seems to be randomly selected. I remember that two years ago (2006), it was filled in by parents of a few students from each class." (T35, p.10)*

For the characteristics of the students, students' intake is around 3.2 out of 3 in

the SSPA System. Students' motivation to learn is low. Students are passive and had low self-image. They do not have high self-expectation for themselves. In addition, students are weak at collaboration and learning. They do not care about what was going on around them:

*"As revealed from the parents and the local residents, the School's image and ethos are relatively low in the district.....in addition, strengthening students self-confidence and sense of belongings are also important" (School 3, School Development Plan, 04-05, p.133; 06-07, p.136)*

*"Students' motivation is also low." (T31, p.6)*

*"Students do not care about civic duty, their neighbourhood and the world affairs" (School 3, Civic Education Committee and Environmental Protection Committee, School Development Plan, 04-07, p.101)*

*"Students are passive...some students' self management skills need to be improved" (School 3, Students' Affairs Committee, School Development Plan, 04-07, p.122)*

*"Students' attention is weak. Their self-discipline is weak. They need extra guidance and discipline" (School 3, Life Education Committee, School Development Plan, 07-08, p.130)*

*"Students lack a sense of judgment" (School 3, School Development Plan, 04-07, p.89)*

ESR report of School 3 also served as corroboration of the above quotes:

*"Some students have low self-image and weak motivation to learn, and do not aim high." (ESR report, p.10)*

*"Students are generally passive learners who do not get involved proactively nor interact with each others. They also do not make effective use of different learning strategies nor adopt different reading strategies to facilitate learning." (ESR report, p.8)*

For the students' discipline, according to the informal interviews with teachers

in School 3, there are 3 to 5 teachers leaving School 3 every year. This is because they could not bear the naughty behaviour and discipline problems of the students. Students' sense of judgment is weak. Teachers generally believe that their students may evaluate them negatively if they discipline them:

*"Maybe students of the previous year behaved badly. Some naughty classes were believed to have caused some teachers to resign." (T35, p.13)*

*"At present (2008), we design a questionnaire for students to write down their opinions on teachers. Frankly speaking, colleagues are worried that given the quality of our students, they might not be fairly rated by students. They may give good comments on teachers who do not scold them, and bad comments on those who scold and argue with them. We are worried about the reliability and validity of SSE questionnaires." (T31, p.2)*

*"The students' intake has been degraded obviously" (School 3, Discipline and Guidance Committee, School Development Plan, 07-08, p.118)*

*"Our school do not face problem in student admission. But their quality is degraded. Our committee should continue to make effort in mobilising teachers to attract more quality students to admit to our school" (School 3, School Promotion Committee, School Development Plan, 06-07, p.159)*

In summary, the intellectual, social and cultural capital of students and parents in School 3 is not strong. They cannot monitor teachers' performance as well as school's performance as stated in the policy aim of SSE documents.

#### **4.4.3 The Context of People**

To better understand the community of people in School 3, we have to understand the principal's leadership, the middle managers and the teachers in School 3.

In September 2001, the SSB appointed a new principal from one of the

secondary schools under its purview to be the principal of School 3. The new principal came from a reputable traditional school with very good academic results under the same SSB. The new principal was visionary and experienced. Since his arrival in September 2001, the new principal attempted to introduce SSE policy in School 3. He wanted to establish the SSE Committee as an effective SSE implementation agent. But he failed due to the strong political resistance. It was not until 2006 that the principal was able to secure gradual support of the SMC in establishing formal SSE committee:

*"When the former principal took the helm (before 2001), the evaluation that we mainly saw was the one made by the panel head on subject teachers." (T33, p.7)*

*"The new principal attached great importance to how to get in line with the government's trend in educational reform. So after he assumed office, the school's evaluation mechanism had differed from the one adopted in the former principal's time." (T33, p.7)*

*"The milestone for SSE was not the arrival of the new principal. I did not think it was obvious." (T32, p.12)*

ESR report for School 3 served as another source of evidence:

*"The principal knows clearly the school's current situation and way of development, and is a "veteran" administrator. He endeavours to find a way out of the established school culture and teaching models in order to make teaching and learning comply with the direction of curriculum reform." (ESR report, p.5)*

From 2002 to 2004, SSE was not successfully implemented in School 3. The principal could not secure the support of the majority of the middle managers in establishing SSE mechanism. He had no strong power and could not follow-up on

the under-performing teachers. The principal could not exercise his power to punish or to accredit teachers. The hard-to-change culture even prevented the principal from implementing SSE smoothly. Under his weak leadership, the vice-principal also could not monitor the teaching and learning of the middle management effectively:

*"We did not handle self-evaluation in an explicit manner in 02-04..... If some committees did not report what they had done, other committees would know nothing about it. In my impression, there wasn't any clear message on what I needed to do. This self-evaluation was just like usual evaluation on colleagues' work." (T33, p.11-12)*

*"It was clear in both self-evaluation and external review that there was no mechanism for award and punishment." (T35, p.19)*

*"The established office culture could neither be improved overnight nor changed through the implementation of SSE and ESR. It was very difficult to change a culture." (T33, p.2)*

Apart from the above quotes, ESR report of School 3 served as corroboration:

*"The vice-principal has to strengthen his monitoring over the execution of learning and teaching among individual subjects, so that the subjects can implement work in line with the school's major concerns." (ESR report, p.5)*

In 2004, the principal did not give up. The principal tried to publicise the importance of conducting SSE. However, teachers in School 3 believed that conducting SSE was just a show for the EDB rather than for their own professional accountability:

*"EMB had specified the time frame for schools to upload their information on self-evaluation (2004)...We had evaluation, but not quite systematic at that time. But now (2008), EDB had revised relevant guidelines, and we would follow them." (T31, p.1)*

*"Our principal stated the need to do self-evaluation, and the vice-principal required us to put it into practice...The main goal was to optimise learning and teaching, but I thought it had more to do with meeting the requirements from EMB rather than realising a need to do self-evaluation." (T32, p.1)*

In February 2006, School 3 was informed of ESR visit in May 2006. In early 2006, the principal mobilised the teachers to comply with ESR requirements of EDB immediately. Most teachers treated SSE process as documents submission required by EDB. But the teachers knew that they could not negotiate with EDB. The teachers felt that they could not resist the global trend of public accountability. They admitted that EDB had given them a lot of guidelines and tools to implement SSE. They had no excuses for not "knowing how to implement SSE". No technical difficulties could be used as an excuse to refuse to implement SSE.

Yet, teachers still perceived SSE as a means to control schools. This time, they knew that the results of SSE would be used as evidence to decide the fate of teachers when redundancies arose.

*"This was because we took self-evaluation as a job and a document. Before submission, someone would tell you how to do it. (Our perception of SSE) might have something to do with that culture." (T32, p.2)*

*"During ESR (Mar 2006), we were in the fighting mode to fulfil all requirements. We failed to see the core values of self-evaluation, as we just wanted to 'get something done'. But over the last one to two years (2007-2008), we felt less pressure, as there might be no more pressure from ESR and SSE had been conducted for a few times. There was no need to do some 'unnecessary work'." (T32, p.3)*

*"I think we dared not bargain, as this was an official requirement that had to be fulfilled. It had something to do with authority, so you had to do it. There would be bargaining when it came to something non-official or not*

*required to be done.” (T33, p.17-18)*

*“I thought it was because the government needed to use the public money cautiously and thus held teachers to be accountable for what you did after (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) SARS in 2003. EDB provided many guidelines (for EDB) which were not provided in the era of SMI. In the era of SMI, no standardised approaches monitoring were there but everyone was free to implement their own (mode of SMI). But now, EDB made us of various methods to monitor (our performance). SSE and ESR became much more serious (T31, p.2)”*

ESR report of School 3 also served as corroboration:

*“The school’s self-evaluation mechanism has preliminarily been set up. Over the past two years (2005/06)... there was much room for the school to improve in respect of its preparation of Annual School Plans.” (ESR report, p.3)*

The underlying cause for the weak legitimization of principal leadership was due to the management philosophy of the SSB. The Protestant SSB of School 3 emphasised that love and caring should be highly-valued. All staff conflicts should be handled with encouragement and not by punishment. The principal knew that even the dismissal of a janitor would upset the SMC. He knew that he would not have the power to dismiss teachers. On the other hand, the middle managers were experienced and had served in School 3 for many years. They also knew that the principal had to observe the management philosophy of the SMC in managing staff:

*“It depended on whether the SMC had such power and resorts to warning or even termination of employment. This could serve as a warning signal to others, but it’s difficult to carry out. It’s difficult to make changes without a culture of proactiveness and accountability.” (T35, p.20)*

*“But the SMC put much emphasis on the keeping of a harmonious working*

*relation among teachers. It did not attach enough importance to enhancing teachers' sense of accountability. This was not favourable to the school's sustainable development." (ESR report, p.5)*

*"The SMC cherishes harmony and consensus for all. Should there be a lack of consensus, alternatives can be explored." (T33, p.11)*

The middle managers in School 3 were experienced and had served for a long time in School 3. So, they were given job permanence. In this regard, their accountability for the job was very weak. They did not look for promotions. They were powerful and not submissive to the principal's leadership. In the eyes of the middle managers, they had nothing to fear. Some teachers stated that the middle managers, such as the Senior Graduate Master/Mistress (SGM), Assistant Master/Mistress (AM) and Senior Assistant Masters/Mistress (SAM), were opposed to the implementation of SSE. This strong force became 40% of the teaching force.

*"Among the 60 colleagues, nearly 20 are SGMs. So, AM, SAM and SGMs account for more than 20 of us or 40% of the school's teachers. Not all of them were not willing (to self-evaluate). More than half of them, or nearly 20 of them, did not raise their hands (to support the implementation of SSE)." (T33, p.10)*

*"Most middle managers reflected that in the past 20 to 30 years, or even earlier, teaching did not require SSE and evaluation. In view of this, implementing SSE or ESR was a hurdle to them." (T33, P.1)*

ESR report for School 3 served as another source of evidence:

*"The school needs to address the fact that some middle-tier managers do not identify with the school's direction of development, which hinders the convergence among subject teachers and the implementation of the school's work through individual subjects panels." (ESR report, p.5)*

The middle managers did not care too much about implementing SSE. Some



panels did not agree with the rationale and were not familiar with the requirements of SSE. They believed that SSE was important theoretically but difficult to implement in practice. Even though there was a front-line teacher, T35, who wanted to conduct SSE, they knew the stance of their panel heads very soon:

*"Some subject heads still neither fully supported the concept of self-evaluation nor came to grips with the skills of self-evaluation." (T33, p.12)*

*"No one (panel) showed you how to analyse the data. You were just given a questionnaire, and you had to do the calculation yourself. No one would scan the questionnaires for me (to possess the data). No one helped me churn out the data." (T35, p.17-18)*

ESR report for School 3 served as additional corroboration:

*"There is not enough self-reflection and an absence of solid follow-up proposals for the subject (after SSE). There is still room to enhance the sense of self-perfection." (ESR report, p.7)*

The middle managers knew the principal had no power to follow up on the under-performers. So, they chose to be lenient towards the under-performing teachers:

*"But in our situation, even though you thought I was evaluated badly, so what? It was nothing more than coming to the knowledge of other colleagues or possibly being scolded by the supervisor, and that's it. As we thought there was neither follow-up nor consequence after evaluation, why should I be the one to point out others' faults? This was a rather common scenario." (T33, p.8)*

*"We thought it inappropriate if appraisal or SSE was employed to bring the appraisee some consequences. SSE might mean being scolded or given a cold shoulder, or even involve job security or workload. This fueled doubt on whether SSE was appropriate." (T32, p:7)*

Some teachers also commented that teachers with high seniority (e.g. the SGMs) were difficult to handle in School 3. These interest groups made SSE an ad hoc event for EDB rather than a genuine evaluation process. Other teachers also doubted the effectiveness of SSE:

*"ESR had generated a report, so what? Everyone saw that our school did not appear to be good in part of the self-evaluation report, so what? Was it the basis for school closure?" (T33, p.13)*

*"Every organisation needed evaluation. As a person, you also needed to evaluate yourself to ensure that advancement had been made. However, if a system was meant to protect a group of people on whom you could not make any impact, evaluation by all means was useless." (T33, p.9)*

*"It was difficult to deal with civil servants with higher seniority. In the same line of thought, teachers with higher seniority were unlikely to be fired here." (T35, p.20)*

As the majority of middle managers resisted obeying the principal, even though there were a few middle managers who wanted to make change, they failed and lost their desire to implement SSE:

*"In many cases in the business sector, a company owes its success in reform to the existence of a strong leader who embraces change. Change is non-existent in the education sector if there is no such leader or harmony is the choice of the majority." (T33, p.13)*

*"Strong leadership creates an atmosphere and breeds a culture. It takes a long time to change the goals, but leaders play a pivotal role in the making of culture/atmosphere. When everyone is happy to follow the established culture/atmosphere and knows that there is something more than work and (SSE) would bring consequence to their work, colleagues will know what the school requires and what they should do." (T33, p.13)*

*"If everyone flatters each others and don't want to be offensive, how can this evaluation system be implemented? If one's bad performance deserves the lowest grade, but I still give him a medium grade because of flattery. This shows that this way of doing fails to reflect the true picture of a certain department or an individual colleague." (T33, p.1)*

As a result, SSE in School 3 was poorly implemented. The middle managers were very lenient and overrated their colleagues' performance to protect the superficial harmony in School 3. It became a face-saving activity in conducting SSE:

*"If the evaluation is non-discriminatory but is just a ground for flattery and harmony, that's fine. If the evaluation is discriminatory with concrete ratings, there has to be a system, which ensures only the fittest survives and achieves the aim of evaluation." (T33, p.2)*

Most general teachers were experienced but did not want to conduct SSE as they had not been promoted. To some teachers, SSE should only be implemented when there were promoted or had salary increases. T35 suggested that there should be a grade whose salary ranges between Graduate Master (GM) and SGM called as Assistant Senior Graduate Master/Mistress (ASGM). Teachers who conducted SSE should be promoted to ASGM grade and get a higher salary. Most teachers wanted to do their job with little accountability. They had no interest in participating in school policy. They were willing to participate in SSE sharing sessions organised by the SSB of School 3. But they refused to put the learnt knowledge for conducting an SSE into action:

*"Yes, it's really contradictory, but I thought the government needed to offer incentives. In the system level, for example, a GM teacher should be promoted to a senior grade (called AGSM), whose salary ranged between the SGM and GM salary, for shouldering administrative duties (such as SSE)" (T35, p.13)*

*"Vice-principals from other schools had been invited to share how they observed the lessons conducted by teachers. This was helpful, but our school did not put much of what said into practice." (T35, p.15)*

In addition to the above quotes, ESR report of School 3 served as corroboration:

*"Teachers do not involve much in the school's policy making process, and have yet to develop consensus on the school's missions and goals proposed by the principal. Inter-subject collaboration is weak, and teachers' sense of reflection and accountability is not high." (ESR report, p.12)*

*"The school needs to set up clearer objectives for appraisal, make better use of the appraisal results and put appraisal into practice, so as to let teachers know what to improve and enhance their sense of accountability." (ESR report, p.12)*

They did not value the evidence-based SSE and did not even set targets to be achieved. Some teachers found excuses to cover up their laziness. Very few teachers wanted to conduct SSE seriously. Otherwise, they would suffer from the attacks of colleagues. They were labeled as "do-gooders" and "trouble-makers":

*"If your passing rate was not good, you would not admit it's your fault. I could say your class really under-performed or, and I could say the rate was higher than the mean in Hong Kong, so you had done a good job. It's all based on my interpretation. Despite having unfavourable data, you could still be favourably assessed under my interpretation. This showed the subjectivity of SSE comments." (T33, p.12)*

*"I guess 1-2% of them (teachers) took the SSE questionnaire themselves and conducted. They cared about their own teaching performance." (T35, p.17)*

*"Some colleagues insisted on telling the truth. Those who were more adamant would have more conflict with other colleagues. They were described as being strict, obstinate and demanding. They were negatively commented by colleagues, but some colleagues had got used to this*

*culture.” (T33, p.8)*

*“From an operational point of view, I think this prevented an organisation from making changes and taking a step forward.” (T33, p.8)*

ESR report of School 3 also served as another proof:

*“Teachers are not able to grasp the concept and skills of SSE. The criteria of success devised in the School’s and the panel’s annual plans are in general piecemeal and not objective. The evaluation mainly focuses on the projects implemented and fails to effectively review the overall efficiency of the areas of concern. Some projects in the Annual School Plan are not devised based on the evaluation results of the previous academic year.” (ESR report, p.3)*

Teachers did not care whether they taught well or not. Teachers did not want to make their conflicting relationship known to others. They wanted to keep the superficially harmonious culture. Follow-up actions for under-performers were rare. SSE and ESR were not accompanied with reward and punishment regimes. Teachers knew there was no follow-up even though some teachers were rated unsatisfactory and problematic. They would not risk themselves offending other colleagues:

*“Some colleagues were hard-working, while some stopped their work when the time was up and left the school punctually... The former would have grievance and doubted why they could not leave punctually. To preserve harmony, such grievance was never discussed openly and was thus accumulated. I knew some colleagues thought it was futile to speak it up, and many opinions were thus kept under the table. How could an organisation which was free of divergent ideas make a step forward?” (T33, p.9)*

ESR report on School 3 also served as corroboration:

*“Teachers seldom employ suitable teaching strategies to address learning*

*differences among students; there is not enough classroom interaction; teachers are not good at raising questions and using double lessons..... The school should devise tailor-made professional development plans for teachers and arrange professional activities with other parties for them to take a leaf from the book of other schools." (ESR report, p.11)*

Some front-line teachers wanted to implement SSE by evaluating their panel heads while some dared not to voice their desire to evaluate their heads:

*"No more than half of the staff members, or less than 30 of them, had raised their hands in support of "top-down and bottom-top SSE (as required by EDB)". They should be the ones who had not yet promoted, i.e. non-SGM." (T33, p.10)*

*"After they (the senior management) had discussed and raised the proposals, we on the front-line would know what to do. So, we did not have much chance to get involved in the discussion on the implementation of the system of self-evaluation or appraisal. " (T32, p.8)*

*"If I evaluated my supervisor unfavourably, how would he treat me? This is an issue that had to be faced. In theory, it's mutual evaluation, mutual help and mutual understanding, but in reality it's not." (T33, p.1)*

*"So I also believed government officials dedicated to ESR had their own difficulties. Some schools might do it (SSE) just as part of their obligation. We all were just "employees", and it's understood that something had to be accountable to others. There were really some difficulties (in implementing SSE)." (T33, p.9)*

Some teachers reflected that the non-accountable school culture was derived from the educational philosophy of the SSB. They observed that superficial harmony was able to maintain the operation of school but no improvements could be made. They also added that teachers' conflicts were deeply rooted. Under the management of the Protestant SSB, acceptance and love were frequently emphasised. Thus, all conflicts and staff dismissals should be avoided:

*"In a religious sponsoring body-run school, concepts of tolerance and love were taught to students and practised in colleague communication, so its working approach was not as decisive or merciless as that in the business world, where every vile thought and every decision to terminate employment could be put into practice once conceived. Under a school setting, communication and tolerance were keys to settling disputes from big to small. The situation where sometimes "there might not be anything to follow up" had to a certain extent something to do this management style." (T33, p.8)*

*"It depended on whether the SMC had such power and resorts to warning or even termination of employment. This could serve as a warning signal to others, but it's difficult to carry out. It's difficult to make changes without a culture of proactiveness and accountability." (T35, p.20)*

ESR report on School 3 served as another source of evidence:

*"But the SMC puts much emphasis on the keeping of a harmonious working relation among teachers. It does not attach enough importance to enhancing teachers' sense of accountability. This is not favourable to the school's sustainable development." (ESR report, p.5)*

As a result, the implementation of SSE in School 3 was carried out in a perfunctory and poor manner

*"From beginning to end, I was not against implementing the said SSE. There was a need to ensure only the fittest survives in this sector, as in other sectors. But many factors had neither been given enough thought nor come to a solution. So, many conflicts arose in the stage of implementation, and nearly nothing was achieved." (T33, p.13)*

*"I had that feeling. Colleagues' performance was reported and commented, and that's it. Not much thought was given on how to handle a specific class or group of students. Yes, the meeting was held for the sake of meeting only." (T35, p.12)*

*"Everyone thought SSE was more of a project than a school policy, so I guessed they did not think it (SSE) helps." (T32, p.10)*

The following specific case demonstrates how the principal faced strong opposition when implementing SSE in School 3. Before the arrival of the new principal in September 2001, SSE in School 3 was nearly non-existent. The role and function of the SSE Committee was not clear. Its networking and communication was weak too:

*"(The school did not handle SSE in an explicit manner in 02-04... If some committees did not report what they had done, other units would know nothing about it. In my impression, there wasn't any clear message on what I needed to do. This SSE was just like usual evaluation on colleagues' work." (T33, p.11)*

In September 2001, the new principal was appointed to be the principal of School 3 by the SSB from a band one school. However, he was told that the middle managers were opposed to new ideas and were difficult to persuade. Hence, he chose to prepare the SDP himself. He excluded the teachers in the policy formulation of SSE. He was caught in a dilemma. On one hand, he knew teachers' participation was important in implementing school policies. However, he also knew it was hard to involve such opposing middle managers in the formulation of the school development plan. ESR report also revealed the above situation:

*"The existing policy-making process fails to converge the power of teachers. Their overall involvement is not enough. Some of them don't identify with the school's policy. The principal consultation committee fails to gather teachers' views extensively in the policy-making process." (ESR report, p.4)*

*"The principal clearly understands it's not good for him to set up the school's development plans and annual plans alone without teaching staff's involvement." (ESR report, p.5)*



As predicted, the office politics and the balkanised teacher culture which existed among the middle managers did not facilitate the implementation of the school development plans of School 3 prepared by the principal. The teachers' opposition hindered the implementation of SSE. Even though there were some teachers who were willing to implement SSE, they would negotiate with the principal to alleviate their workload:

*"In our school, the operation of SSE was in some way affected by office politics and tribalism. For example, if middle-tier or "veteran" staff members who enjoyed power were not quite co-operative during the stage of implementation, the operation of the (SSE) system was to a certain extent hindered from the perspective of management studies." (T33, p.1)*

*"As there were many "veteran" staff members, they used the old way to do evaluation. In 20-30 years ago or even earlier times, there was no evaluation on teaching. Their established thought was hindrance to the effective implementation of the system of SSE or ESR." (T33, p.1)*

*"I thought there was a need to cut the number of lessons, as you needed time to review colleagues' documents and talk with them, and I also needed time to review documents and take part in workshops. It was time consuming to collect, review and vet documents and review them again after vetting." (T31, p.10)*

The middle managers chose not to be evaluated seriously in the process of SSE. They believed that there would be no consequences after the implementation of SSE. They believed that the principal could not dismiss them. As a result, in order not to provoke the middle managers, the principal told the middle managers that he was conducting SSE only for teacher development. Therefore, in the views of some middle managers, SSE was implemented without follow-up actions. For them, SSE was a waste of time actually. They observed that some meetings were conducted for no purposes and were without follow-up:

*"If an organisation did not attach importance to the results, a mere observation approach would not work indeed. Many schools said the appraisal was for teachers' development, but what was teachers' development? If I evaluated you unfavourably, did it mean that I needed to lay you off? It's not the case. So, what's the point of evaluation? Although it was for teachers' development, what if one gave it a cold shoulder? What if he did not improve? Was there any follow-up by the school? It was in vain without any follow-up." (T33, p.1)*

*"Every organisation needed evaluation. As a person, you also needed to evaluate yourself to ensure that advancement had been made. However, if a system was meant to protect a group of people (the SGMs in School 3) on whom you could not make any impact, evaluation by all means was useless." (T33, p.9)*

*"It was difficult to deal with civil servants with higher seniority. In the same line of thought, teachers with higher seniority (the SGMs in School 3) were unlikely to be fired here." (T35, p.20)*

*"I had that feeling. Colleagues' performance was reported and commented, and that's it. Not much thought would be given on how to handle a specific class or group of students. Yes, the meeting was held for the sake of meeting only." (T35, p.12)*

Despite the above negative comments from the middle managers, there was a weak voice for change. But the voice was too weak indeed. Therefore, there was frustration among SSE supporters. T35 worried about the policy sustainability of SSE due to the teachers' commitment and self-initiatives. T35 could see the effects of SSE on building relationships between School 3 and the parents. T35 believed that SSE could enable him to reflect on his own performance. He did not think students would be biased when implementing SSE.

*"I think there was a need for a good system to put school administration into order. A school policy could either be sustainable, or fade away after*

*one or two years of implementation. In fact, some policies were well executed at the onset but fail to sustain because of a lack of proactiveness and commitment." (T35, p.20)*

*"I thought self-evaluation served to enhance teacher-student relation and even the bridge between parents and the school." (T35, p.13)*

*"But (self-evaluation) could make me understand my blind spots or drawbacks.....Its focus was on whether one was satisfied with teachers' classroom objectives or teaching approach, or issues from a similar perspective, followed by many sub-questions, such as teaching method, particulars and atmosphere of activities. It's acceptable. The low mark might have something to do with having few activities. The students preferred more activities, such as group gathering or movie-going." (T35, p.4)*

*"Their answers were unbiased and some of them were even constructive. Form one students were asked to write down their views. They might not write much, but some of them could do it." (T35, p.4)*

As the power and influence of the resistant middle managers was too strong, the principal had no choice but to adopt a mild approach in the implementation of SSE. The principal chose to implement SSE voluntarily. However, this voluntary SSE was indeed poorly implemented. Hence, the pro-SSE teachers described SSE as nearly useless. They complained about the lenient attitude of the principal towards the experienced panels and middle-managers. T33 was disappointed that the principal did not dismiss the resistant teachers. He believed that the principal should have adopted a strong management style in leading the different sub-groups in School 3. T35 even predicted he would lose his zeal to work hard in School 3 after 10 more years.

*"If the school is resolute to change, it can be done through a system (SSE). I think that to a certain extent, there is a need to issue a warning by sacking one teacher if necessary." (T33, p.7)*

*"First, the role of the principal is important in that he has to talk with different parties. If he doesn't communicate well, each party will do its own part of work to fulfil their job duty. Even there is flattery within a group, one still has to flatter the principal. So, it's important for the principal to communicate with different parties.....A principal with strong leadership is necessary if change is to be made, especially in schools with a deep-rooted organisation culture." (T33, p.6)*

*"Doing it well will not lead to promotion, while doing it badly will not lead to unemployment..... I'm worried that 10 years later, I will become a teacher who doesn't mind compromising with the under-performed teachers and takes everything lightly." (T35, p.19)*

In 2003, when teachers in School 3 learned that some teachers would be made redundant they worried a bit. The sense of crisis was immediately very strong.

*"Everyone was in fear. Some colleagues might re-examine their value to the team and found jobs outside." (T32, p.7 )*

*"In fact, at that time, everyone feared not because of appraisal but lay-off—how many, who, how and on what scoring basis. At that time, meetings lasted until 7-8pm." (T35, p.13)*

*"Everyone observed this. They might not say it, but they understood the level of class reduction and the dropping enrolment. The overall student population of the district had dropped, so could we enrol enough students? If not, how many of us had to leave? Was I to be sacked because I was young and green?" (T31, p.6)*

*"The number of subjects available for studnets' choices dropped unier new senior secondary. Some colleagues may need to leave the school, so the decrease in the teacher ratio is also sensitive. If classes are reduced, what is the basis? Who will be the first to leave the school?" (T31, p.6)*

In 2004, however, when the threat of redundancy passed, the threatening message of the principal was no longer threatening anymore.

From 2004 to early 2006, school-based SSE was implemented voluntarily in School 3. In reality, a very few teachers designed school-based SSE tools in School 3. No one monitored and follow up on the results. The principal had to compromise with the political reality. For EDB-stipulated SSE tools, they were also adopted on a voluntary basis:

*"We had not set any questionnaire for students to express their opinions on teachers. If teachers wanted to know how students comment on them, we encouraged them to find it out themselves. We would not get involved."* (T31, p.1)

*"In our school, it was optional for students to evaluate teachers. It was not a must."* (T31, p.2)

*"Student questionnaires? It had been optional all the way, so it was not something that ended midway, but as indeed an "unborn child".* (T33, p.18)

*"As the same teacher took and distributed the SSE questionnaires and possessed the result, so no one was clear about the SSE results."* (T31, p.2)

*"I agreed with what that school had said. For example, how could self-evaluation be done in a one-man panel? I would not give myself bad comments, so was SSE really implemented at all? Did I still go through all the right track of SSE for you? That's a question."* (T31, p.10)

In early 2006, when School 3 was informed of ESR, the principal appointed the vice-principal to conduct SSE again. This time, the principal could make use of the urgency of ESR team to motivate the teachers. However, teachers thought that they had to conduct a show or a project for EDB rather than for school improvement:

*"Our principal stated the need to do self-evaluation, and the vice-principal required us to put it into practice...The main goal was to optimise learning*

*and teaching, but I thought it had more to do with meeting the requirements from the ED rather than realising a need to do self-evaluation.” (T32, p.1)*

*“Everyone thought it's more of a project than a school policy, so I guessed they did not think SSE helped.” (T32, p.10)*

In early 2006, when there were only a few months left before the arrival of ESR inspection team from EDB, the middle managers realised that it was the government who needed SSE documents. They understood that if they still refused to co-operate with the principal, EDB would inform the SMC of their un-cooperative attitude. If this happened, it would trigger the anger of the SMC and they would have to face the pressure from the SMC. They then chose to submit the minimum requirements of SSE documents required by EDB to the principal. They knew the “rules of the game” and were willing to “play the game” for EDB. They rushed to make up records and documentation for SSE:

*“We needed to prepare all documents beforehand, because we needed to collect some documents as record. If there was no such record, we needed to make it up.” (T31, p.1)*

*“We needed to review documentation spanning three years and put something in record. If part of it was lost, we had to find it out. It's tough.” (T31, p.1)*

*“So I also believed that government officials dedicated to ESR had their own difficulties. Some schools might do it just as part of their obligation (we all just worked to meet our supervisors' requirements, and it's understood that something had to be done). There were really some difficulties.” (T33, p.9)*

In these few months, EDB-stipulated questionnaires and SHS survey were used by the middle managers to evaluate the principal's performance (Figure 21). Students were given questionnaires to evaluate the teachers' performance. Parents were given

questionnaires to evaluate the school's performance. In addition, the Head of SSE hastily made up documents, such as ASP, SR and SHS so as to "entertain" EDB. However, the school-based SSE tools were not developed:

*"Our teachers did the self-evaluation themselves and reported it to the principal. I did it from the measuring parameters I had just mentioned, such as one's performance in non-teaching aspects, effort, availability of all relevant documents, punctuality, setting of test papers, homework arrangement, co-operation with colleagues, classroom observation, etc."*  
(T31, p.4)

**Instructions**

- This form should be completed on a voluntary basis.
- Place an x on the numbered line for each item.
- Leave blank if you have no opinion.
- The sheets will be given back to the appraisee for analysis/records/reference.
- Information so obtained may form part of the basis of future individual/group staff development programmes.

