

**DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENCES OF THEIR
LEADERSHIP ROLE**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Lindiwe Maria Thabethe, declare that:

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my loving parents, Paul and Nokuthula Thabethe. Thank you for supporting and encouraging me throughout my years of studying. You have always believed in my potential, and your prayers have always sustained me. Ngiyabonga maNdwane nawe Mkhohlo!

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ABSTRACT

School leadership is a critical driving force to the realisation of educational goals. For many decades, research studies on school leadership focused on the role played by the school principal while being oblivious to that played by the deputy in school leadership. This is perplexing, considering that the deputy principal is the second in charge after the principal in the school hierarchy. The few studies conducted on the leadership role of deputy principals are mostly from an international context. Using the sensemaking theoretical framework, this study sought to explore deputy principals' understanding and experiences of their leadership roles. The rationale for conducting the study was to gain insight into how deputy principals in the South African context understand and experience their leadership roles. The critical questions that this study sought answers to were: what the deputy principals perceived their leadership roles to be; how they experienced their roles; what factors enabled them to play or hindered them from playing their roles effectively, and what support they received to play their roles effectively. The leadership role of deputy principals was studied through the interpretive lens. A qualitative research approach and case study design were used to gain in-depth knowledge into the real-life experiences of deputy principals. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven purposively selected participants. The responses to the interview questions were analysed and organised into themes that correlated with related literature and the research questions. There were two levels of data analysis. In the first level, data were presented and supported by verbatim quotes, while in the second level, themes that emerged from the data were discussed. The findings of the study indicate that although deputy principals perceive themselves to be leaders and the principals' right-hand man or woman, their power and authority rested with the principal. There was very little that deputy principals could do without the principal's approval. It also surfaced that as part of their leadership, deputy principals played numerous roles, to the extent of being overwhelmed by them. Consequently, deputy principals found it difficult to strike a balance between their professional and personal responsibilities. Factors that hindered deputy principals' effectiveness outweighed those that enhanced it. Lastly, there was very little support that deputy principals received to build their capacity to lead effectively. The study also presented recommendations that could enhance how deputy principals experience leadership

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HoD	HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (SCHOOL-BASED)
RSA	REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
SASAMS	SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
SGB	SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
SMT	SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

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CHAPTER 1

A PRELUDE TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

While it is true that principals are the brains behind school leadership, it is also true that “two brains are better than one”. Based on this belief, the researcher introduces this study that seeks to explore deputy principals’ understanding and experiences of their leadership role. In the school’s hierarchy, deputy principals are positioned as second-in-charge after the principal, yet most of the focus on school leadership has been on the leadership of the principal, leaving a vacuum on the leadership of the deputy principal. International scholars have attempted to fill this void, but there is still not enough knowledge available on the deputy principal. In the South African context, the gap is even wider, with very few studies focusing on the leadership of the deputy principal. In this chapter, I intend to lay the foundation on which the upcoming chapters will build. As a starting point, I give the background and rationale for conducting the study. I shall then present the problem statement, purpose statement and the critical research questions, and wrap up the chapter by giving a preview of the chapters and a conclusion.

1.2 Background to the study

The Employment of Educators Act, No. 76 of 1998, regulates the employment of educators, prescribes the structure of posts, and the roles and responsibilities applicable to each post. The Act places the principal at the top of the hierarchy. Below the principal is the deputy principal. Below the deputy principal are the heads of department (HoDs). Below the HoDs, and at the bottom of the hierarchy, are the teachers or educators. In South African public schools, the vacancy for a deputy principal post is determined by the learner enrolment. A vacancy for the post is created for every 450 learners in a high school and 550 learners in a primary school, up to a maximum of two deputy principals per school (Republic of South Africa, 1998).

Earlier studies on school leadership placed the principal as the only prominent source of leadership responsible for the successful running of the school (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004; Wong, 2009; Petrides, Jimes, & Karaglani, 2012). The prominence of the leadership role played by the principal overshadowed and undermined the role played by other

leaders in the school, especially the role played by the deputy principal. In some studies, deputy principals are referred to as “the forgotten leaders” (Cranston et al., 2004; Leaf & Odhiambo, 2016). Scholars conducting research on school leadership in the twenty-first century have questioned the validity of placing only the principal at the centre stage of leadership, and advocate for the recognition of the leadership role played by the deputy principal in school effectiveness (Leaf & Odhiambo, 2016; Gurr, 2018; Lu & Hallinger, 2018). Milondzo and Seema (2015) concur with the view that no one individual can be credited for successful school leadership because school leadership is a collective effort of the school management team (SMT), especially the two senior managers, the principal and the deputy principal. This study focuses on the deputy principals, who are often referred to as the second- in-charge because of the position they occupy in the school’s hierarchy. The existence of the position of the deputy principal in the school is an acknowledgement that principals need to be supported and assisted in managing the school. Judging by the importance of the role played by deputy principals in schools, it is confusing that there has been very limited research conducted to gain more insight into their roles (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012; Blose & Naicker, 2018; Khumalo, van Vuuren, van der Westhuizen & van der Vyver, 2017).

One of the most critical roles played by school leaders is instructional leadership, because it is directly linked to improved learner performance. Previously, instructional leadership was exclusively reserved for the principal. The advocacy for more distributed forms of leadership in schools has resulted in the deputy principal playing a more active role in leading the instructional programme in the school (Searby, Brown-Ferrigno, & Wang, 2017; Lu & Hallinger, 2018). Deputy principals play the vital role of assisting the school principal in managing the school, and ensuring that the vision and strategic goals of the school are realised (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Gurley, Anast-May, & Lee, 2015). Deputy principals have become important strategic partners to the principal. They serve as a crucial link between the principal, HoDs and teachers. Deputy principals have the responsibility to be in charge of a school in the absence of the principal (RSA, 1998). This responsibility requires them to provide leadership and make decisions, and brings the issue of the deputy principal’s authority into the debate. The question of the deputy principal’s authority is problematic because the level of authority they may exercise is derived from the level of support they receive from the principal (Mitchell, Armstrong, & Hands, 2017; Cohen & Schechter, 2019). The relationship between the principal and the deputy principal also comes into the spotlight.

The prevailing point of view is that deputy principals have numerous leadership roles to play, and they are faced with many professional dilemmas (Kwan, 2009; Barnett et al., 2012; Shore & Walshaw, 2018). Taking into consideration all the responsibilities that deputy principals have to shoulder, it is concerning that research points to a lack of sufficient professional development opportunities to support deputy principals in their leadership (Gurley et al., 2015; Goksoy, 2016; Khumalo et al., 2017). This study seeks to explore deputy principals' understanding and experiences of their leadership role. This brief background has highlighted some of the debates into the leadership roles of deputy principals, and that there is still a lot to be learnt about deputy principals.

1.3 Rationale for the study

My personal interest in this study was sparked by my experiences as an employee in the Department of Basic Education. I have been in the teaching profession for 25 years. For the first 16 years of my teaching career, I was a level one educator. I was then promoted to the post of HoD, a position I occupied for four years, after which I was promoted to the position of deputy principal, a position I hold still. In some schools, it is an open secret that there is tension between the principal and the deputy principal. I personally witnessed this tension in one of the schools I worked in while I was a level one educator. A consequence of this tension was that the staff's loyalties were divided between the principal and the deputy. Although I never knew what the source of this tension was, I was gravely concerned by it. In my personal experience as a deputy principal, I work very well with the principal. However, most of the time I am overwhelmed by the demands of my job. When I was appointed, I would plan the activities of the day ahead, but as soon as I arrived at work, most my plans would never materialise. The needs of the principal, teachers and parents superseded my own plans. I soon learnt to take each day as it came. Not being able to plan ahead can be frustrating at times. At times I question my own effectiveness as a leader because of the confusion that often comes with the position of deputy principal.

Then there is the question of the deputy principal's authority. There have been a number of occasions where I felt my authority was being undermined by some teaching staff. It seems as though teachers have been socialised to recognise only the principal as a figure of authority in the school. Even though the principal is supportive towards many of the decisions that I make, there are some decisions that I cannot make without prior consultation.

I have also personally observed that there are very few, if any, programmes that the Department of Education has put in place to enhance the leadership capacity of deputy principals. Most of the capacity building programmes that I have attended were meant to be attended by the principal. In most cases it is the unavailability of the principal that affords deputy principals the opportunity to attend capacity building.

As was stated in the preceding section, the position of deputy principal is under researched. Most of the literature that is currently available on the deputy principal focus on the international context. These studies have focused on different aspects of the deputy principal's position. Clayton and Bingham (2018) and Cohen and Schechter (2019) have explored transitioning challenges faced by deputy principals in the USA and Israeli contexts respectively. Wong (2009) explored the relationship between the principal and the vice principal in China. Various studies have focused on the dilemmas and challenges faced by deputy principals in countries such as China, Canada and New Zealand. Some scholars have attempted to understand what deputy principals perceive their role to be (Kwan, 2009; Mitchell et al., 2017; Shore & Walshaw, 2018). The challenge with perceptions is that they are context-based, and cannot be generalised. Navarro-Corona and Slater (2017) and Abrahamsen (2018) explored how the roles of deputy principals have been redesigned in the context of Mexico and Norway respectively. Van Tuyle (2018) focused on the role of the deputy principal as a disciplinarian. Even though these studies have been able to provide some insight into the position of the deputy principal, they are not a reflection of the realities of the deputy principals in South Africa. By conducting this study, I wish to make a meaningful contribution to the literature on deputy principals in South Africa so that there may be a better understanding of the position by those occupying it, and those with aspirations to become deputy principals. I am also hoping that the experiences of the participants will assist me in my own practice, and help me to be effective in my leadership.

1.4 Statement of the problem

The call for transformation of schools and the adoption of distributed forms of leadership in schools recognises that principals cannot singlehandedly lead schools to greatness, because leadership is a combined effort of different individuals (Bolden, 2011; Sibanda, 2018). As strategic partners to principals and the second-in-charge, deputy principals play a critical supportive role to the principal (Cranston et al., 2004; Kwan, 2009; Barnett et al., 2012). The main job of the deputy principal is to assist the principal in managing the school (RSA, 1998).

At face value, the job seems to be very simple; however, upon closer analysis, that is not the case. What complicates things further is that it is the prerogative of the principal to delegate and to set boundaries in order to determine the extent of authority the deputy principal may exercise. It does not make logical sense that there have been many studies conducted on the leadership role of the principal, yet little has been researched about the role of the deputy principal. This implies that the leadership of the deputy principal is less significant than that of the principal. Putting too much emphasis on the principal as the leader in school could be the reason why deputy principals are sometimes referred to as “the forgotten leaders”. Although there have been some studies conducted on the leadership role of the deputy principal, these studies have mostly been of an international context. There is however, a glaring scarcity of literature that provides insight into the leadership role played by deputy principals and their contribution in the successful running of the school in the South African context. In this study, it is the voices of the participants that will provide more insight into the deputy principals’ understanding and experience of their leadership role specifically in the South African context.

1.5 Purpose statement

Guided by the rationale and the problem statement, the purpose of the study was to explore deputy principals’ understanding and experiences of their leadership role, focusing in part on what deputy principals perceive their role to be. Another area of focus was gaining insight into how they played their leadership role, and looking both at the factors that enable them to play their role effectively and also those that inhibit their leadership effectiveness. I was also interested in establishing the kind of support deputy principals received to better perform their leadership role.

1.6 Critical research questions

Based on the purpose of the study, these are the critical research questions to be answered:

- What do deputy principals perceive their leadership roles to be?
- How do deputy principals experience their leadership roles?
- What factors enable deputy principals to execute their roles effectively or hinder them from doing so?
- What support do deputy principals receive to better perform their leadership roles?

1.7 Clarification of key concepts

1.7.1 Deputy principal

Different terms are used in different contexts to refer to individuals who are second-in-command to the principal. In the South African context, a post level three educator is known as a deputy principal (RSA, 1998). Post level three educators are second-in-charge to the school principal. This term is also used in Australia (Cranston et al., 2004) and Turkey (Goksoy, 2016). The term “vice-principal” is used in China (Kwan, 2009) and in Canada (Mitchell et al., 2017). Assistant principal is used in the context of the USA (Barnett et al., 2012) and Israel (Cohen & Schechter, 2019). In Botswana and Norway individuals who are second-in-charge are known as deputy heads. In some contexts, like Australia, the terms assistant principal and deputy principal are both used. In the international context, a clear distinction is made between aspiring deputy principals and career deputy principals. Aspiring deputy principals have their sights set on becoming principals, while career deputy principals are content in their position, and do not aspire to become principals (Kwan. 2009). This distinction is significant because the roles they play are in accordance with their aspirations. In the South African context, such a distinction is not made. In the context of this study, the term deputy principal will be used to refer to an educator who is second-in- charge to the school principal.

1.7.2 Leadership role

The concept of leadership is defined and perceived in various ways according to individual perspectives and aspects of the phenomenon that is of most interest to them (Silva, 2016). This scholar defines leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organised group of people towards the attainment of common goals in a given context. In this study, the focus is on the leadership role of the deputy principal in the school. According to Spicker (2012) a leadership role refers to a set of functions assumed by the leader in the process of influencing those being led to achieve the goals of the organisation. In the context of this study, the deputy principal is viewed as a leader who has multiple functions to perform that are aligned to the goals that the school sets out to achieve. The deputy principal is expected to influence different stakeholders to achieve the schools’ goals by leading various functions. These roles or functions are discussed in the chapters that follow.

1.8 Preview of the chapters

Chapter One, a prelude to the study, sets the scene and introduces the study. It begins by stating what the study seeks to achieve. It then provides a background and rationale for undertaking the study. This chapter also includes the problem statement, the purpose statement, and the critical research questions, and gives clarity on the concept of deputy principal. The chapter ends with a preview of what is contained in each of the chapters of the study.

