



Educação & Formação

ISSN: 2448-3583

Universidade Estadual do Ceará

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Educação & Formação, vol. 7, no. 1, e7068, 2022, January-April

Universidade Estadual do Ceará

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25053/redufor.v7i1.7068>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=585869643005>

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The schools inspections/schools external evaluations: effects on school institutions described in articles published since 2016¹

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Abstract

This article aims to carry out a systematic review of the effects of school inspections/school external evaluations in schools, presented in the results published by open access articles, published in scientific journals, present in the Web of Science and Scopus databases, since 2016 to date (08/14/2021). Keyword searches were carried out, titles, abstracts, keywords and full texts were read and support software was used. From 914 initial articles, 14 articles were considered relevant. The evidence of the occurrence of unwanted effects is the one that is most present. Longitudinal studies, involving several schools, using control groups, will increase knowledge of the occurrence of the effects.

Keywords

Educational Effectiveness; Schools External Evaluation; School Inspection; Effects.

As inspeções/avaliações externas de escolas: efeitos nas instituições escolares descritos em artigos publicados desde 2016

Resumo

Este artigo tem por objetivo realizar uma revisão sistemática sobre os efeitos das inspeções escolares/avaliações externas de escola nas escolas, apresentados nos resultados divulgados por artigos de acesso aberto, publicados em revistas científicas, presentes nas bases de dados Web of Science e Scopus, desde 2016 até o momento (14/08/2021). Efetuaram-se pesquisas por palavras-chave, realizaram-se leituras dos títulos, resumos, palavras-chave e textos integrais e utilizou-se *software* de apoio. De 914 artigos iniciais, consideraram-se relevantes 14 artigos. As evidências de ocorrência de efeitos não desejados são aquelas que estão mais presentes. A realização de estudos longitudinais, envolvendo várias escolas, com utilização de grupos de controle, aumentará o conhecimento da ocorrência dos efeitos.

Palavras-chave

Eficácia Educacional; Avaliação Externa de Escolas; Inspeção Escolar; Efeitos.

¹ English version by Marina Lima Pompeu.

Las inspecciones/evaluaciones escolares externas: efectos en las instituciones escolares descritos en artículos publicados desde 2016

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo realizar una revisión sistemática de los efectos de las inspecciones escolares/evaluaciones escolares externas en las escuelas, presentados en los resultados publicados por artículos de acceso abierto, publicados en revistas científicas, presentes en las bases de datos Web of Science y Scopus, desde 2016 hasta hoy (14/08/2021). Se realizaron búsquedas de palabras clave, se leyeron títulos, resúmenes, palabras clave y textos completos y se utilizó *software* de apoyo. De 914 artículos iniciales, 14 artículos se consideraron relevantes. La evidencia de la ocurrencia de efectos no deseados es la que está más presente. Los estudios longitudinales, que involucren a varias escuelas, utilizando grupos de control, aumentarán el conocimiento de la ocurrencia de los efectos.

Palabras clave

Efectividad Educativa; Evaluación Externa De Escuelas; Inspección Escolar; Efectos.

1 Introduction

Investigation about effectiveness and research on improvement are related to what has been called “[...] reform oriented towards international performance” (REYNOLDS, 2007, p. 473). At the beginning of the 21st century, according to Hopkins and Reynolds (2001), research on school improvement and school effectiveness began to converge, focusing on student outcomes, among other aspects.

The investigation on the key characteristics decisive for the progress and development of students (MORTIMORE *et al.*, 1988) or on the processes associated with school effectiveness (REYNOLDS; TEDDLIE, 2000) identified a set of key factors in educational effectiveness which then became part of the reference frameworks used in school inspections or schools external evaluations (SCHEERENS; EHREN, 2016). On the other hand, effective school improvement identified, among others, dimensions of organizational health, school-based assessment, facets of educational leadership, and effective systemic reform, with an emphasis on student performance and teaching quality, among others (SCHEERENS; EHREN, 2016). On the other hand, the assessment of student learning focused on results and achievement of goals has led to some disastrous consequences for the quality of teaching (SOARES; SOUSA, 2020).