Administrative / Executive Traits	Negative				Positive		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Sets goals/objectives in line with the school aims and objectives					4.69		
2. Makes decisions which aim at improving the educational opportunities of students					4.62		
3. Makes detailed plans for the implementation of goals/objectives				4.13			
4. Organizes resources for the implementation				4.19			
5. Presents ideas in a clear and concise manner				4.10			
6. Conducts meetings to serve meaningful purposes					4.53		
7. Monitors progress of plans and presents reports on progress as and when necessary				4.32			
8. Completes necessary paper works promptly and accurately					4.97		
9. Surveys recent educational periodicals and reads information pertinent to his/her work					4.81		
10. Participates in professional organizations and activities					4.79		
11. Is supportive to colleagues' classroom concerns				4.38			
12. Is understanding of teacher's personal concerns					4.51		
13. Takes definite steps to aid teacher's professional growth					4.74		
14. Allows teachers to try new ideas					5.31		
15. Takes time to praise teachers				4.32			
16. Evaluates teachers in objective manner					4.58		
<b>Sub-total (a) =</b>							

**Figure 21: Results of EDB SHS for the Principal in School 3**

In March 2006, School 3 was inspected by ESR team of EDB. ESR report revealed that teachers in School 3 had just commenced their SSE process in early 2006. EDB observed that SSE in School 3 had just begun. EDB also discovered that

the communication between the teachers and the principal was weak. EDB pointed out that teachers in School 3 were weak in accountability in order to protect the school's superficial harmony. In other words, the middle managers' resistance and reluctance to implement SSE was observed. In addition, the development of the subject panels did not tie in with the school development plan. The following extracts from ESR report detailed the situation:

*"From an individual point of view, since 2006 teachers have had to evaluate their own teaching performance and talk face-to-face with the principal before the end of the semester in order to seek improvement. However, this arrangement has just begun and its effectiveness has remained to be seen. Such arrangement has not yet been formally included as part of teachers' performance and in the teachers' professional development plan. It remains to be seen as to how the two can be merged."* (ESR report, p.3)

*"To ensure effective team-building the principal still needs to enhance communication with teachers and increase their involvement in the decision-making process."* (ESR report, p.5)

*"The school always attaches importance to harmony among teachers. The sense of using the appraisal system to increase teacher accountability is low."* (ESR report, p.6)

*"In addition, there is variation within the panel's working plans. Some subject plans do not relate closely with the school's major concern. The school should strengthen monitoring and follow-up to ensure that the subject concerned is in line with what the school has been doing."* (ESR report, p.3)

In 2008, the principal introduced the new elements of SSE mechanism when the field work was conducted. The general teachers were given opportunities to evaluate their panel Heads and other middle managers. School-based SSE tools were in the process of being developed.



*"The principal intentionally made public the data on people's comments on him. Yes, I think he wanted to be a pioneer. Last time, there was no bottom-up SSE. I learnt from a recent meeting (2008) that such idea was to be mulled this year, but it remained unclear as to whether it would really be implemented." (T32, p.10)*

*"At present, we are on our way to school-based SSE implementation, designing a questionnaire for students to write down their opinions on teachers. Frankly speaking, colleagues are worried that given the quality of our students, it will not be fairly conducted. They may give good comments on teachers who do not scold them, and bad comments on those who scold and argue with them. We are worried about its faithfulness and effectiveness." (T31, p.2)*

To summarise, implementation of SSE in School 3 was the organic interaction of the policy, place and people. To illustrate the complex interaction, Figure 22 offers delineation as follows:

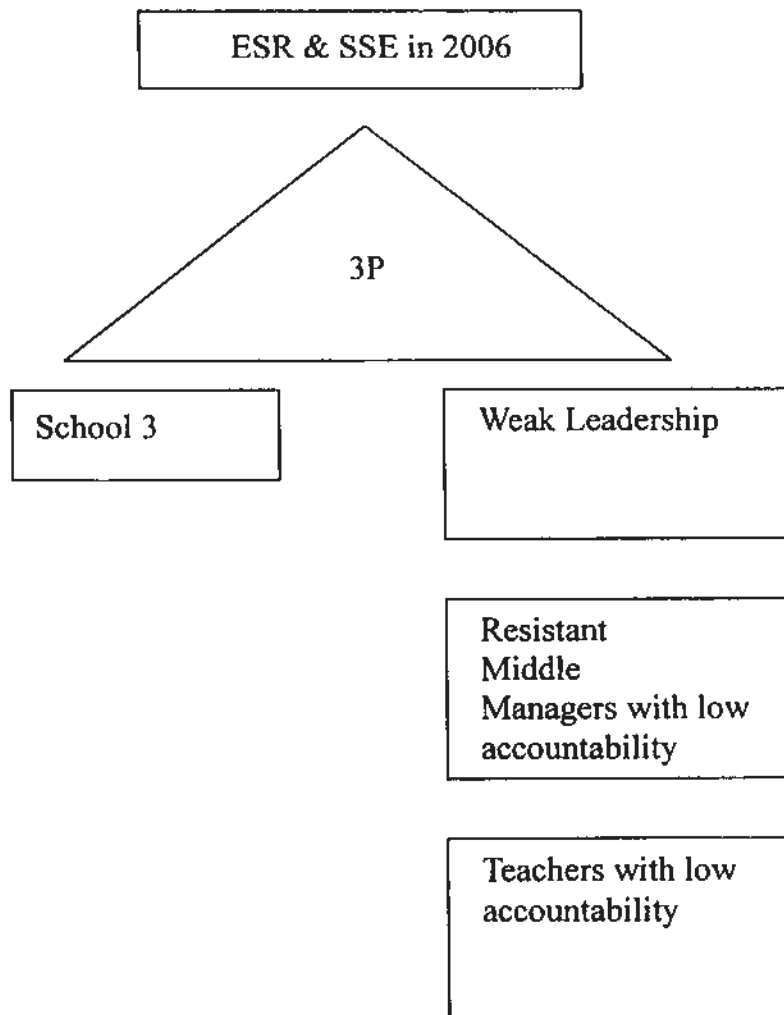


Figure 22: 3Ps Model for School 3

To begin with the context of Policy, SSE documents such as the SDP, ASP were not prepared and available in School 3 although these EDB's requirements were fulfilled by most schools in early 2006. There was no teacher participation in implementing SSE. The subject committee could not match with their development of major concerns. SSE was a Pandora box. Despite the presence of the SSE Committee, it did not function and was not noticed by teachers. There was no policy networking, and no policy indigenisation.

In February 2006, ESR team of EDB informed School 3 of their visit in May 2006. School 3 had no choices but to implement SSE hastily to tackle the upcoming visit of ESR. Hence, School 3 had to rush making all SSE policy specification, formalisation and documentation. From February to May 2006, teachers in School 3 copied templates provided by the SSE Committee so as to fulfil the requirement of EDB in ESR. These make-up SSE data and procedures were discovered by ESR team of EDB. As a result, SSE in School 3 was poorly implemented. Despite the mature instrumentalisation offered by the government, School 3 was devoid of concrete policy formalisations, policy networking and policy indigenisation.

Second, the context of Place, it does not exert great pressures on monitoring the performance of teachers and the school in School 3. The students and parents are of low social, intellectual, cultural capital. Both parents and students always faced financial, family, social and community problems. So, their monitoring effects as stakeholders of the schools are relatively weak and are not strong as stated in SSE government documents.

Third, for the context of People, there was weakly-legitimate new principal leadership from 2001 to 2008. It was because of the lenient management philosophy of the SMC from 1977 to 2008. The SMC did not allow dismissal or other forms of punishment as a means to handle under-performed teachers. The principal knew that the SSB would not be happy with any dismissal of staff. Such dismissal would serve as anti-school mission acts and measures. Therefore, the principal had no administrative power to motivate the teachers easily. The middle managers and the teachers were experienced and also understood there would be no consequences when refusing to do SSE. In this regard, they kept holding low accountability

towards their job. They were mostly resistant, powerful and not submissive to the principal's leadership. The general teachers just wanted to get their job done with little accountability. They had no interest in participating in school policy.

#### **4.5 Implementation of SSE--Complex Organic Interaction among Policy, Place and People**

In view of these three schools, it was found that the implementation of SSE is a complex and organic interaction among the context of Policy to be implemented along with time, the context of Place in which the policy supposed to take hold and the context of People implementing it.

##### **4.5.1 Policy Maturation Takes Time**

###### **School 1**

From 1991 to 1997, School 1 had implemented SMI. From 1997 to 2002, School 1 had implemented SSE stated in ECR7. From 2003 to 2008, School 1 implemented the mandatory SSE for the upcoming of ESR. Such a long period of time allowed the government SSE and School-based SSE of School 1 to reach policy maturation of SSE in 2008.

To begin with, time allowed School 1 to learn from 1991 to 2008 for 17 years from the time of collective puzzlement when it started the policy of SMI from scratch. In School 1, implementation of the protocol of SSE--SMI started in 1991. It was due to the introduction of SMI by the former principal, a former Administrative Officer in EDB. In 1991, there were no government specifications, formalisations, networking and instrumentalisations stipulated by the ED when implementing SMI.

The former principal was given vague policy ideas of SMI to implement school-based SMI in School 1 with his robust bureaucratic administrative experience. With the arrival of the new principal in 1997, he delegated his power to the middle managers and provided them with lots of policy networking such as SSE training and psychological preparation for the advent of SSE in 2003.

Furthermore, time allowed School 1 to establish strong policy networking with other SSE pioneers and networks. In School 1, implementation of SMI was conducted with invitation from ED in 1991. Together with other pioneer schools, School 1 participated in a SMI-pilot project. As School 1 had gradually grasped basic concepts of SMI and SSE from 1991 to 2002, thus in 2003 School 1 could proceed to more advanced school-based policy indigenisation of SSE. School 1 could have strong policy networking of SSE by joining SSE project offered by the CUHK and professional sharing among affiliated schools.

Moreover, time allowed School 1 to change from the dictatorial decision-making into participatory decision-making mode in implementation of SSE. In School 1, it was at first dictated by the former principal and two vice-principals and two assistant-principals from 1991 to 1997. They were smart and efficient when compared with other newly-graduated young teachers. Hence, there were only four SMI leaders working in a very strong top-down manner. In 1991, the teachers there were young and glad to follow the four leaders. However, the teachers gradually lost the sense of ownership and demanded greater teachers' participation from the leaders in around 1995. This paved a way for the advent of distributed leadership among middle managers through policy networking and greater staff participation by the middle managers for implementation of SSE in 1997. With the concerted effort of the

new principal and the teaching force from 1997 to 2003, the middle managers were given ample chances to implement SSE policies and accumulated their SSE experiences. In 2003, most middle managers became “veterans” in implementing SSE. This success was attributed to the deeper culture of SSE established in School 1 along with time.

Time allowed the government to evolve from vague policy specifications and formalisations to concrete policy specifications, formalisations, documentation and instrumentalisations. There were no policy specifications and formalisations for SMI in 1991. No standard templates and formats were required by the government. SMI pilot scheme in 1991 only provided School 1 with a chance to develop its own form of policy formalisations. Moreover, no SMI policy tools were given by the government. No standard format of ASP was given and mentioned. There were no policy instrumentalisations of SMI by the government. School 1 had to initiate its policy formalisations, policy specifications, documentation and instrumentalisations. It was until 1997, ECR7 provided performance indicators and the model of QAI and SSE for schools to follow. Finally, in 2003, EDB could provide sophisticated policy instruments such as the KPM, APASO, SHS and the SVAIS for schools.

Under such policy context, implementation of SMI in School 1 was progressive and evolutionary. From 1991 to 2008, School 1 seized this valuable chance of implementing SMI to develop its policy specifications, formalisations documentation and instrumentalisation. When School 1 was visited in 2008, sophisticated school-based SSE instruments tools such as subject questionnaires, committee questionnaires, school-based performance indicators were developed and were incorporated into SSE documents. There was development of SSE documentations

such as staff handbook and job description.

Time allowed policy networking of SSE to become stronger. In 1991, School 1 had assigned a special committee formerly called SMI Committee to implement SMI. In 1997, the principal invited more middle managers and teachers to practise his distributed leadership. He strengthened the policy networking in 1997 to pave way for future effective implementation of SSE in 2003. From 2003 to 2008, SSE was highly focused with clear themes. SSE was also more tightly networked at subject and panel level.

Time allowed School 1 to change the paradigm shift of policy measurement of SSE from feeling-based to evidence-based. In 1991, School 1 had conducted SMI based on the feeling and intuition of principal. Teachers' performance was measured with principal's favour and judgment. For instance, classroom management was highly-valued by the former principal in the lesson observation. In 2008, SSE had become more formalised and objective procedures and evidence-based in nature. Take lesson observation as another example, a team of teachers instead of the principal alone would evaluate and observe colleagues so that peer-learning could be established.

Time allowed School 1 to change the mindset of teachers to accept implementation of SSE. In 1991, when implementing SSE in School 1, teachers were puzzled and opposed to it. In 1997, quite a number of teachers then realised the importance of implementing SSE in a systematic perspective to guarantee the passing-on of good practices. In 2003, School 1 was more receptive to the core essence of implementing SSE. This increasing receptivity of SSE was attributed to

the slow evolution of government SSE policy from 1991 to 2008.

## **School 2**

Implementation of SSE in School 2 had been in place for 10 years since 1998. With these 10 years, two stages were characterised. First, it was the stage of QAI & SSE from 1998 to 2002. Second, it was from 2003 to 2008. Such a relatively long time of evolution for policy maturation explained why in School 2, implementation of SSE was relatively moderately-hooked. Time brought the following merits for the implementation of SSE in School 2.

Time allowed School 2 to learn and risk from policy puzzlement when SSE started in School 2 in 1998 after ECR7 in 1997. In 1997, SSE and QAI were formally introduced in ECR7. Relevant performance indicators such as input, process and output indicators were recommended to monitor the effectiveness of quality education. Under such policy context, teachers started the implementation of school-based SSE from these policy recommendations. In 1998, School 2 implemented SSE. Formal meetings on SSE were conducted. Teachers gradually familiarised with the cycle of SSE. In 2004, the principal also joined the HKSSSEN to practice policy networking. Like other schools, School 2 also faced the difficulties of gathering teachers for implementation of SSE at the very initial stage. Along with time, policy formalisation, documentation, networking of SSE was resulted. In 2003, the school-based policy indigenisation of SSE was also implanted at subject levels. Different KLAs rotated and became the major concern of the school in implementation of SSE. Gradually, the norm of conducting SSE in different subjects was established. In 2003, School 2 also joined SSE project organised by the CUHK to conduct SWOT analysis and action plan through policy networking. This



experience further strengthened the foundation of SSE in School 2. In 2004, the implementation of SSE was highly-rated by ESR team of EDB. ESR report affirmed SSE in School 2 as comprehensive, penetrating through school, panel and teacher level and as effective. Students' voice was valued in the Extra-Curricular Activity (ECA) and teaching effectiveness. After 10 years of hard work, SSE mechanism was well-established and well-implemented when the fieldwork was conducted in 2008.

Time allowed School 2 to form policy networking with other SSE pioneers in HKSSSEN in 1998. Time allowed School 2 to learn SSE with other networking schools. Time provided ample space for principal to secure external resources in implementing SSE with richer resources. Time was critical in allowing policy networking among middle managers by attending workshops and trainings organised by EDB and the tertiary partners.

Time allowed School 2 to develop policy indigenisation of SSE in School 2. In 1998, there was policy indigenisation in School 2. In 2003, there was gradual development of school-based lesson observation. In the past, the principal in School 2 evaluated the lesson plan himself with subjective judgment and no clear performance indicators. With the implementation of SSE, there was a gradual development of performance indicators in school-based lesson observation. The principal in School 2 established the performance indicators through which lesson observations were assessed. In 2003, 80% of teachers agreed with the principal's advocacy along with time. There was development of school-based questionnaires. Every student in every class was given questionnaires from the SSE committee. The result of SSE would be announced to panel head for further discussion with his or her panel members under the formalised SSE policy. In 2008, these school-based

questionnaires penetrated through every KLA so that implementation of SSE could be deeply implemented.

Time allowed School 2 to develop policy instrumentalisation. In 1998, there was no stakeholders' survey and other SSE tools in School 2. In 2008, parents were also included in school-based questionnaires after conducting activities. There was development of concrete performance indicators such as the popularity rate of teachers, the use of English in the teaching medium, the punctuality rate of teachers and the time of arrival and departure of teachers. All well-developed indicators show the evolution of performance indicators. Time enabled teachers to absorb the essence of SSE gradually and develop their own SSE instruments. Panels set the target mean score in SSE survey in which all teachers should attain. Moreover, the government SSE indicators such as results of AL, CE and, KPM, TSA were widely-used as clear indicators of teachers' performance. Teachers were given chances to self-evaluate and discuss with panels in professional dialogue.

Time allowed School 2 to develop its policy formalisation of SSE. Time allowed teachers get trained so that a robust team of SSE members were gradually established. In 1998, the formalisation for SSE just began. In 2008, a clear flow of chain mechanism and procedures was established for coordination of SSE. The SSE Committee stipulated a very clear follow-up mechanism for the principal, vice-principals and the middle managers to sustain SSE mechanism. When good practices were identified, panel heads would affirm teachers. For areas to be improved, panel heads would deal with teachers personally. The principal in School 2 also required the panels to report to him for special findings and the corresponding follow-up in writing of annual plan.

Time allowed teachers in School 2 to compare against the performance of other teachers. The principal took the dominating role in the implementation of SSE. In 2008, most teachers belonging to different KLAs would be able to implement SSE themselves. They knew how to make share decisions based on hard data. Time allowed School 2 to change the mindset of teachers to accept implementation of SSE progressively. In 1998, School 2 had experienced opposition in implementation of SSE initially, but time allowed the dissatisfaction and dissenting voice to cool down. In 2008, quite a number of changed their mindset and accepted SSE more readily. Some teachers realised that it was not for the benefits of EDB and but the public to conduct SSE. Though few teachers doubted the motivation of conducting SSE, there were some teachers who supported SSE. In 2008, more teachers welcomed the positive side of implementing SSE. They chose to implement SSE in an incremental approach. Now, there were teachers who embraced the essence of SSE. There were some teachers who affirmed the importance of SSE even though they were busy for it. Others reflected how SSE results help them improve their professionalism.

Time allowed School 2 to deal with policy documentation in implementation of SSE. Time allowed School 2 to implement SSE with good documentation through policy learning from the HKSSSEN and the CUHK and other affiliated schools. School 2 offered SSE templates to teachers to resolve their doubt and fear in implementing SSE. Gradually, the teachers became “veterans” in preparing for the policy documentation of SSE and their policy puzzlement gradually removed.

### **School 3**

Implementation of SSE in School 3 had just begun since early 2006 because

ESR team of EDB visited it in May 2006. Their visit forced School 3 to implement SSE and could not delay SSE anymore. With such short period of implementation time, implementation of SSE in School 3 was not hooked firmly. Such short period of time brought the following negative impacts on implementation of SSE in School 3.

There was not enough time for School 3 to go through the process of policy formalisation and specifications. Before early 2006, SSE was nearly not implemented and even not felt present by teachers. Before 2001, there was a former principal. In September 2001, a new principal or the serving principal joined School 3. He attempted to find an exit and to change the non-accountable and non-evaluative culture in School 3. But due to his weak legitimation, the lenient management philosophy of the SMC and the resistant teachers, he failed. In February 2006, the principal was informed of ESR visit in May 2006. The principal had no choice but to offer middle managers templates to copy and to modify as a quick fix to handle EDB. Therefore, even though teachers could “submit the homework” and “entertain EDB”, the quality of implementation of SSE was not good. There was still no policy indigenisation of SSE including the indigenisation of performance indicators.

There was not enough time for School 3 for policy networking with other schools. When School 3 started to implement SSE in February 2006, it was too late. Nearly about 40% of secondary schools in Hong Kong were already inspected by EDB. Therefore, their motivation to form SSE policy networking would be greatly reduced. Though teachers had received SSE training from CUHK, teachers had low willingness and low sense of accountability to implement SSE. In addition, the policy networking within School 3 was also weak. When SSE was implemented in

School 3 in early 2006, the staff participation among middle managers and teachers was low. There was no effective committee disseminating the policy specifications of SSE. Teachers did not feel a sense of ownership in the implementation of SSE. Teachers did not value the process of implementation of SSE. Instead, they looked for "model answers" to "copy" and for final decisions from the heads. In 2006, only 10-20% of teachers knew what SSE was about. Even the principal admitted to EDB that staff participation was not strong in implementation of SSE.

There was not enough time for School 3 to develop policy specifications and policy instrumentalizations. For instance, there were no school development plans and no operational details of SSE were seen. Due to lack of time, School 3 only conducted government SSE by adopting all the ready-to-use SSE tools. In contrast, the policy indigenization of school-based questionnaires was not developed. As a result, very few teachers knew the core essence of SSE. Thus, teachers even did not know the meaning of conducting SSE. Due to lack of time, teachers' worries over the students' voice in implementing SSE were not resolved yet.

There was not enough time to change the mentality of middle managers. Time was not enough for the principal to deal with political resistance with both power and re-education. There was not enough time for School 3 to change the paradigm shift of measurement of teachers' performance. Before early 2006, SSE was nearly not implemented. Only basic book-checking, occasional lesson observation and feeling-based evaluation were conducted. In early 2006, teachers had been asked to evaluate their own teaching effectiveness for the sake of entertaining EDB.

Furthermore, time was not enough for the principal in School 3 to handle the

dissenting voice of implementing of SSE. Teachers believed that SSE was implemented for the sake of EDB. Affirmative voice from the pro-SSE camp was breeding, yet not strong enough to oppose to the resistance under such a limited time. Some teachers of pro-SSE camp demanded the SMC to use power to remove political resistance against SSE. Otherwise, they believed that it would be meaningless to conduct SSE. Finally, time was not enough for the principal to seek the trust and support from the SMC for the forceful implementation of SSE in School 3.

There was no enough time for School 3 to deal with the policy documentations arising from implementation of SSE. In School 3, even the preparation of SSE documents such as formatting could be problematic due to limited time. The 3-year documentation requirement for SSE was already very demanding to teachers in School 3.

To conclude, policy maturation of SSE took time. Time enabled the policy to reach policy formalisations, networking, specifications and indigenisation. However, it had to make it very clear that the policy maturation here was referred to school level, and more specifically, for the three sample schools only. In other words, this study did not argue for the policy maturation at systemic level. Moreover, the policy maturation here could be referred to individual teacher level, which would be further elaborated in Chapter 5.

## **4.5.2 Parents and Students Background Matter**

### **School 1**

Implementation of SSE in School 1 had been well-established. The government

SSE documents predicted that parents and students would serve as monitoring roles in monitoring the teachers' and school's performance. It was expected by EDB that Parents and students would serve as auditors to monitor school performance. In School 1, students and parents came from low-income families. Their intellectual, social, cultural capital was limited.

In School 1, students usually come from low-income group and have ageing parents. Thus, students rely heavily on the educational input from teachers of School 1. Students are therefore not so critical towards teachers' teaching performance. Hence, the results of SSE from student stakeholders would not exert too much pressure on teachers. Teachers, on the other hand, would not dissatisfy with the implementation of SSE as there are little threatening and monitoring effects from the student stakeholders. Students even do not know what SSE was when they conducted SSE process. Thus, students do not monitor teachers' performance as predicted in the government SSE documents.

Parents' intellectual, social and cultural capital was also limited. Parents in School 1 are usually from single-parent-working family. Most mothers are housewives. Parents in School 1 are mainly "blue collar" and thus find hard to monitor the performance of teachers. They seldom challenge against the school even though they are given chances to conduct SSE. They are willing to serve schools as volunteers. They do not participate in the school policy as monitoring role, but as supportive role as volunteers. The prediction in government SSE documents does not apply to School 1.

## **School 2**

Implementation of SSE in School 2 was established, with a mid-low student and parent SES background. In School 2, students are from mid-low income families. Parents are with mid-low educational background. The intellectual, social, cultural capital of parents is limited. They are all busy with working. It usually takes the parents 2 to 3 hours to return from the urban areas to their home. Thus, it is hard for them to squeeze time to look after their children, not to mention to monitor the performance of teachers in School 2.

Most students come from mid-low income group families. As their parents are busy, the students rely heavily on the educational input from teachers of School 2. Students are therefore not so critical towards teachers' teaching performance. Hence, the results of SSE from student stakeholders would not exert too much pressure on teachers. Teachers, on the other hand, would not dissatisfy with the implementation of SSE. There are little threatening and monitoring effects from the student stakeholders. Students even do not know what SSE was when they conducted SSE process. Students in School 2 are willing to learn and respond to teachers' instruction. They are obedient but passive in learning. Hence, students' do not have great voice in evaluating and monitoring teachers' performance. Also, quite many students are Christians. They are submissive and obedient to the teachers, as required in the biblical teaching.

To sum up, both parents and students are of low intellectual, social, cultural capital. They do not serve as monitoring roles in monitoring the teachers' and school's performance, as predicted in SSE documents. They have no time to audit the



performance of teachers and the school. Also, the strong Christian culture did not encourage students to challenge teachers.

### **School 3**

Implementation of SSE in School 3 was poorly implemented. In School 3, students are from very low-income families in New Territories East. They usually have behavioural problems. Parents are mainly new immigrants with very low educational attainment. Quite a number of them were unemployed. Some are construction site workers while some are indulged in gambling problems, as reported by the interviewees during informal dialogues. Quite a number of families are composed of old fathers but young Mainland mothers. The families have great financial problems in paying the transportation fees, and picnicking fees of their children. They are resistant to participate in school policy and SSE. Teachers, on the other hand, served as financing and sponsoring role to help the students in need.

Students are from very low-income group families. Some students are resistant to normal schooling and have very low interest to learn either. Students spend most of time doing part-time jobs or surfing in internet to eliminate their loneliness and to escape from the sense of failure in their studies, as reported by interviewees during informal dialogue. Hence, it is very difficult to get students to become stakeholders in monitoring their teachers' and the school's performance. Some teachers even doubted whether students could learn in School 3. Some teachers left School 3 because the students were too naughty. Under such context, teachers in School 3 had very low accountability towards themselves as the intellectual, cultural and social capital of students and parents are limited. They found hard to serve as monitoring role in School 3, as predicted in SSE documents.

To make it brief, the place where SSE was implemented was significant. It showed that low intellectual, social, cultural capital of the stakeholders such as parents and students could lead to weak monitoring effects on the performance of teachers and the school. In the three sample schools, the parents and students failed to serve as monitoring roles in auditing teachers' and school's performance, as predicted in SSE documents.

### **4.5.3 Combination of People Matters**

#### **School 1**

Implementation of SSE in School 1 had been well-established with good combination of people. In School 1, there had been strong, dictatorial and forceful former principal from 1991 to 1997. Then a harmonious and approachable new principal emerged from 1997 to now on. There had been a team of young and energetic teachers in 1991 who later became "veteran" middle managers of SSE in 2008. There were obedient and cooperative teachers. Even for those who opposed to SSE policy, they would still observe the policy requirements of EDB and the school as formality fulfilment. To illustrate how combination of people worked well for implementation of SSE, the following paragraphs delineated how the principal leadership, middle managers and general teachers worked together for the strong team-building of School 1 for the implementation of SSE.

To begin with the principal leadership, the former principal in 1991 was strong, autocratic with strong sense of bureaucratic legitimacy. The early implementation of SMI from 1991 to 1997 was partly attributed to his strong bureaucratic legitimacy. He was a former Administrative Officer. He was forceful and determined in

implementing SMI. In addition, he was smart, efficient, autocratic, experienced and well-connected. He believed in accountability. He scolded teachers with poor teaching performance. Thus he nominated the pro-SMI teachers as teacher administrators of SMI in School 1. Under his strong administration, the teachers gradually demanded greater participation in school policies. They looked for a more approachable principal to work for.

In 1997, the former principal left School 1 to become Supervisor of other schools under the same SSB. The vice-principals and assistant-principals also left School 1 to become principals in other schools. Starting from 1997, the new principal had resumed duty till now. He joined School 1 in 1984 and had served there for 13 years when he served as the principal. Thus, he was highly legitimate for his good relationship with colleagues. He was visionary, people-attracting and communicable. He was good at policy networking.

In addition, he was able to ask others to help him by offering appreciation. He possessed professional knowledge. He showed effective leadership in curriculum development. He was intelligent and knew the problems of his teachers without having conflicts with them. As he was the “appointed successor” of the former principal during the era of the former principal, he witnessed how the teachers in School 1 hated the dictatorial leadership. They knew the middle managers wanted to be delegated with power.

Thus, the new principal demonstrated his approachable leadership style and promoted his close comrades as the new era of middle managers and senior management. He believed in positive non-interferism in school policy. He valued

harmony, consensus and rationalisation in policy formalisation and policy indigenisation. He avoided dealing with teachers with poor performance and triggering an atmosphere of fear. He knew when to show his authority so that teachers would obey and attain the designated requirements. Yet, sometimes he allowed negotiation and compromise when facing opposition.

Apart from the former principal and the existing principal, there were four senior administrative teachers. They were close comrades of the new principal since 1984. In 1997, they were promoted as the vice-principals and assistant-principals. In 2008, they were “veterans” of SSE and proactively assisted the principals in monitoring teachers and bridging with them. One vice-principal was well-equipped in educational administration while the others were sensitive to the opposition of teachers in times of trouble.

There was a strong team of middle managers in School 1. They were young and new teachers in 1991. Now, they were experienced middle managers and “veterans” of SSE. A Strong team of SGMs were nurtured in School 1 from 1997 during the past 11 years. They were effective and well-versed in communication with other teachers. They were effective in building consensus and “selling policy” for the school. They were empowered by the principal. An atmosphere of support was built up among panels. The SGMs also value team-working rather than individual comparisons. The SGMs also knew how to avoid conflicts with teachers. The relationship among SGMs was good. The SGMs were willing to work with younger colleagues in some cross-committee task groups. The SSE Committee was an example of cross-rank co-operation.

There were obedient and co-operative teachers in School 1. In School 1, implementation of SSE was partly attributed to obedient and co-operative teachers. Teachers in School 1 were co-operative, harmonious and close. There were weak policy opponents. Even there were teachers who opposed to the implementation of SSE, these teachers were still “controllable”. They would follow the policy requirements and at least did something for the School. They would not yell it out. Most policy opponents were still willing to conduct SSE as a gesture of formality and duty fulfilment. They understood it was the central policy required by EDB. With such chemical reaction of the principals, senior management, middle managers and the general teachers, implementation of SSE in School 1 was smooth and successful in School 1.

## **School 2**

Implementation of SSE in School 2 had been established. In School 2, there had been an experienced strong and forceful principal with strong intellectual and religious legitimation. There had been a team of obedient experienced and effective middle managers. There had been obedient and cooperative teachers. For those who opposed to school management, they would still observe still the policy requirements as formality fulfilment. To illustrate how combination of people worked well for implementation of SSE, the following paragraphs briefly described how the principal, middle managers and front-line teachers worked well in School 2.

To begin with the principal, he was a strong, forceful and well-connected principal with high intellectual legitimacy. He had served in School 2 since 1992. In School 2, implementation of SSE was partly attributed to such an experienced, strong, intellectually-legitimate and religiously-legitimate principal. In 1998, he allowed

teachers to participate into the formulation of school's major concerns. He also integrated his professional knowledge in education into his daily school administration. According to the informal dialogues of the interviewees, the principal was also appointed as church administrators of the SSB. The SSB of School 2 is keen on preaching the gospels. In this regard, the principal received strong respect from teachers. Also, he provided adequate support in SSE network of School 2. He was skilful in leading School 2 and managing his staff.

In 2003, he adopted close monitoring and quantitative measurement on measuring teachers' performance. Some teachers reflected their resistant feelings towards the "hard-fact measurement" in monitoring teachers' performance as "unfair" and "inaccurate". Despite this, teachers were willing to co-operate with the principal due to their strong Christian faith, their submissive culture and the principal's strong leadership.