Chapter Two, a review of related literature, presents the views of different scholars and brings in local and international debates on the leadership of the deputy principals. This chapter also presents the sense-making theory, which is the theoretical framework that underpins this study.

Chapter Three, provides a clear description of the research design and methodology that were used to conduct this study. It also explains the paradigm and research approach that underpins it. The process of selecting participants and the procedures and instruments for generating and analysing data are clearly expounded. The chapter highlights the issues of trustworthiness, ethical considerations and setbacks encountered. Lastly, possible limitations of the study are divulged.

Chapter Four presents the first level of analysed data. It begins by introducing and presenting a profile of the participants. The data generated from participants are presented in themes and supported by verbatim quotes of the participants' utterances.

Chapter Five presents the second level of analysis. Owing to the thickness and depth of the data, a further analysis brings emerging themes to the fore. These are discussed and debated in relation to scholarly literature.

Chapter Six, the last chapter, provides a summary of the findings of the study by using the data generated from participants to answer each of the research questions. Conclusions are drawn from the findings. Lastly, I present recommendations for principals and the Department of Basic Education. In the final word, I bring the study to a close.

1.9 Chapter conclusion

This introductory chapter has provided the background, purpose and rationale of the study. I posed critical research question from which I shall seek answers in my exploration of deputy principals' understanding and experiences of their leadership roles.

Before concluding the chapter, I presented an outline of what is to be covered in the upcoming chapters. In the next chapter I review literature related to the leadership of the deputy principal.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a synopsis of this study. Some of the highlights of the synopsis include the statement of the problem, the rationale and motivation for the study, key concepts and the research questions. Hart (2018) describes a literature review as a systematic, analytical and critical evaluation of existing and relevant knowledge on a research problem or topic. The purpose of this chapter is to review related literature on the leadership role of the deputy principal in the school. This literature review seeks to explore and critically discuss what has been uncovered, nationally and internationally, about the leadership role of the deputy principal in the school. In developing this chapter, the literature review is presented thematically. As a point of departure, the review presents a critical discussion of leadership as a critical concept in this study. After the literature review, I discuss sense-making theory as a framework guiding the study.

2.2 Conceptualising leadership

The success of any organisation, including a school, is largely dependent on the individuals who are tasked with leading it (Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, & Hopkins, 2007). In the school, as in any organisation, leadership has an impact on learning outcomes, and acts as a catalyst for improved student achievement (Leithwood, Sun & Schumacker, 2020). Silva (2016) asserts that although the concept of leadership is one that is widely used, it is hard to define. This scholar however also points out that the definition of leadership has evolved over time resulting in the emergence of new concepts of leadership. Chow, Salleh and Ismail (2017) also concur with the view that the conceptualisation of leadership has evolved over time. These scholars attribute the evolution of the concept of leadership to the change of environment and complexities within organisations. Below is a discussion of how leadership is conceptualised. The concepts of leadership discussed in this study are not a representation of all the conceptualisations that are associated with leadership.

2.2.1 Leadership as a trait

Northouse (2017) describes two ways in which leadership can be conceptualised. According to this scholar, leadership can be defined as a trait and also as behaviour. Trait-based leadership dates as far back as the nineteenth century, when scholars like Carlyle and Galton (1869) refer to a trait as an innate quality or characteristic that sets an individual leader apart from others (Zaccaro, 2007).

This definition of traits focused more on leaders and those unique characteristics that distinguished them from non-leaders, and implied that leadership was reserved for a select few who possessed special leadership traits (Northouse, 2017). Germain (2012) states that one of the strengths of trait leadership is its exclusive focus on the leaders and their personalities in the leadership process, and not the situation or the followers. There was, however, a need for a shift in perspective on trait leadership in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries because many scholars rejected trait leadership on the basis that it was insufficient in explaining leadership, and there was a very small relationship between traits and leadership effectiveness (Zaccaro, 2007). Moreover, because of the failure of traits to clearly distinguish leaders from non-leaders, the success of traits in selecting individuals for leadership positions was severely compromised (Fleenor, 2006). Even though trait leadership has been criticised for not providing a conclusive set of leadership traits, it is still relevant and useful in providing guidance in identifying traits that can enhance expert leadership behaviour (Germain, 2012). Trait leadership highlights how having a leader with certain traits is crucial for effective leadership.

2.2.2 Leadership as behaviour

The conceptualisation of leadership as behaviour focuses on the actions or behaviour of a leader towards enhancing the performance of a team or an organisation (Northouse, 2017). This scholar further explains that leaders can enhance the performance of others by influencing the processes that determine performance in different situations. Yukl (2012) stresses that for a leader's behaviour to be effective, the behaviour should be well-defined, observable and measurable, and suited to diverse leaders and leadership contexts. Yukl, Gordon and Taber (2002) identify three broad behavioural categories enacted by leaders in organisations. These scholars assert that leaders generally engage in task-oriented, relations-oriented and change-oriented behaviour. An assessment of the categories reveals they have different primary objectives. Leaders use task-oriented behaviour to perform tasks effectively and efficiently

(Yukl et al., 2002; Yukl, 2012). Leaders engage in relations-oriented behaviour to improve the quality of human relations by making people feel comfortable within groups and situations with which they are confronted. The category of change-oriented behaviour came into existence as a response to the evolving nature of organisations, and aims to implement innovative processes and procedures; encourage collective learning, and ensure adaptation to the external environment.

It is critical for leaders to have a balanced combination of task and process behaviour. Earlier studies on leadership as behaviour focused on the leader's influence on internal activities, and overlooked the impact of a leader's behaviour and interactions outside the organisation (Hassan, Prussia, Mahsud, & Yukl 2018). The externally oriented leader behaviour category emerged later, and advocates the use of networking in acquiring information and resources from external sources to promote the interests of the organisation (Yukl, 2012; Hassan et al., 2018). Although each of the behaviour categories has a specific objective, they are all equally important in optimising the performance of individuals in organisations. It is critical for leaders to discern why, when and how they use particular behaviours, and to understand that the use of behaviours is situation- and context-driven.

2.2.3 Leadership as values and vision

In addition to traits and behaviours, Bush (2003) makes use of two dimensions to conceptualise leadership. His conceptualisation uses leadership and values and leadership and vision. A leader's influence is grounded in personal and professional values, and therefore the primary role of a leader is the unification of people around values that are important to the leader and the organisation. The second component that is vital for leadership is vision. Successful leadership requires a leader who has a vision for his organisation, and is able to communicate this vision and use his influence to secure commitment among people in the organisation (Anderson, Ndalamba, & Caldwell, 2017).

2.2.4 Leadership as a process of influence

Bush (2007) conceptualises leadership as a leader's ability to influence the actions of other people to achieve desired objectives. Bush and Glover (2014) expand on this conceptualisation and define leadership as a process of influence where an individual intentionally influences others to achieve a common goal. Leadership can also be defined as a process of influencing the actions, belief system and behaviour of others in order to encourage them to work towards

the achievement of a specified goal (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013). The word process implies that influence does not happen overnight, but is a result of a series of actions or steps that are taken in order to achieve the goals of an organisation (Northouse, 2017). Defining leadership as a process of influence makes it clear that leadership is not the unique traits or abilities that a leader possesses, but it is an interactive phenomenon that occurs between the leader and the followers. What makes influence crucial to the process of leadership is that leaders affect followers.

Leaders focus all their efforts towards creating conditions that enable them to achieve common goals together with the followers (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). In instances where leaders and followers have common goals, the possibility of coercion or unethical action is significantly reduced (Milondzo & Seema, 2015).

2.2.5 Leadership as practice

Leadership as practice as a conceptualisation of leadership is not only focused on what people do, but also on how and why they do it (Spillane, 2005). The practice of leadership and management in a school is a result of the interactions of leaders and followers and their situation. The understanding of school leadership as a practice starts with considering the macro and day-to-day tasks around which leaders organise their practice (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). Macro tasks that are considered as necessary for instructional leadership include formulating a school's vision, monitoring instruction and teacher development, among others. The macro tasks, however, restrict access to the practice of leadership. It is the enactment of the day-to-day tasks that give leaders access to practising leadership. Leadership as a practice requires an understanding of how leaders in schools define, present and execute day-to-day tasks, and analysing how they interact with others in the process.

2.2.6 Emergent leadership typologies

Educational leadership has seen the emergence of new models to conceptualise leadership (Hallinger, 2003). The unique feature about these emergent leadership models is their explicit focus on how the enactment of educational leadership by teachers and school managers improves learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2005). The emergent leadership typologies that will be conceptualised in this study are instructional leadership, transformational leadership and distributed leadership.

2.2.6.1 Instructional leadership

One of the most critical roles of school leaders is instructional leadership, because it is believed to be the key factor for school effectiveness (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005; Khan, Khan, Shah, & Iqbal, 2009; Bush & Glover, 2014). Hallinger and Murphy (as cited in Aziz, Muda, Mansor, & Ibrahim, 2017) define instructional leadership as actions of principals that are focused on involving teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders in promoting and improving teaching and learning in schools.

As instructional leaders, principals have to prioritise activities that enhance the quality of teaching and learning, which is the core business in the school. The practice of instructional leadership is necessary in influencing the behaviour of teachers, implementing effective academic management, and improving the quality of teaching and learning so that teachers can teach effectively (Aziz et al., 2017).

There are many different models that explain what instructional leadership is; however, Hallinger and Murphy's model has been the most frequently used in empirical studies (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger, 2009; Bush & Glover, 2014; Bush, 2015; Aziz et al., 2017). According to this model, there are three core dimensions of instructional leadership in schools. These dimensions are: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme, and promoting a positive learning climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

In the first dimension, the principal's role in defining the school's mission is to work with teachers to make sure that the school has clear and measurable goals that are directed at the students' academic progress (Hallinger, 2003). The school principal has the responsibility of ensuring that these goals are communicated to and supported by the entire school community. The second dimension, which is managing the instructional programme, incorporates supervision and evaluation of instruction, coordination of the curriculum, and monitoring of student progress (Aziz et al., 2017). The principal's core role in this dimension is to develop the school's academic programme, and requires the principal's expertise in teaching and learning. The last dimension, promoting a positive school learning climate, has a very broad scope and purpose (Hallinger, 2005). This dimension requires leaders to create an environment that protects instructional time and promotes progressive improvement of teaching and learning. The principal has to ensure that there is continuous teacher professional development and incentives to reward excellence.

There are several challenges associated with instructional leadership. It has been criticised for placing more emphasis on teaching than learning, yet both are of equal importance (Hallinger & Heck, 2009). Bush and Glover (2014) acknowledge the role of the principal as an instructional leader, but point out that too much focus on the principal downplays the role of other leaders in the school, including the deputy principal. Bush (2015) recommends that instructional leadership should be a distributed function involving different leaders in the school.

2.2.6.2 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership, as conceptualised by Burns (as cited in Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005), happens when leaders and followers engage with one another, thus creating a connection that results in heightened levels of motivation and ethical behaviour. According to Hallinger (2003), the focal point of transformational leadership is the commitment and capacity of people in an organisation to bring about change. Transformational leaders in schools are mostly concerned with capacity building in order to support the development of changes to teaching and learning practices. Bush and Glover (2014) view transformational leadership as a comprehensive model that is mainly focused on examining processes by which leaders influence school outcomes as opposed to the nature and course of those outcomes. Transformational leaders are therefore not only focused on group performance, but also inspire and motivate individuals to reach their highest potential (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015).

To achieve high levels of commitment from teachers, transformational leaders ensure that the vision and goals of the school are shared by all stakeholders (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). These scholars explain that transformational leaders build strong cultures in their schools, and provide intellectual stimulation and individualised support towards personal and staff development. In addition to this, transformational leaders model the kind of behaviour they expect from others, which makes them have high expectations of their followers (Hallinger, 2003). In situations where transformational leadership works well, there is potential for a harmonious relationship between leaders and followers, which can lead to agreed decisions. Transformational leadership can pose a challenge where it is used to impose the values of the leader only, and not those that are shared by the collective (Bush & Glover, 2014).

2.2.6.3 Distributed leadership

Studies on school leadership have mainly focused on the leadership of the principal as the key to school effectiveness. Lu and Hallinger (2018) caution that focusing solely on the leadership of the principal indirectly overlooks the potential contributions made by deputy principals, departmental heads and teachers in effective teaching and the successful running of the school. This statement advocates a shift from traditional autocratic forms of leadership where only one individual at the top of the hierarchy has all the authority to lead.

Leadership in schools needs to shift towards a more democratic and distributed type of leadership (Sibanda, 2018). In a distributed leadership, leadership is not the responsibility of one person, but is shared among multiple individuals with varying skills and abilities (Spillane, 2005; Bolden, 2011; Goksoy, 2015). The distribution of leadership is not intended to undermine the important leadership role of the principal in a school, but is meant to highlight that leadership is more of a collective than individual practice (Spillane, 2005).

With the diverse nature and conceptualisation of leadership, Bolden (2011) suggests that instead of understanding leadership as a fixed phenomenon, it should be understood as fluid and emergent. In explaining the fluid nature of leadership, Bhengu and Myende (2016) point out that leadership is context driven, therefore leadership practices have to adapt to what works best in the prevailing situation.

2.3 The role of leadership in schools

Leithwood and Riehl (2005) define school leadership as the process of influencing and inspiring others to communicate and achieve the shared objectives and goals of a school. School leadership is a critical driving force to realisation of educational goals (Smith & Riley, 2012). Globally, school leadership plays a significant role in student learning, and has a remarkable impact on learning outcomes (Bush & Glover, 2014; Abrahamsen, 2018). Leadership in the school is the responsibility of the entire SMT, and is not only reserved for the school principal (Lu & Hallinger, 2018). The SMT has numerous leadership roles, but only three of them will be discussed in this study.