According to Hofer, Holzberger, and Reiss (2020), the effectiveness of school inspections is related to the achievement of objectives, accountability, verifying the

application of policies, and improving the school. The objectives of supporting and articulating with teachers, schools, and the educational system to improve their development have gained importance since the 1990s of the 20th century (EHREN, 2016a). The worst-performing schools now have specific support programs, and support materials have been developed for them (REDDING *et al.*, 2018). On the other hand, the role of an inspection body in the assessment and provision of stimulus and support to school networks in the same geographic area has had a significant impact on the improvement of schools (BROWN *et al.*, 2020).

The school inspection/external school evaluation moving beyond cognitive results, started to consider the evaluation of social results (DIJKSTRA, 2017). The expected effects of school inspections or external school evaluations also depend on what is considered in the reference frameworks. For example, although there is a recognition that the quality of teaching is the main condition for the quality of the school, the characteristics of the teachers aren't included in the standards used in the inspection or evaluation actions of the school, which can affect the validity of the results produced by these assessments (EHREN; PIETSCH, 2016; SCHEERENS; EHREN, 2016). According to Ehren and Pietsch (2016), the effectiveness of a school evaluation system must consider validity as of utmost importance, as wrong judgments are likely to harm schools and teachers. For Simeonova *et al.* (2020), the rigor of school inspections depends, among others, on how inspection visits are handled, how often and on the level of enhancement of the school's self-assessment, and the planning of actions for improvement.

In a survey that identified 30 studies that used inferential statistics, Hofer, Holzberger, and Reiss (2020) mention some factors that can influence the effectiveness of inspections. According to Piezunka (2019), the two strategies used by inspectors to increase the acceptance of feedback by school representatives are fewer judgments and more descriptions about what was observed and taking into consideration the representatives' opinions about their expectations regarding the schools.

The literature shows growing empirical evidence that school inspections can be a primordial feature of school improvement (EHREN, 2016b). Ten empirical studies carried out in Portugal, within the scope of the research project "Impact and effects of external evaluation in non-higher education schools" (PACHECO, 2014, p. 10), allowed us to

conclude that inspections has had an impact and effects: on appropriation by the school of the referents, in monitoring student results, in improving the school at an organizational level, in strengthening the school's self-assessment, in carrying out improvement plans and in increasing community participation in the school's social life (PACHECO, 2016). Using another characteristic of the effects, Maia and Pacheco (2019), based on a literature review, enunciated and described, among others, the discursive legitimization effect, the procedural effect, the symbolic legitimization effect, and the pragmatic effect.

The fact that inspections inform what schools already know or don't have an effect on a certain group of students has also been pointed out in some studies (EHREN, 2016b). On the other hand, undesirable effects or side effects, mainly negative, of school inspections have also been mentioned in literature reviews. Examples of this are effects such as stress, anxiety, and increased workload in preparing for the inspection (EHREN; JONES; PERRYMAN, 2016); the absence of qualitative consequences for the school (PACHECO, 2014); fixation in measure that it can lead to the deliberate manipulation of data (PACHECO, 2014); intentional strategic behavior, with activities before and during the inspection visit designed to provide a better image of the school or even mislead the AEE team (AEE - Portuguese acronym for Schools External Evaluation) with rare contribution to the improvement of the school (EHREN; JONES; PERRYMAN, 2016; PENNINCKX, 2017); unintentional strategic behavior, with a focus on the part of the school on the elements that are evaluated and that appear in the external evaluations frame of reference, causing a distraction from regular school life due to the notification, conduct or results of the school inspection (EHREN; JONES; PERRYMAN, 2016; PENNINCKX, 2017).