There was only one vice-principal in School 2. It was believed that only one vice-principal was found qualified in the eyes of the principal. He intentionally left vacant the other vice-principal position so that the other SGMs would know his expectation on the vice-principal. The existing vice-principal was expected to succeed the principalship once the existing principal retired in the coming few years.

There was a strong team of middle managers. In School 2, implementation of SSE was partly attributed to strong but obedient middle management. The middle management reflected that in School 2, they needed to accomplish the designated tasks assigned by the principal and the top-management. Otherwise, they would suffer. Panels were responsible and professional. They would follow up the problems

identified. Middle managers could demonstrate humanistic leadership. Yet, they would strictly follow what had been assigned to them by the principal and the vice-principal. Middle managers in School 2 were willing to listen to the voice of front-line teachers. However, some panels were not so open to criticism. In implementing SSE, the roles of middle managers were to observe lessons, to study SSE results and to give positive and negative feedbacks to teachers involved. It was also the role of middle managers to measure teachers' performance through quantitative measurement. This over evidence-based SSE might lead to unfair judgment on teachers' performance. Some teacher even criticised that over-emphasis of SSE would lead to counter-effects.

However, owing to their common Christian belief, teachers in School 2 were generally submissive, co-operative and obedient. This common Christian belief enabled teachers to have common belief and shared vision. This minimised deviation among teams. Yet, their communication had been weakened than before as their workload increased in the past few years. The attributes of teachers were professional, harmonious and accommodating. Teachers valued communication and building consensus. Conflicts were not made public to protect the harmonious culture.

When it comes to the general teachers, there were weak policy opponents. In School 2, implementation of SSE was partly attributed to the weak policy opponents. Teachers in School 2 were obedient. Even they opposed to SSE, they just groaned instead of acting against the policy holders. Teachers knew that they could not resist and disobey the order of the principal finally. So, at most, teachers just asked the middle managers to alleviate their workload. Teachers would seek help from them if they were really over-loaded. In general, the team-building in School was strong.

### **School 3**

Implementation of SSE in School 3 had been poorly implemented with the combination of people. In School 3, there had been a former principal before September 2001. In September 2001, a new visionary but not forceful principal was appointed by the SSB from one of the school under its purview. The new principal came from a school with very good academic results under the same SSB. For the middle managers, they had low accountability. There had been reactive teachers with low self-motivation and accountability. The majority of teachers opposed to school management when implementing SSE. There was no policy indigenisation of SSE in School 3. SSE was just implemented in February 2006 when they knew ESR team would inspect them in May 2006. To illustrate how combination of people poorly worked for implementation of SSE, the following paragraphs would unfold the principal, middle managers and teachers in School 3.

There was a former principal before September 2001. During his administration, the staff relationship was loose. For the SMC, they valued love and care most. It intended to settle all staff conflicts with encouragement only. In September 2001, a visionary but weak new principal was appointed from a school with very good results under the same SSB. When the new principal resumed duty, he decided to breakthrough the former resist-to-change culture. Yet, he could not secure the support of the majority of the middle managers.

The new principal had no strong power and could not tackle the under-performed teachers. The principal could not exercise his power to punish, to discipline or to accredit teachers. The middle managers also knew the principal could



not dismiss teachers. The general teachers knew even the principal had no power to follow-up their under-performance, so they chose to keep silent towards the under-performed teachers. They knew the SSB wanted the principal to adopt “love and care” approach in managing staff relationship. They knew the principal could not resist their opposition. Under his leadership, the vice-principals also could not monitor the teaching and learning of the middle management effectively. They were regarded as speakers of the principal with no real power in hand.

There was a team of experienced middle managers possessed with low accountability. In School 3, poor implementation of SSE was partly attributed to a team of experienced middle managers with low accountability. Middle managers in School 3 became powerful. They were not so obedient towards the principal’s leadership. It might be due to their low participation of school policy and low accountability. They understood the SSB well and the principal would not dismiss the under-performed teachers for the sake of “love and caring school philosophy”. In this regard, middle managers did not care too much in implementing SSE.

There were very few self-motivating but many reactive teachers in School 3. Poor implementation of SSE was partly attributed to these reactive teachers with low self-motivation. Other than the middle managers, the general teachers were also with low accountability. They did not value evidence-based SSE. They did not even set targets to be achieved at the beginning of each school year. Some teachers were finding excuse to cover up their laziness. Therefore, even some young teachers wanted to conduct SSE seriously, they would suffer from attack of colleagues as “over-done something” and “stirring up matter”.

Moreover, teachers were not enthusiastic about catering for learning diversity and teaching effectiveness. Teachers did not want to open up their conflict. Instead, they kept harmonious culture superficially. Middle managers themselves were strong policy opponents as they perceived SSE as a means for the principal to “reform” the school. They would act against the principal and forced him to make compromise when implementing School-based SSE. The hard-to-change culture even locked the principal for reinforcing the implementation of SSE. In the eyes of middle managers and the general teachers, they had nothing to fear. Even some teachers who were willing to do SSE, they did it as “submitting homework to EDB” and “a show for EDB”.

To conclude, the combination of community of people was crucial when implementing SSE. It governed how much negotiation and compromise the teacher administrators should make. It revealed how strong and powerful the teacher administrators and the teachers. Such combination of people would be very useful in explaining the political resistance of the policy and the evolution of the policy implementation.

#### **4.6 Chapter Summary**

To summarise the research findings of Chapter 4, the implementation of SSE in School 1, School 2 and School 3 was delineated with the 3Ps model, the Policy, Place and People (Honig, 2006). In view of these three schools, implementation of SSE is a complex and organic interaction among the time and evolution of policy to be implemented, the place in which the policy supposed to take hold and the people implementing it. Implementation of SSE needs time to reach policy maturation

(Policy). Implementation of SSE gets strong reliance on parents and students background (Place). Also, implementation of SSE gets strong reliance on combination of people (People). As the Chinese traditional wisdom goes: Timely Act (Time and evolution) (天時), Favorable Demography (Place) (地利) and Harmony of People (People) (人和) all are dependable factors for implementation of policy SSE.

Time allowed School 1 & 2 to learn and risk from policy puzzlement when started from nothing. Time allowed them to form policy networking with other SSE pioneers. Time allowed them to change the paradigm of staff participation of SSE. Time allowed them to develop policy specification and instrumentalisation of SSE. It allowed them to develop policy indigenisation of school-based SSE. Time allowed them to change the paradigm shift of measurement of SSE. Time allowed them to change mindset of teachers to accept implementation of SSE. Time allowed them to deal with policy documentation arising from implementation of SSE. Due to lack of time, School 3 could not develop the above policy formalisation, specifications, networking, instrumentalisations in implementation of SSE. Hence, SSE could not be well-implemented in School 3.

Parents and students background in School 1, 2 and 3 affected implementation of SSE. In School 1, students are from low-income group families. Their intellectual, social and cultural capital is not strong. Some are single-parent families. Most mothers are housewives. Parents and students do not serve monitoring roles in supervising the teachers' and school's performance. Hence, teachers thus do not feel resistant to the implementation of SSE. In School 2, students from mid-low income group families. The intellectual, social, cultural capital of parents and students was low. Parents and students do not serve monitoring roles in supervising the teachers'

and school's performance. Teachers thus do not feel resistant to the implementation of SSE. In School 3, students from very low-income group families were with behavioural problems. The intellectual, social, cultural capital of parents and students is very limited. These families always faced financial problems and community problems such as drug addiction, teen gangs and family violence. Parents and students do not serve monitoring roles in supervising the teachers' and school's performance. To sum up, parents and students in all these three sample schools do not serve monitoring roles in supervising the teachers' and school's performance, as predicted in the government SSE documents.

Good combination of people enabled SSE to be implemented well in School 1 and 2. In School 1, the autocratic but bureaucratic-legitimate former principal and the legitimate new approachable principal, the strong middle management, obedient and co-operative teachers and weak policy opponents all worked together became a good team-building for the good implementation of SSE. In School 2, strong, forceful, intellectually-legitimate and religious-legitimate principal, the strong and obedient middle management, obedient Christian teachers with same belief and weak policy opponents all worked well the implementation of SSE in School 2. Yet, in School 3, the new visionary but weakly-legitimate principal, a team of experienced but resistant middle managers with low accountability, teachers with low self-motivation and strong policy opponents all contributed to the poor implementation of School 3.

In studying implementation of SSE, it was important to make reference to the time and evolution for Policy maturation, Place where the policy to be implemented and the combination of People. Making simplistic comparison of implementation of SSE in various schools without studying the context of Time for Policy maturity,

Place and People would not be objective and comprehensive enough.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **BEYOND DICHOTOMISED PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF SSE**

#### **5.1 Chapter Summary**

It is argued that the policy effects of SSE are as not as clear cut as theorists in the two camps, school improvement and managerial control, suggested in the literature review. The perceived effects are not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of teachers in the Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers make sense of the policy in relation to their relevant contexts. In this chapter, teachers' perceptions on the effects of SSE policy will be related to three of these meaning-contexts. The first is the school-organisational context to which teachers are exposed and embedded onto. The second is the biographical or more professional-socialisation context in which teachers have grown up with and incubated into. The third is the positional context in which teachers are prescribed with their mentality and belief towards SSE. These three perspectives will be applied in analysing the data so as to reveal the teachers' perceptions of the policy effects of SSE, as mentioned in research question 2.

The first perspective of analysis is at the school level. The intention is to find out whether perceptions on the effects of SSE were likely to emerge or even be forged among teachers in each sample school. Specifically, this perspective investigates whether the perceived effects of SSE on teachers in a school are more likely to be on school improvement or on the managerial control side. Then, contextual explications will be given to explain why such a tendency of perceptions emerged, with reference to the unique school-based implementation of SSE in the

three sample schools described in Chapter 4. It is proposed that such perceived effects are affected by the school-based implementation of SSE in their own school. In other words, it is argued that teachers' perceptions of SSE are affected by the policy situation, i.e. schools, in which they find themselves. The policy situation of a particular school serves more or less as a lens through which practising teachers perceive and make sense of the policy. This lens is referred to School Implementation Lens (SIL) in this chapter.

The second perspective to be used in guiding the analysis is at the level of teacher generation. More specifically, it adopts the similar generational contrast of teachers (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002) in the UK such as the Plowden teachers of the 1970s and 1980s and the OFSTED teachers of the 1990s to delineate the professional and the biographical contexts in which teachers of different ages grew up and socialised professionally. To contextualise this in Hong Kong context, the labels of Pre-ECR7 Era and ECR7 Era were adopted by the researcher to facilitate the above discussion. It is proposed that teachers' perceived effects of SSE are influenced by their policy context, and the paradigm shift of their value and discourse in which they were professionally socialised. That is, the biographic & professional backgrounds of teachers serve more or less as a lens through which practicing teachers perceive and make sense of the policy. This lens is called the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL) in this chapter.

Lastly, the third perspective of analysis is at the level of teacher position. It intends to find out whether teachers of different ranks within a given school organisation were likely to perceive SSE more on the school improvement or the managerial control side. Explications will be given to the mentality and beliefs

formulated in their different positions. It is proposed that teachers' perceptions of SSE are affected by their formal positions in the school organisation. In other words, it is argued that teachers' perceptions of SSE are affected by their position in school. That is, the teacher's position in the school serves more or less as a lens through which a practising teacher perceives and makes sense of the policy. This lens is referred to as the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL) in this chapter.

It is argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be an organic interaction among the School Implementation Lens (SIL), the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL) and the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL). The three arguments to be put forward in this chapter are summarised in Figure 23. Yet, it had to make it clear that these three Lens should not be taken separately. Rather, there was organic, complicated and dynamic interaction among the three Lens, which interwove with one another in the mind of each teacher. This explains why different teacher would have different perceived effects of SSE on school improvement and managerial control in reality.



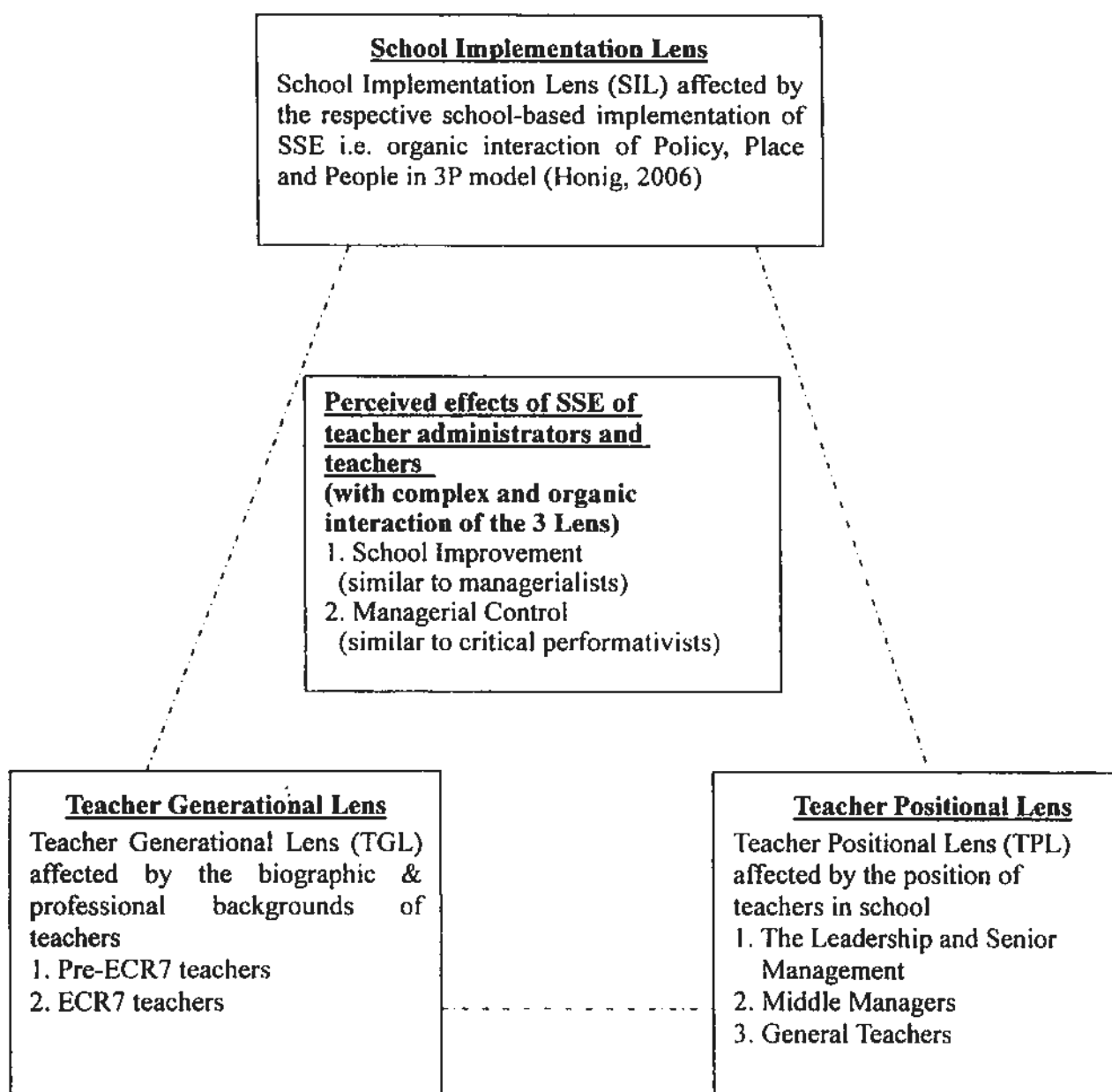


Figure 23: Proposed Framework for Analysis of this Chapter

## 5.2 School Implementation Lens (SIL)

This section focuses on the first perspective of analysis---School. It discusses the perceived effects of SSE of teachers in each school. Specifically, it investigates whether perceptions of SSE formed by teachers in a school are more likely to be on school improvement or on the managerial control side. Then, contextual explications

will be given to explain why such perceptions resulted, with reference to their unique school-based implementation of SSE in the 3 sample schools described in Chapter 4. It is proposed that such perceptions are affected by the school-based implementation of SSE in their own schools. In other words, it is argued that teachers' perceptions of the policy of SSE are affected by the policy situation, i.e. schools, in which they find themselves. That is, the policy situation of a particular school serves more or less as a lens through which a practicing teacher perceives and makes sense of the policy. This lens is referred to School Implementation Lens (SIL) in this chapter.

SSE policy evolved into different forms as it had been implemented in schools from 1991 to 2008 in Hong Kong. This evolution, as revealed in Chapter 4, can be characterised into 3 stages: Stage 1: 1991 - 1996; Stage 2: 1997 - 2002; Stage 3: 2003 - 2008. In Stage 1, the official SMI document did not provide clear policy formalisation, policy procedures, policy instruments or work specifications for schools to follow. In Stage 2, QAI and SSE policy stipulated in ECR7 became mandatory and more specified, formalised and instrumentalised. In Stage 3, SSE and ESR were complemented with advanced instrumentalisation and measurement tools such as guidelines for SSE, templates on school plans and reports, the SHS to teachers, students and parents, the KPM and the APASO. There were altogether 23 KPMs given by EDB, from which 11 were selected for reporting on the web. The first cycle of ESR lasted from February 2004 to the end of 2006. The second cycle of ESR commenced in 2007.

## **School 1**

At the time this study was carried out in School 1, the implementation of SSE was already in place. This was due to the organic interaction of the Policy, Place and

People in School 1. For Policy, School 1 had been implementing SSE policy from 1991 to 2008, for a period of 17 years. It had already experienced the evolution of the policy from SMI in 1991, to SSE and QAI in 1997 and to SSE and ESR in 2003. In fact, such a long experience of policy evolution led to very mature policy formalisations, specifications, documentation and networking.

For Place, in School 1, the climate of the school has been characterised for its limited intellectual, social and cultural capital of both the students and parents. Therefore, the monitoring effects of parents and students in SSE are not as strong as those expected in SSE documents.

For People, the leadership in School 1 evolved from strong bureaucratic leadership of the former principal to the approachable and distributed leadership of the new principal. There was a smooth succession of the leadership as a result of the legitimation gained by the serving principal. For the middle managers, they had evolved from the newly-graduated teachers in 1984 to “veterans” of SSE in 2008. Most general teachers had served in School 1 since 1984 to 2008, with the low turn-over rate partly attributed to the harmonious relationship among teachers. Implementation of SSE therefore unfolded in the eyes of the teachers in School 1 as a result of the organic interaction of the 3Ps in 2008. This unique context of implementation of SSE in School 1 became the School Implementation Lens (SIL) accounting for the perceived effects of the teachers in SSE in School 1. This SIL explains why the perceived effects of teachers in School 1 are more likely to be on school improvement and less likely to be on managerial control.

## **More Likely to Perceive SSE as a Means of School Improvement**

In School 1, teachers were more likely to perceive of SSE as school improvement. To begin with, teachers could perceive effects of SSE on enhancing teaching and learning. Teachers knew the weakness of students and adjusted the teaching progress in the process of SSE. Lesson observation culture of SSE is useful in staff management, for example, by arranging professional development for newly-recruited teachers. It was found that teachers enhanced their teaching skills with the help of advice which resulted from lesson observations in the process of SSE. Some teachers believed that the KPM of SSE could motivate teachers to work extra hard as they had to be accountable for students' academic results.

*"At least teachers know the weaknesses of students and can adjust the teaching progress." (VP1, p. 7)*

*"Our School has a culture of class observation...for example, class observation must be implemented to those newly recruited colleagues during the first year of teaching...practical opinions were given by using the class observation form provided by the Education Bureau." (AP15, p.20 )*

*"I think that the principal and subject panel can offer comments on my performance during lesson observation. I am relatively active in class but the principal is worried about my chaotic classroom management skills. The principal may not know where I am in the classroom when I am teaching. The principal therefore taught me how to become ballast in class which is very helpful to my teachings in future." (T16, p.7 )*

*"I compel myself to work hard seriously as it is necessary for me to submit figures of students' performance in public examinations. The performance indicators and the passing rate would become a motivator for those teachers who neither very hardworking nor very lazy." (T16, p.20 )*

Other teachers elaborated that the KPM of SSE correlated with the

accountability of teachers, teachers' job security and their status in school with students' academic results. Some teachers believed that SSE could help both teachers and students reflect on the quality of their work and the teaching progress. In addition, the SWOT analysis of SSE could pool teachers together for professional enhancement of teaching and learning during common free periods. Teachers would then discuss the solutions for students after identifying the problems. Moreover, SSE served as a self-monitoring mechanism towards teachers' performance:

*"Teachers are responsible for both students and the school. Their job security is based on the teaching effectiveness of their work. In this regard, I absolutely believe that the results of public examinations do spur senior class teachers to work better. When you cannot perform well in the performance indicators, your status in school will be challenged. You will find ways to be promoted and all you do is to work harder continuously. If not, you would be despised as a pest."* (T16, p.14)

*"The teaching progress would be faster if the class you are teaching is of good academic achievements. Teachers may have time to teach extra learning techniques to them. Both of teachers and students would be beneficial when having academic discussions in class...."* (T13. p.5)

*"Self-evaluation mechanism surely improves teaching and learning.....We concentrate on finding out solutions for such problems.....We discuss and review items such as the weakness of students during common free periods. Each colleague actively expressed his or her own views. Some of them were responsible for searching sentence pattern while others suggested buying reference books. We finally discovered that different approaches were adopted among us."* (T13, p.4)

*"I think that self-evaluation is good and promotes teaching quality. SSE should be done during mid-term rather than year-end, allowing teachers to have reflections. Some teachers may felt stressed as they thought that naughty students in class might have negative effect on teachers' performance. As a reflection on teaching, it is necessary to have adjustments and improvements."* (T12, p.13)

In addition, teachers in School 1 perceived effects of SSE on improving leadership and management. The vice-principal of School 1 found that vision and direction of School 1 were in tandem with the introduction of SSE. SSE also led to the principal's openness towards teachers' opinions with the objective evaluation of the school administration. They believed that SSE would facilitate curriculum improvement in SSE meetings:

*"At least the vision and direction of school becomes clearer.....teachers know what's going on in schools. Take this year as an example, we have to think about how to prepare for the New Senior Secondary Curriculum and Other Learning Experiences. We focus on these areas.....teachers know our direction." (VP1, p.7 )*

*"I believe that the principal is willing to listen to our voices and also willing to resolve problems in an objective way." (T16, p.9)*

*"We pay attention to the general trend of the evaluation result rather than the specific data of each class. We also note the vertical alignment such as the articulation of S4 to S5. From my point of view, I prefer to consider from a high-rank perspective on the improvements of the curriculum, if needed..... We may discuss teaching contents during common free period and meetings. Form coordinators may also report the discussion to subject panel." (T13, p.5 )*

Moreover, teachers in School 1 perceived effects of SSE on developing staff capacity. Some teachers acknowledged the usefulness of SSE in monitoring staff's performance and quality assurance. The staff development capacity had been improved after the SWOT analysis of SSE on their readiness towards the New Senior Structure (NSS). Some teachers explained why, from the perspective of motivation, teachers could further develop their potential with the help of SSE process:

*"If there is a mechanism in monitoring teaching performance, teachers will alert their behavior in class.....It is anticipated that a well-planned operation plan will be followed by the implementation of (SSE) mechanism. There is a*

*room for you to evaluate all the time. If you are willing to do so, appropriate support for improvements becomes necessary.”(T12, p.12)*

*“Under 3-3-4 academic structure, we know that English Language subject will encompass language arts and non-language arts. As we are not familiar with modules under the language arts category, we therefore seek help from service providers for further improvements on teaching (after the process of SSE).” (T13, p.6)*

*“For those colleagues with aspiration, a self-evaluation process is beneficial. It is because he/she has a chance for self-evaluation on teaching performance and report to the principal and vice-principal through face-to-face discussion. So it becomes an incentive to improving teaching.” (AP15, p.21)*

*“No matter your teaching performance is evaluated by yourself or external stakeholders, much of paper work is needed during the (SSE) process and you have a sense of fear, which becomes a motivator for your work. Even though you have no teaching heart at all, you have to be accountable to your salary. So, it is the reason why I support SSE.” (T16, p.15)*

Teachers in School 1 reported that SSE promoted an evaluation culture of SSE in school without lowering the difficulty of the “examination paper” in order to “please students” and to “get a higher SSE rating” from students in return. Teachers changed their attitude towards students a bit because students were given chances to evaluate teachers’ performances. Besides, teachers in School 1 perceived SSE as strengthening the evaluation culture of schools. They found a gradual cultural change with an enhancing awareness towards SSE in the Chinese panel. ESR report also confirmed the efficient follow-up actions after SSE process.

*“It is explicit that student evaluation on teaching can reflect what students have learnt or have failed to achieve. If you are unwilling to accept their feedback, how do you have further developments on teaching.....I am opposed to designing an easier examination paper so as to make students feel happy in learning. It is appreciated that no such practice occurred in our school.” (T16, p.16)*

*"Colleagues' professional knowledge on teaching is evaluated by stakeholders through questionnaires during the process of ESR. Colleagues' attitudes towards the stakeholders have a bit change." (AP15, p.20)*

*"Up till now, we still keep on using SSE data in a rational way... not implemented it in a dictatorial manner. I don't think it is useful completely but at least has a bit help." (T12, p.16)*

*"Since more common free periods for each grade have been set aside, colleagues are more willing to sit down for experience sharing. We met once every week talking our own teaching progress and commented on contents taught. From the cultural rather than managerial perspective, I think that the culture of self-reflection has been enhanced." (T12, p.14-15)*

*"Gradually, we accept the arrangements on self-evaluation. I am not totally agreed with the vice-principal's view on the complete internalisation of SSE. Yet, it is a matter of fact that our job requirements are clearly shown and we understand what self-evaluation is...We are sensitive to SSE figures and value-added performance indicators." (T12, p.13)*

Some teachers in School 1 observed that their gradual improvement in SSE mentality. They observed their shift of focus "from passing rate" to "an awareness of the dimension of value-addedness". They reported that performance indicators and objective observation also facilitated the evaluation in school. SSE also facilitated evaluation of teaching progress, content and assessment policy. Moreover, they perceived effects of SSE on improving the school-based curriculum. VP 1 claimed that SSE was beneficial to the teaching and assessment cycle. Teacher 12 recalled how SSE process sharpened the remedial measures in the curriculum and teachers' sensitivity towards the learning diversity:

*"The performance indicators and the SVAIS value-added indicator had just been introduced a few years ago...Now we understand that SSE is not only counting on the passing rate but also comparing with the value-addedness of students studying in F6 and F7 HKALE results." (T12, p.14)*



*"For senior form, the public exams, value-added indicator and observation can reflect (teachers' performance). Also for junior forms, there are assessments, lesson observation and internal assessment marks..... (reflecting students' performance)." (VP1, p.7)*

*"It is better to have clear, concrete and context-specific performance indicators in assessing schools' performance. (Even somebody may argue for multiple sets of performance indicators) I believe that no single set of performance indicators can cater the interests of all. " (T16, p.17)*

*"(SSE) is also helpful in teaching progress, content and assessment policy.....It depends on SSE results (for their reflection)." (VP1, p.7)*

*"We have SSE on (remedial measures of) curriculum. We also do a lot of things on pulling up the marginal students and strengthening the cream students... We do work hard on SSE statistics.....We are not keeping an eye on passing rate only but also their academic attainments." (T12, p.14)*

Some teachers also perceived the effects of SSE on catering for individual differences. AP15 described his successful experience of how SSE helped him evaluate the width and depth of the curriculum. Teacher 12 also noted her interest in curriculum design. Other teachers discussed with their English panel their practical experience of using SSE data to cater for learning diversity and nurturing the elite students. Teacher 12 also attributed the appropriate use of EDB grants in School 1 to SSE process:

*"For example, we discussed about the teaching progress in the curriculum SSE meeting. Since learning abilities among students were different, we found that the progress in classes with good performance would be faster and vice versa. We would keep on enhancing time management but adjustments would be made (after SSE). " (T13, p.5)*

*"I had an experience in teaching Chinese Language subject and participated in self-evaluation. It was beneficial no matter on the depth of curriculum, teaching materials and teaching topics... It is really useful." (AP15, p.20)*

*"I think that SSE is needed to be conducted for teaching and curriculum design in the end of academic year." (T12, p.9)*

*"SSE on teaching is no longer by personal impression...our Native English Teacher (NET) assigned a number of morning reading works for enhancing elite students' speaking performance. SSE enabled us to identify target students based on their academic results in S4 and S5. This time, 30 students were chosen because we only have 3 days available by the NET teachers." (T13, p.10)*

*"The Education Bureau had additionally subsidised schools employing teaching assistants for Chinese Language in response to the implementation of new curriculum. Some schools did not use it in a proper way. But our school employed the new colleague for sharing part of workloads of some classes such as training speaking skills (after the process of SSE). In fact, the colleague actually supported the work on curriculum design." (T12, p.16)*

Teachers in School 1 perceived effects of SSE on raising teachers' and students' expectations on achievement. Some teachers admitted that the evidence-based SSE culture could raise both the expectation of students and teachers. They highlighted the fact that SSE could enhance the teachers' expectations on their teaching effectiveness. This was because the results of their students would be publicised in the schools. They stated that the transparency of public exam results among teachers caused them to be mutually accountable. They also welcomed the market-driven competition among teachers through which teachers' performance was boosted:

*"(Teachers') more expectations on their performance (with SSE)...students also work harder and their scores are higher accordingly...Teachers of Chinese Language are beneficial too because students' scores stably increased over these years." (T12, p.15)*

*"Yes, there are improvements. We found students' problems. We then fixed solutions. Our objective is to help students presenting what they have learnt in examinations and daily practice. We expect that they can do well (in exam) and*

*their results will certainly be improved.”(T13, p.9)*

*“If their students' passing rate increases, teachers' legitimacy in school will be higher. I definitely believe that a low passing rate in public exam do have a negative impact on schools, especially to the reputation of the school. In this regard, I certainly believe that the school asks teachers to be accountable to their teaching effectiveness. I also heard that there were serious evaluations with the performance indicators. Teachers felt shamed at their poor passing rates and credit rates. This was because their achievement on performance indicators was announced to all teachers via circulation of SSE documents. The impact is so great indeed.”(T16, p.13-14)*

*“We can't say that such value-added indicators are useless. The Academic Committee published the public examination results in the past years at the beginning of every academic year. Relevant colleagues were informed and could read the results of other colleagues. Is it a stress on colleagues? I think it is normal. If you don't have any hard feelings towards the drop in their results, you find hard to have resting place in school.”(AP15, p.18)*

*“There is no competition between different forms.....It would exist if such measures were introduced on individual teacher basis. The reason is that SSE motivates improvements and does not harm despite its competitive nature. A society cannot exist without competitions. Initially, you felt satisfied when only having a banana in hand on a barren island. However, you later found that somebody living nearby could enjoy a delicious meal. You might query why others could have such enjoyment.”(T14, p.15)*

Teachers in School 1 perceived effects of SSE on enhancing resources allocation and securing external networking. ESR report confirmed that School 1 had been communicating with parents and the public and shared the school development direction with them via the school's website. ESR report also confirmed that School 1 was able to build up a good relationship with the community and thus able to secure external resources to support their educational services. Some teachers recalled the parents' responses towards the school's performance were positive. They added that SSE was able to facilitate the allocation of human resources in a more

strategic manner. They mentioned their experiences of allocating suitable teachers to appropriate academic groupings after SSE meeting:

*"Feedback from parents on teaching is quite positive. Those parents are mainly less-educated grassroots and they thought that they are not familiar with the way of parenting their children well. Therefore, they totally rely on the school and input from teachers. "* (T13, p.11)