2.3.1 Developing the vision and setting the goals for the school

Developing the vision and goals of a school is a collective strategic activity of the SMT. It is critical for school leaders to have a vision for their school so that the educational goals can be accomplished. Good school leaders are skilled visionaries that empower and bring about transformation in the school. Vision is about purpose. It is future- and goal-oriented. It is a practical guide for creating plans, setting goals and making decisions. A clearly articulated school vision helps to keep everyone focused, and ensures that everyone works towards a common goal (Hallinger & Heck, 2002). In a school context, the common goal is student achievement.

The principal, in collaboration with other members of the SMT, has the critical responsibility of developing clear and measurable academic goals that focus on students' academic progress (Hallinger, 2005). Goals map out specific areas of focus and the resources that need to be allocated to such areas. Goals have time frames within which they have to be achieved, and clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the school. The mission of the school, then, clearly outlines how the goals are to be accomplished. The mission is communicated to all stakeholders, and should be clearly visible in the school.

2.3.2 Managing the school's instructional programme

The second role of school leadership is managing the instructional programme. In this aspect, the SMT works with teachers in curriculum-related matters. The principal, deputy principal and HODs observe the teachers' delivery of the curriculum in the classroom, and based on this, make formative evaluations that highlight areas of strength and offer support in problematic areas (Khan et al., 2009). Hallinger (2005) stresses that it is important for school leaders to possess expert knowledge in curriculum matters because there can be no proper supervision without it. It is also important to monitor the learners' progress in order to determine the effectiveness of the teaching, and also for the purpose of developing programmes to support both teachers and learners.

2.3.3 Promoting a positive learning climate

The third role that leaders play is promoting a positive learning climate. Khan et al. (2009) describe a school's learning climate as attitudes reflected in the school's patterns and behaviour that are influenced by the norms of the students and staff. Hallinger and Murphy (1985)

explained that the principal uses school policies and practices to communicate expectations and set standards for teachers and learners. They suggested that in order to influence the attitudes of teachers and learners, and motivate them to meet expectations, principals can introduce a reward structure. Hallinger (2005) elaborated on this notion, and stated that schools need to develop a culture of ongoing improvement in which the rewards alluded to by Hallinger and Murphy are aligned with purposes and practices. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) proposed six activities that can be instrumental in creating a positive learning climate: protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, developing and enforcing academic standards, and providing incentives for learning.

2.4 The roles and responsibilities of the deputy principals

In the international context, deputy principals have different roles and responsibilities that they play as stated in their job descriptions, or as dictated by the situations that prevail at a particular point in time (Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018). These roles and responsibilities may change from time to time as a result of changes in policy, amendments in legislation, and the frequent restructuring and reforms taking place in schools (Cranston et al., 2004). This section will highlight the roles and responsibilities of deputy principals in different countries and contexts.

2.4.1 International perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of deputy principals

Research on deputy principals is very sparse in African countries (Khumalo et al., 2018). Research that is available into the roles and responsibilities of deputy principals in Botswana and Kenya reveals that deputy principals have similar roles to their counterparts in South Africa. The deputy principals' main role in the contexts of Kenya and Botswana is to assist the school principal to organise, administer and control the school, working together with other staff members and learners to achieve the intended goals and objectives (Macharia, Thinguri, & Kiongo, 2014; Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018). Their role is also to assist the principal in key areas of leadership and management concerning teaching and non-teaching staff. They play an important role in developing and carrying out the vision, mission and strategic plans of the school, working with other members of the SMT. Over and above the roles and responsibilities that are stipulated by policy, deputy principals in Botswana also perform any other duties that are delegated to them by the school principal (Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018). Wong (2009) observes

that it is common practice for deputy principals to perform duties that are not specified in their job description, but are delegated to them by the school principal. Similarly, in the international context, the deputy principals in countries such as Norway, New Zealand and the USA (in Texas) also play a supportive role to the principal by performing administrative and management functions that are mostly delegated by the principal (Abrahamsen, 2018; Shore & Walshaw, 2018). Other roles associated with deputy principals include discipline, attending to the welfare of students, and interacting with parents.

2.4.2 Ambiguous job descriptions and leadership roles of deputy principals

Even though there are similarities in the roles and responsibilities that are associated with deputy principals globally, many of the job descriptions are unclear. What complicates the roles and responsibilities of deputy principals is that their explicit responsibilities are determined by the specific needs of other staff members such as the principal and the teachers (Barnett et al., 2012). Thus their roles vary between schools, districts and even across different countries. There have been calls to revise the role of the deputy principal. Abrahamsen (2018) describes how the role of deputy principal was reorganised to improve teaching and learning, and consequently improve learner achievement in Norway. Before the redesign, the hierarchical structure of leadership meant that the principal was the only figure of authority and leadership in charge of the general management of the school, while the deputy principal focused on teaching and performing administrative tasks delegated by the principal. In the new structure, leadership was distributed between the principal and the deputy principal, resulting in the deputy principal becoming the instructional and academic leader, with more authority and responsibility.

2.4.3 The deputy principals' instructional leadership role

Most of the literature on instructional leadership before and towards the 2000s placed the principal as the sole person who was responsible for instructional leadership in the school (Abrahamsen, 2018). Owing to many educational reforms that are taking place in many countries, there is a need for a shift from placing most of the responsibility of leadership on the principal to distributing leadership to the different leaders in the school (Wong, 2009; Searby et al., 2017; Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018). Distribution of leadership necessitated the creation of leadership teams where members could share responsibilities and contribute to a professional learning community within the school. Leaf and Odhiambo (2016) elaborated that as a

consequence of principals distributing leadership to deputy principals, deputy principals now have a more significant role to play as instructional leaders tasked with improving their school's performance.

Gurley et al. (2015) point out that principals are faced with the challenge of having quite a number of leadership roles that they play in schools, which leaves them with very little time to focus on instructional leadership. Murphy, as cited in Gurley et al. (2015), concurs that principals often relinquish instructional leadership to the deputy principals in order to reduce their own responsibility for it.

Principals often complain that instructional leadership roles are too difficult and challenging to deal with, and as a result they will try and avoid them whenever possible, and delegate them to deputy principals instead. The preceding argument makes it clear that the deputy principal is an important strategic partner to the principal.

Once the vision and mission of the school have been developed and communicated to the school community by the principal, the deputy principal plays a pivotal role in its implementation (Gurley et al., 2015). In their day-to-day practice of leadership, deputy principals work closely with HODs and teachers to ensure that the goals that have been set for teaching and learning are accomplished (Abrahamsen, 2018). They also encounter numerous challenges, and constantly have to make decisions. The vision and goals of the school guide problem solving and transformation. The deputy principals use their influence to achieve the goals of the school, foster teaching and learning, and build a culture of success and shared responsibility (Gurr, 2019). As instructional leaders, deputy principals ensure that the vision on academic performance is carried through.

As curriculum leaders, deputy principals work together with the principal to create a positive culture of learning. As previously alluded to, principals are often not available at school owing to other educational commitments. Deputy principals often work on the ground to ensure stability in the school. In their study, Bloese and Naicker (2018) demonstrate how deputy principals in South Africa create a positive culture of learning at their schools. The deputy principals in the study were sure that their physical visibility in the school made their leadership effective. In order to make their visibility felt, they engaged in activities like gate duty, where they controlled late coming by both teachers and learners. The deputy principals, together with the principal, would also walk around the school ensuring that effective teaching and learning was taking place. If a teacher was not in class for whatever reason, they would ensure that

someone was there to teach or supervise, and in this way they also protected instructional time. Being physically visible in the school means that deputy principals know what is going on in the school, and it allows them to apply corrective measures where and when necessary. In the same study, Blose and Naicker (2018) also emphasised the importance of rewarding teachers' excellent performance because it motivated them to work harder resulted in a positive school climate. These practices support Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership. The deputy principals were under no illusion that creating a positive school culture and climate can happen overnight. Blose and Naicker (2018) emphasise that in reality good values and practices take time to build, and leaders need to be patient during the process of building such cultures.

2.5 Deputy principals' understanding and perception of their leadership role

Most of the literature on the leadership role of deputy principals shows that most deputy principals perceived their main leadership role as that of being heads of academics or curriculum leaders (Cranston et al., 2004; Petrides et al., 2014; Gurley et al., 2015; Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018; Shore & Walshaw, 2018). As curriculum leaders, deputy principals are mainly responsible for ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place by planning, supervising and monitoring all activities related to teaching and learning (Petrides et al., 2014; Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018).

2.5.1 Deputy principals as academic leaders

Deputy principals also felt that as academic leaders, they had the important role of supporting teachers in their classrooms. They stated that to do this, they conduct class visits and performance evaluations with the intention of identifying professional development needs, planning for programmes that would enhance teaching skills, empower teachers and promote teacher practice (Petrides et al., 2014; Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018). As part of the professional development programmes, deputy principals have a responsibility to induct newly appointed teachers and act as mentors to teaching staff. There was a strong conviction held by many deputy principals that the success of the academic performance was mostly dependent on their leadership, and that curriculum leadership was a role that they were best prepared to perform (Barnett et al., 2012).

2.5.2 Deputy principals as managers and administrators

Deputy principals perceive their leadership to be vital to the issues of school management and administration. One of the fundamental components of management is planning. Deputy principals are described as “architects of school functionality”, meaning that their job involves a lot of planning, without which the school may be rendered dysfunctional (Bloese & Naicker, 2018). Deputy principals have to plan for all co- and extra- curricular activities in the school. According to Barnett et al. (2012), deputy principals manage student affairs, physical and human resources, and staff development programmes. They also play a supervisory role wherein they supervise teachers’ work, assessment activities and the work of non-teaching staff. According to Bulawa and Mhlauli (2018), some of the administrative functions that deputy principals in Botswana perform are financial management and facilitating the admission and transfer of learners in the school. As school finance officers, they are responsible for school finances and coordinating all school funds. As a member of the school’s finance committee, the deputy principal has to keep financial records and give reports at the finance committee meetings. Even though deputy principals gained satisfaction from performing management and administration duties, their levels of satisfaction with these jobs diminished when they were excessive (Shore & Walshaw, 2018).

2.5.3 Deputy principals as role models

As leaders, deputy principals consider themselves to be role models (Goksoy, 2016). It is therefore critical for them to lead by example. For their leadership to be effective, deputy principals state that it is important that they model the kind of behaviour that they wish to see in others. In a study that was conducted by Bloese and Naicker (2018), the deputy principals share this notion of modelling the right kind of behaviour. In their study, the deputy principals modelled quality teaching by repeatedly producing outstanding results, and this had a positive influence in the teaching practice of other teachers in the school. By arriving early at school and conducting teaching outside normal teaching hours, the deputy principal was able to eradicate late coming in both teachers and learners, and at the same time model excellent time management.

2.5.4 Deputy principals' perception of teamwork

Fostering teamwork and collaborative relationships is another crucial aspect of the leadership of the deputy principal (Lu & Hallinger, 2018). Deputy principals understand the value of teamwork as opposed to working in isolation. Teamwork as understood by deputy principals means learning to work together with the SMT without abuse of power and manipulation from their side (Shore & Walshaw, 2018). In Blose and Naicker's (2018) study, the deputy principals ensured that they consulted with SMT members, especially HODs, regarding important issues in the school and those affecting their departments before taking any important decisions. This allowed for the exchange of ideas and the freedom to disagree. This kind of interaction between members of the SMT is necessary because decisions are taken as a collective, and in most instances this results in increased levels of accountability. The horizontal communication approach allows for more cooperation among the SMT (Goksoy, 2016; Blose & Naicker, 2018). Fostering a positive teamwork culture strengthens collaboration among the SMT and teachers in the school, and provides opportunities for sharing knowledge and professional expertise.

2.6 Deputy principals' experiences of leadership

The transition to deputy principal is complicated by the fact that deputy principals are often not prepared for the challenges that arise from dealing with teachers, students, parents, the community and district officials, and this challenge is not unique to novice deputy principals, because even those with more experience complain about similar challenges (Searby et al., 2017).

2.6.1 Leading from the middle

Being a leader in the middle has its own complications. The bureaucratic structure within which the principal and the deputy function complicates their relationship because it places them at different levels of the hierarchy (Gurley et al., 2015). The principal sits at the top of the hierarchy, while deputy principals are at the second level, and thus become the middle leaders between the teachers and the principal. In this position, deputy principals are confronted with a range of challenges. Their power is often challenged because they do not have the same authority and power as the principal. In Abrahamsen's (2018) study, the teachers bypassed the deputy principal and went straight to the principal regarding matters that they deemed serious.

The deputy principals' interpretation of this action by the teachers is that their authority is less than that of the principal. Deputy principals also struggle with finding the right balance between **being** autonomous leaders and perceived as an extended arm of the principal by passing down the orders of the principal to the teachers, and as a messenger between the teachers and the principal (Mitchell et al., 2017).

2.6.2 Professional dilemmas facing deputy principals

In the study conducted by Shore and Walshaw (2018) in New Zealand, it surfaced that dealing with problems created by complaints against teachers by parents and students, as well as professional dilemmas that are a result of uncooperative staff, diminished the job satisfaction of deputy principals. Handling poor team dynamics and managing conflict involving teachers present huge challenges for deputy principals. The sources of conflict are many and varied, and include poor performance in the classroom, failure to comply with school policies and procedures, and being resistant to change (Shore & Walshaw, 2018). These situations of conflict cause a lot of emotional strain because of competing loyalties between upholding professional values and maintaining healthy and important relationships with colleagues. Deputy principals identified learner discipline as another challenge they had to deal with (Clayton & Bingham, 2018). In her study in Illinois, USA, van Tuyle (2018) identified deputy principals as disciplinarians. Deputy principals complained that discipline took up time that was meant for other duties because they had to attend meetings with parents to discuss learner misconduct and attendance, among other learner issues (Navarro-Corona & Slater, 2017). There were also many areas of administration and management that had a corrosive impact on their job satisfaction. These involved constant filling in of compliance forms, lack of preparation for the demands of the job, long hours which clashed with family commitments, and the challenge of managing unplanned and unscheduled tasks, among others (Barnett et al., 2012; Shore & Walshaw, 2018).