Some authors (HOFER; HOLZBERGER; REISS, 2020; KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017) point out that in European countries inspections started to be introduced to the logic of evidence-based governance only in the 1990s, with a significant number of research results on the impact and effects of external evaluations on schools being inconclusive or non-generalizable. Hofer, Holzberger, and Reiss (2020) point out that, in 16 studies with control groups, in which 222 effects were identified, 58% (129) can be considered without attributable positive or negative meaning.

Before what was shown in this introduction, this article aims to carry out a systematic review of the effects of the schools inspections/schools external evaluations in

the schools, presented in the results published by open access articles, published in scientific journals, present in the Web of Science and Scopus databases, from 2016 to date (14/08/2021).

2 Methodology

The search was carried out in Web of Science and Scopus peer-reviewed abstracts and citations databases of scientific articles considering the inspections/external evaluations of non-higher educational institutions. Ten searches were carried out, five in each database, by article title, abstract, and keywords, for the period from 2016 to the present (14/08/2021), with the following logical combination of keywords (filter): in English, “School external evaluation” or “School inspection” and “Effects”; in Spanish, “Evaluación externa de la escuela” or “Inspección Escolar” and “Efectos”; in Portuguese, “Avaliação externa de escola” or “Inspeção escolar” and “Efeitos”; in French, “Évaluation externe de l'école” or “Inspection scolaire” and “Effets”; in German, “Schulexterne evaluation” or “Schulinspektion” and “Auswirkungen”. The results of this initial search found 914 articles (Web of Science: 669; Scopus: 245).

Based on the framework described in the introduction, namely considering the one presented by Ehren (2016b), Ehren, Jones and Perryman (2016), Hofer, Holzberger and Reiss (2020), Pacheco (2014, 2016), and Penninckx (2017), to help in the analysis of the results presented in each article, a characterizing keyword was defined – “changes” – and, based on it, the following nine categories of effects of IE/AEE in schools were established, each with seven associated key ideas (understood as not being the only ones), presented in the following paragraphs.

Organizational Changes (OC): is a process developed with the knowledge of most teachers in the school; provides teachers with an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses; influences the articulation between school leaders; influences the commitment of intermediate leaders (for example coordinators, class directors...); promotes the commitment of teachers in projects promoted by the school; influences the commitment of teachers in the development of innovative strategies; influences the management of human and material resources.

Changes in the curriculum (CCur): contributes to improving the teachers' curricular practices (planning, methodology, assessment...); contributes to the application of regulations on curriculum flexibility; contributes to the development of collaborative work between teachers in the curriculum development process; it contributes for teachers to have autonomy in the curriculum development process; it contributes to improving supervising teachers' curricular practices (planning, methodology, assessment...); it causes effective changes in curriculum management; contributes to the articulation between cycles/levels of education.

Changes in the Classroom (CCla): contributes for teachers to collaborate when preparing classes; contributes to greater involvement of teachers in innovative teaching and learning processes in the classroom context; contributes to the support provided to teachers to improve their teaching skills; influences the monitoring of teaching practice in the classroom; contributes to teachers developing tests together to assess learning; reinforces the appreciation of summative assessment in face of the formative assessment of learning; values the results of the external assessment of learning (national tests and exams).

Changes in student results (CSR): contributes to the improvement of internal learning outcomes; contributes to the improvement of external academic learning outcomes (national tests and exams); contributes to improving compliance with rules and discipline; contributes to the reduction of school dropouts; influences the participation of students in school life and taking responsibilities; influences the increase in the forms of solidarity in which students are involved; reinforces the impact of schooling on students' lives.

Changes in school self-assessment (CSSA): contributes to the existence of school self-assessment; it takes place in parallel with the school's self-assessment; imposes a school self-assessment model; contributes to the elaboration of a school improvement plan; values the work carried out by the school's self-assessment team; contributes to the impact of self-assessment on planning, organization, and professional practices; fosters the existence of a continuous improvement plan by the school.