*"Parents would think that school was open-minded and respectful for their comments. We regularly disseminated opinions and results in self-evaluations for parents and students through newsletter and school website. When parents were well-informed, they would have a good feeling of getting involved in SSE."* (T12, p.16)

*"SSE benefited human resources allocation. For instance, an experienced teacher would be assigned to the class which is poor in both academic performance and classroom discipline instead of assigning a less experienced one to teach. It is because those with less experience would not be able to handle the students well."*(T12, p.15)

*"Yes, SSE is beneficial to human resources management on the allocation of teachers to groups in need. With a pool of experienced teachers, our strategy was to assign 1 teacher to teach 2 groups, with one having good but the other having so-so academic performance. Then, we divided a class into 3 groups, being taught by 3 teachers."*(T12, p.15)

In addition teachers' quotation, the ESR report also confirmed the above observation:

*"School reported the tasks completed annually to its stakeholders via the Schools' Development Plan and various communication channels such as school website and newsletter. It helped strengthen the accountability of the school."* (ESR report, p.3)

*"A closer relationship has been established between the School and the educational organisations outside. Schools can be further developed with external resources provided. Diversified counselling activities have been offered for supporting student development services from outside."* (ESR report,

### **Less Likely to Perceive SSE as a Means of Managerial Control**

In School 1, the perceptions of SSE by teachers were less likely to be centered on managerial control. There were teachers in School 1 who perceived SSE as a strategy of managerialism and performativity. They observed that managerialism would weaken the teachers' mutual trust and trigger teacher conflicts. However, they also recognised the importance of performativity in monitoring teachers' performance. They believed that students' voices reflected the reality of their school lives to a certain extent. They understood that even when SSE was implemented, there might be a loop-hole in peer evaluation. But this loop-hole could be prevented if SSE mechanism was carefully-designed. However, they demanded that a context-specific set of performance indicators should be adopted to weaken the managerial sense of SSE:

*"We all are colleagues under the school. It is easy to offend one another when conducting SSE. If you comment on the under-performance of your colleagues, you would be criticised in return. But if you over-do something when compared with others, great troubles and feedback from colleagues would arise following your "extra" effort. When I contributed more than others, I would be commented by others as (over-doing something)." (T16, p.1)*

*"It has been tested that human has a feeling of inertia. Things without a proper monitoring would be getting worse and even collapse. This does not limit to HK educational system, but the global one. " (T14, p.17)*

*"I personally think that we can't totally rely on SSE results from student questionnaires but we can't deny its function. Although students are not professional enough on evaluating someone's teaching performance, their feelings can actually reflect their school lives to a certain extent."(AP15,*

*"A lazy teacher never marked homework for her students. She was so lucky that her good friend was the book-checker in the first term. Her friend simply filled in SSE evaluation form and completed the book-checking (and blinded her eyes on the unmarked homework). However, this lazy teacher was then audited by another unfamiliar colleague in the next term. Later, she had no choices but hastily requested her students to stay behind after school for "doing the homework" and then submitted this homework to the new book-checker. It is a "classical" example indeed."(T16, p.12)*

*"Our school accepts and understands the use of performance indicators. But when you came to our school for class observation, should we brief you about the strength of our school in the pre-meeting for facilitating the class observation thereafter....the standardisation of performance indicators show no respect to school's own specific context. Could EDB review this aspect?" (AP15, p.24)*

Also, there are teachers in School 1 who perceived effects of SSE on a strategy of instrumentalism. They accepted the existence of performance indicators. But they emphasised the importance of prior-communication between ESR team and the school. Some teachers said the performance indicators had their own limitation in measuring the intangible abstract concepts such as teachers' care of students. They discovered that SSE could be somewhat subjective and not objective enough in its measurement. But generally speaking, they were not opposed to SSE. They just showed their concerns over the quality ESR team and how ESR team used the performance indicators. Also, they did not believe SSE was only managerial in nature without any substantial value:

*"The practice (SSE) has been criticised as peremptory. The Education Bureau believes that every school can be assessed by a single set of performance indicators only. As you mentioned before, SSE measured the input and output and EDB thought that was comprehensive enough...It is necessary for us to have performance indicators.... but prior communication is the cornerstone.*

*You cannot simply say that "these performance indicators should be absolute standards to follow....." (AP15, p.24)*

*"It is difficult to assess something intangible with figures, such as our care to students. A teacher being rated as lenient with low teaching effectiveness in students' evaluations might really devote care to students, enhancing their motivation in learning English in the long-run. From another perspective, lenient is a merit too." (T13, p.16)*

*"Also, the tools of SSE and educational outcomes are somewhat subjective in measurement, sometimes SSE takes into account of students' questionnaires and observation only..... Also the reliability and the difficulty in measuring the educational outcomes had their limitation." (VP1, p.3)*

*"Monitoring system (SSE) is not an evil measure. Things become unreasonable if there is no monitoring. Besides, I focus on the quality of ESR team and their professionalism in using the performance indicators." (T16, p.16)*

*"Colleagues working at schools feel stressed under this arrangement (SSE) as they are required to fulfil the requirements. I agree that schools may be benefited with the changes brought (by SSE and ESR) and not just with increased workload. But we cannot reach the conclusion that SSE and ESR must either be absolutely inaccurate or accurate easily." (AP15, p.22)*

*"It is valuable to have SSE. Some schools show strong initiatives in implementing SSE and in setting its own school-based performance indicators even without the compulsory implementation of SSE and ESR..... Yet, some schools followed the government SSE policy in order to entertain EDB only." (T16, p.18)*

Also, teachers in School 1 did not perceive effects of SSE on de-professionalising teachers by naming and shaming. They would not make critical comments to upset one another in order to maintain the harmonious working environment. Some teachers also discovered that SSE would not harm the harmonious relationship of School 1:

*"Firstly, we understand that SSE arrangement would not harm the harmonious*

*culture in our school. On the other hand, if people who really want to have a real-picture of the improvements on teaching and follow SSE policy without any bias, it becomes a great motivator and all colleagues follow suit without query. " (T14, p.16)*

*"I know the Chinese panel very much. The relationship between colleagues was relatively harmonious. Otherwise, it would be harmful to the whole panel. Therefore, such side-effect (SSE leads to de-professionalisation) is not obvious in the Chinese panel." (AP15, p.22)*

*"The relationship maintained as good as usual even though more discussions between colleagues (in the process of SSE)." (T12, p.14)*

In addition, teachers in School 1 perceived effects of SSE as a strategy for empirical-analytical and science-based in its epistemological foundation. They stated that there should be three major categories of context-specific performance indicators in the future with reference to the school banding. They stated that the medium of instruction (MOI) that the school adopted would have effects on student performance as well. Some teachers also said they would inject the "humanistic elements" when implementing the school-based SSE. So, school-based SSE in school 1 would not be the simple input-output mechanistic process. Teachers still thought SSE and ESR were necessary and unavoidable.

*"The difference between band-one and band-three students is obvious. Classifying the performance indicators with school banding is good enough...Parents' social and economic status (SES) are influential to children's learning attitude and abilities. We cannot do anything for the SES. But it is unnecessary to adopt performance indicators by districts."(T16, p.18-19)*

*"We teach English Language at a CMI school. Our educational input and output are not in proportion. We all are very hard working and care for our students. Once you are being evaluated under SSE, you would feel stressed. You would feel discouraged if you found that the return was not in right proportion."(T13, p.6)*



*"No (for simple input-output mechanistic process). We still emphasise on whole person development and not only focus on students' academic outcomes. In SSE and our daily teaching, we injected lots of humanistic elements in SSE." (T12, p.17)*

*"We think that ESR and SSE are necessary and cannot be avoided." (AP15, p.21)*

Furthermore, teachers in School 1 did not perceive SSE as pushing schools to quasi-market by steering at distance. Teachers in School 1 believed that competition between schools nearby would not be initiated easily because goodwill and word-of-mouth of School 1 were well-established. Also, they did not observe any inter-class competitions among students and teachers in the process of SSE in School 1. However, some teachers noted that the uploading of ESR reports led to inaccurate interpretation of the school by the public.

*"Our teachers don't think in this way (perceiving SSE is tool for EDB to control schools) we think SSE is to seek participants' views on the process of school activity." (VP1, p.8)*

*"Schools facing redundancy or laying-off worry about or think in this way (perceiving SSE is tool for EDB to control schools). To us, SSE is just to evaluate from ourselves to see whether we can do better next time. SSE in our school is not for appraisal but for professional development. ' (VP1, p.8-9)*

*"I do not believe that the government is able to use SSE figure as a tool in controlling schools.....When parents choose schools, they value the educational philosophy of our school, the word-of-mouth among parents, student-teacher relationship, and the feedback of their primary school alumni rather than just relying on SSE figures." (T12, p.17)*

*"There is no competition between classes. Filling in SSE questionnaires and conducting class observations in ESR would not cause any competitions among students and teachers. " (AP15, p.22)*

*"No obvious for competitions among teachers were observed. Teachers would*

*have plans to train students in obtaining good results.” (AP15, p.22)*

*“If I were a common citizen, what I saw in ESR report in the internet would be perceived as a full picture of your school. ESR report is a bit over-simplified and dangerous indeed.” (AP15, p.23)*

In addition, teachers in School 1 did not perceive themselves as confessional and fear animals in panoptic under the power foundation of EDB. They commented that the documentation was not as demanding as some had thought it would be. However, they accepted that there was increased workload and the monitoring effects of SSE for the benefit of the school. They still thought the implementation of SSE and ESR were justified for their monitoring effects. They thought that students' voices should be valued. Teachers should do their very best to cater for the needs of the students. They claimed that it was impossible to manage schools by adopting a laissez-faire approach:

*“I don't think there is too much documentation. No complaints were received from colleagues on this issue (SSE). Now, the number of SSE questionnaires distributed is less than that in 2003.” (T13, p.15)*

*“Some conspiracists may think that SSE figures are to be used as a tool to close down schools. It is uncommon to discuss such thought among our Chinese teachers. They seldom objected to SSE policy.” (T12, p.4)*

*“They may complain about the workload but they understand that it (SSE) is proven to be beneficial to them. In fact, such heavy load is necessary.” (AP15, p.13)*

*“As a rational and educated citizen, it is reasonable to have a monitoring mechanism (SSE) for the Hong Kong education system. There should be expectations on school's improvement to justify the use of public money.” (T14, p.17)*

*“An appropriate monitoring mechanism can motivate greater improvements*

*since people are unwilling to have improvement without incentive and have inertia. Self-evaluation is just for self reflection, having ESR as complementary as SSE would be more comprehensive.” (AP15, p.22-23)*

*“It is better to introduce both SSE and ESR than not implementing them. Of course, schools may make very limited improvements in the absence of them. As monitored by EDB, an evaluation mechanism is required, regardless of SSE or ESR. Non-interferism is impossible indeed in school management.” (AP15, p.23)*

*“Students are mature enough to judge whether the performance of a teacher is good or not. They would provide feedback if the teacher’s performance failed to meet their expectations, just as the customers’ facial expression would tell the chef the quality of the food when their cuisines were being tasted .....or audiences would have feedback on the film they watched though they were not professional critics..... Since students really have feelings, their voices should be respected accordingly.” (T16, p.15)*

*“Teachers’ duty is to facilitate students to learn. What I have done is for their own good. If students have learning difficulties, I need to have adjustments accordingly. It is necessary to take care of learning diversity among students. If you fail to do so, you are not a good teacher.” (T16, p.15)*

*“It is better to implement the (SSE) mechanism rather than not to do so. I think that the Education Bureau should monitor its schools well by evaluating their performances, regardless of SSE or ESR..... It is impossible to manage schools by adopting a laissez-faire approach.” (AP15, p.24)*

To conclude, the perceptions of teachers on SSE are more likely to be on side of school improvement and less likely on managerial control. This could be attributed to the systematic and well-planned school-based implementation of SSE in School 1. The smooth implementation of SSE in School 1 made the School Implementation Lens (SIL) of School 1 positive, through which teachers were more likely to perceive SSE as school improvement and less likely to perceive it as one of managerial control.

## School 2

In School 2, the implementation of SSE was moderately-developed, as a result of the organic interaction of the Policy, Place and People in School 2. For Policy, School 2 implemented SSE from 1998 to 2008 and experienced the evolution of the government SSE & QAI in 1998 and SSE & ESR in 2003. Such a long period of time led to mature policy formalisations, specifications, documentation and networking. For Place, School 2 is characterised for the limited intellectual, social and cultural capital of parents and students. Therefore, the monitoring effects of parents and students in SSE are not as strong as predicted in SSE documents. For People, there was strong, intellectually-legitimate, and religious-legitimate principal leadership lasting for a very long period of time. The principal was not just the organisational leader, he was perceived as one of the active church administrators of the SSB. In this regard, due respect was given to the principal.

There were effective and obedient middle managers and teachers. Their obedience and submissive personalities were attributed to their strong Christian culture, in which being submissive towards authority was an important biblical teaching. Implementation of SSE therefore unfolded in the eyes of the researcher in School 2 as a result of the organic interaction of the 3Ps. This unique implementation of SSE in School 2 became the School Implementation Lens (SIL), through which teachers perceived SSE as ambivalent for both school improvement and managerial control. This SIL explains why teachers are likely to offer ambivalent views for both sides.

## **Ambivalent Perceived Effects of SSE a Means of School Improvement**

In School 2, teachers perceived ambivalent effects of SSE in terms of school improvement. To begin with, teachers perceived effects of SSE on enhancing teaching and learning by redefining the new direction for the principal and teachers. They appreciated the importance of having performance indicators for subjective reflection. They believed that SSE helped them conduct a SWOT analysis of their students through series of data-driven student questionnaires. Also, they thought that students' reflection of their teaching effectiveness and efficiency were vital to their own reflection on their teaching. They stated that they would pay special attention to the curriculum design and pedagogy. They ruled out the possibility of "their pleasing students" in order to get good student ratings in the process of SSE.

*"We all lack of time on teaching and learning. A SSE report helps the principal and teachers understanding our major direction on teaching and learning." (T21, p.3)*

*"SSE report shows my strengths and weaknesses that can facilitate me to have improvements on my job performance by doing SWOT analysis. The results of students' stakeholders' survey are more reliable than ESR one because students' responses directly reflect their learning outcome, which is a closely-related issue on teaching and learning." (T21, p.3)*

*"When we are informed of the assessment criteria (in SSE & ESR), we can make sure whether our performance meeting the performance indicators or not. It becomes an effective measure on reviewing teaching performance for enhancing teaching quality." (T26, p.11)*

*"Yes. A standard performance indicator can reflect the effectiveness of teaching and weaknesses for our further improvement. We can understand the directions for improvement in future." (T26, p.1)*

*"SSE report shows my strengths and weaknesses that can facilitate me to have improvements on teaching. The results from student evaluation are more reliable than ESR reports because students' responses directly reflect their learning outcome which is a closely-related issue on teaching and learning."(T21, p.3)*

*"The result of a SSE report is based on evidences from various stakeholders. It is valuable to assess the effectiveness of teaching, especially those feedbacks from students. Students are our major service recipients. Their voices are valuable."(H23, p.4)*

*"When I study the questionnaire, the content and layout of the questionnaire give me some ideas (of my teaching effectiveness). On the other hand, observing students' response when they are filling in questionnaire is another useful reference to analyse the trend of their SSE ratings."(T25, p.4)*

*"Most colleagues understand the objective of the self-evaluation and also pay attention to their own teaching strategies and curriculum design."(T25, p.10)*

*"I believe most teachers concern their further improvements in the quality of teaching rather than purely aiming at securing a high score in evaluation or pleasing their students."(H23, p.4)*

Teacher 25 also cited an example of the principal's open and positive feedback on "good lessons" observed. Some teachers also felt that they would be satisfied if their works were recognised or they secured high ratings in the process of SSE. Teachers stated that they wanted to collect students' feedback on how well they taught and on areas that needed to be improved. In this connection, they could choose what pedagogy could be adopted to suit students' needs.

*"When class observations finished, the principal would give comments on their pedagogy to teachers during teachers' meetings."(T25, p.10)*

*"Appreciation given by panel and students through questionnaires on*

*teaching and efforts on marking are highly appreciated." (T26, p.3)*

*"I attempted to design a SSE questionnaire for students to obtain their feedback. I want to capture their opinions in my teaching performance, no matter it is positive or negative." (T26, p.3)*

*"It can broaden our horizon and is beneficial in learning different teaching methods and choosing the right one for myself." (T26, p.6)*

Moreover, teachers in School 2 perceived effects of SSE on improving leadership and management. Some teachers recalled how the staff participation in SSE enabled good follow-ups in action. They believed that school knew where to improve as a result of SSE data. SSE data was reported to all staff in order to enhance transparency and mutual accountability. This made the school leadership appear more rational and open. Yet, some teachers remarked that the senior management could at least listen to the voice of teachers, whether or not they accepted the advice in the end. They thought that SSE served as a mirror to reflect the performance of the senior management. They also stated that they could suggest the class they wish to teach the next year under SSE. In addition, the criteria for the division of labor in the panel became clearer and therefore no single colleague became overloaded.

*"Teachers reviewing the self-evaluation results together would help indicate good practices and items to be improved for follow-up actions." (T24, p.1)*

*"The advantage (of SSE) is to assess what areas could be improved." (T21, p.2)*

*"They adopted such (SSE) tools to assess their performance." (T21, p.5)*

*"The rationale behind (SSE) is good. It helps schools pay attention to items needed improvements. Furthermore, the school management shares*

*SSE results with teachers, which is much appreciated." (T22, p.2)*

*"Yes, it leads to a more open-minded and rational mode in school management." (T26, p.11)*

*"At least the management is informed of their performance, no matter any follow-up actions to be taken. However, the use of evaluation result by the management is another concern. It depends on whether the management uses the data wholeheartedly." (T24, p.9)*

*"Whether SSE is effective in reflecting problems of teaching depends on the personality of a teacher. Of course, whether there are any follow-up actions is another issue. But the teachers at least know their performance, despite minor deviations might exist." (T25, p.4)*

*"We can express our views to the panel on the class we preferred to teach. The rationale of class arrangements is informed by the panel so that the workload is evenly shared. The principles and criteria on job allocation are transparent and open to all. No one will be over-burdened." (T26, p.11)*

In addition, teachers in School 2 perceived effects of SSE on developing staff capacity. Teachers in School 2 believed that SSE could lead to the staff's commitment to further their studies, better equip themselves and enhance their competitiveness. They reflected that SSE could serve as a systematic performance indicator to reflect on their work. They realised what aspects of their work they should improve on after conducting SSE.

*"SSE can motivate teachers to pursue further improvements such as continuing their studies in order to enhance their own competitiveness." (T22, p.2)*

*"A standard set of performance indicators can reflect your work performance. A self-evaluation process gives you an opportunity to review the works done." (T24, p.1)*



*"In conclusion, I make improvements when I know my weaknesses." (T26, p.5)*

*"Ongoing SSE can motivate teachers to seek for improvements. For example, they look for an enrichment course that can enhance their teaching skills." (T26, p.6)*

Teachers in School 2 perceived effects of SSE on strengthening the evaluation culture of their school. Teachers reported that there was an evaluation team in their panels. The evaluation team would prepare some data for the analysis of the panel head. Then the panel head would use the data for the yearly interview, and then submit it to the principal, the vice-principal and the assistant-principal. Some teachers also reflected that SSE made the evaluation more concrete, objective and practical.

*"We have an evaluation team in our panel. The evaluation team produces some SSE data for the panel to follow-up. Students' opinions, panel's opinions and self-evaluation are all taken into account. Then the panel would interview with you before other interviews with principal and the vice-principal. New teachers or teachers of basic rank need to have interview with the principal every two years. There are also many evaluation stages they need to overcome at the end of every year. (T24, p.4)*

*"Self-evaluation mechanism can further strengthen the evaluation culture with objectivity and data and reflect the real situation." (T26, p.6)*

Besides, teachers in School 2 perceived effects of SSE on improving the school-based curriculum. Some teachers admitted that SSE encouraged the pooling teachers in order to have curriculum adaptation which narrowed down the topics covered. They reported that the coordinator would gather teachers' views on teaching progress for further adjustment. The teachers would then assign different amounts of homework based on their student's learning diversity. They further noted how the

panel heads benefited from SSE by seeking teachers' views on the effectiveness and the significance of the policy launched.

*"The curriculum includes many topics. We have to discuss our progress in SSE process. Otherwise, we may have different teaching progresses." (T21, p.8)*

*"In the progress of self-evaluation, the coordinator collected the comments and teaching progress from teachers... in order to adjust the teaching progress. We provided extra coursework for those students with good academic performance to cater for learning diversity." (T21, p.9)*

*"It is useful to conduct SSE for reflecting the teaching progress among teachers and preparing for examination scripts. Discussions between colleagues can build up a better relationship." (T26, p.10)*

*"We can have a chance in assessing the panel's performance (As a result of SSE process). When we expressed our views on certain poor policies and informed the panel in SSE process, the policy would no longer be continued the next year. Our contribution aims at benefiting students with high effectiveness. If not, it becomes an extra burden." (T26, p.11)*

In addition to the above, some teachers perceived effects of SSE on building professional and interactional relationships among colleagues. Some teachers were described as being a bit irresponsible. In this regard, SSE could serve as an important bridge to "have professional communication". Teacher 26 remarked that a professional relationship needed to be based on "trust, previous relationships and common faith". Otherwise, genuine "professional and interactional relationship" could not be nurtured.

*"Results from SSE questionnaires can be evidence in proving the bad performance of some teachers." (T21, p.4)*

*"Distrust between one another could lead to a failure in making*

*constructive decisions. As I have mentioned, a common Christian belief among colleagues is needed as they believe that education is a meaningful matter instead of a job only.”(T26, p.10)*

## **Ambivalent Perceived Effects of SSE a Means of Managerial Control**

In School 2, teachers also perceived ambivalent effects of SSE on managerial control. To begin with, teachers in School 2 perceived SSE as a means of increasing managerialism and performativity. Some teachers did not understand the real reason for implementing SSE. They thought that implementing SSE was to fulfil for the need for public accountability and also for the monitoring of teacher performance. They perceived SSE as a means to justify the use of public money. They believed that the purpose of SSE and ESR was good. Yet, the school’s capacity to change was limited and was under “change fatigue” with weak policy sustainability. Some teachers claimed that the follow-up actions of SSE were not enough.

*“As SSE report contains no practical examples to support the judgment, the whole SSE exercise is conducted for the sake of doing it.”(T21, p.8)*

*“I think all SSE stuff is done for accountability purposes, such as the compliance of SSE performance indicators by teachers and their corresponding improvements if necessary. As the government also needs to be accountable to the public, we have SSE in place to monitor teachers’ performance.”(T24, p.8)*

*“It is unreasonable for schools to enjoy the privileges entitled under government provision while not having any duties to be accountable for. As much of the tax revenue goes to education, it is reasonable for schools to devise measures to ensure proper use of fiscal resources contributed by the taxpayers.” (T26, p.8)*

*“The school finds it tough to tackle too many issues within a short time. Every educational or school initiative has its own significance. But if*

*there are too many initiatives to implement, and they are done too frequently and quickly, it may not produce positive results. I was in a similar situation when SSE was implemented. SSE initiative can be meaningful by nature, but it may not be easy to find a positive stroke under the backdrop of hasty educational reform.”(H23, p.6)*

*“After finishing the self-evaluation, adequate follow-up actions should be taken. Otherwise, teachers may not have enough reflection, and it will be futile.”(T22, p.8)*

Moreover, teachers in School 2 perceived SSE as a tool for adopting instrumentalism. Some teachers did not believe students were mature and reliable enough to judge the teaching effectiveness of a teacher. Also, students’ perception of teaching effectiveness could be easily manipulated by the offering of some “advantages” by teachers or by their “lenient” attitudes to students. Some teachers commented that the “teaching style” of teachers was “hard-to-quantify” with objective criteria as it included the professional judgment in teaching.

Other teachers found limitations in the performance indicators in measuring all the workload of the teachers. Some commented that the performance indicators were divided into many single discrete items, which were not holistic enough to identify problems in school. They also highlighted the complexities of multi-causal factors behind the educational outcomes. They felt that it was difficult to attribute the success or failure of students to a single set of educational input. They elaborated on the fact that the data of SSE might be misinterpreted. They believed that teachers fulfilling performance indicators were not necessarily hardworking.

*“Some teachers think that students do not have proper judgment. Some less able students complain that teachers don’t teach well.....There is a question on whether students have enough professional capacity to comment on the performance of teachers.”(T21, p.6)*

*"Those filling in the questionnaires are students, who are not mature enough. For example, they may base their comments on their personal experience or individual cases, which are subjective, so the actual performance of the teachers may not be reflected. For instance, if a teacher gives a higher score to students in the test to make them happy, while SSE questionnaire is to be conducted the next day, the high ratings in questionnaire results may not reflect the true teaching performance of the teachers as students may take the favor into account." (T22, p.6)*

*"What makes a good teacher? Students dislike teachers who always scold them harshly and urge them to hand in homework, and favor those who are lax in homework collection and are in good terms with them. It sounds a bit subjective." (T24, p.6)*

*"Assessing teachers' performance may be a kind of art, which is difficult to quantify. The amount of homework given and the appraisal system can serve as reference to indicate how responsible a teacher is. But teaching quality is art, which can neither be quantified nor measured." (T22, p.8)*

*"Teachers may have done something that may not be included in SSE assessment. I remembered six colleagues were assigned to take up a work after the meeting. If there was extra work that no one wanted to take up, I was always the one to offer a helping hand. I was willing to take on (additional work) most of the time. For example, I needed to prepare some revision worksheets before the exam was not just for my class but also the whole form, and this might not be counted in SSE. As this was not homework and had nothing to do with classroom teaching, so I thought SSE... was not comprehensive enough to cover efforts in all aspects..." (T24, p.2)*

*"The aim of ESR is to improve teaching quality. However, SSE and ESR report contain facts without making any recommendations to improve. I also think ESR sets its focus on only a certain small discrete items of the whole system. Should a school perceive the matter in such discrete way, or from a holistic angle? It seems EDB does not adopt a holistic view, and such approach is nothing but superficial. It is improper to use the same approach and the same set of resources to assess schools of whatever*

*bandings (from band 1 to band 3) under the objective of improving teaching and learning." (T21, p.8)*

*"Contents of the Religious Education subject are difficult to measure. It is not impossible to set up some indicators, such as lesson flow, memorisation of key verses, and classroom discipline. But it's difficult to effectively evaluate one's intrinsic religious values and their willingness to learn more about the faith." (T25, p.2)*

*"But staying at the school until 6 pm or 7pm does not mean diligence. Those teachers may always go shopping or chatting with students and colleagues. A regular statistics is made for SSE on the time and frequency of your departure taken between 5pm and 5:30 pm, i.e. the number of leaves taken in a month, and those taken after 7 pm." (T24, p.4-5)*

*"I think one's development involves the interplay of many factors at the same time... and so it's difficult to handle in a clear-cut manner. One's language ability may improve because of his exposure to the mass media and blog-writing, rather than the language education he receives from a particular teacher in school. I think what can be observed is a trend instead of a rule." (T25, p.4)*

*"For example, a student's interest in Chinese Language may not have anything to do with his/her current subject teacher. He/She may have been inspired by the teacher last year or those in primary school. The current teacher may not teach well, but that student may write in the questionnaire that he/she is interested in the subject, thus leaving an impression that their current teacher teaches well. His/her interest may be inspired by the Chinese teacher in primary three only." (T25, p.5-6)*

However, some teachers expressed the view that SSE and ESR did not interfere with teaching a lot but served as a reflection of what to improve. They believed that ESR team should better understand the contextual factors of the School, such as the SES of the school, instead of just commenting on the KPMs and the hard figures only. They believed that the core essence of education was to "strengthen the moral education" and "teach the students well". They demanded "corporate judgments"

from various stakeholders instead of relying on a single set of educational input.

*"I don't think so. It is impossible to assess the quality of a teacher without a kind of measurement standard. In fact, self-evaluation is done after a certain period of work, rather than causing disturbance to the teachers continuously. It is a tool to evaluate teachers' work for continuous improvements, just as examination to students' learning outcomes." (T26, p.6)*

*"Only teachers understand both the background and performance of students but ESR team may not. They observed no more than the value-addedness of students, in the data analysis, while turning a blind eye to students' SES and ambience of the district, which to an educationally trained person are factors of some significance. So, this is unreasonable." (T21, p.10)*

*"In society, children are non-complying and rude, among many other problems. Do you believe that the problem can be solved by learning more about Chinese rhetoric and hundreds of terms (in the process of SSE)? It may have something to do with our poor judgment (on the core value of education)." (T25, p.6)*

*"We not only look at the opinions of parents or students. Feedback from our colleagues, management from some schools and professionals from the government is part and parcel of the whole evaluation mechanism adopted by our senior management." (T26, p.7)*

Teachers in School 2 also perceived effects of SSE on de-professionalising teaching, but not to the extent of "name and shame". Teachers were forced to undergo "professional development" even though they had no time or energy for preparing lessons and meeting with students. They stated that SSE data would not intensify teacher competition as it was not released to all teachers, but to panels only. Some teachers believed that if the data of SSE was relevant to promotion or contract renewal of teachers, it led to increased teacher competition. Currently, SSE just led to some conflicts only.

*"Basic lesson preparation and mutual mentoring among colleagues leave me with no time, room nor energy to handle students' needs. I have at least heard from some fellow teachers that they have no time to meet students but have to spend two to three hours to 'be developed in staff development'." (T25, p.11)*

*"They do not know it (SSE result). You are the only one to know your self-evaluation and questionnaire results, other than the panel head and the assistant panel head. Other parties would not be informed." (T21, p.7)*

*"SSE questionnaires are not linked to promotion and contract renewal in order to avoid competition among teachers." (T22, p.7)*

*"There may be jealousy among some colleagues. Teachers teaching the same class may compare the scores of each others. Jealousy is seen in both men and women." (T24, p.6)*

*"SSE involves an extensive use of school resources and even leads to personal conflicts. This is an objective drawback I can observe." (H23, p.5)*

However, some teachers commented that the Christian culture of the panel alleviated the conflicts a bit. They pointed out that SSE might be subjective and involved too many human factors. Teacher 26, on the other hand, held a more positive view towards SSE. He said that as SSE data was not released to other teachers, it could be used for personal professional development. He also believed that as long as the competition was not vicious, it was acceptable.

*"I think I can work with most of colleagues. There may be a little conflict and jealousy even among colleagues who are true believers, but the relationship would improve gradually after rounds of discussion. I am optimistic about it." (T24, p.6)*

*"Under the self-evaluation mechanism, the so-called objective indicators may not be so objective under the influence of many human factors. The*



*indicators themselves are not objective. Second, there are human factors. If you befriend the teacher who observes classes, he would give you higher marks in peer evaluation of SSE. "(T24, p.9)*

*"No (teachers' competition), we don't know the evaluation results of other classes. There is competition among schools in such areas as enrolment, academic performance, inter-school achievements etc. no matter there is SSE or not. More importantly, we know that positive competition fosters improvement. "(T26, p.7)*

Most teachers showed their understanding towards the rationale behind the implementation of SSE. They noted that it was acceptable to treat schools as factories. Some teachers believed that SSE made schooling system mechanical and led to an atmosphere of distrust. Other teachers thought that SSE was a good incentive for the school to reflect on its input and output process for continuous improvement.