2.6.3 Deputy principals' relationship with teachers

Deputy principals value their relationships and social interactions with their colleagues because these enable them not only to survive the challenges and pressures that are associated with the position, but to grow and flourish (Shore & Walshaw, 2018). As deputy principals move from classroom duties to administrative tasks, they often feel isolated from their former teaching colleagues. The challenge that deputy principals face is that while they are still redefining and

negotiating their new roles, they also have to deal with loss of support from their former peers. Deputy principals are sometimes confronted with a conflict of loyalty between the school management and the teachers. Teachers and the school management are perceived as sitting on opposite sides of the school divide, and deputy principals feel that they are excluded from the teachers' side, but not yet fully accepted by the management (Mitchell et al., 2017). In Petrides et al. (2012), deputy principals reported that there was very little change in their job realities the longer they stayed on the job. However, they reported an improvement in how they performed as curriculum and instruction leaders. In Barnett et al. (2012), deputy principals also recognised the importance of understanding the expectations of the principal and the needs of staff members and students. Spending more time on the job allowed deputy principals to develop coping mechanism and to establish strong professional networks to deal with the stressful nature of the job.

2.7 Factors affecting deputy principals' leadership roles

In an attempt to gain insight into the leadership of the deputy principal, it is of great importance to examine the factors that contribute to how deputy principals execute leadership. For many deputy principals, the transition to the position is fraught with many challenges.

2.7.1 Time management

One of the challenges that are faced by some novice as well as experienced deputy principals is the inability to manage their time effectively as they find the job to be fast-paced and overwhelming (Barnett et al., 2012). Many deputy principals experience frustration in not being able to complete tasks efficiently and effectively because they regard their workload as being excessive. Bulawa and Mhlauli (2018) explain that the dual role of being a teacher and a manager is what contributes to the excessive workload of deputy principals. Once on the job, many deputy principals acknowledge the importance of having organisational and managerial skills. Searby et al. (2017) report that deputy principals lamented that their excessive workloads were physically and emotionally stressful, given the fact that they lacked the technical and procedural skills required to complete daily managerial tasks. The inability of the deputy principals to strike a balance between their professional and personal lives accounted for low job satisfaction for deputy principals (Shore & Walshaw, 2018).

2.7.2 Role definition

Much of the stress and frustration that deputy principals experience is because of the lack of role definition for the position (Mitchell et al., 2017; Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018). This means that deputy principals cannot plan and prepare adequately for their administrative role because the principal may delegate or add new responsibilities to them that may not even fall within the scope of their job description. Shore and Walshaw (2018) added that for many deputy principals the challenge was to successfully manage a role in which unplanned tasks took precedence over other scheduled and important tasks, making it difficult for them to complete tasks on time. All of these factors impact severely on the expected effectiveness of the leadership of the deputy principals.

2.7.3 School structure

The school structure also plays an important role in how deputy principals execute their leadership role. In a hierarchical structure that is inflexible and characterised by strict rules, the principal makes all the decisions, and delegates to staff members, especially the deputy principal (Goksoy, 2016). It is difficult for deputy principals to exercise leadership in such a structure because they have no decision-making power or authority. Cohen and Schechter (2019) explain that the position of deputy principals in the school structure means that their power and authority over staff members is determined by the level of support they get from the principal. There is a great need for power sharing between the principal and the deputy (Abrahamsen, 2018). A flexible school structure encourages independence, creativity and innovation. As leaders, deputy principals have to strive towards striking a balanced combination between vertical and horizontal communication lines.

2.7.4 The school context

Shore and Walshaw (2018) highlighted that besides the administrative and management factors, school context is an important factor that determines the effectiveness of the leadership of deputy principals. Blose and Naicker (2018) suggest that deputy principals that lead in a deprived context that is characterised by abject poverty, high rates of unemployment and a broken family structure can turn to leadership of care to help them deal with low levels of school effectiveness. A context of deprivation can result in low morale and lack of commitment from teachers, and a sense of hopelessness among learners. Deputy principals are best

positioned to restore morale and commitment in teachers by supporting them, acknowledging their efforts in spite of the discouraging conditions under which they work, because of the close working relationship they have with the teachers. A leadership of care can restore hope for success in learners and encourage them to continue with schooling. The reputation of the school and its geographical location were other school contextual factors that mattered to some deputy principals (Shore & Walshaw, 2018). For certain deputy principals, the reputation of the school was seen as a reflection of the quality of the role that leaders were performing at the school. The reputation of the school was also associated with positive self-esteem and high levels of confidence, and inspired the deputy principals to work towards maintaining the good name of the school, and leaving a lasting legacy about the leaders of the school.

2.7.5 Deputy principals' relationship with other members of the SMT

According to Shore and Walshaw (2018) deputy principals value relationships with the SMT because they provide them with motivation, a sense of professional belonging and support, and bring about high levels of job satisfaction on their part. Deputy principals expressed appreciation for diversity among SMT members. Where a culture of trust and loyalty has been established, diversity is not viewed as a potential cause for friction; instead, it will present opportunities for members of the SMT to complement one another. The principal was perceived to be instrumental in creating conditions for open discussions, free debate and disagreements (Abrahamsen, 2018). Such freedom assists in developing processes for conflict resolution. Deputy principals conceded that the principal had the right to make the final decision, but they viewed a wise principal as one who listened to the views of others, gave them the freedom and space to lead, and had faith in their capabilities. A relationship that is built on a team culture and values can create an enjoyable and challenging work environment. Teams that thrive are those that are unified around a common purpose.

2.8 Deputy principals' relationship with principals

The relationship between the principal and the deputy principal is very important because it sets the tone for other relationships in the school. Both the principal and the deputy principal need to forge a strong and mutually beneficial relationship. Schools are unique entities, so the status of the relationship between the principal and the deputy principal varies from one school to another.

2.8.1 The status of the relationship between the deputy principal and the principal

As Mitchell et al; 2017 & Walshaw 2018 point out, building a strong relationship with the principal is the most critical component in navigating the role of being a deputy principal. What can make the relationship between the principal and deputy principal tricky is that the duties of the deputy principal are to a large extent determined by the principal (Wong, 2009). Deputy principals' experiences regarding the kind of relationships they have with their principals are diverse. In a study conducted by Mitchell et al. (2017) in Canada, some deputy principals reported that they worked exceptionally well with their principals, while some had reported having difficult relationships with them. The relationships that worked well were characterised by care, support, open lines of communication and trust.

Deputy principals whose relationships with the principal were challenging were often left to feel insecure and incompetent (Abrahamsen, 2018). In some instances, cases of abuse of power and authority by the principal resulted in the authority of the deputy principal being intentionally or indirectly undermined by the principal (Mitchell et al., 2017).

2.8.2 A relationship based on trust and loyalty

A strong relationship based on loyalty and trust with the principal was highly valued by deputy principals because it created a strong sense of belonging and appreciation (Mitchell et al., 2017; Wong, 2009). Trust is viewed as the most critical and valued of the two virtues because it improves cooperation, empowers deputy principals to make meaningful decisions, and allows them to contribute positively in the school. Shore and Walshaw (2018) warn that a lack of trust and loyalty could render the relationship dysfunctional. A relationship of mistrust between a principal and the deputy principal is characterised by constant interference and micro-management by the principal.

2.8.3 The principal's leadership style

Wong (2009) that in instances where the principal's leadership style was autocratic, deputy principals felt unsupported because their views were being ignored and their authority was deliberately challenged. Sometimes deputy principals felt powerless because they had to support the principal's ideas regardless of their personal perspectives. They also felt cheated when all the accolades and praises were given solely to the principal. whereas they had put in all the effort (Mitchell et al., 2017). Such negative actions by the principal may cause stress

and result in deputy principals detesting their work. A strong and positive relationship with the principal is essential for a positive school climate, and no significant learning can take place without it.

2.9 Skills and competences essential for effective leadership by deputy principals

In order for deputy principals to be able to effectively play their leadership role, they need to be equipped with a certain set of skills.

Cranston et al. (2004) identify skills that are considered as vital to the role of deputy principals as interpersonal skills, effective and efficient management and administration, being able to inspire, having a vision, and being able to alter the vision to suit the prevailing circumstances of the organisation. Barnett et al. (2012) regard personal as well as professional traits as essential competences for effective leadership by deputy principals. Goksoy (2016) foregrounds technical, interpersonal and conceptual skills as critical skills that deputy principals need to have. The skills and competences foregrounded in these three studies will be categorised into personal traits, interpersonal skills and professional skills in order to facilitate a coherent discussion.

2.9.1 Personal traits

The personal traits that deputy principals need to have, as stated by Barnett et al. (2012), are: emotional intelligence, flexibility, and positive reactions to other people. The deputy principals in this study stated that it was most important for them to manage their own emotions because this would minimise unnecessary altercations and tensions between themselves and other staff members. Having emotional intelligence also meant having the ability not to take things personally, remaining calm during stressful times, and having emotional stamina for dealing with other personnel's issues. Being flexible and open-minded helped deputy principals to cope with the multitude of tasks that they had to perform and spontaneous decisions they had to make. The third personal trait emphasised the need for deputy principals to exercise fairness and equality when dealing with all personnel in the school. Goksoy (2016) has a similar sentiment of the importance of treating staff with fairness and being consistent in the way deputy principals deal with staff issues.

2.9.2 Interpersonal skills

Deputy principals regard having good interpersonal skills as important to their leadership role. Having strong communication skills and being able to communicate effectively are considered to be critical skills for deputy principals because they interact with various stakeholders including teachers, parents and leaders in the community (Cranston et al., 2004; Goksoy 2016). Closely linked to effective communication is the skill of being a good listener (Barnett et al., 2012). The ability to communicate effectively also strengthens relationship among the stakeholders, and minimises misunderstandings that can escalate into conflict. The ability to solve problems as soon as they occur also assists in minimising conflict. The office of the deputy principal is described as a “hive of activity” (Blose & Naicker, 2018). The multiple leadership roles that the deputy principal plays require that he/she becomes a good listener because different people come into the his/her office with a wide range of professional and sometimes personal issues and problems that need to be attended to. This makes the deputy as accessible, and results in improved staff cohesion.

The ability to delegate and empower others was considered to be essential because it did not only help to ease the workload of deputy principals, but also helped in building strong relations among personnel, which can result in a more productive workforce (Barnett et al., 2012).

2.9.3 Professional attributes

The deputy principals regard the following professional qualities as essential for them to possess: leadership and management skills, planning and organisational skills, and time management (Cranston et al., 2004; Barnett et al., 2012). With deputy principals lamenting about being burdened with administrative and management tasks, it is imperative for them to have those skills. A combination of effective planning of their daily activities and management can ease some of the administrative burden that they have to carry. Mitchell et al. (2017) maintain that effective time management can reduce the job-induced stress and tension that results from the deputy principals’ inability to complete tasks timeously. Those who manage time better experience higher job performance, increased job satisfaction and better work and home balance.

2.9.4 The need for acquiring skills in information technology

Poor time management, as previously cited by deputy principals in this study, robs them of the opportunity to focus more on instructional leadership, which is the core business in schools. Goksoy (2016) highlights the need for school leaders, especially deputy principals, to have information technology skills. Innovative schools invest in technical equipment because incorporating technology in teaching enhances and supports learning. Administrative tasks can be better managed with the use of technology. In the South African context, the administration of all public schools is managed using the South African school and administration management system [SA-SAMS] (van Wyk, 2015). Van Wyk (2015) suggests that it is imperative for deputy principals as administrative leaders to be knowledgeable about this programme, not only for the purpose of compliance with departmental regulations, but also for easing the burden of administration on their part. It is worth noting that the skills and competences discussed in this study are not exhaustive of all the skills required by deputy principals in their leadership roles.

2.10 Professional development for deputy principals

Most leadership preparation programmes focus on the principals. Research studies reveal that there are not enough professional development programmes to prepare deputy principals for their position and support them while they are expected to play a significant leadership role (Goksoy, 2016; Khumalo et al., 2017). In the absence of appropriate and effective professional development opportunities, deputy principals are thrown into the deep end, and have to use whatever means possible to swim out of the leadership crisis in which they later find themselves.

2.10.1 The need for professional development

The lack of professional development for deputy principals is a major stumbling block to preparing them for their leadership role and enabling them to become productive in future (Gurley et al., 2015). Professional development for deputy principals is crucial because in many countries, the position of deputy principal is a necessary stepping stone to a principalship. In

many countries in Europe and Africa, and in the USA and Australia, it is common practice for deputy principals to be appointed as school principals (Abrahamsen, 2018; Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018; Shore & Walshaw, 2018). The same practice, however, does not apply in South Africa, as any educator with the relevant teaching qualifications and years of teaching experience may apply and be appointed to the position of principal. Gurley et al. (2015) suggest that districts should develop succession programmes for deputy principals who aspire to be principals, as well as programmes to induct and support deputy principals who have no desire to be principals.

2.10.2 Identifying the gaps

For effective professional development to take place, it is imperative for deputy principals to identify management and leadership challenges they experience and the skills that they need to perform effectively (Cranston et al., 2004; Khumalo et al., 2017). Once the problems and skills have been identified, it will be possible to develop programmes that are suited specifically to develop skill sets that will enable deputy principals to better perform their leadership roles. Knowledge of the challenges and skills helps to put the dynamics of the deputy principal into perspective. Schools can then create an environment that empowers deputy principals to improve their performance and that of the schools. In their study, Barnett et al. (2012) identify key performance areas in which deputy principals required professional development. Their study revealed that deputy principals needed assistance in time management, conflict resolution, organisational skills and instructional leadership capabilities. Goksoy (2016) identified managing human relations as an area in which deputy principals required development. In their study that was conducted in Australia, Cranston et al. (2004) point out that deputy principals struggle to deal with financial management, various aspects of leadership, time management and performance measurement, and sought opportunities for professional development.