Changes in improvement processes (CIP): contributes to the diagnosis of problems to be solved; contributes to the definition of detailed objectives based on the diagnosis of problems to be solved; influence the planning of improvement activities; influences the definition of the specific roles and tasks in the implementation of

improvement activities; influences the implementation of improvement activities; influences the evaluation and reflection on the implemented improvement activities; contributes to the readjustment of improvement activities already performed.

Changes in the community (CCom): reveal the existence of a practice of collaboration between the school and the educational community; it contributes for the school to follow a marketing strategy in valuing the school before the educational community; provides information to parents/guardians (EE) about the strengths and weaknesses of the school; promotes interaction between school and educational community; influences the appreciation by the surrounding community of the role of the school in the education and training of students; contributes to the increase of partnerships established with a view to pursuing the objectives of the educational project; contributes to promoting public debate on the quality of schools.

Changes in the culture of improvement (CCI): leads to feedback acceptance given by the inspection/evaluative team; has leadership influence for the involvement of people in improvement; influences the shared vision, clarifying the objectives to be achieved and the strategies to be followed; contributes to internal pressure for improvement; has influence in the leadership to support the training of school professionals; influences the autonomy used by schools to improve; influences the school's willingness to be a learning organization.

Unwanted Changes or Unwanted Effects (UC/UE): leads to excessive focus in registration procedures; causes stress for those involved; deprives teachers of time needed to prepare their classes; it leads those involved to provide answers to improve the assessment, using misrepresentation and fraud; causes anxiety in professionals; provokes the narrowing of the taught curriculum; leads to non-acceptance of the feedback given by the inspection/evaluative team.

For this study, open access articles with data from qualitative studies (for example: document analysis, interviews), quantitative studies (for example: descriptive, with control groups, with comparison groups, with a correlation of variables, with inferential statistics) and studies with mixed methodologies (qualitative and quantitative) were considered.

In the inclusion decision stage for the second phase of analysis at the level of the full text of the article, the Rayyan software (<https://www.rayyan.ai/>) was used, what did

not exempt the reading and analyzing of the title and the summary of each of the 914 articles.

In the second phase, the articles' full text was read. As an aid to content analysis, the MAXQDA 2020 Analytics Pro software was used. Thus, the refinement of the research led to 14 articles considered relevant (2016: 7; 2017: 2; 2018: 0; 2019: 1; 2020: 3; 2021: 1). The complete reference of each article is presented in the "References" section and is preceded by an asterisk ("*").

Reading the text of the articles allowed the identification of effects not translated by the key ideas of each category, which didn't prevent considering and including them in one of the nine defined categories.

3 Results and discussion

Of the 14 articles, eight are quantitative, with data collection by questionnaire and discussion of results using inferential statistics, four of which are longitudinal (EHREN; SHACKLETON, 2016a; JONES *et al.*, 2017; KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017; WAGNER, 2020) and another four non-longitudinal (PENNINCKX 2016a, 2016c; QUESEL; SCHWEINBERGER; MÖSER, 2020; QUINTELIER; DE MAEYER; VANHOOF, 2020). Ehren and Shackleton (2016b) used data collected from school evaluations and a repository of information about schools organized by a non-profit organization, in which they applied inferential statistics. Penninckx *et al.* (2016b) conducted a qualitative longitudinal study by conducting interviews to collect data. This collection method was also used in four other studies (HOPKINS *et al.*, 2016; HULT; EDSTRÖM, 2016; MOURAZ; LEITE; FERNANDES, 2019; SAMPAIO; LEITE, 2021). Two studies used more than one data collection method (HULT; EDSTRÖM, 2016; MOURAZ; LEITE; FERNANDES, 2019). Thus, in addition to a majority of quantitative studies (9), there are three qualitative studies and two studies that used mixed methodologies (HULT; EDSTRÖM, 2016; MOURAZ; LEITE; FERNANDES, 2019).