*"Someone regards schools as factories with little humanistic touch, and that is unavoidable. Society has been changing, and it remains unclear as to whether this is improvement. But at least there is now such a request for SSE, and schools, which are publicly-funded, are required to meet the society's request to justify the use of public money, be it reasonable or not. "(H23, p.6)*

*"It is like a factory which keeps on churning out products from the same mold. People's feeling takes no place in such a mechanical process. "(T24, p.9)*

*"Maybe I am traditional and outdated, so I tend to support the former view (that the school has become a factory because of the self-evaluation policy). We seem to be working but without being trusted. But it may be my fault only. "(T25, p.8)*

*"SSE mechanism is not to turn the school into a factory. In fact, as an organisation that can help students develop in good ways, a school has input, process and output, but they are not the same as those in a factory.*

*A school should look at three aspects: qualities of students admitted, the process of education, as well as how and what they can contribute to society after graduation. Without looking at these aspects, it remains dubious as to our school can achieve our objectives.” (T26, p.7-8)*

Furthermore, teachers in School 2 perceived SSE as highly empirical-analytical and science-based in its epistemological foundation. Teachers reflected that 40% of teachers recognised the importance of scientific measurement and documentation while the others prefer concentrating their energy on teaching activities. Some teachers recalled that SSE could be so “biased” if the performance indicators just captured “single incidents only”. They believed that SSE should be implemented to fulfill the expectation of society, parents and students.

*“About 40% of teachers welcome matters with a scientific and document-based approach. The remaining 60% still hope to concentrate on teaching only.” (T22, p.7)*

*“I think some indicators are not objective. The school only required me to submit composition and sentence-making exercises for checking, so I handed them in. The evaluation showed I scored low for one indicator. The panel head explained that he did not see that I had prepared notes for students. I thought I was unfairly commented. My wrist got hurt as I needed to type the whole set of notes for form six. When you saw me, you always asked me what I was doing, and I would say I was typing the notes. Why did you give me such poor remarks in evaluation when I did not attach the notes for book-checking?” (T24, p.7)*

*“Some are of course of the view that something cannot be quantified. This may give some pressure to teachers. The pressure not only comes from the school or the government, as students and parents also have their own expectation. This SSE mechanism is meritorious if it can ensure reward for our effort and improvement to our performance.” (T26, p.6)*

Moreover, teachers in School 2 perceived effects of SSE on pushing schools to quasi-market by steering at distance. Teachers reported that they had to fulfil the

requirement of EDB as most policies were enforced in a top-down manner. If they did not comply with the policy, there would be problems later on. Other teachers, however, held a positive view that schools should be conscious of their stakeholders such as parents and students so that they could improve.

*"Yes, most policies are in top-down implementation. We usually have a remark in the panel and staff meeting to indicate what the requirements of EDB and the school is. For example, if a problem was spotted in SSE, ESR or school-based SSE three years ago, and it would reappear one or two years later, we have to show our improvements to others." (T21, p.13)*

*"Through communication (induced in SSE process), we can let parents and students understand the rationale behind teachers' decisions and the school's policy. We, as professionals, can guide them to a better understanding of our decisions. But if we just cling to our professional ground, we may not meet their needs. Therefore, their support is essential to our effective implementation of work." (T26, p.6-7)*

In addition, teachers in School 2 perceived effects of SSE on teachers and made them become confessional and fear animals in power foundation under panoptic performativity. They shared the feeling of fear and of being under surveillance. They believed a self-motivated teacher would conduct a SSE himself or herself. They expressed the view that SSE data would make them feel stressed. They were opposed to the over-measurement of a teacher's performance. They also did not like SSE because of their fear that it would led to a shrinking enrolment and the "killing of schools". They thought that they had no power to resist the monitoring.

*"Each year, the distribution of the multitude of SSE questionnaires triggers fear among teachers as it represents distrust of their ability.....So if a teacher wants to teach well, he can conduct SSE questionnaires himself and no monitoring and surveillance is needed." (T21, p.4)*

*"The school has a record in place for the subject heads and us to see. An analysis was done on the time of departure of teachers from the school, you felt some pressure and being watched even though the principal did not tell you that he is evaluating you." (T24, p.5)*

*"The evaluation encompasses every aspect of the school, goes into every detail, and is conducted frequently. It's just too much and too frequent and is a source of pressure." (T25, p.5)*

*"The workload is heavy. Human nature is resistant to be evaluated, monitored and commented all the time." (T25, p.5)*

*"Some teachers are resistant to ESR because of the worry that EDB may associate SSE results with school closure in shrinking enrolment." (T22, p.5)*

*"Teaching English language is always daunting and uneasy. Due to workload and other factors, I think colleagues have the same feeling that they are mistreated and abused, and they are used to it. English teachers are highly expected, and after their struggle, they no longer have any motivation to move on and struggle again." (T24, p.9)*

However, not all of teachers felt negative towards SSE. Some teachers did not object to the culture of lesson observation as they indeed gained a lot from the process. Some teachers reported that teachers' emotions were not affected by the process. They recalled the assurances of the principal that the use of SSE data would be for personal development only. They also admitted SSE was important for under-performing schools with chaotic school management. In addition, they believed that Christians would endure as much as possible until they could no longer tolerate a situation. Some teachers found the recognition and appreciation of the students and the school as a positive thing.

*"I like to have my class being observed to let people see how well I teach in class... There is some pressure, but the benefits outweigh the pressure. But I know that other teachers don't like to be observed." (T21, p.12)*

*"SSE mechanism has been in place for some time, and there isn't much negative feeling among teachers." (T22, p.6)*

*"The principal has clearly stated that SSE serves as reference for improving teaching quality and teachers' personal professional development. He lets us feel that we don't need to be worried about the results." (H23, p.2)*

*“(SSE) is a good measure in to point out what is not good. Monitoring is good to schools which are very lazy, unenthusiastic and disorderly.” (T24, p.9)*

*"There isn't much resistance (towards SSE). I think it's easy for Christians to accept SSE as long as it's not too extraordinary. We can do it as far as we can." (T25, p.11)*

*"I think there is a little pressure. It's a kind of affirmation if our work delivers and receives recognition from students (in the process of SSE)." (T26, p.13)*

In terms of the workload arising from implementation of SSE, some teachers admitted that the extra workload was a result of SSE. T21 gave an example the principal's request of adding a "literature review" in the lesson plans that were submitted to him. Other teachers stated that the requirement of adding literature review caused extra workload to them. They pointed out that the "excessive teacher-development" resulted from the follow-up of SSE. However, they believed SSE was justified as a way to monitor the use of public money and the professional growth of teachers.

*"SSE is an extra work indeed. After completing a program plan for SSE, we also need to complete the reflection section for each part with literature support as part of the post-teaching review to support our teaching philosophy." (T21, p.12)*

*"Adding a little to our existing heavy workload is no big deal, but adding three to four job items is significant and disgusting. It is acceptable to do SSE once every three years." (T25, p.5)*

*"The problem is: SSE is in general related to staff development, but the complaint I have heard is on the latter rather than the former. When teachers exclaim at the launch of another staff development, I feel sorry, too. This is like forestry – there seems to be no more room for development, but another round of tree-trimming has to be carried out." (T25, p.9)*

*"If you ask me, I would say students' growth not only hinges on teaching and learning. Their lives involve different aspects, including family, health, religious faith, internal struggle, love affairs, etc, which we don't have enough time to handle." (T25, p.11)*

*"Let me repeat: the problem is not on SSE but on the educational reform, of which self-evaluation forms part. However, I don't suggest withdrawing the whole policy. In fact, it brings some benefits to the society, the taxpayers and my teaching development." (T25, p.11)*

To conclude, teachers in School 2 were likely to perceive ambivalent effects of SSE on school improvement and managerial control. This could be attributed to the smooth implementation of the school-based SSE in School 2 because of its ample time for policy maturation. The smooth implementation of SSE in School 2 caused SIL of School 2 to be ambivalent, resulting in teachers perceiving both effects of SSE in terms of school improvement and managerial control.

### **School 3**

In School 3, the implementation of SSE was poorly-developed, as a result of the organic interaction of the Policy, Place and People in School 3. For Policy, School 3 had experienced 2 years of SSE implementation from 2006 to 2008 for the evolution of the government and school-based SSE policy, leading to immature policy

formalisations, specifications, documentation and networking. For Place, School 3 is characterised for the limited intellectual, social and cultural capital of its parents and students. Therefore, the monitoring effects of parents and students in SSE are not as strong as predicted in SSE documents.

For People, there was visionary but weak principal leadership since the principal had come from another school under the same SSB. In this regard, his legitimation was weak. In addition, the lenient management philosophy of the SMC forbade the new principal from using his administrative power to get rid of the under-performing staff. In addition, there were highly resistant under-performing middle managers. They had a very weak sense of accountability and were used to resisting change. The general teachers therefore lost direction and also possessed a very weak sense of accountability. The implementation of SSE therefore unfolded in the eyes of the researcher in School 3 as a result of the organic interaction of the 3Ps. This poor implementation of SSE in School 3 became the School Implementation Lens (SIL) through which teachers in School 3 were more likely to perceive SSE as having an effect on managerial control and less on school improvement.

### **Less likely to Perceive SSE a Means of School Improvement**

In School 3, teachers were less likely to perceive the perceived effects of SSE on school improvement. To begin with, teachers perceived effects of SSE on enhancing teaching and learning. Some teachers acknowledged that SSE and the lesson observations enhanced their teaching skills through peer learning. They elaborated on how they benefited from the process of lesson observations. They also admitted that the process of SSE enhanced their pedagogical skills more than improving the selection of a school-based curriculum. They recognised the

importance of their students' voice in giving feedback to their teaching performance. They also recognised the importance of SSE in assuring educational quality. However, they emphasised the importance of follow-up actions after SSE data was obtained. T33 believed that if no appropriate follow-up was made, SSE would lose its effects.

*"SSE system can help improve teaching skills." (T31, p.4)*

*"It helps improve preparation for teaching and learning with flexibility." (T34, p.7)*

*"It is certain that self-evaluation is beneficial to teaching and learning, as it can help teachers understand their teaching objectives and approach. I believe it depends on what areas of self-evaluation individual schools are focused." (T35, p.1)*

*"SSE helps (teaching and learning).....because we can obtain some information from students.....Yes, I think it enhances more of my teaching skills than the selection of school-based curriculum." (T32, p.3)*

*"When teachers know they are not teaching well, they would try to learn from colleagues in the shared preparation of SSE. This is a good way for us to reflect on what to improve in our teaching approach and learn some good practice." (T31, p.8)*

*"Some students may complain about the lesson in terms of pace, coverage, scope or depth. They can point it out and describe it." (T32, p.2)*

*"But I somehow hope that my class would perform better. I believe this is what every teacher has in mind." (T35, p.12)*

*"SSE helps us.....because teachers who conduct lesson observation are more experienced..... They can offer opinions based on their experience. Also, other colleagues join the peer observation and learn some skills therein." (T35, p.1)*

*"We are familiar with what we teach, but taking students' views into*



*account can help us teach them better.”(T32, p.3)*

*“I support the (SSE) mechanism and think that it is necessary to do SSE. This is in fact needed for every sector.”(T33, p.2)*

*“As mentioned before, whether SSE can help improve teaching and learning depends on the follow-up actions towards the under-performed teachers.”(T33, p.15)*

Furthermore, teachers in School 3 did not perceive effects of SSE on improving leadership and management. Some teachers pointed out that no appropriate follow-up actions were made after obtaining SSE data. So SSE did not serve as an effective instrument of change.

*“In practice, you need to collect sufficient evidence and undergo a series of formalities to dismiss a teacher. Therefore, if there is no follow-up after evaluation, there is no screening of teachers' performance. So I think SSE is well-intentioned.”(T33, p.2)*

Moreover, teachers in School 3 perceived slight effects of SSE on strengthening of the evaluation culture of schools. They could see how the evaluation culture of schools was strengthened with the implementation of SEE.

*“Improvement? You may say so, even though we are required to work hard and do many things.”(T31, p.5)*

*“Colleagues adopt some of the strengths from the government's self-evaluation, such as emphasis on data and percentages, to replace the feeling-based self-evaluation in the past. I can say they have made use of the government's self-evaluation in a refined manner.”(T34, p.2)*

In addition to the above, teachers in School 3 perceived effects of SSE on building professional and interactional relationships among colleagues. Some teachers shared the fruits of their work by opening their classrooms for lesson

observations and professional dialogue in the process of SSE. They admitted that at least procedural professional exchange became more frequent gradually, though superficially.

*"I take it positively. At least a culture of peer observation has been gradually established. In the past, you didn't know whether it's good to observe classes conducted by the panel head. Now, he invites you to observe and be observed."* (T31, p.8)

*"Communication on the surface or in terms of procedural requirements has increased, such as homework checking and joint lesson preparing. I believe many schools also do it this way. They were non-existent before the system is in place."* (T33, p.3)

*"Yes, because we share our own views on SSE and discuss ways to analyse the data. I think SSE is useful."* (T35, p.11)

### **More Likely to Perceive SSE as a Means of Managerial Control**

In School 3, teachers were more likely to perceive effects of SSE on managerial control. At the outset, they perceived SSE as a means of increasing managerialism and promoting performativity. Some teachers could clearly see the monitoring nature of SSE on teachers as a way to justify the use of public money. They reflected that in School 3 SSE served as both a means to improve teaching and learning and appraising teachers' performance. They could see hardly any good effects of SSE in School 3 in terms of school improvement.

*"The notion of accountability has become predominant since 2000. It did not take such a central position in SMI era, which emphasised self-management. SSE has come into play after the SARS outbreak, amid tightened public coffers. Since then, guidelines have been introduced to carry out monitoring through other means. The atmosphere has become more serious."* (T31, p.2)

*"There is distrust, as I think self-evaluation is presented as a means to*

*improve teaching ... . To our school... ., it offers teachers a tool for review and has something to do with performance appraisal." (T32, p.7)*

*"I think SSE is a means for the government to control schools." (T31, p.11)*

*"(Is the government's evaluation a means to control schools?) I believe the intention is good, but improvement is far from significant." (T34, p.10)*

Some teachers believed that the performance indicators in SSE were controversial indeed. Many teachers in School 3 were opposed to SSE. Some teachers commented that students in School 3 might not be mature enough to judge their teachers. They also observed that there might be many interpretations for some of the data in SSE. Some teachers stated how teachers could manipulate the students' ratings in SSE.

*"Instrumentalism isn't inappropriate, depending on how. As what I've said, evaluation is necessary for every sector, and what matters is how... . Many of the performance indicators employed in our sector are abstract. For example... . some colleagues may think that a higher passing rate hinges on students rather than your way of teaching. Therefore, many criteria are debatable." (T33, p.4)*

*"Many colleagues dislike the culture (of self-evaluation)... . but I am fine with it, as I personally see the need for evaluation for every job done. But our peers find such practice unacceptable." (T33, p.17)*

*"Frankly speaking, colleagues are worried that given the quality of our students, SSE was not fairly conducted. They may give good comments on teachers who do not scold them, and bad comments on those who scold and argue with them. We are worried about the reliability and validity of SSE." (T31, p.2)*

*"Students' evaluation of teachers depends very much on the former's maturity. Even in an elite school, there are two factors to consider – first, whether objectivity can be ensure for such evaluation; second, young people attach importance to relationship or their feeling to*

*teachers.....They may not have independent judgment.”(T33, p.5)*

*“Hard fact can also be subjective evaluation. A 90-100% passing rate may be attributed to good student quality rather than your way of teaching. So, your performance is rated as fair only.”(T33, p.12)*

*“In fact, when it’s time for students to do the evaluation, it is not difficult to please them in our favor. This shifted our focus of work from teaching to relationship building.”(T33, p.5)*

*“It remains unclear as to whether your students take self-evaluation seriously and maturely as it means to be, or they just like a teacher because of the favors he gives, such as candies, homework counselling or relaxed test paper marking. We don’t know whether these exist behind the veil.”(T31, p.7)*

Some teachers pointed out that using a single set of indicator to measure all schools was inappropriate and incomprehensive. They also questioned whether a single set of performance indicators could be applicable to all schools with different contextual consideration. They further commented that the performance indicators of SSE did not reflect the true picture of the school. They believed that the single set of performance indicators made schools factory-like. They reflected that not all aspects could be measured by quantitative numbers.

*“Having a performance indicator is good but unrealistic.....There should be some changes, as nothing is universally applicable. Band 1 and band 3 schools are different in terms of intake, culture, student support, etc. I have reservations on this single set of performance indicators.”(T31, p.6)*

*“The SVAIS fails to reflect the full picture. Subjects without satisfactory SVAIS may be regarded as useless by the school despite their satisfactory passing rates. A mere lack of indicators renders them unimportant. What’s the point of such SVAIS?”(T33, p.13)*

*“It depends on whether a school’s value is solely measured by the several*

*items encompassed in SSE checklist. If it's so, the observation in SSE is not comprehensive enough." (T32, p.6)*

*"(How many teachers regard self-evaluation as a way to measure their performance, making them feel like working in factory as labour?) I think some teachers may have such thought.....maybe 10%, which means just 5-6 of them." (T34, p.10)*

*"This gives me a feeling that everything hinges on data. But as school is a place where human communication is valued, not everything can be quantified with data." (T35, p.19)*

Also, teachers in School 3 did not feel that SSE de-professionalised teachers by "naming and shaming". However, this did not mean that teachers' relationship was harmonious. This only reflected the lack of follow-up in SSE process. Therefore, competition among teachers to perform better did not really exist in School 3 even after the implementation of SSE. Rather, SSE process overloaded the capable teachers by requiring them to shoulder heavier workloads but failed to motivate the unmotivated teachers. Also, SSE data obtained in School 3 would not be transparent and open to all teachers, thus there was no competition or mutual accountability in School 3 at all.

*"(Since the implementation of self-evaluation, has the relationship turned from harmonious to competitive one?) No." (T35, p.12)*

*"I always emphasise on the importance of follow-up work. If SSE data is obtained without any follow-up actions, there isn't any incentive for colleagues to compete or improve, as they can keep working as usual." (T33, p.5)*

*"In fact, self-evaluation makes everyone tend to show off, so the problem exists whenever there is evaluation. It is important to see how the management perceives such competition and communicates with colleagues. In fact this is not division but is a means for us to assess the overall performance of a school. It's not bad." (T33, p.6)*

*"More competent colleagues are assigned to handle SSE. This gives rise to two extremes: while these colleagues are assigned to more workload, those who don't work remain as they are. There is harmony on the surface, with grievances kept to the heart. The situation can only get worse." (T33, p.14)*

*"No, not too much, no comparison.....The self-evaluation scores are confidential. They are not released unless they are made public by the principal and vice-principal." (T35, p.10)*

Finally, teachers in School 3 perceived SSE as confessional and fear animals in power foundation under panoptic performativity. Situated in a district of shrinking enrolment, Teacher 31 admitted that SSE would be "very sensitive" under their context. Teachers observed that SSE brought an increased workload in terms of documentation, preparation and also added pressure on the teachers.

*"(Is there any pressure on student enrolment of your school as well as in New Territories East, thus making self-evaluation sensitive?) Yes, it's sensitive, as some colleagues may need to be assigned other duties or laid off following the reduction in the number of subjects taught under NSS. They may think whether they can see the future and whether their subjects will be phased out. Everyone observes this. They may not say it, but they keep an close eye on the level of class reduction and the dropping enrolment. The overall student population of the district has dropped, so can we enrol enough students? If not, how many of us have to leave? Am I to be sacked because I am young and green?" (T31, p.6)*

*"Schools have to follow what the authorities dictate. When schools follow the instruction, there may be some advice from the authorities. We have to make some response accordingly." (T33, p.17)*

*"Second, more paperwork means reduction in the effort on students, such as homework marking and lesson preparation. We need to spend a lot of effort on paperwork." (T33, p.3)*

*"I believe the workload increases, as the implementation of either ESR or SSE requires a lot of follow-up actions from teachers." (T33, p.14)*

*"(Self-evaluation) is good, but it involves too much paperwork, especially for language subjects. Students' motivation is low, while pressure from society is high. The number of lessons for each subject is the same, and teachers need to assess students' work and organise activities.....Some teachers are required to go out to take total immersion courses, all of which are taken by language teachers.....Afterwards, they need to call tender, followed by the monitoring mechanism and an additional lesson to ensure sustainability.....In a sense, English teachers have to take up more lessons and workload than others." (T31, p.6)*

*"With this SSE mechanism, I think teachers being evaluated sustain higher pressure ..... " (T33, p.3)*

*"It is mainly because the government's self-evaluation is highly sophisticated, which teachers think is unnecessary and is done for the sake of only having something to do.....Colleagues find it tough as it takes them a lot of time, especially in respect of data collection." (T34, p.2)*

Two years after ESR in 2006, some teachers in School 3 felt that even without ESR, SSE had been easier and more acceptable in 2008 as the monitoring effects were not so strong. They also reaped the benefits of SSE when teachers began to familiarise themselves with the essence of SSE. Teacher 33 explained that SSE should be maintained and the only thing he was concerned most about was the clarity of the mechanism. Teacher 34 recalled that some teachers thought SSE was an extra requirement instead of the things they would normally be doing. They further explained how the complex performance indicators caused the resistance of some of the teachers.

*"I think the pressure comes from the fear that the outcome will be unsatisfactory. Also teachers did not know what to fulfill under the performance indicators. After completion of ESR, no one finds fault in your practice. There is more freedom and flexibility, and it is easier to accept the outcome of SSE." (T32, p.3-4)*

*"At the beginning, we had no idea what SSE was, and the atmosphere wasn't good. But now we are not that resistant to self-evaluation, as there isn't much problem from the enrolment figure of student' intake, and we are used to it." (T32, p.8)*

*"(Does self-evaluation challenge the professional status of teachers?) I don't think so, as I think every sector needs some kind of evaluation system. Even CEO in big corporations is subject to evaluation, too.....I don't think our professionalism is challenged, but there is a need to make the system or its principles clearer.....This is very important." (T33, p.5)*

Some teachers recalled the difficulties in implementing SSE in School 3, where ranks were not highly emphasised. They observed that SSE was not vigorously implemented. This was because teachers tended to be lenient in assessing colleagues' performance due to the pressure to be socially and politically correct. They discovered that only a few teachers had implemented SSE voluntarily. Along with the fluctuating trend of enrolment, the sense of crisis under SSE went away and teachers' alertness returned to normal. SSE was not seriously implemented as it was in 2006.

*"(Are there any colleagues who resist self-evaluation for fear that their old files are brought into light?) No, our school emphasises harmony. As far as I know, we adopt a relaxed standard for self-evaluation, so there isn't much difference in our ratings. This is not as strict as the one done by the government, where ESR ratings among colleagues can be large." (T34, p.3)*

*"This is true, considering that in a harmonious environment where hierarchy is not distinct, it is difficult to put accountability in full play." (T34, p.3)*

*"Some colleagues are worried about the ratings they obtained after implementation of SSE." (T35, p.2)*

*"As the school's enrolment has met the target, colleagues .....forget the crisis of redundancy. There has been some discussion on when and how to*



*lay off staff, except in this one year or so." (T35, p.12)*

Teachers in School 3 were more likely to perceive SSE as a means of managerial control and less as a means of school improvement. This could be attributed to the poor school-based implementation of SSE in School 3. The poor implementation of SSE in School 3 made the SIL become negative, through which teachers in School 3 perceived SSE as more of a tool of managerial control and less of one of school improvement.

To conclude, it is argued that the policy effects of SSE are as not as clear cut as theorists in the two camps, school improvement and managerial control, suggested in the literature review. The perceived effects are not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of teachers in the Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers make sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts. In the above analysis, the school-organisational context of the three sample schools in which teachers are exposed to and embedded onto shaped the perception of teachers towards SSE. It was found that the well-implemented school-based SSE in School 1 led to a relatively positive SIL, through which the perceived effects of SSE were more likely on school improvement and less likely on managerial control. In School 2, the smooth implementation school-based SSE led to an ambivalent SIL, through which the perceived effects of SSE were ambivalent for both school improvement and managerial control. In School 3, the poor implementation the school-based SSE led to relatively negative SIL, through which the perceived effects of SSE were less likely on school improvement and more likely on managerial control.

### **5.3 Teacher Generational Lens (TGL)**

As revealed in the last section, the perceptions of teachers in a school are affected by their respective School Implementation Lens (SIL), through which teachers would perceive SSE differently. A positive SIL would result in teachers' tendency to perceive SSE as more of school improvement and less of managerial control, and vice versa. This section focuses on the second perspective to be used in guiding the analysis, namely that of teacher generation. More specifically, it adopts the similar generational contrast of teachers (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002) in the UK such as the Plowden teachers of the 1970s and the 1980s and the OFSTED teachers of the 1990s to delineate the professional and the biographical contexts in which teachers of different ages grew up and socialised professionally.

To contextualise this into the Hong Kong context, the labels of Pre-ECR7 Era and ECR7 Era are adopted to facilitate the discussion. It is proposed that teachers' perceived effects of SSE are under the influence of their policy context, the paradigm shift of the teachers, and the value and discourse in which they professionally socialised. That is, the biographic and professional backgrounds of the teachers serve more or less as a lens through which practising teachers perceive and make sense of the policy. This lens is called the TGL in this chapter.

The Pre-ECR7 Era teachers represented teachers aged 40 or above. They have usually started their teaching careers in the 1980s, during a time of an expansion in the quantity of education, and a time when management by process and centralisation were emphasised. However, at this time, the concept of improvement in education quality, and management by output and de-centralisation were not widely promoted.

They perceived education as the nurturing of lives and the inheritance of values. They do not regard education as a value-added process with managerial tools to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

The Pre-ECR7 teachers usually finished the advanced professional training by completing a Master of Education or a Master's Degree in their respective disciplines much earlier in their careers. They also enjoy a certain degree of "high legitimacy" in their schools. In terms of stage of life, they are generally just past their 40s and might pursue other interests rather than just teacher career development. Rearing their young children or teenagers and fulfilling of parenthood best describe the stage of life they were experiencing.

Regarding the teachers of ECR7 Era, they represented teachers in their 30s or below. ECR7 teachers had usually started their teaching career in around the late 1990s, when improvement in education quality, management by product and de-centralisation were the prevalent beliefs. ECR7 teachers perceive education as products as in an output-product model. They are usually undertaking some structured learning course to stay competitive and marketability over their colleagues. In terms of their stage of life, they have just arrived at the ambitious ages and are often pursuing career development. They may have just got married and might not have had children yet.

As both teachers of the Pre-ECR7 Era and teachers of ECR7 Era were found in the three sample schools, this section will explicate the former first, then the latter. To begin with, the teachers of the Pre-ECR7 Era were found as follows in the three sample schools:

## **Teacher of the Pre-ECR7 Era**

### **AP15**

AP15 is a very experienced assistant-principal in School 1. He was more likely to perceive SSE as a means of managerial control. He is in his late 40s. He has been teaching in School 1 from 1984 until now. He has nearly 24 years of teaching experience. When he joined the teaching profession, the focus of education in Hong Kong was still on quantitative provision. Educational management, quality and monitoring were not common themes in the schools. He recalled that in the 1980s, teaching was the ideal job for those who wanted stability. In other words, he expressed the feeling that, in the informal discussions, those who entered the teaching profession did not want to change easily. Otherwise, they would have entered the business field instead.

AP15 believed that leadership and management styles were not easy to change under SSE as he did not believe SSE findings could change the mentality of school administrators towards different opinions easily. He reflected that SSE could not make changes in the managerial style of the school. He added that for those who did not want change and were looking for stability, SSE was a waste of time and energy. He did not see fundamental improvement in teaching and learning as a result of implementing SSE. He did not attribute the good communication with stakeholders to SSE. He did not accept the single set of performance indicators adopted by EDB for all schools. Moreover, he did not accept the epistemological nature of SSE and ESR.

*"The working style has been long-established in our school while working*

*here for a long time. If a colleague accepted your comment, he/she would have made improvements accordingly. If not, he/she would simply ignore it. They would not please someone because he/she was the appraisers in the process of SSE.” (AP15, p.19 )*

*“Both the principal and the vice-principal have certain degree of power and status. They do change their management styles easily. ” (AP15, p.9 )*

*“SSE data is not compelling or worst enough and therefore our school has no intention to change our management style and other areas.” (AP15, p.20 )*

*“It is subject to the personality among different colleagues. Someone tended to be aggressive and others tended to be stable without faults.” (AP15, p.21 )*

*“There were changes in teaching methods and attitudes towards stakeholders for SSE result, but I cannot see any fundamental change indeed in other aspects.”(AP15, p.20)*

*“I think that the motivation (to pursue academic excellence) does not come from SMI, SSE & ESR, it comes from the school itself. Starting from the establishment of the school, we aimed at being a high-ranking CMI school rather than the EMI one, we cannot afford being ranked to low in the district....” (AP15, p.18)*

*“SSE has been criticised as peremptory. The Education Bureau believes that every school can be assessed by a set of standardised performance indicator fairly. Your work done is treated as pass if you follow the indicators...It is true that an indicator is necessary for any assessments but communication is a key factor instead. The ESR team cannot simply say that ‘the performance indicators are absolute standard’ .....Now, EDB just notified us to prepare documentation for the arrival of ESR team without understanding our context at all.”(AP15, p.24)*

To him, education was not about ranking and grading people or about treating students as inanimate physical objects. He found that the uploading of ESR report would lead to inaccurate interpretation of the school’s performance. He did not

accept the check-list model of performance indicators during lesson observations and he believed that teachers' professional judgments and adoption of pedagogy in class should be respected, though he did not reject the existence of SSE.

*"We are not getting used to SSE. If we always emphasise on figures and performance indicators, we feel uncomfortable and unhappy to it, especially being marked by such unrecognised grades (by ESR team)." (AP15, p.21)*

*"If I were an ordinary person to the school, what I saw in ESR report of the web would be my impression of your school. ESR report over-simplifies the school context and it is a bit danger indeed. Hence, rational mind-set is necessary. We should think whether SSE can't assess the school fairly?" (AP15, p.23)*

*"When ESR team came to our School for class observation, should we be allowed to brief you about the strength of our school in the pre-meeting for facilitating the class observation thereafter. You should not ask me to complete all pre-requisite tasks in the form. They should understand that lesson observation could be a game and a play. I don't rule out some people would play it well. But if we were required to present all items in the lesson observation form and fail to do so, our score in lesson observation would be marked at low level...In short, more respect on schools should be given." (AP15, p.24)*

## **T25**

Teacher 25 was a very experienced panel of Religious Studies. He was more likely to perceive SSE as a tool of managerial control. He is in his late 40s. He has been teaching since the 1980s and so has nearly 30 years of teaching experiences. During his early teaching career, teaching was seldom monitored by performance indicators. The focus of education in Hong Kong was still on quantitative provision.

He doubted the effects of lesson observation in SSE would have on the

improvement of teaching and learning and he doubted whether the teachers being praised by the principal would indeed teach so well and had “internalised all the skills” in every lesson. He also wondered whether teachers would take follow-up actions based on the results of SSE, though he did not object to the diagnostic nature of SSE. He expressed the view that no time was available to conduct SSE because teachers were already burnt-out in School 2. He doubted if fulfilling all the performance indicators would lead to better teaching effectiveness and better school performance.