2.10.3 The principal's role in the deputy principal's professional development

Principals have the ability to provide meaningful professional development opportunities for deputy principals, and they should play a significant role to this effect. Barnett et al. (2012) recommend that principals organise and support on-the-job professional development programmes that are focused on building deputy principals' skills, effectiveness and self-confidence as competent instructional leaders. Deputy principals can enhance their leadership skills by engaging in activities such as designing, planning and implementing school-based

professional development programmes and leading school improvement initiatives. Gurley et al. (2015) suggest that the principal should establish leadership teams in which the deputy principal would be a critical member. To this effect, deputy principals and teachers could attend professional development together, and then collaborate in developing teaching resources and implementing new instructional practices.

2.10.4 Education districts' contribution towards professional development

There has been a strong call for education districts to develop induction and mentoring programmes for newly appointed deputy principals, and continuous professional development opportunities to assist deputy principals to cope with the transition to their new role, and be able to handle the many challenges that come with the new position (Barnett et al., 2012). The same call has been made for the need to set up systematic leadership succession programmes for deputy principals who aspire to be principals (Gurley et al., 2015). In Botswana, deputy principals have to attend a two-year in-service training programme, offered at the University of Botswana that is specifically designed to enhance the leadership of deputy principals (Mhlauli & Bulawa, 2018).

In the United States, the Assistant Principals Academy is a long-term, systematic, two-year programme that trains deputy principals as instructional leaders (Gurley et al., 2015). The programme aims to support and develop deputy principals' potential for professional growth, strengthen their leadership skills, and develop them as instructional leaders to ensure school effectiveness. Professional development programmes that are structured, continuous and tailor-made for deputy principals are essential for their effectiveness as well as the overall effectiveness of the school.

2.11 Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon the sensemaking theory to explain deputy principals' understanding and interpretation of their leadership role. Sensemaking is a process by which people give meaning to experiences that are confusing and unexpected (Weick, 1995; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005; Grodzki, 2011; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Sense-making seeks to give clarity and provide meaning to otherwise ambiguous phenomena (Mills, Thurlow, & Mills, 2010).

The process by which people give meaning to experience has been studied and applied in disciplines such as philosophy, sociology and cognitive science since the beginning of the

twentieth century albeit under different names (Weick, 1995). Sensemaking was introduced to information science by Brenda Dervin in an effort to understand the cognitive gaps experienced by individuals when they made an attempt to make sense of observed data. Researchers Russell, Stefik, Pirolli and Card introduced sensemaking to the discipline of human-computer interaction. Karl Weick introduced the notion of sensemaking in organisation studies in the 1960s as part of his ongoing research in organisational behaviour and strategic management (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). His book 'Sensemaking in Organizations' published in 1995 laid the foundation for the use of sensemaking as a theory that provided insight into factors that surface as organisations address uncertain or ambiguous situations (Grodzki, 2011).

According to Kudesia (2017), sensemaking happens through an ongoing process of enactment, selection and retention. Enactment describes the process of noticing and selecting ambiguous information from the environment. People act on these ambiguous events by making multiple interpretations. The selection process details how people draw from past events or experiences to find reasonable interpretations of the selected information with the aim of creating or restoring order. Interpretations that people consider as acceptable form part of their identity, and are negotiated through interaction with others.

Weick (1995) foregrounds seven interrelated characteristics or properties of sensemaking. The first characteristic asserts that people's perceptions of the world are shaped by who they are and their experiences. Identity is therefore a central feature in sense-making (Grodzki, 2011). Identity is something that continually changes because of different experiences that people go through, and as a result of interaction with other people (Mills et al., 2010).

These experiences and interactions have an effect on identity construction and on how people view certain situations. Secondly, past experiences have an impact on how current or present situations are interpreted, hence sense-making is said to be retrospective in nature (Weick et al., 2005). In trying to understand the present, reference is made to the past. A comparison is made between the current situation and a similar situation from the past, and people rely on the past to make sense of the present (Weick et al., 2005). Sense-making is therefore also a comparative process.

The sensemaking process is focused on and by extracted cues. According to Maitlis and Christianson (2014), this process involves focusing on certain factors to make sense of a situation while completely ignoring others. The choice of extracting certain factors over others is influenced by past experiences and perceptions. Kramer (2017) explains that it is practically

not possible to consider all the information about an experience; therefore, attention is focused on certain aspects of it to enable generalisability about it. Sensemaking enables people to interpret situations in a way that supports their beliefs. That is why the same situation may be interpreted differently by different people.

Another characteristic of sensemaking is that it is driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (Weick, 1995). When people are trying to make sense of a situation, they select meanings that make their sensemaking seem logical and reasonable rather than accurate. Weick (1995) and Kudesia (2017) point out that accuracy is less practical and fruitful because of the numerous and ever-changing identities and interpretations that exist among different people. Sensemaking is based on enacting sensible environments, which means that all interpretation and meaning making is based on experiences within one's environment (Brown, Colville, & Pye, 2014). The environment can either create or inhibit sensemaking. An environment that has been created by an individual supports his/her sense of plausibility. When people articulate their experiences, they are able to understand and interpret their thoughts, organise their experiences and control and anticipate events (Grodzki, 2011).

Sensemaking as a social activity acknowledges that an individual's interpretation of events is dependent on direct or indirect interaction with others (Mills et al., 2010). Communication enables individuals to share their narratives with others. These plausible narratives are then preserved or retained. Grodzki (2011) describes the social nature of sensemaking as being a result of progressive conversations we have with ourselves and others.

Kudesia (2017) describes sensemaking as an ongoing process that never stops because sense is never made in perpetuity. Individuals go through different experiences in their interaction with the world, and their reaction to these experiences simultaneously shape and alter their perception of the world (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Because each sensemaking event is triggered by a break in routine and uncertainty, it necessitates that individuals find new meaning in the processes involved (Mills et al., 2010). Therefore, this makes the process of sensemaking a sequential process that never stops.

2.11.1 Rationale for adopting sensemaking

Sense-making is the appropriate theoretical framework for explaining how deputy principals construct meaning about their leadership role. As an interpretative process, sense-making is grounded on the construction and reconstruction of meanings about a particular situation

(Abrahamsen, 2018). Literature reveals that within the school leadership environment deputy principals have multiple leadership functions that they have to perform. The deputy principals' interpretation and enactment of their leadership role has a direct effect on the schools' management and teaching and learning.

Maitlis and Christianson (2014) put forward three benefits that both individuals and organisations could accomplish through sensemaking: strategic change, learning and innovation. As leaders, deputy principals are sense-makers who shape the sensemaking of the teachers that they lead. If deputy principals are able to successfully influence the sensemaking of their colleagues, these individuals become motivated to make alterations in their own roles and practices. These strategic changes culminate in learning and creativity.

Deputy principals' experiences of their leadership roles are not consistent, but change according to the prevailing situation. This requires deputy principals to make sense of or construct meaning about their enactment of leadership in different situations in which they find themselves (Abrahamsen, Aas, & Hellekjær, 2015). According to Weick (1995), it would be impossible for deputy principals to consider all the information about how they understand and experience their leadership role. Deputy principals have to select that information that supports their pre-existing experiences, values and beliefs about leadership. They then construct meaning from the information selected, make interpretations thereof, and finally act on those interpretations. The enactment of leadership by deputy principals is also influenced by the social interactions with different stakeholders in the school, such as the principal and the teachers, and stakeholders outside the school, such as the district officials. The way in which deputy principals enact their leadership roles has an impact on how they develop their own identities as leaders, and how they influence school culture, procedures and practices. Maitlis and Christianson (2014) explain that sensemaking is an ongoing process for individuals and organisations in their quest to create order and make sense of everyday occurrences. Deputy principals are continuously engaged in the sensemaking process because they are confronted by perplexing and unexpected situations in their day-to-day enactment of their leadership role in schools.

This study explores deputy principals' understanding and experiences of their leadership role using sensemaking theory. In order to fully explore deputy principals' understanding and experiences of their leadership role, sensemaking theory was used in the selection of the research paradigm and design.

The interpretive paradigm and case study design generated thick and descriptive data that enabled the researcher to explore how deputy principals make sense of their real life experiences of leadership.

2.12 Chapter conclusion

This chapter discussed the leadership roles of the deputy principal in a school context. As a point of departure, conceptualisation of leadership was discussed. This was followed by exploring the role of leadership in schools. The discussion then zoomed onto the roles and responsibilities that are part of the deputy principals' portfolio. It was also important to comprehend what deputy principals understand and perceive their leadership role to be. The literature reviewed also provided insight into how deputy principals experienced leadership in schools, and the factors that impact on how they execute their leadership role. The position of deputy principal exists because they have to assist the principal therefore, it was crucial to examine the nature and the dynamics of the relationship between the two leaders. The last two sections of the literature review highlighted the competences and skills deemed essential for deputy principals to possess in order to execute their leadership role effectively and identified gaps and opportunities for professional development. Finally, the deputy principals' understanding and experience of their leadership role was seen through the sensemaking theory. The next chapter will outline the research design and methodology that were used to carry out the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the review of local and international literature on the leadership role of deputy principals provided insight into some of the compelling issues related to the role. In this chapter I present the research design and methodological processes followed in this study. The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate how the research design and methodology procedures were used to conduct this study. The discussion begins with the selection of the paradigm or lens through which the phenomenon is viewed in this study. The research approach and design and the selection of participants are presented next. The sections that follow thereafter outline the data generation and analysis procedures followed. I further clarify how fundamental issues of trustworthiness were ensured. The last section of the chapter addresses the ethical considerations that were adhered to, and how these were integrated into the study.

3.2 Research paradigm

Lincoln and Guba (1998) define a paradigm as a worldview or a set of beliefs that define the nature of the world to the researcher. The phenomenon of deputy principal's leadership in this study was viewed through the interpretive paradigm. Interpretive research is usually qualitative in nature, and favours methodologies that allow the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016). Researchers in the interpretive paradigm do not subscribe to the notion that there is only one reality; their view is that there are multiple realities (Creswell, 2014). The fundamental belief of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially constructed and context based (Willis, 2007). Researchers in the interpretive paradigm conduct research in natural environments and real-life situations (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). These researchers deem it critical to understand the context in which research is conducted. The interpretive paradigm posits that individuals' view of the world is shaped by their perceptions and experiences, which results in multiple interpretations of meaning (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). In essence, interpretive research recognises that different people have different perceptions of the world.

The interpretive paradigm is mainly focused on understanding the subjective world of human experience from within an individual, and preserving the integrity of the phenomenon being

studied (Cohen et al., 2013). As a researcher in the interpretive paradigm, I sought to understand the individual deputy principal's interpretation of his/her leadership role without imposing any influence based on my own experiences.

It was my belief that each of the deputy principals participating in this study understood and experienced their leadership role differently from their counterparts, based on the unique experiences each had. Although all the schools were in the same township, and were all ranked as quintile 3, they were all unique. The context in which each deputy principal experienced leadership was also unique. As a researcher conducting my study through the interpretive lens I was able to get in-depth knowledge and understanding of the real-life experiences of leadership of the individual deputy principals.

3.3 Research approach

The qualitative research approach was adopted in this study. The basic underlying feature of qualitative research is that knowledge construction is an ongoing activity as people engage in and make meaning of their experiences (Merriam, 2013). A principal characteristic of qualitative research is that reality is socially constructed by individuals as they interact with their world (Corbin, Strauss, & Strauss, 2015). A second characteristic of qualitative research is that it focuses on meaning and understanding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These scholars explain that qualitative research seeks to understand the experiences of individuals and the meanings that these experiences have within their unique social reality. In this study I seek to understand, from the perspective of deputy principals, how they understand and experience their leadership role. A second feature of qualitative research, as described by Corbin et al. (2015), is that the researcher is as central to the research process as the participants and the data they provide. The researcher is the key instrument for data generation and analysis. This affords the researcher the opportunity to further probe unanticipated responses, process data promptly, and crosscheck for accuracy of interpretation with participants (Merriam, 2013).

The researcher can further extend his/her understanding by observing non-verbal communication cues. However, it is important to acknowledge the shortcomings and biases of the researcher because they can have an effect on the study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommend that biases regarding the theoretical framework and the researcher's personal interest be identified and monitored instead of attempting to eliminate them. Acknowledging the biases is necessary in clarifying how they shape data generation and interpretation. A third characteristic of qualitative research is that it is an inductive process (Silverman, 2013). Unlike

quantitative researchers, who seek to test hypotheses and the strength of theories, researchers doing qualitative research use multiple sources of data to build concepts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Findings in the form of themes and categories are inductively derived from the data. Qualitative research is ideal for this study because of its richly descriptive nature. The use of words rather than figures provides in-depth knowledge into the phenomenon, context and the participants involved in the study (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, & Walker, 2013). In addition, sources of data including field notes, audio recorded interviews and transcripts can always be available to support the findings of the study, and contribute to the descriptive nature of qualitative research (Merriam, 2013).

3.4 Research design

The case study research design was used as a strategy to conduct this qualitative study. As explained above, the purpose of the study was to explore how deputy principals understand and experience their leadership role. Rule and John (2011) define a case study as a comprehensive study of one particular case in its real-life context; where the case may be a person, a group of people, a programme or an organisation. Litchman (2013) elucidates that a case study has to be represented by a 'case' or the unit of analysis which is the main focus of study. The case or the unit of analysis in this study is the deputy principal's leadership role. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident (Yin, 2014, p. 16). The case study methodology was best suited for this study because it allowed me to delve deep and thus gain full insight into what the leadership role of the deputy principal entails. Data generated through semi-structured interviews provided the empirical evidence to support the claims and conclusions made in this study. Deputy principals' understanding and experiences of their leadership role was explored within the real-life context of the schools where their leadership manifested.