Regarding countries, data collections were carried out in Austria, England, Ireland, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Sweden, and Switzerland (JONES *et al.*, 2017), in Austria and Sweden (KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017), in the German federal state of Lower Saxony (WAGNER, 2020), in the Netherlands (EHREN;

SHACKLETON, 2016a, 2016b), in Portugal (MOURAZ; LEITE; FERNANDES, 2019; SAMPAIO; LEITE, 2021), in the Belgian region of Flanders (QUINTELIER; DE MAEYER; VANHOOF, 2020; PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c), in the United Kingdom (HOPKINS *et al.*, 2016), in Sweden (HULT; EDSTRÖM, 2016) and Switzerland (QUESEL; SCHWEINBERGER; MÖSER, 2020).

In the 14 articles of this review, 114 mentions of occurrence of effects of the school inspection/school external evaluation in the school were found. The evidence of occurrences of positive (desired) effects represents 58% and the negative ones (undesired) 42% of the total. Six studies (43%) have a majority of evidence regarding the occurrence of unwanted effects (EHREN; SHACKLETON, 2016b; HOPKINS *et al.*, 2016; HULT; EDSTRÖM, 2016; JONES *et al.*, 2017; PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016b; SAMPAIO; LEITE, 2021).

The greatest number of evidences of occurrences occurred about unwanted effects (48), followed by changes in the improvement culture (33) and organizational changes (12). With six or less, there were changes in the curriculum (6), in the improvement processes (6), in the classroom (5), in the school's self-assessment (3), in the community (1) and student results (0). In the following paragraphs a summary by effect category is presented.

The reviewed studies present a lot of evidence of the occurrence of unwanted effects. When a lot is at stake in an inspection process (HOPKINS *et al.*, 2016), with an increase in the workload and with the disruption of normal school life (PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016b), teachers feel levels stress and anxiety above the senses in periods without inspection visits (PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016b), which leads to: reduced professional enthusiasm after the inspection visit (PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016c), headaches and lack of sleep before the visit (PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016b) and reduced eating and sleep during the visit (HOPKINS *et al.*, 2016). Some authors present evidence on the occurrence of an excessive concentration during the inspection process in data recording procedures (JONES *et al.*, 2017), sometimes involving counterproductive bureaucracy (SAMPAIO; LEITE, 2021). The study by Hult and Edström (2016) points out that school visits take away the time teachers need to prepare their classes. On the other hand, the occurrence of activities that have the purpose of receiving a more favorable inspection judgment that may cause data misrepresentation to mislead inspectors was also mentioned by some

authors (JONES *et al.*, 2017; PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016b). Evidence was also found that inspections in schools lead to the focus shifting to subjects with external exams, causing the narrowing of the taught curriculum (EHREN; SHACKLETON, 2016a, 2016b; JONES *et al.*, 2017) and strategies for teaching (JONES *et al.*, 2017). Other unwanted effects mentioned in the results of the reviewed studies were: a lack of morale or enthusiasm for long-term improvements (EHREN; SHACKLETON, 2016b); the reduction of teachers' professional enthusiasm after the inspection visit, influenced by the perception of the quality of the assessment carried out at the school (PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016c); the feeling of dependence on what inspectors could reveal as indicators of how the school could/should improve (HOPKINS *et al.*, 2016); the view that systematic school self-evaluation, with time and dedication to it, is an unlikely phenomenon in the absence of a school inspection process (HOPKINS *et al.*, 2016); the reluctance to innovate and the tendency to follow the pedagogical approach that is perceived as being preferred by the inspection team and leading to better inspection results (HOPKINS *et al.*, 2016; JONES *et al.*, 2017); the reduction of trust and inhibition of discussion about difficulties, due to the pressure to demonstrate good performance (HOPKINS *et al.*, 2016); the postponement, by the school, of some activities and actions planned due to the preparation and performance of the inspection visit (PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016b); the disregard of the assessments carried out by the teachers themselves, together with their students, and the target of joint reflection on teaching (HULT; EDSTRÖM, 2016); the feeling of lack of trust in teachers by the school administration and parents (HULT; EDSTRÖM, 2016); putting aside social justice issues or adjusting them to what is defined externally, due to the need to meet specific goals and objectives considered relevant by the inspection, with an excessive focus on students' academic results (SAMPAIO; LEITE, 2021); the lack of appreciation by inspectors/inspectors team of the work performed by teachers (SAMPAIO; LEITE, 2021). New studies on unwanted effects will continue to have all the relevance, especially given the desirable consideration of their results in the definition of policies, by the Ministry of Education, and in the implementation of procedures, by the inspection body and schools aimed at eliminating or reducing these effects.