*“After class observation, the principal praised some colleagues or their teaching approach in some public occasions. But we don't know whether the good performance is only seen in that particular lesson or in every lesson of the teacher being praised.” (T25, p.10)*

*“Opinion taken, but business as usual? Suppose this (SSE & ESR) is a mirror, you may not groom yourself after looking your untidy face, or you just don't trust the mirror (SSE & ESR) at all.....Yes, the mirror may somehow be flawed a little bit, but this is still a mirror through which you can see the real you, not others.” (T25, p.4)*

*“(Self-evaluation) is conducted not very frequently. We are too occupied for our existing workload ..... we are all very busy. I see that many colleagues need to work until after midnight every day, and some on Saturdays and Sundays.” (T25, p.8)*

*“I don't think SSE is a solid set of indicators which I can believe blindly. I don't incline to agree with the thought that ‘if I do SSE in this prescribed way, the results will be surprising and effective’. ” (T25, p.4)*

In addition, Teacher 25 also noted that there was a lack of trust and the occurrence of quarrels while implementing SSE. He also observed that the resistant voice of teachers was strong. He valued the importance of human trust in the work place. He doubted that the results and performance indicators of SSE would lead to

school improvement. He reflected that there was strong opposition towards SSE and that it was difficult to measure educational outputs with the performance indicators used in SSE. He expressed the view that the causal input and output relationship established in SSE was somewhat not so strong and was, in fact, actually linear. He strongly believed that devoting time to solving the problems of teenagers was more “valuable” than filling in the questionnaire.

*“It is true that the trust among us has been lost. For example, if one is rated four on a five-point scale, he will argue with the panel head. The quarrel may be so vehement that even the principal is aware of it. I have heard of such cases several times.” (T25, p.7)*

*“Maybe I am relatively conservative and traditional, I tend to support the former view (humanistic perspective), rather than SSE & ESR which spring from a sense of distrust.” (T25, p.8)*

*“My workload is already very heavy. We have to take of the additional administrative stuff such as SSE. Human nature has natural feeling of resistance against under surveillance, appraisal and observation, regardless of my job performance.” (T25, p.5)*

*“The voice of opposition is greater. They complain that they need to fill in SSE forms again.” (T25, p.5)*

*“I always think relationship matters. With relationship and trust, we can say and do anything. ~~But~~ how can we build it up...?” (T25, p.11)*

*“Some parts of the Religious Education subject are difficult to measure. It is not impossible to set up some indicators, such as lesson situation, memorisation of bible verses, and classroom discipline. But it's difficult to effectively evaluate one's intrinsic values and willingness to learn more about the faith.” (T25, p.2)*

*“I don't know whether things can be so clear-cut. Besides figures, there can be many factors behind a certain result or outcome. For example, a student's interest in Chinese Language may not have anything to do with*



*his/her current subject teacher. He/She might be inspired by the teacher last year or those in primary school. The current teacher may not teach well, but that student may write in SSE questionnaire that he/she is interested in the subject, thus leaving an impression that the current teacher teaches well.*" (T25, p.5-6)

*"I prefer to tackle students' family problems rather than to complete this SSE questionnaire. Character build-up is part of teachers' job. The transfer of knowledge is relevant, but in society, children are non-complying and rude, among many other problems. Do you believe that the problem can be solved by learning more about Chinese rhetoric and hundreds of vocabulary terms?"* (T25, p.6)

He warned that we should not place too much faith in the effectiveness of SSE in terms of school improvement. He also stated that SSE brought about pressures on teachers. He believed that teachers already had no time for meeting students but were forced to undergo "professional teacher development like deforestation", meaning that teachers were being exploited again and again like trees being chopped down repeatedly. He also highlighted the fact that teachers found it hard to balance school work with their personal lives. Teacher 25 claimed that SSE was not the only solution to solve the problem of the degradation of educational quality. He believed that there were many ways which could also lead to school improvement.

In fact, Teacher 25 declared his personal choice of not having SSE as a means to school improvement. But he was also opposed to the cancellation of SSE policy. His stance was to avoid over-measurement and over- superstitious in the effects of SSE. He believed that SSE was not the solution to solve the problem of the degradation of educational quality.

*"I have heard from some fellow teachers that they had no time to meet students but had to spend two to three hours to 'be developed' in teacher*

*development day.*" (T25, p. 9)

*"The problem is: SSE is in general related to teacher development, but the complaint I have heard is on the latter rather than the former. "When teachers exclaim at the launch of another new project, I feel sorry, too. This is like forestry – there seems to be no trees for chopping, but another round of tree-trimming has to be carried out."* (T25, p. 9)

*"I hope to take some courses with colleagues teaching the same subject, but they often ignore me. Maybe they are occupied with their families and children."* (T21, p.6)

*"To those who introduce SSE & ESR, they think they are important and have to be put in place, otherwise education will be collapsed and we will lose the direction. I think this belief amounts to blind faith."* (T25, p.5)

*"If I have to choose "yes" or "no" to the presence of SSE and ESR, I will tend not to say "no". Maybe I'm traditional.....In this money-oriented society, Hong Kong students of this generation are facing a lot of problems in life. If SSE and ESR are effective, why is the world downward morally instead of being upward?"* (T25, p.7)

*"As self-evaluation is part of the system, if we only need to handle SSE and the scope is within the school, it's manageable. The problem is that the government has also introduced ESR, which by itself involves great deal of work and possibly some other follow-up issues."* (T25, p.11)

In brief, he believed that the over-measurement of SSE caused teachers' resistance towards SSE.

*"The evaluation encompasses every aspect of the school, goes into every detail, and is conducted frequently. It's just too much and too frequent and is a source of pressure."* (T25, p.5)

## T31

Teacher 31 is in his late 40s. He was more likely to perceive SSE as a means of managerial control. He started his teaching in the early 1980s and so has around 30 years of teaching experience. When he joined the profession, accountability was not emphasised. The focus of education in Hong Kong was still on quantitative provision.

T31 perceived SSE as a means to increase control and monitoring of schools and to justify the use of public money. Teacher 31 recalled that in the era of SMI, the school evaluation was without guidelines and monitoring. He believed SSE was used as a means for the government to monitor schools. He also expressed the belief that teachers of his generation feared that students would not evaluate a teacher's performance fairly. T31 and teachers of his generation worried about the reliability and validity of SSE results. This was because the students would overrate those who were lenient to them and underrate the strict teachers. He believed students were manipulated easily.

*"The notion of accountability has become predominant since 2000. It did not take such a central position when SMI system, which emphasised self-management. It has come into play after the SARS outbreak, amid tightened public coffers. Since then, guidelines have been introduced to carry out monitoring through other means. The atmosphere has become more serious." (T31, p.2)*

*"I think it is a means for the government to control schools." (T31, p.11)*

*"Frankly speaking, colleagues are worried that given the quality of our students, it will not be fairly conducted. They may give good comments on teachers who do not scold them, and bad comments on those who scold and argue with them. We are worried about the reliability and validity of SSE*

*results.” (T31, p.2)*

*“It remains unclear as to whether your students take (self-evaluation) as it means to be, or they just like a teacher because of the favours he gives them, such as candies, homework counseling or relaxed test paper marking. We don't know whether these exist behind the veil.”(T31, p.7)*

Teacher 31 thought that the use of single performance indicators would not be comprehensive enough to measure schools with three bandings. He advocated for creating more time for teachers to teach students than to prepare documents. He recommended hiring some administrative staff to handle the administration of SSE rather than asking teachers to do this. Also, he believed that SSE would be linked with the issue of redundancy in the minds of teachers. But he acknowledged that competition was unavoidable to a certain extent.

*“Having a performance indicator is good but unrealistic.....There should be some changes, as nothing is universally applicable. Band 1 and band 3 schools are different in terms of intake, culture, student support, etc. I have reservations on this particular point.”(T31, p.6)*

*“.....Is it necessary to conduct another review? Teachers should concentrate on teaching rather than meaningless paperwork.”(T31, p.11)*

*“For (self-evaluation) in other countries, there are executives dedicated to its implementation, while teachers can concentrate on teaching without too much involvement in administrative work. This division of labour works even better” (T31, p.11)*

*“As some colleagues may need to be assigned other duties or laid off as a result of reducing subjects taught under NSS. They may think whether they can see the future and whether their subjects will be phased out. Everyone would observe this. They might not say it, but they understand the level of class reduction and the dropping enrolment. The overall student population of the district has dropped, so can we enrol enough students? If not, how many of us have to leave? Am I to be sacked because I am young and green? We have discussed this sensitive issue.”(T31, p.6)*

*“There is no way to say no. as this is an internal factor and everyone is doing the same thing. There is no choice at all, especially given the keen competition among the schools in the district.” (T31, p.6)*

## **Teachers of ECR7 Era**

### **T16**

Teacher 16 is in her early 30s. She was more likely to perceive SSE as tool to use for school improvement. She joined the teaching profession in 2000, when QAI & SSE had already been promoted for 3 years. At that time, SSE was very popular in the education field and had been implemented in School 1.

Teacher 16 believed that SSE was useful to her teaching. She also praised the importance of SSE in encouraging teachers to work harder and make them more accountable for their teaching performance. She embraced the use of performance indicators in educational measurement. She believed SSE data was a strong fact to justify the performance of teachers. She believed in a single set of performance indicators so that every school could be measured equally. Teacher 16 used the analogy of a chef and a film-maker to create good dishes and good films for their customers and audiences in order to demonstrate how teachers should respond to the needs of their students. She emphasised that teachers should cater for the ability and needs of students. Otherwise, they would become “useless teachers”.

*“It is beneficial and useful to be evaluated by the principal and the panel (in the process of SSE) since they gave a lot of suggestions on my teaching.”  
(T16, p.7)*

*“Teachers are responsible for both students and the school. Assessments on the effectiveness of their work would be based on SSE figures and data. In this regard, I absolutely believe that the results of public examinations do spur senior class teachers to work better. When you want to be promoted,*

*you ought to work harder continuously. If not, you would be being contempt as a pest and lose your status in school.” (T16, p.14)*

*“If students’ passing rate was increased, teachers’ performance would be recognised by the school. I definitely believe that a low passing-rate in senior forms did have a negative impact on schools, especially to the reputation of the school. In this regard, I certainly believe that teachers should be accountable to it and actually I have heard many cases of serious evaluation by the school. Teachers would feel shamed at teaching those classes with lower academic results. Student results would be widely circulated among colleagues. The impact is so great indeed.”(T16, p.14)*

*“To assess a school’s performance, it is better to use a single set of indicators which can be clearer and more concrete. (Some may think using a single set of indicators is not good.) But too many sets of indicators are not good too. I think nothing fits all. As long as the direction is clear, ESR team is valuable.” (T16, p.18)*

*“Students are able to judge teachers’ performance accurately, as they take what has been prepared for them from teachers. In a restaurant, even though you are a professional chef, you have to receive comments from the customers and to suit their appetite. Likewise, even though you are not a film critic, you will have your own feeling to the film you’ve just seen. Therefore, I think students’ feeling has to be respected. They have some points to make.”(T16, p.15)*

*“If they are less capable, you need to make adjustment accordingly to suit their level. If you only teach what you think is important, you fail to take students’ ability into account and you aren’t a good teacher. We need to consider students’ discrepancy.”(T16, p.15)*

*“When I honestly wrote my comments and marked Grade B on evaluation form when conducting peer evaluation, I was blamed by other colleagues for not rewarding them Grade A. Later, I just followed their preferred Grade to avoid offending them. You don’t want to offend others.” (T16, p.7)*

## T26

Teacher 26, in contrast, is in his late 20s and he perceived strong effects of SSE as it related to school improvement. He joined the teaching profession in 2002, when QAI and SSE were promoted 4 years since 1998. At that time, SSE was widely popular and injected in School 2 already. Some SSE networks were formed in School 2 such as the HKSSSEN.

Teacher 26 was highly appreciative of the effects of SSE on his own teaching. He believed that the objective performance indicators of SSE enabled him to improve his own teaching. He felt rewarded after receiving students' good ratings. He believed that the management style and leadership improved as a result of SSE. The English panel was more transparent in job allocations and school policies. Teacher 26 even designed one SSE questionnaire to measure his own teaching effectiveness.

*"When we are well informed to the performance indicators in SSE, we can make sure whether our performance meeting the standard or not. It becomes an effective measure on reviewing teaching performance for enhancing teaching quality." (T26, p.11)*

*"SSE helps us broaden our horizon and is beneficial in learning different teaching methods and choosing the right one." (T26, p.6)*

*"Yes. A standard performance indicator can reflect the effectiveness of teaching and weaknesses for further improvement. We can understand the directions for improvement in the process of SSE. " (T26, p.1)*

*"Recognition of our effort was received when SSE results were positive." (T26, p.3)*

*"I attempted to design a SSE questionnaire for students to provide their*

*feedback. I want to capture their opinions no matter it is positive or negative.”(T26, p.3)*

*“In conclusion, I would have improvements when I know my weaknesses.”(T26, p.5)*

*“Yes, it leads to a more open-minded and rational mode in school management” (T26, p.11)*

*“We can express our views to the panel on class allocation (in the process of SSE). The rationale of job allocation is informed by the panel so that the workload is evenly shared. No one is overloaded.”(T26, p.11)*

*“We can have a chance in assessing the panel's performance. When we expressed our views on certain policies and informed the panel, the policy would no longer be continued the next year. Our contribution aims at benefiting students. If not, it becomes an extra burden.”(T26, p.11)*

Teacher 26 also stated that he would link SSE results with his professional development needs. He believed that SSE would strengthen the evaluation culture in School 2 and he believed that SSE was an effective tool to justify the use of public money. He thought that SSE induced positive competition. He also believed that SSE would serve as a report to summarise what he had done. He felt encouraged when his work was appreciated by students.

*“Continuing assessments on performance can motivate teachers to seek for improvements. For example, they look for a course that can enhance their teaching skills.”(T26, p.6)*

*“Self-evaluation mechanism can further strengthen the evaluation culture and reflect the real situation.”(T26, p.6)*

*“It is useful for reflecting the teaching progress among teachers and preparing for examination scripts. Discussions between colleagues can build up a better relationship.”(T26, p.10)*



*"It is unreasonable for schools to enjoy the privileges entitled under government provision while not having any duties to discharge. As much of the tax revenue goes to education, it is reasonable for schools to devise measures to ensure proper use of fiscal resources." (T26, p.8)*

*"I don't think so. It is impossible to assess the quality of a teacher without a kind of standard. In fact, self-evaluation is done after a certain period of work, rather than cause disturbance to the teachers continuously. It is a tool to evaluate teachers' work, just as examination to students' learning outcomes." (T26, p.6)*

*"We do not limit the feedback to parents or students. Feedback from our colleagues, management from some schools and professionals from the government is part and parcel of the whole SSE evaluation mechanism." (T26, p.7)*

*"No, we don't know the evaluation results of other classes. There is competition among schools in such areas as enrolment, academic performance, inter-school achievements etc. no matter there is self-evaluation or not. More importantly, we know that positive competition fosters improvement." (T26, p.7)*

*"The mechanism does not turn the school into a factory. In fact, as an organisation that can help students develop in good ways, a school has input, process and output, but they are not the same as those in a factory. A school should cater for three aspects: qualities of students admitted, the process of education, as well as how and what they can contribute to society after graduation. Without looking at these aspects, it remains dubious as to our school can achieve our objectives." (T26, p.7-8)*

*"Some are of course of the view that something cannot be quantified. This may give some pressure to teachers. The pressure not only comes from the school or the government, as students and parents also have their own expectation. This mechanism is meritorious if it can ensure reward for our effort and improvement to our performance." (T26, p.6)*

*"I think there is a little pressure. It's a kind of affirmation if our work delivers and receives recognition from students." (T26, p.13)*

## T35

Teacher 35 is in his late 20s. He started teaching in 2001 and so had 7 years of teaching experience. At time he joined the profession, SSE and QAI had already been promoted for 3 years. Teacher 35 could see the positive impacts of SSE for the improvement of teaching and learning. He could see the bright side of lesson study when implementing SSE. When asked how he felt about SSE, he perceived SSE positively.

*"It is certain that self-evaluation is beneficial to teaching and learning, as it can help teachers understand their teaching objectives and approach. I believe it depends on what areas of self-evaluation individual schools would focus on." (T35, p.1)*

*"SSE helps, as teachers who observe classes are more experienced..... They can offer opinions based on their experience. Also, other colleagues would join the observation and learn some skills therein." (T35, p.1)*

*"(Under self-evaluation, teachers are observed and their homework checked. Do they think this amounts to de-professionalisation? They may think that, 'I am already a professional, what make you qualified to evaluate or observe my class?') I don't feel so.....There is even some help to my teaching as I don't need to worry about school closure." (T35, p.19)*

*"Yes, because we share our own views on it and discuss ways to analyse them. I think it is useful.....I haven't noticed this until I am reminded about its importance."(T35, p.11)*

Teacher 35 did not feel the implementation of SSE would intensify teachers' competition as the data obtained was confidential to the principal only. Rather, he believed SSE would enhance teachers' expectations about their own teaching effectiveness.

*"No, not too much, no comparison.....The self-evaluation results are confidential. They would not be revealed unless they were made known to*

*colleagues by the principal and vice-principal." (T35, p.10)*

*"SSE is not considered as a competition, but I somehow hope that my class would perform better. I believe this is what every teacher has in mind." (T35, p.12)*

Teacher 35 also acknowledged the unproductive teachers' culture in School 3. In addition, he expressed the fact that he was worried about being affected by the non-accountable culture of the school and that he might lose his passion for teaching one day. He also remarked that teachers with high seniority would not be sacked easily and thus it would be difficult to motivate them.

*"Their answers were unbiased and some of them were even constructive. Form one students were asked to write down their views. They might not write much, but some of them could do it." (T35, p.4)*

*"Can I say a culture of indifference prevails among teachers? (You may say so.)" (T35, p.20)*

*"I am worried that I will become a teacher who doesn't mind compromising with the under-performed teachers and takes everything lightly. I need to keep on reviewing and reminding myself." (T35, p.19)*

*"It is difficult to deal with civil servants with higher seniority. In the same line of thought, teachers with higher seniority are unlikely to be sacked here." (T35, p.20)*

To conclude, it is argued that the policy effects of SSE are as not as clear cut as theorists in the two camps, school improvement and managerial control, suggested in the literature review. The perceived effects are not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of teachers in Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers make sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts. In the above analysis, AP15, T25, T31 were teachers of the Pre-ECR7 Era. They were more likely to perceive education as

an inheritance of moral judgment, values and vision. They did not attribute too much importance to the managerial nature of SSE. The Pre-ECR7 teachers were not so affected by the rise of managerialism when they joined the teaching profession in 1980s. On the other hand, T16, T26, T35 were teachers of ECR7 Era. They accepted the fact that education could be managed so that the performance of teachers, panels and schools could be enhanced. ECR7 teachers were strongly influenced by the prevailing managerialism when they entered the teaching profession in the 1990s.

#### **5.4 Teacher Positional Lens (TPL)**

This section focuses on the third-perspective of the analysis--- the teacher's position. The unit of analysis is the teacher. It intends to discover whether teachers of different ranks were likely to perceive SSE more in terms of school improvement or in terms of the managerial control side. Explications will be given to the mentality and beliefs formulated in their different positions. It is proposed that teachers' perceived effects of SSE are affected by their formal position in the school.

In other words, it argues that teachers' perceptions of the policy of SSE are affected by their managerial position in school. That is, the teachers' position in the school serves, more or less, as a lens through which a practising teacher perceives and makes sense of a given school policy. This lens is referred to as the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL) in this chapter. There were a total of three major categories of teachers who perceived SSE differently. They were described as follows in descending order of their position in their schools:

- The Leadership and the Senior Management
- Middle Managers

- Front-line teachers, including permanent and contract staff

It was observed that the perceived effects of SSE were related to the rank of the teacher. It was found that the more senior rank a teacher had in the school, the more likely they would be to perceive SSE as a means of school improvement. This is because a teacher's position in school governs his or her viewpoint and mentality towards SSE.

The first category of teacher observed is the Leadership and the Senior Management group. They were most likely to perceive SSE as a tool for school improvement. Their managerial mind-set and top-down thinking compelled them to perceive SSE as more of a tool for school improvement. In addition, the Leadership and the Senior Management group usually needed to persuade other teachers to accept SSE policy. They usually perceived SSE was a means to school improvement and to eliminate inefficiency.

The second category of teachers was the Middle Managers. Middle Managers were more likely to perceive SSE as a tool for increasing managerial control. Their panel roles demanded that they be positive in selling the policy and to persuade their panel members to accept the policy. In addition, they were policy users of SSE in which they benefited by having more managerial instruments.

The third category of teachers was the Front-line Teachers. They included teachers under both permanent and contract terms. Teachers under permanent terms were more likely to be indifferent but had a co-operative attitude towards the implementation of SSE. SSE to them was not the thing they were most concerned

about. Instead, SSE was viewed as just another piece of administrative work. Front-line Teachers thought it was not very relevant to their teaching duties. The result was that they had no special feeling for SSE. But the teachers under contractual terms were more likely to perceive SSE as more of a managerial control tool because SSE might jeopardise their job security. So, they exhibited more negative feelings towards SSE.

## **The Leadership and the Senior Management**

### **VP1**

VP1 was a senior manager and the vice-principal of School 1. He was also the teacher administrator of SSE in School 1. He was more likely to perceive SSE as a highly effective tool for school improvement. He believed that SSE would enhance the SWOT analysis of the school and enhance teaching and learning. He thought that SSE promoted clearer vision building for the school's development. He perceived SSE as a means to establish a data-driven evaluation culture and the performance indicators as a means to learn more about the school's performance. He viewed SSE as a means to enhance teaching-effectiveness. He did not view SSE as a means to control the teachers and the school. Rather, he perceived SSE as a vehicle for professional development.

*"At least teachers know the weaknesses of students and can adjust the teaching progress." (VP1, p. 7)*

*"(SSE) also helpful in teaching progress, content and assessment policy.....It depends on the results (for their reflection)." (VP1, p.7)*

*"At least the vision and direction of school becomes clearer..... At least teachers know what's going on in schools, or the expectation. Take this year as an example, we had to think about how to prepare for the New Senior Secondary Curriculum and Other Learning Experiences. We focus on these*

*areas. At least, teachers know our direction.” (VP1, p.7)*

*“For senior forms, the public exams, value-added indicator and observation can reflect (our performance). Also for junior forms, there are assessments, lesson observation and internal assessment marks.....” (VP1, p.7)*

*“Our teachers don’t think in this way (perceiving SSE is tool for EDB to control schools). We think SSE is to seek participants’ views on the process of activity.”(VP1, p.8)*

*“But our school doesn’t face this problem. In other words, schools facing redundancy or laying-off would worry about or think in this way. To us, SSE is just to evaluate from ourselves to see whether we can do better next time. SSE in our school is not for appraisal but for professional development.” (VP1, p.8-9)*

## **H23**

Teacher 23 was the policy initiator in School 2. He was the Head of the SSE Committee and also the head of various administrative committees. He had great potential to be promoted to assistant-principal in the near future.

He was more likely to perceive SSE as a way to reflect teachers’ teaching effectiveness. He perceived the students’ voice as important in reflecting the true picture of their learning. He believed the panel heads would make use of SSE data obtained and followed up the teaching effectiveness of their members and their own. He also perceived SSE as a non-threatening activity for the teachers. Also, he believed SSE was a useful tool to help justify the use of public money and to fulfil the parents, students and the societal expectations:

*“The result of a self-evaluation report is based on evidences from various stakeholders. It is valuable to assess the effectiveness of teaching, especially those feedback from students.”(H23, p.4)*

*"We would collect students' feedback on teaching in the questionnaire. If a panel head or a teacher finds out that students are not satisfied with the teacher's teaching, improvement may have to be made in several directions.....But I believe that once relevant data is available and improvement proposals are made, most teachers would seriously consider ways to seek improvement to regain students' recognition in the next evaluation, rather than to win their favour by giving students higher marks."(H23, p.4)*

*"Colleagues are worried about the way the school may handle the results – whether the results would be kept as an entry in their personal profile, whether promotion would be affected, or whether any pressure for class reduction or school closure would be created. But the principal has clearly stated that the evaluation is mainly a reference for colleagues to improve their teaching quality and personal development, except in case of serious mistakes. He gives us a feeling that we don't need to be too worried about the results."(H23, p.2)*

*"The school finds it tough to tackle too many issues within a short time. Every educational or school initiative has its own significance. But if there are too many initiatives to implement, and they are done too frequently and quickly, it may not produce positive results. I was in a similar situation when ESR was implemented. The initiatives (SSE & ESR) can be meaningful by nature, but it may not be easy to find a positive stroke under the backdrop of hasty reform."(H23, p.6)*

*"Someone regard schools as factories with little humanistic touch. Society has been changing, and it remains unclear as to whether improvement has been made. But at least there is now such a request, and schools, which are publicly funded, are required to meet the society's request, be it reasonable or not."(H23, p.6)*

### **T33**

Teacher 33 was an aspiring middle manager with a high possibility of being promoting to vice-principal in School 3. He was more likely to perceive SSE as a means of promoting school improvement. He regarded SSE as necessary in every



school area. He highlighted how teachers in School 3 felt resistant to SSE. He felt strongly that concrete follow-up actions had to be taken to tackle the under-performing teachers in order to utilise the essence of SSE.

*"I support the (self-evaluation) mechanism and think that it is necessary to do it. This is in fact needed for every sector." (T33, p.2)*

*"(Does self-evaluation challenge the professional status of teachers?) I don't think so, as I think every sector needs some kind of evaluation system. Even CEO in big corporations is subject to evaluation, too....I don't think our professionalism is challenged by SSE, but there is a need to make the mechanism or its principles of evaluation clearer.....This is very important." (T33, p.5)*

*"Many colleagues dislike the culture (of self-evaluation)..... but I am fine with it, as I personally see the need for evaluation for every job done. But our peers find such practice unacceptable." (T33, p.17)*

*"In practice, you need to collect sufficient evidence and undergo a series of formalities to dismiss a teacher. Therefore, if there is no follow-up after evaluation, there will be no screening of teachers' performance. So I think SSE is well-intentioned." (T33, p.2)*

*"It depends on how the data is used. There won't be competition if SSE data is used for development purposes. Follow-up is important. If data is obtained without any follow-up action, there isn't any incentive for colleagues to compete or improve, as they would work as usual." (T33, p.5)*

*"As mentioned before, whether self-evaluation can help improve teaching and learning depends on the results of follow-up." (T33, p.15)*

On the other hand, he believed that SSE would lead to an unfair division of the workloads in School 3 if no concrete measures were taken against the under-performing teachers.

*"Competent colleagues are assigned to handle more workload. This gives*

*rise to two extremes: while these teachers are assigned to more workload, those who don't work remain as they are. There is harmony on the surface, with grievances kept to the heart. The situation can only get worse."*(T33, p.14)

## **Middle Managers**

### **T12**

Teacher 12 is an assistant Chinese panel in School 1. She was going to take over the position of the Chinese panel in the near future. She was also SSE policy promoter, whose job was to encourage the Chinese teachers to accept and conduct SSE. She was more likely to perceive SSE more as a tool to encourage school improvement. She believed that the results of SSE could be used to enhance teaching effectiveness. She valued SSE as a means to reflect on the existing performance of teachers and also to enrich her analysis, as an assistant panel, with objective, hard facts. She appreciated SSE as a means for teachers to reflect on their own teaching qualities. Furthermore, she believed that SSE was a transparent mechanism through which teachers could observe each other and compare their own performance with the performances of their colleagues.

T12 admitted that SSE was just a routine in School 1. Teachers in School 1 were highly sensitised to the implementation of SSE. She quoted an example of how the data-driven SSE boosted the academic results of students by placing on them higher expectations for their teachers.

*"We have (reviewed our curriculum). It is obvious that we looked at the passing rate in the past. But figures show that we haven't done enough to boost our credit or take care of our elite and weakest students. We have done a lot based on the figures.....It may not have anything to do with (curriculum reform). Maybe our focus of teaching is on training up the elite students. If the passing rate is below expectation, we would try to boost it. If*

*we note a decline in the passing rate, we would provide more support to weakest students.....We are not looking at the passing rate only. We also need to note that the intake quality is good. These are the things we also need to look at.”(T12, p.14)*

*“I think it’s good, as I attach great importance to teaching quality. SSE is better to be done in mid-year rather than year-end to allow teachers to do some reflection. Some teachers may feel pressure as they think their students are naughty and the results are not good. But as a kind of reflection on teaching, it is necessary to make some adjustment.” (T12, p.13)*

*“The mechanism is there, and you are expected to put it into practice on your own. I have given you some space to let you know that if there is a decline in this year’s results, you have to reflect on it, and I will help you explore how to improve..... (Teachers have better control of their teaching through this self-evaluation mechanism.)...We look at public exam results for HKCEE classes, while passing rates for junior forms. Performance of each class can be shown in the form of figures for us to see.”(T12, p.12)*

*“Yes. In the example I’ve mentioned, we found out students’ problems and explored ways to improve in order that they could apply what they had learnt in their examinations and coursework. We expect them to do it and show improvement in their results.”(T13, p.9)*

## **T14**

Teacher 14 was a middle manager. He was the Geography panel and the Head of the Discipline Committee. He appreciated the core essence of SSE. He affirmed that intra-school competition was necessary to enhance teaching and learning effectiveness. Teacher 14 felt strongly that more vigorous SSE measures should be implemented in order to enhance school performance. He cited the business model of Starbucks Coffee to support his performance-based management style. He affirmed that SSE was an important means to counteract the inertia of individuals and to avoid the degradation of the educational quality. Also, he perceived SSE as a way to justify the use of public money.

*"Competition is not evil. Without competition and comparison, a society won't seek improvement. The problem is: we use the same textbooks and teach the same things, but the results vary among classes. There may be variation in intake quality, but the three elite classes may still perform differently. For example, in one of the five classes of a certain form, less than half of the students have passed a recent Mathematics exam. What's the problem? Has the problem been reflected? But this may be what the Mathematics teachers have expected as they know the diligence of certain colleague." (T14, p.15)*

*"Yesterday I read of Starbuck CEO's account of his plans to build up the US' and the world's largest retail business in 20 years since 1996. He is not the founder but CEO. He spent US\$3.6 million to buy a company. He demanded highly from staff, but told them earnestly this was feasible. I wish to point out that if self-evaluation is run in this way, colleagues would be convinced about its feasibility. By nature it's a tough exercise, but it works, gives us job security, and helps enhance the school's reputation as well as student quality." (T14, p. 18)*

*"It must be so, as human beings are prone to inertia. This has been proved, not only in Hong Kong's education system but also in those around the world. Without monitoring, many things would go wrong, and quality would be compromised." (T14, p.17)*

*"As a citizen who is sensible, wise, well-nurtured and educated, I hope to see Hong Kong's education system be run in an established way with some monitoring system ..... Resources from the public coffers should serve to motivate them to improve." (T14, p.17)*

### **T34**

Teacher 34 is a policy promoter. He was a panel head and was more likely to perceive SSE as a means to promote overall teaching effectiveness. He believed that SSE was well-received by his colleagues. Teacher 34 believed that the harmonious relationship among teachers in School 3 would enable SSE to be well-implemented.

*"It helps improve preparation for teaching and enhance flexibility."(T34, p.7)*

*"Improvement is seen mainly in overall planning rather than individuals' abilities."(T34, p.8)*

*"Colleagues adopt some of the strengths from the government's self-evaluation, such as emphasis on data, percentage points and class differentials, to replace the feeling-based self-evaluation in the past. I can say they have made use of the government's self-evaluation in a refined manner."(T34, p.2)*

*"SSE can be implemented in the school given our harmonious relationship."(T34, p.9)*

### **Front-line Teacher with Permanent Post:**

#### **T32**

Teacher 32 is a front-line Graduate Master (GM) teacher. In his eyes, the senior management knew about SSE much better than he did. He recalled that the coordination of the SSE Committee was very weak. He, being only at the basic rank, did not know much about SSE and was not given a chance to participate in SSE process. Therefore, most of his answers about SSE were not informative and his attitude towards SSE was indifferent. He only knew that he had to submit documents for SSE.