Miles, Huberman and Saldanã (2014) explain that one of the distinguishing characteristics of the case study is that the phenomenon being studied occurs within a bounded context or system. This study did not seek to gain insight into all aspects of the leadership role of the deputy principal. The main focus of this study was to gain insight into how deputy principals understand and experience their leadership role. The case of the deputy principal's leadership was bounded within the context of deputy principals in the Umhlathuzana Circuit Management Centre (CMC).

3.5 Research site

The study was conducted in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The research site was the Umhlathuzana CMC, which is managed under Pinetown District. The Umhlathuzana CMC, which is under the jurisdiction of the national Department of Basic Education, manages a total of 35 public schools. Nine of these schools are high schools and 26 are primary schools. Out of a population of 35 schools, six public schools were selected for this study. Two of the schools are primary schools and four are high schools. All the schools are located in a township that is characterised by high rates of unemployment and a low socio-economic status. All the participating schools are ranked as quintile 3 schools according to the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996). The context of quintile 3 schools is that of deprivation, therefore school fees are not collected from parents. Quintile 3 schools mostly rely on the Departmental norms and standards for funding.

3.6 Selection of participants

Deputy principals that participated in this study were chosen from a population of schools with deputy principals in the Umhlathuzana CMC. They were sampled using purposive and convenient sampling methods. According to Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016), selecting participants using purposive sampling happens when the researcher selects a specific group of participants for a particular purpose or unique qualities that the participants possess. Cohen et al. (2011) explain that in purposive sampling, participants are selected because of their in-depth knowledge and experience of the phenomenon being studied or by virtue of their position. Purposive sampling is a common feature of qualitative and case study research. In this study, deputy principals were selected because the study focused on deputy principals' leadership role. There could be no one better positioned to talk about deputy principals' experiences of leadership except the deputy principals themselves. Their unique experiences of how they understood and experienced their leadership role provided in-depth information that was essential for understanding the phenomenon being studied. Convenience sampling is a non-random sampling strategy where participants are targeted because they meet certain criteria such as availability, accessibility and geographical proximity (Etikan et al., 2016). I opted for convenience sampling because the Umhlathuzana CMC covers a very wide geographical area. I chose schools that were close to where I work so that I would not have to travel long distances to meet the participants. Convenience sampling proved to be cost effective, and also made the process of data generation manageable.

The participants selected for this study were seven deputy principals. The criteria for selecting the participant was based only on the deputy principals' willingness to participate in the study. This study did not seek to make any comparisons based on experience or gender. While attending a principals' meeting on behalf of my school principal, I approached principals of schools that had deputy principals. I informed them about my study, and explained its purpose and relevance. I then requested the principals to grant me permission to meet deputy principals at their schools. The principals gave me permission to meet them, and I made appointments to meet with individual deputy principals. At the meetings I explained what the study entailed, and asked if they would be interested in being participants in the study. Most of the deputy principals that I approached were interested and willing to participate in the study. I addressed some of the ethical issues with them, and explained what would be expected of them as participants.

3.7 Data generation

The data generation technique used in this study was the interview. A research interview is a process in which the researcher engages in a purposeful conversation with a participant with the intention of eliciting information related to a research study (Merriam, 2013). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to generate data in this study. In a semi-structured interview there is a set of predetermined questions that initiate the discussion, followed by further questions that arise from the discussion (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Rule and John (2011) advocate the use of semi structured interviews because they allow for more flexibility during data generation, and create space for the interviewer to probe further and follow up on matters that arise from the discussion. Consistent with Creswell's (2013) views, semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to obtain more and descriptive data from the participants. In addition, they allow the researcher to clarify questions for the participants, and to observe and make meaning of non-verbal cues.

The data generation instrument was the interview schedule. I elicited the assistance of a fellow researcher and my supervisor in crafting questions to be included in the interview schedule. A fellow researcher was objective and assisted in crafting interview questions that would answer the research questions in this study. The interview schedule has been attached in the annexure list. Interview questions were forwarded to participants a few days before the actual day of their interview. Before the interview began, I asked for each participant's permission to audio-record the interview. Participants were also assured that their identities would be protected, and that

pseudonyms would be used instead of their real names. During the interviews, I also took notes. The contents of the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim.

3.8 Data analysis

In this study, both inductive and deductive processes were used to analyse data. The process of data analysis started when the data were generated, and continued until the process of data generation was completed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The deductive process began with identifying specific categories that emerged from literature, and these were used to organise the data (Rule & John, 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Data were deductively analysed by searching for patterns of correlation and disparity between the data generated from the participants and the literature that was reviewed (Silverman, 2013). The data were inductively analysed through open coding and thematic analysis. The inductive approach begins with observing raw data, which upon closer observation formed patterns, generalisations and theories (Rule & John, 2011; Creswell, 2013).

The first step in data analysis was data reduction. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) describe data reduction as a process that involves selecting, focusing, simplifying and transforming data that have been transcribed. A technique known as open coding was used to reduce the data. I thoroughly read the transcripts several times. The process of open coding involved assigning a label or code to a portion of text that was significant or meaningful in terms of the focus of the study (Cohen et al., 2011). Coding helped in reducing the many pages of data so that it became easier to make sense of them. The next step involved the use of codes to identify patterns of similarities and differences. The codes were then grouped into categories. After going through the process of reading and rereading the data, taking notes and making comparisons, the categories were further analysed until themes were generated. This process of moving from codes to grouping data into categories and generating themes is referred to as thematic analysis (Rule & John, 2011). The final themes generated correlated with the literature and critical research questions.

3.9 Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocate the use of the concept of trustworthiness to refer to the notion of ensuring reliability and validity in qualitative research. Owing to the multiple nature of reality and the diverse interpretations that individuals have of their world, it is difficult to establish reliability and validity in qualitative research. Judging scholarly rigour, quality and

transparency of the research process is done by exploring trustworthiness through the constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.9.1 Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility refers to the extent to which the research findings have recorded the fullness and essence of the data drawn from the participants' original data. Credibility ensures that the interpretations made in the findings represent the correct and original views of the participants. To ensure credibility in this study, I sought consent from all the participants to use an audio recording device to record the interviews. To ensure accuracy, the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Rule and John (2011) recommend the use of the technique of member checking as an additional strategy to ensure credibility. In this study, I used the technique of member checking by sharing the interview transcripts with the participants in order to ascertain that I had represented their views correctly.

3.9.2 Confirmability

Confirmability addresses concerns about the researcher's bias and influence on the study (Rule & John, 2011). Similarly, Shenton (2004) views confirmability as measures taken by the researcher in ensuring that the findings are a true reflection of the participants' perceptions and experiences, and not the researcher's biased views and beliefs. Probst and Berenson (2014) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016) propose that researchers engage in reflexivity wherein they declare and explain their biases and assumptions about the research they are conducting. These scholars explain that reflexivity clarifies to the readers of the research how the researcher's values and expectations have influenced the conclusion and recommendations of the study. A strategy referred to as a critical peer check is also used to address researcher bias (Rule & John, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) – an independent and objective person able to identify disparities between the original data and the interpretations made by the researcher. To eliminate bias in my study, I solicited the help of a fellow researcher engaged in doctoral studies to read through my report to check for the accuracy in the interpretation of data and findings. My supervisor was another critical reviewer that checked the data I had analysed.

3.9.3 Dependability

In qualitative research, the concept of dependability or consistency ensures that the findings are consistent with the data generated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study I ensured that there

was a clear audit trail of how data were generated, analysed and interpreted. The findings in this study can be traced back to the data and data sources. Using an audio recorder and field notes during interviews, and handing back the interview transcripts to participants for verification of interpretation were two of the measures taken to ensure dependability. The interview recordings and transcripts were handed to my supervisor for safe keeping.

3.9.4 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings of qualitative research can be transferred to another similar context or situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rule & John, 2011). The transfer of findings to other settings poses a challenge in qualitative research because the findings are unique to a single study undertaken in a specific context and the experiences of the participants being studied (Shenton, 2004). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommend the use of rich and thick descriptions of the context, participants and findings of the study to enable other readers of the study to transfer the findings to their own context. To ensure transferability of this study to other studies of a similar context, I provided detailed descriptions of the case under review and its boundaries, the phenomenon being studied and the findings of the study. The descriptions that I provided would make it possible for the readers to make comparisons with their own context.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The inception of this study was preceded by ensuring that all critical ethical standards and principles were observed and adhered to. Flick (2014) states that research ethics are mechanisms that should be applied to ensure protection for those who participate in research. As an initial step I approached principals, the gatekeepers in schools, to seek their permission to conduct research in the schools that they were managing. Once written approval had been received from the principals, an application to conduct research was made to the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Ethics Committee. The application process involved submitting a research proposal to the ethics committee. The application was reviewed at the sitting of the ethics committee meetings and full approval was granted on the 25th July 2019 (see Appendix B). An application to conduct research at schools was also made to the KwaZulu-Natal Head of Department in the Department of Basic Education. The Department of Basic Education granted ethical clearance to me on the 5th of July 2019 (see Appendix C). Creswell, 2014; Bertram and Christiansen 2017; Punch and Oancea (2014) identify three critical ethical principles that

researchers should adhere to. These principles are autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence. The principle of autonomy is underpinned by the concepts of voluntary participation and consent (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The purpose, details of what the study entailed and expectations of the study were clearly explained to the participants so that they could make an informed decision to participate voluntarily in it. As recommended by Cohen et al. (2011), participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw their participation in the study at any time. Participants signed consent forms indicating that they had agreed to participate in the study. Through the principle of non-maleficence, participants were assured that they would not be harmed in any way as a result of their participation. In order to ascertain that participants were not harmed, their identities and the names of the research site were protected by keeping them confidential (Punch & Oancea, 2014). The participants were assured that when the results of the study are published, pseudonyms would be used instead of their real names and the names of research sites. Lastly, Creswell (2014) insists that for any research to be worthwhile, the research should yield benefits for the participants, other researchers and the general public. Deputy principals participating in the study would get an opportunity to reflect on their leadership role. The Department of Basic Education would benefit by getting insight into how deputy principals understand and experience their leadership role, and thus focus on measures to enhance and strengthen the leadership capacity of these often forgotten leaders in school.

3.11 Setbacks encountered

A challenge that I came across close to the time of data generation was that some of the participants could no longer participate in the study because they had since been promoted to the position of principal. As a consequence, I had to find other participants to substitute for the promoted participants in a short period of time. The application to conduct research made to the UKZN Ethics Committee was riddled with challenges. Numerous attempts to solicit a response proved to be in vain. It was only after the intervention of the supervisor that ethical clearance was eventually granted at the end of July. The delay in the granting of ethical clearance delayed the process of data generation.

3.12 Possible limitations

It is a common possibility in research studies for limitations to occur. This study was no different, so it was important to notify readers of its possible limitations. The first limitation

could be attributed to the size of the sample, which was relatively small. There were only seven deputy principals out of a very large population of them. Another limitation arose out of the context of the research study. The participants were from quintile 3 schools in one CMC. The findings of this research study could not be generalised because of the small size of the sample and the limited context in which the study was conducted. The findings would only be understood in contexts similar to those of this study.

3.13 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter clearly outlined the research design and methodology used to conduct this study. I started by pronouncing that the study would be conducted through an interpretive lens. The discussion then proceeded to the selection of the research approach and design that were best suited to interpretive research. The context in which the research took place was discussed. I then explained the processes of selecting participants, and generating and analysing data. I also exposed setbacks that were encountered during the data generation phase. Ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness were also highlighted. The chapter was ended by discussing possible limitations to the study. In the upcoming chapter, I present the data that emerged from the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the participants. The data is presented in themes that emerged during the process of data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore deputy principals' understanding and experiences of their leadership role. In the previous chapter, I presented how the data were ethically generated and analysed. I also exposed the hurdles that I had to overcome during the data generation process. In this chapter I present the data. They are organised into themes that reflect similar or diverse perceptions from the participants. I begin by introducing the participants and shedding some light on the context of their schools. The presentation of the data unravels the participants' perceptions and experiences on issues of leadership, management and supervision. The data also explore how the interactions with different stakeholders affect the participants' leadership role. The final theme examines the status of professional development and its implications for the leadership of the participants. Lastly, I present the summary of the chapter.

4.2 Profiling of the participants and schools

Table 1 below provides brief profiles of the deputy principals that participated in the study. As previously stated, in terms of the Employment of Educators Act, No. 76 of 1998, the learner enrolment of a school determines its eligibility for a deputy principal post as well as the number of deputy principals the school qualifies to have (Republic of South Africa, 1998). Mr Gabela started his teaching career at Sibani High School, where he was subsequently promoted to the position of HoD, and is currently the second deputy principal in the school. He has a degree and substantial experience in teaching and management. Mr Skhotha had been an HoD prior to becoming a second deputy principal at Sebenza High School. He has an Honours degree and vast experience in both teaching and management. Mr Thwala was an HoD, and is currently one of two deputy principals at Funda High. He has a degree, a postgraduate qualification, and substantial experience as a manager. Mr Shona started his teaching career at Bumba Primary, was promoted to be an HoD, and is currently one of two deputy principals. He has a post-graduate qualification and extensive experience in teaching and management. Miss Jali has vast experience in teaching and management, having been an HoD prior to her promotion to the

position of deputy principal at Sakhile High. She has an Honours degree, and is the most experienced deputy principal of all the participants. Miss Nkosi has a degree and some managerial experience, having been an HoD prior to her appointment as the second deputy principal at Funda High. Mr Gwala was a level one teacher at a high school when he was appointed as the only deputy principal at Khanya Primary. He has a degree, and had almost no managerial experience except acting as an HoD for two months at his previous school at the time of his appointment.