Regarding the evidence of the effects of inspection on the culture of school improvement, the perception by the teachers of a fair evaluation process is directly related to their acceptance of the feedback given by the inspectors (QUINTELIER; DE

MAEYER; VANHOOF, 2020). The acceptance of feedback/evaluation results by a headmaster of a school that scored lower in the evaluation carried out by the inspectors is low in the first year after the inspection visit, but rises in the second year (EHREN; SHACKLETON, 2016a). Inspection feedback, including negative feedback, can represent a very important learning opportunity for the school (QUESEL; SCHWEINBERGER; MÖSER, 2020). The acceptance of feedback can lead the headmaster to succeed in transforming external evaluations into internal ones, with relevance recognized by teachers for the improvement of their work (HULT; EDSTRÖM, 2016). On the other hand, Kemethofer, Gustafsson, and Altrichter (2017) mention that feedback is more likely to be accepted in systems subject to less pressure than in high-pressure accountability environments, less conducive to processing and using these informative messages given by the inspection/evaluating team. The inspection elicited a reflection on the school's policy and led to concrete improvement actions, resulting in fewer conceptual effects and more instrumental effects (PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016c) or a greater reflection by the teacher on their practices and a greater stimulus to take a critical stand (PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016a). The pressure exerted by the headmaster on the teachers to influence the visit in the process of building curricular coherence, encouraging them to carry out collaborative work and reorganizing their schedules (MOURAZ; LEITE; FERNANDES, 2019), led to the involvement of people in the improvement. Observations from follow-up classes seem to provide a stronger external impetus for improvement and can motivate directors to initiate and coordinate improvement processes that they would not do if not for inspection (WAGNER, 2020). The effect of inspection on the capacity for improvement in the Swedish context (KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017) and greater attention to evaluation criteria, before the inspection visit, by heads of schools located in educational systems considered to be of greater pressure (KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017), were other effects shown.

Regarding the effects of visits to the school at the organizational level, evidence was found that, in the year immediately following the inspection team/evaluators, directors invest particularly in cooperation between teachers, in transformational leadership, or the participation of teachers in the processes of decision (EHREN; SHACKLETON, 2016a). Improvements in school effectiveness have occurred in schools with lower ratings in the assessment carried out by inspectors/inspective staff (EHREN;

SHACKLETON, 2016a). In Sweden, there was an effect of inspection/AEE on teaching conditions with the estimated effect reaching statistical significance (KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017). The school inspection/AEE promoted the commitment of teachers in projects furthered by a school with an autonomy contract designed to better respond to the students' difficulties, with an effect on improving management practices (MOURAZ; LEITE; FERNANDES, 2019). The director exerts pressure on teachers to get involved in these projects as a vehicle for the influence of inspection in the process of building curriculum coherence (MOURAZ; LEITE; FERNANDES, 2019). Inspection influences greater involvement of teachers in innovative teaching and learning processes in the classroom (MOURAZ; LEITE; FERNANDES, 2019). Thus, we observe some influence of the inspection in teachers' efforts in the development of innovative strategies.