*"But the school's structure is different. It's clear that some senior staff are responsible for the matter."(T32, p.4)*

*"I'm not sure, as I was not responsible for SSE policy. Maybe I was just a member. This might have been undertaken by the panel head. As a member, it is not easy to obtain such information."(T32, p.5)*

*"After they (the senior management) have discussed and raised the*

*proposals, we on the front-line would know what to follow. So, we don't have much chance to get involved in the discussion on the implementation of the system of self-evaluation or appraisal." (T32, p.8)*

*"It has been mentioned, but we are still unclear about the members of the SSE Committee." (T32, p.1)*

*"They might not have mentioned this point. This is because we took self-evaluation as a job and a document. Before submission, someone would tell us how to do it. (Our perception of SSE) might have something to do with that culture." (T32, p.2)*

*"The Head of the SSE Committee doesn't mention it in person, but in general meetings, he might mention what documents were required to be completed. He may remind us about it before the deadline. Then we would have an idea of what has to be completed." (T32, p.5)*

*"It remains unclear, but the framework has become clearer. As to whether there is any improvement in quality, it still remains unclear." (T32, p.4)*

*"If the evaluation result of a school is subject to a few numbers of criteria listed, the observation would not be comprehensive enough." (T32, p.6)*

## **Front-line Teacher under Contractual Employment:**

### **T22**

Teacher 22 is a front-line Graduate Master (GM) teacher under contractual employment. His contract was being renewed annually, subject to the operational needs of School 2. He was more likely to perceive SSE as strongly related to managerial control. He was likely to perceive SSE as a tool used to manage fire and control teachers and as influencing the issue of the renewal of contracts. He thought that teachers' continuing education was to fulfil the performance indicators and to maintain competitiveness and avoid being fired. Throughout the interviews, he expressed his fear of SSE results being used to justify the firing of teachers. He believed that only if SSE was not linked to employment issues but used for school

improvement only, would it then be acceptable. With such an outlook, he questioned the causation of poor academic results and teaching effectiveness. He was worried about the measurement problem as it related to teaching quality and effectiveness. He further queried the use of a single set of performance indicators in measuring teacher effectiveness and teaching styles:

*"It becomes meaningless if self-evaluation is linked with promotion and contract renewal." (T22, p.7)*

*"The self-evaluation can motivate teachers having further improvements such as further studies in order to enhance their own competitiveness" (T22, p.2)*

*"It depends on how it's used. Data is useful if they can help teachers. If self-evaluation is only used as a basis for promotion or contract renewal, there is no need for it at all." (T22, p.8)*

*"If the questionnaire is set to overpower and find faults with teachers, e.g. it is used as basis for contract renewal for teachers, I can't accept it...If the questionnaire can prompt some experienced teachers or panel heads to help teachers who are rated as underperforming to improve their teaching, I welcome it... I don't support linking the questionnaire with contract renewal." (T22, p.4)*

*"The best way to set the questionnaire is to ensure it is not linked with promotion and contract renewal in order to avoid competition among teachers." (T22, p.7)*

*"As some students are weak in foundation, their ability does not improve overnight no matter how hard the teachers have tried. On the other hand, say for F6, some students come from outside and are of good caliber, and they may resort to the support from tutorial schools for their studies. This means it does not have much to do with teachers' teaching quality for students' result." (T22, p.4)*

*"The passing rate of every class is mentioned in the staff meetings every*

*year. But I don't think passing rate can reflect teachers' quality of teaching, considering the differences in student quality among classes. For example, there are both ordinary and elite classes. Therefore, while passing rate may not be able to reflect teaching performance, students' feedback may sometimes help." (T22, p.4)*

*"It is difficult to differentiate among teachers at some points. Teacher A may teach well, but teacher B may be willing to spend time to contribute to students' all-around development by answering their questions and discussing with them. It is difficult to say who is better. Assessing teachers' performance may be a kind of art, which is difficult to quantify. The amount of homework given and the appraisal system can serve as reference to indicate how responsible a teacher is. But teaching quality is art, which can neither be quantified nor measured." (T22, p.8)*

*"For example, some teachers like interactive teaching, so the class would be noisier. But the panel head may not agree to this approach. When external forces are involved, this means students can point out that classroom management is weak, and teachers are required to improve it. But the teachers may not agree to another teaching approach and so would not follow it. I think it's no big deal, as he doesn't accept this model, or he has his own style which he believes is good." (T22, p.8)*

To conclude, it is argued that the policy effects of SSE are as not as clear cut as theorists in the two camps, school improvement and managerial control, suggested in the literature review. The perceived effects are not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of teachers in the Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers make sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts. In the above analysis, it was discovered that the Leadership and the Senior Management were most likely to perceive SSE as strongly related to the issue of school improvement. VP1, H23, T33 belonged to the Leadership and the Senior Management. They perceived SSE through a very positive TPL. Thus, they were more likely to perceive SSE as strongly related to the issue of school improvement.



For middle managers, it was discovered that they were more likely to perceive SSE as a tool for school improvement. T12, T14, T34 were middle managers. They perceived SSE through a positive TPL. Hence, they were likely to perceive SSE as useful for school improvement. For general teachers, it was discovered that teachers under permanent contracts were more likely to perceive SSE indifferently with no particular point of view. T32 was a representative example. He perceived SSE through a neutral TPL. Moreover, it was discovered that teachers under contractual terms perceived SSE through a negative Teacher Positional Lens (TPL). T22 was a representative example. He thus was more likely to perceive SSE as a tool to achieve strong managerial control. This is because SSE data obtained would affect the chances of his contract renewal.

## **5.5 Beyond Dichotomised Perceived Effects of SSE—A Complex Organic Interaction among School Implementation Lens, Teacher General Lens and Teacher Positional Lens in Their Meaning Contexts**

To conclude, it is argued that the policy effects of SSE are as not as clear cut as theorists in the two camps, school improvement and managerial control, suggested in the literature review. The perceived effects are not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of teachers in Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers make sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts. In view of these three schools, the argument of Chapter 5 is that the perceived effects of policy teacher administrators and teachers would be an organic interaction among the SIL, the TGL and the TPL.

It is argued that the perceived effects of teachers in a school would be affected

by the implementation of a school-based SSE. This effect is called SIL. Moreover, it is proposed that the perceived effects of a teacher would be affected by his biographical and professional background. This influence is called the TGL. Furthermore, it is recommended that the perceived effects of a teacher would be affected by his or her position in the school. This influence is called the TPL.

### **Good Implementation of SSE Leading to a Relatively Positive School Implementation Lens (SIL)--School 1**

In School 1, the implementation of SSE was well-developed, as a result of the organic interaction of the Policy, Place and People in School 1. For Policy, there was 17 years, from 1991 to 2008, for the evolution of the government and school-based SSE policy, which led to mature policy formalisations, specifications, documentation and networking. For Place, it is characterised by the limited intellectual, social and cultural capital of its parents and students. Therefore, the monitoring effects of the parents and students in SSE are not as strong as predicted in SSE documents. For People, there was strong bureaucratic leadership from the former principal and the new approachable distributed leadership from the new principal, together with “veteran” middle managers along with a harmonious working atmosphere. The implementation of SSE was therefore viewed in the eyes of the teachers in School 1 as a result of the organic interaction of the 3Ps. This unique implementation of SSE in School 1 resulted in the positive SIL accounting for the perceived effects of the teachers in School 1.

This positive SIL explains why the perceived effects of the teachers in School 1 are more likely to be on school improvement and less likely on managerial control.

This could be attributed to the systematic and smooth implementation of SSE in School 1. The smooth implementation of SSE in School 1 made the School Implementation Lens of School 1 positive and, as a result, the effects of SSE were more likely to be perceived as more closely linked to school improvement and less closely linked to managerial control.

### **Fair Implementation of SSE Leading to an Ambivalent School Implementation Lens (SIL)--School 2**

In School 2, the implementation of SSE was only moderately-developed, as a result of the organic interaction of the Policy, Place and People in School 2. For Policy, there was 10 years, from 1998 to 2008, for the evolution of the government and school-based SSE policy, which lead to mature policy formalisations, specifications, documentation and networking. For Place, it is characterised for the limited intellectual, social and cultural capital of its parents and students. Therefore, the monitoring effects of parents and students in SSE were not as strong as predicted in SSE documents. For People, there was strong intellectual, religious principal leadership, together with effective and obedient middle managers and obedient Christian teachers. Implementation of SSE therefore unfolded in the eyes of the teachers in School 2 as a result of the organic interaction of the 3Ps. This unique implementation of SSE in School 2 became the School Implementation Len (SIL) accounting for the perceived effects of the teachers in School 2.

This SIL explains why the perceived effects of teachers in School 2 were ambivalent for the issues of school improvement and managerial control. This could be attributed to the smooth implementation of the school-based SSE in School 2. The smooth implementation of SSE in School 2 led to the ambivalent SIL of School 2,

with the effects of SSE perceived as ambivalent for both the areas of school improvement and managerial control.

### **Poor Implementation of SSE Leading to a Relatively Negative School Implementation Lens (SIL)--School 3**

In School 3, the implementation of SSE was poorly-developed, as a result of the organic interaction of the Policy, Place and People in School 3. For Policy, there was 2 years, from 2006 to 2008, for the evolution of the government and school-based SSE policies, leading to immature policy formalisations, specifications, documentation and networking. For Place, it is characterised for the limited intellectual, social and cultural capital of the school's parents and students. Therefore, the monitoring effects of parents and students in SSE are not as strong as predicted in SSE documents. For People, there was a laissez-faire former principal and the visionary but weak principal leadership, strong resistance from under-performing middle managers and teachers with weak accountability. Implementation of SSE therefore unfolded in the eyes of the teachers in School 3 as a result of the organic interaction of the 3Ps. This unique implementation of SSE in School 3 shaped the School Implementation Lens (SIL) for the perceived effects of the teachers in School 3.

This SIL explains why the perceived effects of teachers in School 3 are less likely to be associated with school improvement and more likely to be associated with managerial control. This could be attributed to the poor school-based implementation of SSE in School 3. The poor implementation of SSE in School 3 made the School Implementation Lens (SIL) become relatively negative, and as a result the effects of SSE were less likely to be on school improvement and more

likely to be on managerial control.

To summarise, the perceived effects of teachers in the three sample schools were categorised as follows in Table 4.

School	Implementation of SSE	School Implementation Lens (SIL)	Perceived effects of SSE of teachers in a school as a means of school improvement	Perceived effects of SSE of teachers in a school as a means of managerial control
1	Very smoothly-implemented	Relatively Positive	More likely	Less likely
2	Smoothly-implemented	Ambivalent	Ambivalent	Ambivalent
3	Poorly-implemented	Relatively Negative	Less likely	More likely

Table 4: Perceived Effects of Teachers in the Three Sample Schools

It was found that the well-implemented, school-based SSE in School 1 led to a relatively positive SIL, through which the perceived effects of SSE were more likely on school improvement and less likely on managerial control. In School 2, the smooth implementation of the school-based SSE in School 2 led to an ambivalent SIL, through which the perceived effects of SSE were ambivalent for both in terms of school improvement and managerial control. In school 3, the poorly implemented school-based SSE in School 3 led to a relatively negative SIL, through which the perceived effects of SSE were less likely on school improvement and more likely on managerial control.

### **Teachers' Biographical and Professional Backgrounds Affecting Teacher Generational Lens (TGL)**

The second sub-argument was that the perceived effects of teachers would be

affected by their biographical and professional background, which is called the TGL. As revealed in the data, there were two types of teachers who were more likely to express strong perceived effects of SSE as a means for school improvement and managerial control. The former were called Pre-ECR7 teachers while the latter were called ECR7 teachers.

### **Pre-ECR7 Teachers Possessing a Relatively Negative Teacher Generational Lens (TGL)**

Teachers of the Pre-ECR7 Era are aged 40 or above. They have usually started their teaching career in the 1980s, when expansion of the quantity of education, management by output and centralisation were emphasised. On the other hand, educational quality was not highly promoted. They perceive education as the nurturing of lives and the inheritance of values. They do not regard education as a value-added process using managerial tools to enhance efficiency, and effectiveness. Pre-ECR7 teachers have usually finished their formal professional learning with a Master of Education or Master's Degree in their respective disciplines a lot earlier in their careers. They also enjoy a certain degree of "high legitimacy" in their schools. In terms of their stage of life, they are middle aged and may have made other life choices rather than just developing their teaching careers. Raising their young children or teenagers and fulfilling of parenthood best describes the stage of they were at. The Pre-ECR7 teachers are not so affected by the rise of managerialism when they joined the teaching profession in the 1980s when the expansion of the quantity of education, and management by process were not emphasised.

AP15, T25 and T31 are teachers of the Pre-ECR7 Era. They perceived education as the inheritance of moral judgment, values and vision. They did not pay

too much attention to the managerial nature of SSE.

### **ECR7 Teachers Possessing Relatively Positive Teacher Generational Lens (TGL)**

Teachers of ECR7 Era are in their 30s or below. ECR7 Era teachers usually had started their teaching careers in around the late 1990s, when the quality of education, market demand and public accountability and monitoring were highly emphasised. The Pre-ECR7 teachers perceived education as the product of an output-product model. They are usually involved in some formal professional learning in order to stay more competitive and marketable than their colleagues. In terms of stage of life, they just arrive at the age of being ambitious in their careers. Moreover, they had often just got married and often did not have children yet.

T16, T26 & T35 are teachers of ECR7 Era. They accepted that education could be managed so that the performance of teachers, panels and school could be enhanced. ECR7 teachers were strongly influenced by the prevailing notion of managerialism when they entered the teaching profession in the 1990s or later.

To conclude, the different teacher generations such as the Pre-ECR7 Era or ECR7 Era partially shaped the TGL through which they then perceived SSE. Teachers of the Pre-ECR7 Era possessed a relatively negative TGL and tended to perceive SSE more negatively and adopted a more humanistic, impressionistic and non-measurable approach to education. In contrast, Teachers of ECR7 Era possessed a relatively positive TGL and tended to perceive SSE more positively and adopted an evidence-based, hard fact and measurable scientific approach to education. This teacher generational influence is called TGL.

## **Senior Position Leading to Relatively Positive Teacher Positional Lens (TPL)**

The third sub-argument was that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by the position of teachers in a given school. This effect is called Teacher Positional Lens (TPL). It was found that teachers of different ranks perceived SSE differently. There were a total of three categories of teachers who perceived SSE differently. They were described as follows in descending order of their ranking:

- The Leadership and Senior Management
- Middle Managers
- Front-line teachers

It was observed that the perceived effects of SSE were related to the rank of the teacher. It was found that the more senior the rank a teacher had in a school, the more likely he or she perceived SSE as a means for school improvement. This is because a teacher's position shaped the mentality and mindset towards SSE and thus their perceived effects of SSE.

The Leadership and the Senior Management was usually more likely to perceive SSE as a means for school improvement. Their managerial mind-set and system-thinking compelled them to perceive SSE as more of a means of school improvement in a top-down manner. In addition, the Leadership and the Senior Management usually persuaded other teachers to accept SSE policy. Examples of this type of teachers included VP1, H23 and T33.



Middle Managers were also positive towards SSE. Their panel roles demanded them to be positive in selling the policy and to persuade their panel members to accept the policy. They were policy users of SSE so they benefited from having more managerial instruments. Examples of this type of teachers included T12, T14 and T34.

There were two types of front-line teachers. The first type enjoyed job security. They were indifferent but co-operative towards the implementation of SSE. SSE to them was not the thing they were most concerned about; they viewed it as another administrative task to be completed. This was because they thought it was not so relevant to their teaching duties. So no special feeling was given to it. Some of them might even be indifferent and neglectful towards SSE. An example of this type of teacher was T32. The second type of front-line teachers was the teachers under contract terms. They perceived SSE as more of a managerial control tool because SSE might endanger their renewal of services and livelihood. So, they showed a more negative perception towards SSE. T22 was an example of this type of teacher.

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

To summarise the research findings of Chapter 5, it is argued that the policy effects of SSE are not as clear cut as theorists in the two camps, school improvement and managerial control, suggested in the literature review. The perceived effects are not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of teachers in the Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers make sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts.

Under this argument, three sub-arguments were proposed. It was revealed from the data that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be an organic interaction among the School Implementation Lens (SIL), the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL) and the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL). It was discovered that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by the implementation of a school-based SSE. This effect is called the School Implementation Lens (SIL). Moreover, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by their biographical and professional-socialisation depending on the era they grew up in. This effect is called the TGL. Furthermore, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by the position of the teachers in a given school. This effect is called the TPL.

For the SIL, it was found that the well-implemented, school-based SSE in School 1 led to a relatively positive School Implementation Lens (SIL), through which the perceived effects of SSE were more associated with the issue of school improvement and less with the issue of managerial control. In School 2, the smooth implementation of the school-based SSE in School 2 led to an ambivalent School Implementation Lens (SIL), through which the perceived effects of SSE were ambivalent for both school improvement and managerial control related issues. In School 3, the poorly implemented school-based SSE led to a relatively negative School Implementation Lens (SIL), through which the perceived effects of SSE were less likely to be on school improvement and more likely to be on managerial control.

Moreover, it was revealed that different teacher generations such as the

Pre-ECR7 Era or ECR7 Era shaped the TGL through which they perceived SSE. Teachers of the Pre-ECR7 Era possessed a negative TGL and tended to perceive SSE more negatively and adopted a more humanistic, impressionistic and non-measurable approach to education. In contrast, Teachers of ECR7 Era possessed a relatively positive TGL and tended to perceive SSE more positively and adopted an evidence-based, hard fact and measurable scientific approach to education. This generational influence is called the TGL.

Finally, it was proposed that teachers' positions within the school, namely the Leadership and Senior Management, Middle Managers and Front-line Teachers would have different TPL and thus have different perceived effects of SSE. It was found that usually the more senior the position they held in the school, the more positive attitude towards SSE they would have. Hence, they would more likely to perceive SSE through a more positive TPL, through which perceived effects of SSE were more likely to be positive.

To conclude, it had to make it clear that these three Lens should not be taken separately. Rather, there was organic, complicated and dynamic interaction among the three Lens, which interwove with one another in the mind of each teacher. This explains why different teacher would have different perceived effects of SSE on school improvement and managerial control in reality.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 6.1 Summary of Major Findings

In this chapter, the major findings and discussion of the research are summarised. In addition, theoretical implications for literature of policy implementation, school administration and perceived effects of SSE will be proposed. In addition, policy implications for policy instrumentalisation, policy alienation and instrumental rationalism and policy localisation at schools are recommended. Moreover, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are highlighted. The three research questions in this study are recapped as follows:

1. from the perspective of teacher administrators and teachers, how was SSE implemented in the three sample schools?
2. from the perspective of teacher administrators and teachers, what were the perceived effects and/or consequences of SSE?
3. given these implementation experiences and perceptions, how could the implementation of SSE be accounted for from the perspectives of policy implementation within the policy studies in education?

With reference to the three research questions above, I believe that I have already answered these three research questions. Detailed findings and discussion are summarised below.

## **Answer to Research Question 1**

### **Implementation of SSE--Complex Organic Interaction among Policy, Place and People**

To begin with, the answer to the first research question is that the context of Policy, Place and People interacted with one another and became an organic complexity for the implementation of SSE. In view of the three sample schools, it was found that the implementation of SSE is a complex and organic interaction among the context of Policy to be implemented, the context of Place in which the policy was supposed to take hold and the context of People implementing it.

In School 1, the context of Policy can be characterised into 3 stages. Stage 1:1991 - 1997; Stage 2:1997 - 2002; Stage 3: 2003 - 2008. In Stage 1, SMI document did not provide clear policy formalisation, policy procedures, policy instruments or work specifications for schools to follow. But School 1 joined SMI in 1991 and started its policy formalisation, policy documentation and policy specifications in 1992 and 1993. From 1991 to 1997, teachers had problems of policy puzzlement, policy networking, policy penetration, policy dissemination and policy instrumentalisation. In Stage 2, QAI and SSE policies became mandatory and more specified, formalised and instrumentalised. The new principal resolved the problems of policy puzzlement by providing policy instrumentalisation, staff participation and consultation from 1997 to 2002. In Stage 3, SSE and ESR were complemented with measurement tools such as guidelines for SSE, templates for school plans and reports, the SHS to teachers, students and parents, the KPM and the APASO. There were altogether 23 KPMs given by EDB, from which 11 were selected for reporting on the web. Also, the first cycle of ESR lasted from February 2004 to the end of 2006. The

new principal resolved the problem of policy puzzlement by means of policy networking and policy indigenisation from 1997 to 2008.

For the context of Place in School 1, the intellectual, social and cultural capital of students and parents are limited. Their monitoring effects on teachers are not strong, which is not predicted in the government SSE document.

For the context of People in School 1, the former principal started to serve in School 1 in 1984. He demonstrated strong governmental-bureaucratic know-how and established his autocratic leadership. In 1997, a new principal, or the serving principal, established his legitimation for his mediator role and familiarity of School 1. There was a strong team of middle managers. They became “the veterans” in implementing SSE. Teachers were diligent in School 1. As a result, the progressive maturity of the principal, middle managers and teachers made for strong teamwork. Hence, there was a concerted effort of the leadership, middle managers and the general teachers. This successful combination of people was the one of the strong reasons for the successful implementation of SSE. Implementation of SSE was smoothly implemented.

The implementation of SSE in School 2 was an organic and dynamic interaction context of Policy, Place and People. For the context of Policy, School 2 implemented SSE in 2 stages, from 1998 to 2002 and from 2003 to 2008. In 1997, QAI & SSE were made compulsory policies in a territory-wide scale. The policy specifications and policy formalisation of SSE promoted in ECR7 were much more detailed than those of SMI in 1991. For example, QAI & SSE in 1997 involved the setting of goals and developing of indicators, the establishment of a quality assurance mechanism,

the enhancement of professional standards for principals and teachers and the time frame for implementing related reforms. Under such a policy context, School 2 started the implementation of SSE in 1998 and developed policy formalisation and policy specifications in 1998. From 1998 to 2002, the SSE Committee developed the policy indigenisation and policy instrumentalisation in accordance with the key SSE concepts stated in ECR7. From 2003 to 2008, School 2 developed policy networking to facilitate the implementation of SSE in their school. From 2004 to 2008, the policy indigenisation was further strengthened with the use of school-based performance indicators and KPMs.

Second, the context of Place of School 2 does not exert great pressures on monitoring the performance of teachers and the school. The students and parents are of relatively low social, intellectual, cultural capital. So, their monitoring effects as stakeholders of the schools are relatively weak and are not as strong as stated in SSE government documents.

On the other hand, for the context of People, there was a robust principal Leadership in School 2. The principal enjoyed strong intellectual legitimation from 1992 to 2008. He also received religious-legitimation from teachers from 1998 to 2008 when he was promoted by the church to be the church administrator. Other than the principal, there were co-operative and supportive senior, middle managers and general teachers from 1998 to 2008. Negotiations and compromises in School 2 were very rare between the principal and the middle managers. This was due to the strong authority of the principal. Only under special conditions, would the assistant-principals bargain a bit for the middle managers and the general teachers to alleviate their workload in other areas. Middle managers were experienced policy

administrators.

The negotiations between the panels and the teachers were also rare. This could be attributed to the common beliefs of their Christian faith. In Christianity, being submissive and obedient to the superior was an important biblical teaching. Hence, most teachers tended to endure the workload without discontent even though some of them were already burnt out from their heavy workload. In short, the team-building force was strong and this facilitated the smooth implementation of SSE in School 2.

The implementation of SSE in School 3 was poorly implemented was partly due to the unsatisfactory combination of the people involved. In School 3, there had been one principal before September 2001. In September 2001, a new visionary but not forceful principal was appointed by the SSB from one of the schools under its purview. The new principal came from a school with very good academic results under the same SSB. For the middle managers, they had low accountability. There were reactive teachers with low self-motivation and accountability. The majority of teachers were opposed to the school management when it was implementing SSE. There was no policy indigenisation of SSE in School 3. SSE was implemented only in February 2006 when the school administration learned that ESR team would inspect them in May 2006. To illustrate how this combination of people worked unsatisfactorily for the implementation of SSE, the following paragraphs detailed the principal, middle managers and teachers in School 3.

There was a different principal before September 2001. During his administration, the staff relationship was loose. For the SMC, they valued love and care most. The principal tried to settle all staff conflicts with encouragement only. In



September 2001, a visionary but weak new principal was appointed from a school with very good results under the same SSB. When the new principal assumed his duty, he decided to breakthrough the former change-resistant culture. However, he could not gain the support of the majority of the middle managers. He had no strong power and could not tackle the problem of the under-performing teachers. The principal could not exercise his power to punish, to discipline or to accredit teachers. The middle managers also knew that the principal could not dismiss the teachers. Even the general teachers knew the principal had no power to follow-up on their under-performance, so they chose to keep silent towards the under-performing middle managers and teachers. They knew that the SSB wanted the principal to adopt a “love and care” approach in managing the staff relationships. They also knew the principal could not resist their strong opposition. Under his leadership, the vice-principals also could not monitor the teaching and learning of the middle management effectively. They were regarded as speakers for the principal with no actual real power.

There was a team of experienced middle managers who had low accountability. In School 3, the poor implementation of SSE was partly attributed to a team of experienced middle managers with low accountability. The middle managers in School 3 were very experienced and powerful. They were not very supportive towards the principal’s leadership. This might have been due to their low participation in school policy making and also their low accountability towards their job. They understood the SSB well and that the principal would not dismiss the under-performed teachers for the sake of the “love and caring school philosophy”. In this regard, middle managers did not care too much about implementing SSE.

There were very few self-motivated teachers but many reactive and opposing teachers in School 3. Poor implementation of SSE was partly attributed to the reactive teachers with low self-motivation. In addition to the middle managers, the general teachers also had low accountability. They did not value the evidence-based SSE. They did not even set targets to be achieved at the beginning of each school year. Some teachers found excuses to cover up their laziness. Therefore, even though some young teachers wanted to conduct SSE seriously, they would suffer from the attack of colleagues as “over-doing something” and “stirring up things”. As a result, most teachers were less likely to cater for learning diversity of their students or try to improve their teaching effectiveness. Most teachers did not want to stir up any conflict. Instead, they aimed to keep a harmonious culture, even if only superficially. Middle managers themselves were strong policy opponents as they perceived SSE as a means for the principal to “reform” the school and to “increase their workload”. They would act against the principal and forced him to make compromises when implementing SSE.

The change-resistant culture in School 3 even prevented the principal from enforcing the implementation of SSE. In the eyes of the middle managers and the general teachers, they had nothing to fear. Even some teachers who were willing to do SSE, they did it as if they were “submitting homework to EDB” and performing “a show for EDB”. Obviously, the combination of people was crucial when implementing SSE. It affected how much negotiation and compromise the teacher administrators should make. Such a combination of people would be very critical when explaining the political resistance of the policy and the poor implementation of SSE in School 3.

As revealed from the research findings of the first research question, the implementation of SSE in School 1, School 2 and School 3 was delineated with the 3Ps model, the Policy, Place and People (Honig, 2006). For these three schools, implementation of SSE was a complex and organic interaction among the policy to be implemented, the place in which the policy was supposed to take hold and the people implementing it. Implementation of SSE needs time to reach policy maturation. However, it had to make it very clear that the policy maturation here was referred to school level, and more specifically, for the three sample schools only. In other words, this study did not argue for the policy maturation at systemic level. Moreover, the policy maturation here could be referred to individual teacher level, which was already elaborated in Chapter 5.

At the school level, time allowed School 1 & 2 to learn and risk from policy puzzlement when they implemented SSE from scratch. Time allowed them to form policy networking with other SSE pioneers. Time also allowed them to change the paradigm of staff participation in SSE. Time allowed them to develop policy specification and instrumentalisation for SSE, to develop policy indigenisation of school-based SSE and to change the paradigm shift for the measurement of SSE. Moreover, time allowed them to change the mindset of teachers to allow them to accept implementation of SSE and this allowed them to deal with policy documentation arising from the implementation of SSE. Due to a lack of time, School 3 could not develop the above policy formalisation, specifications, networking, or instrumentalisations in implementation of SSE. Hence, SSE could not be well-implemented in School 3.

The environment in School 1, 2 and 3 affected the implementation of SSE. In School 1, students are from low-income families. Their intellectual, social and cultural capital is not strong. Some are single-parent families and most mothers are housewives. The SES of the school community is not strong. Parents and students do not serve monitoring roles in supervising the teachers' and school's performance. Hence, teachers do not feel resistant to the implementation of SSE.

In School 2, students come from mid-low income families. The intellectual, social, cultural capital of parents and students is low. The SES of the school community is not strong. Parents and students do not serve as monitoring roles in supervising the teachers' and school's performance. Teachers thus do not feel resistant to the implementation of SSE.

In School 3, students come from very low-income group families and had behavior problems. The intellectual, social, cultural capital of parents and students is very limited. The SES of the school community is not strong. These families very often faced financial problems and community problems such as drug addiction, teen gangs and family violence. Parents and students do not serve as monitoring roles in supervising the teachers' and school's performance. To sum up, the parents and students in the policy environment of all three sample schools do not serve as monitoring roles in supervising the teachers' and school's performance, as predicted in the government SSE documents.

A good combination of people enabled SSE to be smoothly implemented under strong leadership in School 1 & 2. In School 1, the autocratic but bureaucratic-legitimate former principal and the new approachable and legitimate

principal, the strong middle management, the obedient and cooperative teachers and weak policy opponents all worked together and became a good team-building group for the smooth implementation of SSE. In School 2, a strong, forceful, intellectually-legitimate and religious-legitimate principal, the strong and obedient middle managers, the compliant Christian teachers with the same beliefs and weak policy opponents all worked together to contribute to the smooth implementation of SSE in School 2. Yet, in School 3, the new visionary but weakly-legitimate principal, a team of experienced but resistant middle managers with low accountability, teachers with low self-motivation and strong policy opponents all contributed to the poor implementation of SSE in School 3.

In studying the implementation of SSE, it was important to make reference to the Policy to be implemented, the environment of the Policy and the combination of People. Making simplistic comparisons of the implementation of SSE in various schools without studying the context of Policy, Place and People involved would not be objective and comprehensive enough.

### **Answer to Research Question 2**

#### **BEYOND DICHOTOMISED PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF SSE—A Complex Organic Interaction among School Implementation Lens, Teacher General Lens and Teacher Positional Lens in Their Meaning Contexts**

When it comes to the perceived effects of SSE as a means of school improvement and managerial control, it is argued that the policy effects of SSE are as not as clear cut as theorists in the two camps, school improvement and managerial

control, suggested in the literature review. The perceived effects were not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of teachers in the Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers made sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts. It was revealed from the data that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be an organic interaction among the School Implementation Lens (SIL), the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL) and the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL) of them.

It was discovered that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by the implementation of school-based SSE. This effect is called School Implementation Lens (SIL). Moreover, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by their biographical and professional-socialisation in the times they grew up in. This effect is called the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL). Furthermore, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by the position of teachers in the schools. This effect is called the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL).

In School 1, the perceptions of teachers on SSE were more likely to be on side of school improvement and less likely on managerial control. This could be attributed to the systematic and smooth school-based implementation of SSE in School 1. The smooth implementation of SSE in School 1 made the SIL of School 1 positive, through which teachers were more likely to perceive SSE as a means of school improvement and less likely as one of managerial control.

Teachers in School 2 were likely to perceive SSE as ambivalent for both school improvement and managerial control. This could be attributed to the smooth

implementation of the school-based SSE in School 2 which had ample time for policy maturation. The smooth implementation of SSE in School 2 made the School Implementation Lens (SIL) of School 2 become ambivalent, through which teachers perceive both effects of SSE as school improvement and managerial control.