Table 1: A profile of participants

NODP	NOS	HQ	TE	EDP	NODPS	SE
Mr Gabela	Sibani High	B.Ed	16	3	2	1100
Mr Skhotha	Sebenza High	B.Ed (Honours)	22	5	2	1450
Mr Gwala	Khanya Primary	B.Ed	10	3	1	720
Mr Thwala	Funda High	B.Sc. Scie PGCE	12	3	2	1180
Mr Shona	Bumba Primary	HDE ACE (Management)	23	5	2	1500
Miss Jali	Sakhile High	BA (Honours)	25	12	2	1120
Miss Nkosi	Funda High	B.Paed	16	2	2	1180

NODP = name of the deputy principal; **NOS** = name of school; **HQ** = highest qualification; **TE** = teaching experience; **EDP** = experience as deputy principal; **NODPS** = number of deputy principals in the school; **SE** = school enrolment.

4.3 Data presentation

The themes and subthemes that are presented in these sections are a culmination of rigorous inductive and thematic analysis and interpretation of raw data that were generated through semi-structured interviews. The themes discussed are a reflection of the participants' experiences and perceptions of the roles they play. The views expressed in the themes are supported by verbatim quotes extracted from the interview transcripts.

4.3.1 Working with the principal

In trying to gain insight into what deputy principals understand their leadership role to be, it emerged from the data that working with the principal is the main role of a deputy principal. This broad theme explores the role of the deputy principal as a principal's assistant, and how the relationship between these two important leaders influences their working relationship.

4.3.1.1 The deputy as the principal's assistant

In this study, the participants' understanding of what being a deputy principal means is consistent in that deputy principals are leaders who are there to assist and support the school principals in executing their duty of managing a school. With the various roles and responsibilities that deputy principals are expected to perform, participants regard giving support to the principal as paramount. The participants' utterances suggest that it would be overwhelming for school principals to manage schools on their own, hence there is a need for deputy principals to assist them in executing some of their responsibilities. Below are the participants' interpretation of what being a deputy principal means:

Being a deputy principal, means you're a leader. It means that you must work hand in hand with the principal of the school in making sure that the school functions well. Mr Gwala

If you look at the term "deputy principal", there is a "principal" there, which means that you must support the principal. We need to work together with the principals of schools. Mr Skhotha

Secondary to assisting the principal, participants also have to manage and support the HoDs.

To be a deputy principal, firstly, you are there to assist the principal and also to manage the HoDs. But mostly, it's to assist the principal in everything where you are required to. Mr Thwala

Being a deputy principal is first and foremost to give support to the principal, and to give support to the HoDs, right. So when you support the principal you are assisting the school to grow. Mr Shona

It emerged from the participants that in order for the deputy principal to be able to offer assistance to the principal, there is an expectation that the principal should delegate tasks or responsibilities to him/her. The nature and magnitude of tasks and responsibilities delegated to the participants is at the discretion of the principal. In Mr Skhotha's view, even if the principal has not delegated any tasks to the deputy principal, the onus is on the deputy principal to request the principal to delegate responsibilities to him/her.

*So, my understanding is that as a deputy principal, I need to support the principal in executing his duties. I need to ask him, or he needs to delegate the responsibilities to me, as a deputy principal. **Mr Skhotha***

Similar to Mr Skhotha's view, Mr Thwala and Mr Gabela's views also suggest that the deputy principal's work depends on the principal's ability and willingness to delegate.

*In fact, the principal delegates most of the time. As I have said earlier on, even if there's an official, sometimes the official does not speak to the principal, even if the principal is on the school premises. He just refers him/her to you: this is the one who knows what is going on in the school! **Mr Thwala***

*I have to assist all the HoDs and do more or less some of the duties that the principal does, and whatever he has delegated to me. **Mr Gabela***

Participants explained that as leaders, assisting the principal requires them to be able to take charge and step into the principal's shoes should there be a reason that warrants the principal not to be on the school premises. The principal's unavailability at school shifts all responsibility and accountability to the deputy principal. It is also understood by the participants that stepping into the principal's shoes means that as deputy principals they sometimes have to perform some or most of the roles and responsibilities that are usually performed by the principal. Accordingly, participants should be fully knowledgeable about the roles and responsibilities of the principal. This calls for deputy principals to be well versed in everything that pertains to the management and leadership of the school, as articulated by the participants below:

*When the principal is not there you become the acting principal. **Mr Gabela***

*My duty is to make sure and to assist the principal as well. So if the principal is not in, I'm acting as the principal; doing all the roles of the principal. **Miss Nkosi***

*When the principal leaves the school premises, you are the first person in charge. It simply means you have to ensure that the school is running... everything that is required to be done by the principal, you're also in charge of as a deputy. **Mr Thwala***

*Once the principal is absent, you're the principal. What does that mean? It means you must know everything, you know, pertaining to the school and what is expected of you. So you must make decisions, you must plan; you must deliver. **Mr Gwala***

A deputy principal is a principal. You're involved in management roles, all leadership roles of the school. Everything that the principal is doing, you must also know as a deputy. So it involves supervision, management, leadership; everything. **Miss Jali**

The statements articulated by the participants above give the impression that deputy principals have the same authority as the principal. However, this is not always the case. There are certain areas where participants have limited or no authority at all. Mr Gwala cited SGB functions and the school's financial matters as areas where he, as a deputy principal, did not have authority to make decisions. He says that when it comes to these matters he has to consult the principal because they are beyond his scope of work.

But obviously, there are some decisions that as a deputy, you can't make without consulting the principal. For instance, you can't take financial decisions ... not only finance, issues of SGBs sometimes. You'll find that they go beyond your scope of work. They would want the school principal because at the end of the day you'll find that whatever decision needs to be made on the day, the person who must be solely responsible is the principal. **Mr Gwala**

Mr Thwala presented a unique side to the argument. In his case, the decisions that he makes as a deputy principal are sometimes questioned by some staff members. In some instances, the decisions that he makes are overturned by the principal, and staff members are aware of this and use it to their advantage. It is then that feels that he does not have total authority. He often feels undermined by both staff members and the principal.

You don't have total authority! You don't have total authority! You can say A and B should be done this way. Others who are clever, they can go to the principal and they need to hear what his view is! But if the decision has not been taken by the principal, it's been taken by you as the deputy, but sometimes they don't take that decision seriously because they know that decision can be reviewed! **Mr Thwala**

A widely held view is that the main role that is played by a deputy principal is to assist the principal in managing the school and ensuring that there is effective teaching taking place. Over and above the roles and responsibilities that are stipulated by policy, deputy principals also perform additional duties that are delegated to them by the school principal. Participants have their own roles and responsibilities as prescribed in the job description, but they also have to shoulder additional responsibilities. But although the principal and deputy principal may play similar roles, they do not have the same authority.

4.3.1.2 Relationship with the principal

It is crucial to examine the status of the relationship between the principal and deputy principal because these two important leaders in schools are expected to work closely. The majority of the participants reported that they have a good relationship with their principals. The principal is viewed as very supportive. For Mr Gabela it is gratifying that the principal trusts him, and this strengthens their relationship. The trust between them makes him resolute not to disappoint the principal when performing his duties. In most cases the principal is perceived as someone who is approachable and easy to talk to. So when the participants have challenges, they can always speak to the principal. Mr Gabela strongly believes that it is important for the principal and the deputy principal to have a good working relationship, because if that is not the case, there would be divisions among staff members in the school.

*It's a good relationship. So by the time I got into the position, I already thought or knew that he trusted me. So whatever I do I cannot let him down, and what I believe, with the deputy principals, generally speaking, is that they've got to work hand in glove with the principal. If there's a bad working condition between the principal and the deputy, believe you me, the school would just collapse because teachers are very clever. They would see that, and then they'd take sides: some will support the principal; others will support the deputy. So if there're issues, you talk. You're not happy with something, you talk. He's good support material. **Mr Gabela***

Furthermore, Miss Jali appreciates it when the principal is upfront with her and the rest of the SMT. The principal guides them when they are not in the right path by showing them the right way of doing things.

*We have a good relationship with the principal. When he doesn't like something, he doesn't like something. When you do well, he will call you and tell you this is good, you must continue doing it. Even with the management, with us as the management, if there's something we're not doing okay; the principal will call us and say "I don't like this and that. You were not supposed to do this and that." So, he's an upfront person who takes his work seriously. He's very supportive. **Miss Jali***

As far as Mr Skhotha is concerned, he has no choice but to work with the principal because the principal is his immediate supervisor. This suggests that the relationship they have is purely based on obligation.

Yes, of course, the principal is my principal, he's my superior. I don't have any choice; I need to work with him. **Mr Skhotha**

Miss Nkosi and Mr Thwala are deputy principals at the same school. Miss Nkosi says that she has a good relationship with the principal. There has never been a time where she felt that the principal was not supporting her.

And with my principal, the relationship is good as well. So I've got no reason to say that I find my principal not supporting me as a deputy principal. **Miss Nkosi**

The same cannot be said of the relationship between Mr Thwala and the principal, though. Although the participant describes his relationship with the principal as good, he also indicates that they often do not see eye to eye. There seems to be some kind of a power struggle between them. The participant explains that when he takes decisions that he thinks are necessary and appropriate, the principal sometimes opposes those decisions. The principal even reminds the participant that he is the principal and the accounting officer, so the participant should stick to what has been delegated to him, and not go beyond that. In other words, the participant must do as he has been delegated, and leave decision making to the principal. As stated by the participant, for his relationship with the principal to be good it requires both of them to manage each other. His feelings are best expressed in the following transcript.

(After a long pause and sounding very hesitant) Ehm... professionally I will say we are good. I'd say we are good, although as I have highlighted to you, there are things you don't see eye to eye about because as a deputy sometimes you take a decision – you have to take a decision, and he may not be happy about it, and also even tells you that "I'm the accounting officer, I am an accounting officer! You have just been delegated to do A & B!" Once you overstep, you take a decision, it becomes a problem. But all in all, I'd say it is good. It depends on whether you able to manage each other. That's what is important – to manage each other. **Mr Thwala**

The dynamics of the relationship between the principal and the deputy principal are diverse. At the core of a successful partnership between them is trust. A strong relationship that is based on loyalty and trust is highly valued by deputy principals because it creates a strong sense of belonging and appreciation. Where the principal shows trust in the deputy, the partnership is strengthened. The principal provides the support structure that deputy principals need to be able to execute their duties.

4.3.2 The leadership role of the deputy principal

The participants regard themselves as leaders in their schools. In this theme they shared how they played a critical role in the implementation of the school's vision and mission. It also surfaced that the participants considered it important to be role models. Lastly, this theme examined the participants' perceptions of leading from the middle.

4.3.2.1 Implementing the school's vision and mission

Participants consider themselves to be leaders in their schools. They view leadership as one of the essential attributes of being a deputy principal. One participant considers it imperative for deputy principals to provide leadership in times of challenges. Schools have learning outcomes to achieve, and it is imperative for school leaders to have foresight into how these outcomes can be achieved. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the participants to ensure that the activities they engage in with the SMT and other stakeholders are geared towards the realisation of what is envisaged in the vision and mission of the school.

*When it comes to leadership, whenever there's a challenge you must rise and provide leadership as the deputy principal of the school. Being members of the school management team, we also need to make sure that we work together as a team in order to make sure that we realise the goals that we might have set as the school. These goals are informed by the vision that the school has as well as the mission. **Mr Skhotha***

According to Mr Shona, leadership exposes him to different environments within the school. His role as a leader is to ensure that the vision and mission of the school is implemented.

*As a leader, you get the opportunity to lead the teachers and the learners as well. So the leadership exposes you to different environments within the school setup. So as a leader, the duty is entrusted to you to see that the school develops and performs what is needed, and to implement the vision and mission of the school. **Mr Shona***

Miss Jali considers it important as a leader to share with the HoDs the vision she has on a number of different issues, such as staff development and capacity building.

*A leader is a person who has vision and so on. As leaders we sit down with the HoDs; we deliberate on some issues, like staff development, for example. **Miss Jali***

It is Mr Gabela's understanding that as a leader, he is responsible and accountable for everything that happens at the school. By his own admission, leadership is a collaborative effort between members of the SMT.

I'm part of senior management, so it means whatever happens in the school, the entire school, I'm also accountable and responsible. Mr Gabela

The participants fully grasped that they have a leadership role to play in the school, and as deputy principals they have an important role to play in the implementation of the vision and mission of the school. Once the vision and mission of the school have been developed and communicated to the school community by the principal, the deputy principal plays a pivotal role in its implementation. It is noted that some participants perceive the functions of leadership and management to be the same thing.

4.3.2.2 Deputies as role models

There was general consensus among the participants that as leaders they need to model the kind of behaviour that they wanted to see in other staff members. According to one participant, being an effective leader means that the people you lead should see you do what you expect them to do. One aspect in which participants deemed it important to lead by example is teaching learners. As subject teachers themselves, participants report that they always ensure that they honour their teaching periods timeously and prepare thoroughly before going to class to teach.

Being effective means people must see YOU first doing what you want them to do. So I find that working for me because if I'm supposed to be in class, I'll go to class on time. So it is easier therefore to tell them, you know what, let's learn that when you attend classes, love your work. So that is the most important thing. Miss Nkosi

Mr Skhotha echoed these sentiments. In addition, he cited punctuality as another area where he is exemplary, because it assists him to deal with late- coming at his school.

I try my best to be exemplary in terms of the time at which I come to school. I need to be here, at the latest at half-past 7, because we must deal with late coming as well. You cannot expect people to be here at half-past 7 when you come to school at 8 o'clock. I've got two Grade 12 classes that I teach, so I need to make sure that I go to class every day, prepared with my lesson plans. That is one way of showing teachers that they must

also prepare their lesson plans, they must be in class on time, prepared to teach. That is one way of leading by example. Mr Skhotha

Participants keep to stipulated dates when it comes to deadlines and the submission of work. They argued that if they did not lead by example, it would be difficult to delegate colleagues to do the things that they themselves fail to do.

Lead by example. You cannot tell people to submit, you cannot tell people to do well, and you cannot tell people to go to class if you don't do those things. Mr Gabela

Mr Thwala points out that you cannot preach what you don't practise because your colleagues can go as far as reporting to the principal that the deputy principal expects them to do things that they personally do not do. Even from a supervision or management perspective, participants agree that one cannot manage or supervise effectively if they do not practise what they preach.