The inspections' influence on improvement processes is manifested at the level of planning and implementation of improvement activities. Penninckx *et al.* (2016a) show that, in response to the visits, concrete actions are planned or carried out to improve the school. Hopkins *et al.* (2016) also present evidence that the inspection process triggered improvement activities by the school in aspects related to the provision of the educational service/school performance, which were considered to require interventions. On the other hand, obtaining a lower grade in school assessment leads to greater alignment of school and teaching processes with inspection standards in the first year following that assessment (EHREN; SHACKLETON, 2016a). This result is convergent with the appropriation by the school of the referents of the visit mentioned by Pacheco (2016).

Regarding changes in the curriculum, the evidence presented by Mouraz, Leite, and Fernandes (2019) that there was an effect of the external evaluation of the school in stimulating the development of collaborative work between teachers in the development of the curriculum is highlighted. On the other hand, inspection contributes to the articulation between cycles/levels of education (MOURAZ; LEITE; FERNANDES, 2019), and observations from follow-up classes seem to provide a stronger external impetus for improvements (WAGNER, 2020).

Regarding changes in the classroom, there is evidence of the occurrence of school inspection/AEE effects on adequacy of practices that take place in the classroom, including the development of tests together to assess student learning (MOURAZ; LEITE;

FERNANDES, 2019). Wagner (2020) mentions that a follow-up class observation following an inspection can more motivate teachers, who normally plan classes by themselves, to collaborate with each other to achieve better results in these classes.

Regarding the effects of external evaluation on school self-evaluation in the Netherlands, the study by Ehren and Shackleton (2016a) suggests that inspection visits to schools with lower scores in school evaluations led to additional actions by principals, with a view to improving the school's self-assessment, especially in the two years following the dissemination of the results of the school's assessment. On the other hand, the schools with the highest rating worked on their self-assessment before or during a first evaluative analysis carried out by the inspectors, the level of activity decreased when the results were published, and the inspectors attributed this rating (EHREN; SHACKLETON, 2016a). In Portugal, Sampaio and Leite (2021) presented evidence that the external evaluation contributed to the elaboration of improvement plans. The impact of inspections on promoting and improving self-assessment was not statistically significant in Austria and Sweden (KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017). Thus, in the Netherlands and Portugal, evidence was found that external evaluation has contributed to the strengthening of school self-assessment, which is in line with what was mentioned by Pacheco (2016).

Concerning community change, the study by Ehren and Shackleton (2016a) presents some evidence that parents and boards of high-performing schools use information about the school's strengths and weaknesses shown in the first evaluative analysis carried out by the inspectors, during or in the year following the publication of these results, but not in subsequent years. In this review, no evidence was found of occurrences of effects of the external evaluation of the school in the increment of community participation in the school's social life, namely giving a platform with direct intervention in the school and reinforcing the existing partnerships, as mentioned by Pacheco (2016).

In this review, no evidence was found of the occurrence of the effects of the school's external evaluation on student results. Pacheco (2016) highlights the effect on the monitoring of results, however without visible effects. We, therefore, consider that this is an area, together with changes in the classroom, where further studies can be carried out.

4 Final considerations

The majority of studies, 57% (8), present a majority of evidence of the occurrence of effects, intended or desired, of external inspections/evaluations in schools (EHREN; SHACKLETON, 2016a; KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017; MOURAZ; LEITE; FERNANDES, 2019; PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016a, 2016c; QUESEL; SCHWEINBERGER; MÖSER, 2020; QUINTELIER; DE MAEYER; VANHOOF, 2020; WAGNER, 2020). The evidence of the occurrence of positive (desired) effects represents 58% and the negative 42% of the total (114). In a systematic literature review study spanning over 30 years (1990-April 2018), Hofer, Holzberger, and Reiss (2020) mentioned that, of 222 effects present in 16 studies with control groups, 24% (54) could be considered with positive meaning, 18% (39) with negative meaning and 58% (129) without attributable positive or negative meaning, but dividing into 50% (65) with a positive trend, 33% (42) with a negative trend and 17% (22) with no information available on trend.