Teachers in School 3 were more likely to perceive SSE as a tool for managerial control and less of one for school improvement. This could be attributed to the poor school-based implementation of SSE in School 3. The poor implementation of SSE in School 3 made the School Implementation Lens (SIL) become negative, through which teachers there perceived SSE as more of a means managerial control and less of one of school improvement.

Moreover, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by their biographical and professional-socialisation depending on the time they grew up in they grew in. This effect is called Teacher Generational Lens (TGL). That is, the biographic & professional backgrounds of the teachers served more or less as a lens through which a practising teacher perceived and made sense of the policy. More specifically, this study adopts the similar generational contrast of teachers (Woods and Jeffrey, 2002) in the UK such as the Plowden teachers of 1970s and 1980s and OFSTED teachers of the 1990s to delineate the professional and the biographical contexts in which teachers of different ages grew up in and socialised professionally. To contextualise this into the Hong Kong context, the label of Pre-ECR7 Era and ECR7 Era was adopted to facilitate the following discussion.

Teachers of Pre-ECR7 Era represented teachers aged 40 or above. They have

usually started their teaching career in the 1980s, when expansion of the quantity of education, management by process and centralisation were emphasised. On the other hand, improvement in education quality was not highly promoted. In terms of professional knowledge, they believe that curriculum designed by the government could be negotiated and modified. They value flexible and autonomous practices with an emphasis on the educational process. They value students' differences.

For their pedagogy, they tended to be more supportive and believe that learning and human growth takes time. They perceive education as the nurturing of lives and the inheritance of values. They value collegiality, professionalism and self-regulation. They do not regard education as a value-added process or a managerial tool to enhance efficiency, and effectiveness. Pre-ECR7 teachers usually finish their formal professional learning much earlier by attaining a Master of Education or Master's Degree in their respective disciplines. They also enjoyed a certain degree of "high legitimacy" in their schools. In terms of stage of life, they are just around middle-aged and may be pursuing other interests in their lives rather than just developing their teaching careers. Rearing their young children or teenagers and fulfilling of parenthood best describe the stage of life they were in.

Teachers of ECR7 Era are in their 30s or below. ECR7 teachers had usually started their teaching careers in around the late 1990s, when improvement in the quality of education, market demand and public accountability and monitoring were highly emphasised. ECR7 teachers perceive education as a product from the output-product model. They believe that curriculum designed by the government should be followed to avoid problems with the Authority. They highly regard the importance of systematisation, standardisation and uniformity. They usually



undertake some formal and professional learning to stay competitive and marketable compared to their colleagues. They like to demand instant performance from students and relied heavily on quantitative management of students' performance. They value very much managerialism and control. In terms of their stage of life, they are part of the boomer generation and were usually and pursuing career development. They have often recently married but did not have children yet.

To be brief, AP15, T25, T31 are teachers of the Pre-ECR7 Era. They were more likely to perceive education as the inheritance of moral judgment, values and vision. They did not believe strongly in the managerial nature of SSE. The Pre-ECR7 teachers were not so affected by the rise of managerialism when they joined the teaching profession in the 1980s. On the other hand, T16, T26, T35 are teachers of ECR7 Era. They accepted that education could be managed so that the performance of teachers, panels and schools could be enhanced. ECR7 teachers were strongly influenced by the prevailing managerialism when they entered the teaching profession in the 1990s.

In addition to the SIL and TGL, it was discovered that teachers' perceived effects of SSE was affected by their formal position in the school. In other words, it is argued that teachers' perceptions of the policy of SSE are affected by their managerial positions in their schools. That is, the teachers' position in the school serves more or less as a lens through which practicing teachers perceive and make sense of policies. This lens is referred to as the TPL. There were a total of three major categories of teachers who perceived SSE differently. They were described as follows in descending order of their position in school:

- The Leadership and the Senior Management

- Middle Managers
- Front-line teachers including permanent and contract staff

It was observed that the perceived effects of SSE were related to the rank of the teacher. It was found that the more senior rank a teacher possessed in school, the more likely he or she perceived SSE as in terms of school improvement. This is because the mentality and mindset of a teacher in senior position usually showed positive attitude towards SSE and thus the perceived effects of SSE were more likely to be positive.

To begin with the first categories of teachers, they were in the Leadership and the Senior Management. They were most likely to perceive SSE as a tool for school improvement. Their managerial mind-set and system-thinking compelled them to perceive SSE as more of a tool for school improvement. In addition, the Leadership and the Senior Management usually needed to persuade other teachers to accept SSE policy. In this regard, they usually perceived SSE as a means to school improvement and to remove inefficiency.

The second category of teachers is the Middle Managers. They were also more likely to perceive SSE in terms of school improvement. Their panel roles demanded that they be positive in selling the policy and to persuade their panel members to accept the policy. In addition, they were policy users of SSE so they benefited for having one more managerial instrument to help manage their staff with.

The third category of teachers was the front-line teachers. They included teachers under both permanent and contract terms. Teachers under permanent terms

were more likely to be indifferent but nevertheless cooperative towards the implementation of SSE. SSE to them was not the thing they concerned about most; it was just another administrative duty. This was because they thought it was not so relevant to their teaching duties. So they had no special feelings for SSE. But teachers under contractual terms were more likely to perceive SSE as more of a form of managerial control because SSE might jeopardise their contract renewal and thus their livelihoods. So, they showed more of a relative negative perception towards SSE.

To summarise, it was discovered that the Leadership and the Senior Management were more likely to perceive SSE as a tool for school improvement. VP1, H23, T33 belong to the Leadership and the Senior Management. They perceived SSE through a very positive Teacher Positional Lens (TPL). They thus were more likely to perceive SSE as a strong tool on for school improvement. For Middle Managers, it was discovered that they were more likely to perceive SSE as school improvement. T12, T14, T34 are middle managers. They perceived SSE through a positive TPL. Hence, they were likely to perceive SSE as useful for school improvement. They thus also perceived SSE as useful for school improvement.

For the general teachers, it was discovered that teachers under permanent contracts were more likely to perceive SSE indifferently with no policy details in mind. T32 is a representative example. He perceived SSE through a neutral TPL. Moreover, it was found that teachers under contractual terms perceived SSE through a negative TPL with T22 being a representative example. He thus was more likely to perceive SSE as strongly related to the issue of managerial control. This is because SSE data obtained would affect the chances of his renewal.

Yet, it had to make it clear that these three Lens should not be taken separately. Rather, there was organic, complicated and dynamic interaction among the three Lens, which interwove with one another in the mind of each teacher. This explains why different teacher would have different perceived effects of SSE on school improvement and managerial control in reality.

### **Answer to Research Question 3**

## **NOT TOP-DOWN, BOTTOM-UP or HYBRID APPROACHES-- Organic and Complex Interaction of Policy, Place and People in Meaningful Contexts of School Implementation Lens, Teachers' Generational Lens and Teacher Positional Lens**

As revealed in the literature review, the government interventionism from the 1930s to the 1970s, the government retrenchment in the 1980s and the 1990s and the pragmatism model from the 1990s to the current times were so influential in modelling the three main generations of policy implementation, namely the top-down, bottom-up and hybrid approaches. However, it is argued that neither the top-down, bottom-up or hybrid approaches could be used to account for the implementation of SSE in the eyes of teachers in the three sample schools. Instead, teachers made sense of SSE as the complex and organic interaction of SSE implementation with reference to the 3Ps model (Honig, 2006) including the policy to be implemented with policy learning through puzzlement, the place in which the policy was supposed to take hold and the people implementing it. In addition, the perceived effects of SSE were not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of the teachers in the Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers make sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts. It was revealed from the data that the perceived effects of teacher

administrators and teachers were that of an organic interaction among the SIL, the TGL and the TPL.

To begin with School 1, there were 3 stages of the 3Ps in the implementation of SSE in School 1. From 1991 to 1996 was the first stage of 3Ps. In 1991 SMI policy without policy specifications and formalisations was embedded in a district of low SES where parents' and students' intellectual, social and economical capital were limited and was implemented by a bureaucratic and autocratic former principal and a group of newly-graduated teachers. From 1997 to 2002 was the second stage of the 3Ps. In 1997, SSE & QAI policies were in place with clearer policy specifications and formalisations and implemented in School 1 by the new, strong principal, a strong team of middle managers and a group of "veteran" teachers. From 2003 to 2008 was the third stage of the 3Ps. In 2003, SSE & ESR had further evolved to become highly instrumentalised in School 1 and were played out by a strong team of middle managers and a group of "veteran teachers".

In School 2, there were 2 stages of the 3Ps in the implementation of SSE. From 1998 to 2002, was the first stage of the 3Ps. In 1998, SSE & QAI policies had evolved with clearer policy specifications and formalisations. SSE & QAI were implemented in School 2 where parents and students were limited in their social, economic and intellectual capital. Also, there were an intellectually and religiously legitimate principal, a strong team of obedient and effective middle managers and a group of devoted and compliant Christians. From 2003 to 2008 was the second stage of the 3Ps. In 2003, SSE & ESR had further evolved to become highly instrumentalised in School 2 and were carried out by a strong team of "veteran" middle managers and teachers. In this regard, even in School 2, there were 2 3Ps in

these 2 stages.

In School 3, there was only one stage of 3Ps. This was from 2006 to 2008. Due to the visit of ESR team in May 2006, SSE & ESR were hastily implemented in February 2006 by a team of resistant managers and teachers with low accountability. Though SSE & ESR were well-developed with policy formalisations, instrumentalisations and specifications in Hong Kong, SSE was poorly implemented in School 3.

## **6.2 Theoretical Implications**

### **Theoretical Implications for the Literature of Policy Implementation**

In the literature pertaining to policy implications, it is argued whether policy implementation should be a top-down, bottom-up or hybrid approach. In this study, the third research question aimed at investigating whether the relative success or failure of the implementation of SSE in the three sample schools could be accounted for from the perspective of a top-down, bottom-up or hybrid approach. However, as revealed in the data, the implementation of SSE was not simply any one of these, but an organic interaction of the context of Policy, Place and People (3Ps) with policy learning through puzzlement in the three sample schools. As shown in the data, there were indeed different 3Ps in each sample school.

This 3Ps model explains the complexity and fluidity of policy implementation. If any key element, such as Policy, Place or People, changes then the implementation of SSE policy would be affected accordingly. In School 1, there were three stages of 3Ps from 1991 to 2008, in which the Policy and People changed. There was an

evolution of policy formalisations, specifications, networking, documentation and instrumentalisation from SMI in 1991 to QAI & SSE in 1997, then further to ESR and SSE in 2003. There was also a maturation of people. The first autocratic principal was replaced with a transformational and approachable new principal. The newly-graduated and inexperienced teachers became “veteran” teacher administrators.

In School 2, there were two stages of 3Ps from 1998 to 2008, in which the Policy and People changed. There was an evolution of policy formalisations, specifications, networking, documentation and instrumentalisation from QAI & SSE in 1997 to ESR and SSE in 2003. There was also a maturation of the people involved in mastering the implementation skills of SSE, with a strong intellectual and religious principal, compliant middle managers and devoted Christian teachers. Under such interaction of 3Ps, SSE was being smoothly implemented when the study was conducted.

In School 3, there was only one stage of 3Ps from 2006 to 2008, during which time only the Policy changed. Although there were already very mature policy formalisations, specifications, networking, documentation and instrumentalisation of SSE and ESR as stipulated by the government in 2005, there was no change of people in School 3. The weak principal, resistant middle managers with low accountability and the teachers with low accountability all contributed to the poor implementation of SSE in school 3

## **Theoretical Implications for Literature of School Administration**

In terms of school administration, there were studies adopting a systemic and organisational approach to finding out the factors which contributed to the well-being of school administration (see Section 1.3). These factors encompassed an array of policy factors such as policy aims and lack of resources, and organisational factors like conflicting ideas and power struggles in the organisation. Yet, these studies adopted a quantitative and mechanistic approach. The unit of analysis was mostly at school level and the factors used were usually discrete items rather than holistic factors. They did not explore the dynamic interaction of the Leader and Senior Management, Middle managers and General Teachers. As revealed in the data, the context of People partly accounted for the ease or difficulty of the implementation of SSE in the three sample schools.

For the context of People, the former principal assumed his duties in School 1 in 1984. He demonstrated strong governmental and bureaucratic know-how and established his autocratic leadership. In 1997, a new principal, or the serving principal, established his legitimation for his mediator role among teachers and familiarity with School 1. There was a strong team of middle managers. They became “veterans” in implementing SSE. Teachers were diligent in School 1. As a result, the progressive maturity of the principal, middle managers and teachers made for the strong teamwork of School 1. Hence, there was a concerted effort of the leadership, middle managers and the general teachers. This successful combination of people accounted for the successful implementation of SSE. Implementation of SSE took hold in School 1.

For the context of People, there was a robust principal Leadership in School 2.



The principal enjoyed intellectual legitimation from 1992 to 2008. He also received religious-legitimation from 1998 to 2008 when he was promoted by the church to be the church administrator. Other than the principal, there were obedient senior, middle management and general teachers from 1998 to 2008.

Negotiations and compromises in School 2 were very limited between the principal and the Middle Managers. This was due to the strong authority of the principal. Only under special conditions, would the assistant-principals bargain a bit for the middle managers and the general teachers to alleviate their workloads in other areas. The Middle Managers were experienced policy administrators. The negotiations between the panels and the teachers were also rare. This could be attributed to the common beliefs of Christianity. In Christianity, being submissive and obedient to your superior was an important biblical teaching. Hence, most teachers tended to endure the workload without too much annoyance even though some of them were burnt out already. In short, the team-building force was strong and this facilitated the implementation of SSE in School 2.

For the context of People in School 3, there was a weakly-legitimate new principal leadership from 2001 to 2008. This was because of the lenient management philosophy of the SMC from 1977 to 2008. The SMC did not allow dismissal or other forms of punishment as a means of handling the under-performing teachers. The principal knew that the SSB would not be happy with any dismissal of staff. Such dismissals would be viewed as anti-school mission acts and measures. Therefore, the principal had no administrative power to motivate the teachers easily. The middle managers and the teachers were experienced and also understood there would be no consequences when as a result of refusing to do SSE. In this regard,

they kept holding a low accountability towards their job. They were mostly resistant, powerful and not submissive to the principal's leadership. The general teachers just wanted to do their jobs with little accountability. They had no interest in participating in school policy.

## **Theoretical Implications for the Literature of Perceived Effects of SSE**

In terms of the perceived effects of SSE as a means of school improvement and managerial control, it is argued that the policy effects of SSE are not as clear cut as theorists in the two camps, school improvement and managerial control, suggested in the literature review. The perceived effects are not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of teachers in the Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers make sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts. It was revealed from the data that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be an organic interaction among the School Implementation Lens (SIL), the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL) and the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL). It was discovered that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by the implementation of a school-based SSE. This effect is called the School Implementation Lens (SIL).

Moreover, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by their biographical and professional-socialisation for their age group. This effect is called the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL). Furthermore, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by the position of teachers in school. This effect is called the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL).

It was proposed that school-based implementation of SSE in their own schools affected the School Implementation Lens (SIL), which in turn affected the collective perceptions of teachers in a school. In other words, it was found that teachers' perceptions of the policy of SSE were affected by the policy situation, i.e. schools, in which they found themselves. That is, the policy situation of a particular school serves more or less as a lens through which a practicing teacher perceives and makes sense of the policy.

Second, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by their biographical and professional-socialisation for their age groups. This effect is called the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL). That is, the biographic & professional backgrounds of teachers served more or less as a lens through which a practicing teacher perceived and made sense of the school policy. More specifically, this study adopts the similar generational contrast of teachers (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002) in the UK such as the Plowden teachers of the 19870s and 1980s and the OFSTED teachers of the 1990s to delineate the professional and the biographical contexts in which teachers of different ages grew up and socialised professionally.

To contextualise this into the Hong Kong context, the label of Pre-ECR7 Era and ECR7 Era was adopted to refer to two the different generations of teachers. In other words, it was proposed that teachers' perceptions of the policy of SSE are affected by the biographic and professional backgrounds of teachers. That is, the biographic & professional backgrounds of the teachers in which they were socialised serves more or less as a lens though which practicing teachers perceive and make

sense of the policy.

Thirdly, it was argued that teachers of different ranks would likely have different perceptions of SSE as it related to school improvement or managerial control. It was found that teachers' perceived effects of SSE were affected by their formal position in the school. In other words, teachers' perceptions of the policy of SSE are affected by their position in their school. That is, the teachers' position in the school serves more or less as a lens through which practicing teachers perceive and make sense of the policy.

To summarise, it is argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be an organic interaction among the School Implementation Lens (SIL), the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL) and the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL). Yet, it had to make it clear that these three Lens should not be taken separately. Rather, there was organic, complicated and dynamic interaction among the three Lens, which interwove with one another in the mind of each teacher. This explains why different teacher would have different perceived effects of SSE on school improvement and managerial control in reality.

## **6.3 Policy Implications**

### **Policy Implications for Policy Instrumentalisations**

As revealed in the data, as a minimum, either the performance indicators of SSE & ESR or the communication approach of EDB with teachers should be modified so that the measurement of SSE & ESR can be made fair. In this regard, it was proposed that the performance indicators of SSE and ESR could be further modified into banding-specific and socio-economic-status-specific ones. On the other hand, a communicative approach of EDB with teachers should be adopted to facilitate more accurate judgment of inspectors about schools.

To commence with the revision of the performance indicators of SSE & ESR, either the banding-specific performance indicators or the socio-economic-status (SES)-specific performance indicators should be adopted. The banding-specific performance indicators would be adopted to take the intake of students into consideration. This would help avoid using the same measurement tools for high-achievers and low achievers under the same yardstick of SSE and ESR. Of course, the policy administrators of EDB would need to overcome the labelling effects of the banding-specific performance indicators for the school. Currently, very few schools would like to disclose the banding of their school to the public even though the public might have some formulated image on the banding of the schools.

On the other hand, the socio-economic-status (SES)-specific performance indicators would be able to fairly measure the students' achievement with reference to the SES of the students in schools. This would help find out the net school

effectiveness after the removal of the SES factor. However, the policy administrators of EDB would need to overcome the labelling effects of the SES of the schools. As in the current practice, very few schools want to disclose the SES of their schools owing to the potential discontent of parents and students for the labelling effects created by the public.

In view of the difficulties to modify the performance indicators, the communicative approach of EDB with teachers could be the best possible way to improve the existing situation of SSE and ESR. Under a communicative approach, the existing set of performance indicators might still be adopted. But extensive training should be given by university partners to brief the inspectors of the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) so that they would make their judgments when conducting ESR, with reference to the SES status of the school and the intake banding of schools. A special vetting team could be established to moderate ESR report with reference to the above factors. Internal guidelines could be offered to EDB inspectors so that a more open attitude could be adopted to allow schools to speak for themselves during their inspections. Then the team leader of ESR team could further brief the inspectors about the direction and necessary adjustments before the inspection. This communicative approach would be very important to win the trust and rapport of teachers so that teachers would show greater genuine respect to ESR team and recognition of their work, which is very crucial to sustain the effort and contribution that EDB inspectors have made.

To adopt this communication approach, the policy administrators would need to re-deploy the headcount and the number of schools to be inspected by each inspector so that ample time would be given to them to allow room and space for their deeper

understanding of each school context. Although there might be financial implications when new recruitments are open, the fund granted would bring in a deeper understanding of EDB towards schools, and in return their respect and trust towards EDB. This reciprocal relationship would facilitate mutual cooperation in the long-run.

### **Policy Implications for Policy Alienation and Instrumental Rationalism**

As revealed in the data, SSE and ESR policies experienced policy formalisations, specification, documentation, networking and instrumentalisation from 1991 to 2008. The existing SSE and ESR are in a stage of certain policy maturation. Schools and EDB are both clear on what SSE and ESR are about and the necessary know-how needed in preparing for the inspection. But it was also found that some teachers conducted a SSE for EDB and regarded it only as a show for EDB. This process can be described as policy alienation and instrumental rationalisation, under which the parties involved have no zeal for SSE and ESR per se, but rather they completed the policy as a duty fulfilment. It is proposed that two measures----- the expanding of interflow schemes and the client-specific training should be adopted to solve the problem.

First, the expanding of interflow schemes could be adopted. Currently, the QAD opens a considerable number of secondment posts to experienced senior educational practitioners such as the principal, the vice-principal and the SGMs. These posts last for one year usually. The original aim of the interflow-scheme was to enhance mutual fertilisation of EDB inspectors and the front-line teachers. However, as revealed in the data, teachers with senior managerial roles in schools were more likely to

perceive SSE in terms of school improvement and vice versa.

In this regard, it is proposed that the QAD could further open secondment posts to all levels of teachers so that front-line teachers at basic ranks such as GM and CM could be allowed a chance to work in EDB and, most importantly, to perceive SSE and ESR from another perspective to inspire their future perspectives and aspirations of the policy. The relevant mechanism could be referred to the secondment system of the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) of EDB, under which all levels of teachers would be offered a chance to implement the curriculum development from the government's perspective.

Second, for the training aspects, EDB could devise two modes of training for teachers with reference to their years of teaching experience. These courses could be offered in the professional development plans for teachers each school year or offered in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers. As revealed in the data, teachers of the Pre-ECR7 and ECR7 teachers would perceive SSE and ESR differently. In this connection, content could be modified to cater for these two types of teachers. For the experienced Pre-ECR7 teachers, special sharing sessions could be offered by experienced teachers on how to adapt to a SSE and ESR from the influence of their biographical and professional limitations. Some networks of resource personnel could be set up to support the Pre-ECR7 teachers in order to change their mentality towards SSE and ESR. For ECR7 teachers, special training could be given to them on how to solicit a critical mass of teachers in launching school-based implementation of SSE. If relevant training could be tailor-made to fit teachers own biographic and professional backgrounds in which they were socialised, the effectiveness of SSE and ESR would be much more strengthened, subsequent to



the mentality change of the teachers.

### **Policy Implications for Policy Localisation at Schools**

As proposed above, if relevant policy measures and training, such as adopting a communicative approach in ESR, expanding of interflow schemes and offering of the client-specific training, it would facilitate the localisation of SSE at school levels so that SSE could grow and be further implanted at the school level. As revealed in the data, context of People is an important asset of schools and we should bear in mind that teachers played an important role in the organic implementation of SSE.

#### **6.4 Practical Implications for School Administrators**

As revealed from the data, the implementation of SSE was a complex, organic and fluid interaction of the Policy, Place and People, which was far beyond the simple linear explanation of the top-down, bottom-up and hybrid approaches. In this regard, the school administrators should give due attention to the following three issues when implementing SSE at school level.

First, school administrators should bear in mind that policy maturation takes time at school level and at teacher level. They should offer ample time for the policy to be understood and accepted. They should take active role in providing policy specifications, formalisations, documentation, networking, dissemination and indigenisation. They should be ready to resolve the policy puzzlement of colleagues by enhancing staff participation and being open to different views towards the policy to be implemented.

Second, school administrators should understand that the perceived effects of SSE on school improvement or managerial control would be an organic and complicated interaction of the SIL, TGL and TPL. This means that the policy situation of SSE in schools, teachers' generation and teachers' position should be the factors the school administrators take into account when implementing SSE and handling the different perceived effects of SSE of teachers. In this connection, no single Lens should be taken separately to explain teachers' perceived effects of SSE, but the organic interaction of the three Lens.

Third, school administrators should give due attention to the complex interaction of the People, namely the Leadership and Senior Management, the Middle Managers and the General Teachers when implementing SSE. They should take note of the cyclic negotiations, compromises and the political responses of them rather than assuming the implementation process is a liner process.

## **6.5 Limitations**

Like other qualitative research, this study faces the problem of representativeness and generalisability. This is because all the contextual mix and meaningful contexts would be hard to replicate and copy and thus difficult to lead to the same generalisations in other cases. Lincoln & Guba (1985: 316) also admitted that transferability in qualitative research is "impossible" in the strictest sense. At most, "the naturalists can only set out working hypotheses, together with a description of the time and context in which they were found to hold. Thus, it is the task of the naturalist to provide thick descriptions and data to enable others to judge the degree of similarity between the case context and their own context." In the

present study, a rich description of context of Policy, Place and People, as well as the three meaningful contexts were provided as case context. With such a grasp of meaningful contexts, the organic interaction of the 3Ps and the complex interaction of 3 Lens were described. This gave room for readers of this study to judge and “transfer” the research findings according to the degree of similarities with the sample cases.

Moreover, the choice of the three sample schools was limited. There was significant limitation regarding the restriction of time and resources, the sensitivity of the thesis, the professional identity of the researcher, the access to school information and the potential impact of the study. In addition, the implementation stages of SSE of the three sample schools had to be in tandem with the three critical milestones of the implementation of SSE in 1991, 1998 and 2003. This caused difficulty in the selection of the schools to be sample. Besides this, there were difficulties in searching for a large number of teachers who were willing to be interviewed, as their negative comments towards the school management would be included in the write up of the research. Quite a number of teachers were cautious and conservative over the use of the research data which was another limitation in the study. In this regard, the researcher attempted to have informal interviews with teachers so that richer data could be obtained.

## **6.6 Future Research Prospects**

In view of the findings and discussion of this study, there will be three research prospects which could be further explored. First, this study contributed to the future research on the organic and complex interaction for the implementation of SSE with

reference to the 3Ps model including the context of Policy, Place and People in the field of policy implementation. This study revealed that the implementation of SSE is a complex and organic interaction within the context of Policy to be implemented along with time, the context of Place in which the policy is supposed to take hold and the context of People implementing it. In this connection, future research on policy studies could be built on in order to study the intricacy of the 3Ps model on the implementation of SSE and to explore how these 3Ps interacted with one another

Second, this study contributed to the exploration of the dynamic interaction of the Leadership and Senior Management, Middle Managers and General Teachers. As revealed, the context of People partly accounted for the implementation of SSE in the three sample schools. Such human factors and the interaction among the three were sometimes missed in the field of school administration. In this connection, future research on school administration could be conducted on the interaction process of the Leadership and Senior Management, Middle Managers and General Teachers.

Third, this study introduced a new perspective for the debate between theorists of school improvement and managerial control. It showed that the perceived effects were not dichotomised and clear cut in the eyes of teachers in the Hong Kong context. Rather, teachers make sense of the policy in relation to their relevant meaning-contexts. It was revealed from the data that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be an organic interaction among the School Implementation Lens (SIL), the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL) and the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL).

It was discovered that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and

teachers was affected by the implementation of the school-based SSE. This effect is called School Implementation Lens (SIL). Moreover, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by their biographical and professional-socialisation for different age groups. This effect is called the Teacher Generational Lens (TGL). Furthermore, it was argued that the perceived effects of teacher administrators and teachers would be affected by the position of teachers in school. This effect is called the Teacher Positional Lens (TPL). Future research on perceived effects of SSE could be built onto these three proposed lenses.

Finally, future research on policy localisation could be conducted in areas such as the comparison of the implementation of SSE and the teachers' perception of SSE in different school systems such as Singapore and Mainland China. In this connection, future research on the perceived effectiveness of relevant policy measures and training, such as adopting a communicative approach by the government with teachers, expanding of interflow schemes and offering of the client-specific training, could be explored.

As a final remark, this study contributed to the field of knowledge by adopting the 3Ps model in explaining the organic and complex interaction of Policy, People and Place in the implementation of SSE. Moreover, this study argued that the perceived effects of SSE were affected by the complex interaction of the 3 Lens model---School Implementation Lens, Teacher Generational Lens and Teacher Positional Lens. Finally, this study found that neither a top-down, a bottom-up nor hybrid approach should be used to account for the implementation of SSE. Instead, the implementation of SSE was, in fact, an organic interaction of 3Ps and 3 Lenses in the three meaningful contexts.

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## **Appendix: Interview Guide for the 17 Interviewees**

### **Research Question 1**

From the perspective of teacher administrators and teachers, how was School Self-Evaluation (SSE) implemented in the three sample schools?

### **Question Prompts for Research Question 1:**

#### **Policy of SSE**

1. What are the purposes, goals or targets of implementing SSE at your school?
2. When has your school implemented SSE?
3. What tools has your school used to implement SSE?  
(Key Performance Measure, Stakeholders' Survey, school-based questionnaires, territory references, value-addedness data, other school-based data, EDB's templates and online resources)
4. How do you lead the implementation of SSE as a/an vice principal/subject panel/assistant subject panel/general teacher? What steps have you taken? For example, forming committees, working groups.....
5. To what extent has your school involved you in the formation of SSE policy?
6. How many layers are there in the implementation chain of SSE at your school?
7. Have you faced any "negative factors" during the policy formation of SSE? Are they controllable so that the implementation of SSE could be achieved smoothly?
8. Do you think you can create "sufficient/favourable factors" to make the implementation of SSE smooth?
9. Have you negotiated a lot with your superiors or your colleagues when implementing SSE in your respective area(s)?
10. Do you think consensus building is important in implementing SSE?

## **Place**

1. Has your school experienced ESR or QAI? If so, when?
2. How does the school culture, such as the school belief, school norm and administrative style, shape the way you implement SSE?
3. Have the students' intake and their Socio-Economic Status (SES) affected the implementation strategies of SSE at your school?
4. Have any SSE networkings or circles been formed to facilitate the implementation of SSE at your school?
5. Does your school value collaboration and consensus building in implementing policies? How do they affect the implementation approach of SSE?

## **People in School**

1. Why are you selected as an SSE teacher administrator? By status, charisma or experience?
2. As a teacher administrator, has your school formed any special committees to implement SSE, such as School Improvement Team or SSE Team, to launch the implementation of school-based SSE?
3. As a teacher administrator of the school/subject/functional committee, what kinds of teachers have you targeted at when implementing SSE?
4. Have teachers experienced uncertainties and pressures when implementing SSE?
5. Have teachers followed your original policy design of implementing SSE or they have modified it to become another routine?
6. Have there been any complaints from teachers like resources inadequacy or puzzlement or workload?
7. How do you get teachers involved in implementing SSE?



8. Who backs you up most during the implementation of SSE?
9. Have you offered on-the-task training for teachers?
10. How is the attitude of your principal and colleagues towards policies from EDB?  
Hostile or Cooperative?

**Research Question 2:**

From the perspective of teacher administrators and teachers, what were the perceived effects and/or consequences of SSE?

**Question Prompts for Research Question 2:**

1. What do you think about implementation of SSE? Does it lead to pros, cons or both?
2. If SSE leads to pros, what are they and why?

Prompts

- enhancing teaching and learning
- improving leadership and management
- developing staff capacity
- strengthening of evaluation culture of schools
- improving the school-based curriculum
- building professional and interactional relationships among colleagues
- raising the expectation on achievement
- inducing resources allocation and securing external networking

3. If SSE leads to cons, what are they?

Prompts

- too much emphasis on measurement
- de-professionalise the professional judgment of teachers
- vicious competition among classes and schools

- destroy the harmonious relationship by injecting competition
  - treating schools as factories
  - stronger government control
4. In what ways should SSE be modified and why?

**Research Question 3:**

Given these implementation experiences and perceptions, how could the implementations of SSE be accounted for from the perspectives of policy implementation within the policy studies in education?

**Question Prompts:**

1. How does your school regard the implementation of SSE? What kind of process do you perceive SSE as?
2. What is the implementation approach of SSE at your school? (The principal and the school management decide everything and then implement, or front-line teachers put their heads together, or teachers regard SSE as a learning process, or teachers regard SSE as a puzzlement process?)
3. What parties, partners, bodies or networks offer(s) assistance in supporting the implementation of SSE at your school?