It appears that the evidences of the occurrence of unwanted effects are those that are most present in this review. The emotional impact of inspections on teachers has been noticeable (PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016b). There has been a growing interest in carrying out studies on unwanted effects following previous studies (EHREN; JONES; PERRYMAN, 2016; PACHECO, 2014). Some authors have suggested continuing the study of unwanted effects with a view to implementing policies that lead to their reduction (PENNINCKX *et al.*, 2016b), or considering the costs of external evaluations (KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017). Following the effects mentioned by Hult and Edström (2016), we suggest that greater emphasis be given to internal assessments of learning, carried out by the teachers themselves.

Regarding the desired effects, there was more evidence of the occurrence of effects of the external evaluation in the categories of the culture of improvement (33) and at the organizational level (12). With less evidence of the occurrence of effects, they were registered at the level of the curriculum (6), in the improvement processes (6), in the classroom (5), in the school's self-assessment (3), and in the community (1). In this way, a certain tendency continues to be able to conclude that, as mentioned by Pacheco (2016, p. 264), external evaluation has generated effects on “[...] school improvement,

more at the level organizational than at the curricular level and pedagogical work modes”. In terms of the characterization of effects, carried out by authors reviewed by Maia and Pacheco (2019), it can be considered that the external inspection/evaluation has produced more procedural effects, of discursive legitimation, of symbolic and pragmatic legitimacy.

In the longitudinal quantitative study with a control group, Wagner (2020) pointed out, among others, the occurrence of development activities after the inspection visits, with an impetus for improvement provided by the observed monitoring classes, especially in schools with low capacity for innovation. On the other hand, some authors suggest further studies on the desired effects, which include, among others, information on teaching conditions by teachers (KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017) and that consider the relationship between acceptance the feedback provided by the external assessment teams and the cognitive and teachers affective responses (QUINTELIER; DE MAEYER; VANHOOF, 2020).

With this review, the reader interested in the theme of the effects of external inspection/evaluation in schools will get to know part of the most recent developments. Thus, a theoretical support base is provided that, together with others, can be used in future empirical studies. Searching other databases, of abstracts and citations of peer-reviewed articles, may bring to light the occurrence of other effects. The effects on the classroom and student results of external inspections/evaluations are little studied and that this is an area where there may be new work. This review considered open access scientific articles within a well-defined period. Extending the types of sources (references) and the period to be considered for research and review will always be a valid option.

Questions related to different results obtained have led some authors to suggest carrying out studies that seek to answer the same questions and that use the same methodology (KEMETHOFER; GUSTAFSSON; ALTRICHTER, 2017; PENNINCKX, 2017). The duration of the changes or the desired effects may be limited in time, so the carrying out of longitudinal studies involving several schools, using control groups, will increase the knowledge of the occurrence of the effects and their temporal persistence and allow a generalization of the results obtained. Also carrying out studies involving several countries that meet different educational contexts may help to consolidate

evidence on the frequency of occurrence of these effects and their maintenance over time.

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Responsible editor: Lia Machado Fiuza Fialho

Ad hoc experts: Sebastião Lemes and Juvenildo Nascimento

How to cite this article (ABNT):

ALBUQUERQUE, Pascoal Diogo; FERREIRA, António Gomes; BARREIRA, Carlos Manuel Folgado. As inspeções/avaliações externas de escolas: efeitos nas instituições escolares descritos em artigos publicados desde 2016. *Educ. Form.*, Fortaleza, v. 7, n. 1, e7068, 2021. Disponível em: <https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/redufor/article/view/7068>



Received on November 1st, 2021.

Accepted on October 5th, 2021.

Published on January 1st, 2022.