As well, you need to be a leader; show them how work should be done, show them. Don't just preach what you don't practise because they are looking at you as a deputy! If you don't have a file as a deputy, to be specific, they will go to the principal and complain that Mr so and so is asking for a file, but he doesn't have a file! And he also doesn't show us what to do! You need to be able to show them that "This is what you are expected to do," rather than say "This is what I need from you!" Mr Thwala

As leaders, deputy principals consider themselves to be role models. They were of the conviction that if they led by example, it was most likely that staff would emulate them.

4.3.2.3 Leading from the middle

When the participants were asked how they viewed the notion of deputy principals being regarded as leading from the middle, their responses were quite interesting and diverse. Initially, Mr Thwala called himself a mediator, and later a transporter of bad news between the teachers and the principal. When teachers have issues that need to be communicated to the principal, they communicate these through the deputy principal because he works closely with the principal. When the principal wants to give directives that may not be well received by teachers, he delegates his deputy to do so, and in that way the latter is perceived as a transporter of bad news.

*As a deputy you are expected to be a mediator between educators and the principal. If they have challenges with the principal, they come to you because they are saying you are closer to the principal. Now you are also expected to be a mediator at the same time; to say, “Principal, this is what is happening, this is the concern of the educators.” I cannot say you become a mediator, but you become somebody who transports bad news if there is bad news. You have to transport the bad news the way it is! If the principal tells you A & B should happen in this way, you should go to the teachers and explain to them that the principal has said A & B should happen in this way. **Mr Thwala***

Mr Gwala shared the sentiments of Mr Thwala, that he is the middleman between the principal and the HoDs and teachers. He refers to himself as a “messenger” because he takes issues back and forth between the principal and HoDs or the teachers.

*I’m a messenger between the HoDs and the principal – yes, between the HoDs and the principal. I take the issues from the HoDs or from the teachers to the principal. Also, the principal gives me an instruction to pass on to the HoDs or the teachers. **Mr Gwala***

Mr Skhotha views this position in a slightly different way. It is not so much about passing instructions between the principal and the rest of the staff. For him it is challenging to have to deal with the frustrations from both the principal and the HoDs. He always has to find a way of managing these frustrations.

*Yes, it’s very challenging sometimes because you’ve got your HoDs – if they’ve got frustrations they come to you. On the other hand, you’ve got the principal; if the principal’s got frustrations, he comes to you. So, you need to manage, all these situations as a deputy principal. It’s very challenging. **Mr Skhotha***

Mr Gabela enjoys leading from the middle because this position allows him to be able to avoid taking responsibility at certain times. The principal is there to account for everything that happens in the school. When there are problems with curriculum implementation, or when things are not going well in the departments, the HoDs are the ones that are responsible and accountable. He is very quick, though, to clarify that he still does a lot to support the principal, HoDs and teachers.

For me personally, I love that. I don’t know whether it’s running away from the ultimate responsibility because whatever happens in the school now and the school entirely, you know, the first line, it goes to the principal, the principal accounts. And then if the

departments are not doing well, HoDs account, and you are still just in the middle. However, that does not make your work less or makes you less important. You have a lot to do to assist the principal, the teachers and the HoDs. You're the go-to, you're the middle person. **Mr Gabela**

Mr Skhotha rejected the view that leading from the middle means that the deputy principals can sometimes avoid taking responsibility. He cites that when officials from the Department of Basic Education visit a school, they ask to meet with both the principal and the deputy principal. Both have to account. The deputy principal cannot then make an excuse that they cannot account because there are certain things that they do not know about. As the principal's assistant, the deputy principal has to know everything that is happening in the school. Mr Skhotha said that as a deputy principal he must always be in a position to solve problems and intervene whenever it is necessary.

(Participant smiles and shakes his head) Ja, I've heard about that one – that if there is something that they need to account for, they say "I don't know about that one, the HoDs are dealing with that one." If it is more serious, they say "The principal has got to deal with that one." But in high school, if I can give an example, there's no way that you can do that because if the officials come to the school, they want to see the principal together with the deputy principal; you need to account. So you cannot come up with excuses that you don't know. **Mr Skhotha**

Mr Shona completely dismissed the idea that deputy principals are leading from the middle. According to him, such a view can be an indication that duties are not delegated to the deputy principal. He goes on to say that deputy principals who hold this view do not understand what their duties are. Even if the principal does not delegate duties to the deputy principal, deputy principals have their own specific roles and responsibilities that are clearly stipulated in the ELRC file. He refutes the idea that there can ever be a time when deputy principals are not accountable.

In fact, it's not supposed to be the case whereby a deputy principal is in the middle. That is an indication that there are duties that are not delegated to him or her. Even if there are no duties that are delegated to him or her, that deputy principal must not expect to be delegated to because you have got the ELRC file. It is clear about what you do as a deputy principal. So I don't like that angle that no, we're in the middle, we don't want to account and so forth. So the culprit number 1 is not the principal who does not

delegate the duty, the culprit is the deputy principal himself or herself, because as workers we are contracted to do some duties. **Mr Shona**

The deputy principals also struggled with finding the right balance between being autonomous leaders and being perceived as an arm of the principal, passing down his/her orders to the teachers, and as a messenger between the teachers and the principal. There are diverse perceptions and experiences of leading from the middle. Some participants perceive themselves as the liaison between the principal and staff. Another dimension is that it can be problematic to lead from the middle where the deputy principal is regarded as a leader with less authority than the principal. On the contrary, one participant totally refuted the notion that deputy principals lead from the middle, and regarded anyone who embraces this view as making excuses for not performing the duties they are supposed to.

4.3.3 Sharing responsibilities between deputy principals

In my quest to understand the role that deputy principals play in schools, it was necessary to find out how responsibilities are shared between deputy principals in schools where there are two deputy principals. At Bumba Primary and Funda High School, one deputy principal is responsible for curriculum implementation and management, while the other is responsible for administration.

As I've indicated before, we're two deputy principals. One is responsible for the administrative duties of the school, the other is for the curriculum management, development and implementation. So me, I'm responsible for curriculum management, implementation and development. **Mr Shona**

In our school we have a curriculum deputy and admin deputy. I'm an admin deputy. Whatever needs to be done in that office; I'm the one who is responsible. But sometimes you find that other things need doing – for example, checking that teachers are in class, I also go there. I also monitor. **Mr Thwala**

At Sibani, Sebenza and Sakhile High Schools, however, both deputy principals perform curriculum and administrative tasks. At Sibani High School, Mr Gabela is responsible for all matters relating to the GET phase, while the other deputy principal at his school is responsible for all matters relating to the FET phase. At Sebenza and Sakhile High Schools, each deputy principal is responsible for managing a certain number of HoDs. Mr Skhatha supervises two out of the five HoDs at his school, while Miss Jali supervises three out of the five HoDs at her

school. Added to the responsibility of managing HoDs, participants also have to supervise non-teaching staff members.

There are two deputies...we don't have like strictly academic or curriculum and then strictly administrative. We divided into GET and FET. So, I do everything with the GET, both academic and admin. I'm not just deputy principal academic, I'm both academic and administrative for GET, and she is FET. Mr Gabela

We're two. We're both involved academically, in academic work, supervising the HoDs. So of the five HoDs that we have, I'm supervising three, and my colleague is supervising two. On top of that we supervise the non-teaching staff. I'm supervising the cleaner, and my colleague is supervising the admin clerk. Miss Jali

Mr Skhotha is critical of the scenario where one deputy principal focuses on curriculum matters and another on administration. In his opinion, in a school with as many learners and teachers as his, this arrangement would result in an imbalance of the workload between the deputy principals, whereby the curriculum deputy principal would be overburdened.

Okay, our structure in this school is different from other schools because I hear some people talk about deputy curriculum, deputy administration. If you look at the size of our school – if you can say you've got somebody that's responsible for administration and then another one is responsible for curriculum, you'll realise that a curriculum deputy principal is going to be overloaded because we've got five departments in this school. So, what we decide to do is to say that these two deputy principals must be in charge of these departments. Mr Skhotha

Mr Gwala is the only deputy principal at his school, so he shares responsibilities with the principal. The principal deals mainly with issues of governance, while Mr Gwala deals with curriculum and administration. On his own, Mr Gwala has to perform duties that are shared between two deputy principals in the other schools.

We try and divide the scope of work that we have. Usually the principal deals with the governance of the school, and I deal with teacher support, teaching aides, requisition, and administrative work. Mr Gwala

In the absence of a policy or guidelines that define the role of each deputy principal where there are two deputy principals in a school, the division of responsibilities between deputy principals is determined by the needs and preferences of individual schools. There are serious

implications for schools where deputy principals only focus on one area of management, that is, either curriculum or administration.

4.3.4 Ensuring effective curriculum implementation and administration

As part of being leaders, participants are also responsible for ensuring effective curriculum implementation, which includes curriculum delivery and administration. When it comes to curriculum delivery, there are various activities that participants have to plan and organise. At the top of the list is ensuring that there is uninterrupted curriculum delivery. The participants work very closely with the HoDs, who are the curriculum managers, in ensuring that the programmes for teaching and learning are in place, and that teachers are consistently following the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) and engaging in planned assessment programmes.

*My duty is to make sure there is effective teaching and learning at Funda High School. I liaise with HoDs, and we have meetings every Monday, when we speak about curriculum issues, check the ATP (Annual Teaching Plan) to see if teachers are on a par with or ahead of it, and see that there'll be teaching that is taking place; there's assessment that is done in class. **Miss Nkosi***

*As the deputy principal (curriculum), I must make sure of issues pertaining to the assessment programme of the school, I draft it for the grades that do the assessment up to the highest grade, for what you call the assessment management programmes. Then I do the control and monitoring system for the teachers where there has to be an allocation of the duty load. **Mr Shona***

As part of planning, deputy principals have to ascertain that there are resources needed to implement teaching and learning.

Other curriculum-related activities participants manage include allocation of duties and drawing up of different timetables. For the participants, it is crucial to ensure that the school environment is conducive for teaching and learning.

At school you must organise. You must make sure that whatever teaching material that teachers might need must be there. Your timetable must be organised. You must plan; you must make sure that the school is ready for teaching and learning. The duty load must be distributed fairly, and in time. You need to organise, starting from the curriculum, but going outside the school environment: is the school conducive for

*teaching and learning? I liaise with teachers and see if, according to our teaching year plan, you are executing all the things you have set for yourself to do. I check and consult with the HoDs if everything is being implemented. **Mr Gwala***

*One of the things that you do as a leader at school is planning. That is the most important thing that you need to do together with other members of the SMT. You do planning particularly at the beginning of the year. You do a lot of planning when you plan curriculum. As part of planning, you also need to assess and evaluate the resources that the school has. For a school to be able to operate up to its optimum level, it is important that you create an enabling environment. **Mr Skhotha***

Participants are also responsible for capacity building in curriculum matters. Mr Shona, a deputy principal who is focused on curriculum management, is tasked with making sure that teachers are kept up to date with policies pertaining to the curriculum because they are central to curriculum implementation in the classroom. Mr Shona assessed the effectiveness of curriculum delivery, and identified needs for capacity building.

*My duty as a curriculum deputy principal is one for the purpose of teacher development. When there are matters of policy, the curriculum policy, it is my responsibility to make sure that the teachers are apprised of those policies before their implementation. And after the implementation, it's my responsibility to make the recommendation depending on the outcome of the implementation of that curriculum policy. I must review it, make recommendations whether teacher development is needed. **Mr Shona***

Similarly, another participant, Miss Jali, mentions that she is responsible for mentoring and building capacity among HoDs. Capacity building for both teachers and HoDs is essential for improving curriculum delivery.

*The role that you play as a deputy principal, one is mentoring; mentoring the HoDs, capacitating them because you're supervising the HoDs. **Miss Jali***

The participants also receive support from the Department of Basic Education, especially from the subject advisers, because they play a crucial advisory role for teachers. As curriculum managers, the participants often network with peers from neighbouring schools to broaden their knowledge base.

You also need support from officials. The officials could mean the circuit managers; they give us support. The subject advisers play a very important role in advising

teachers about subject content. Another thing: in this circuit we network with other schools. **Mr Skhotha**

Participants also perform administrative tasks as part of their responsibilities. They are responsible for everything related to filing, record keeping and data capturing. Being the only deputy principal in a school that does not have an administration clerk, performing numerous administration duties proved to be too much for Mr Gwala to handle.

You must record whatever you have at school... and even the fact that we don't have a clerk... it becomes a lot. And SASAMS marks, you must make sure that everything is recorded and your analysis; crafting of exam timetable, you know... Basically keeping files of everything; records of everything. **Mr Gwala**

Participants mention that they are also involved in the admission of learners into the school, when they have to ensure that learners have all required documentation on registration. Participants are responsible for ensuring that all data, including learner assessment marks, are correctly captured on SASAMS.

Even in terms of administration, whatever needs to be filed, whatever needs to be recorded, it is your responsibility. And also, when you talk about administration, you also have to supervise the clerk. I do that to ensure that everything that is required in terms of SASAMS is recorded correctly. The marks from the HoDs are correctly recorded. Do they check the assessment? **Mr Thwala**

I assist in admitting the learners at school; that is administration, and making sure that all the learners in the school have all the paperwork they need. **Miss Nkosi**

Participants have multiple tasks to perform in relation to effective curriculum implementation. They engage in various activities to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning.

4.3.5 Working with different stakeholders

As they perform their duties, deputy principals have encounters with different stakeholders in the school. The participants in this study highlighted that the stakeholders they mostly interact with are HoDs, teachers, learners and parents. This section focuses on the deputy principals' experiences of interacting with these stakeholders.

4.3.5.1 Supervising heads of department

One of the key roles of a deputy principal as it emerges from the data is to manage and supervise the work done by the HoDs. The participants have to ensure that HoDs perform their role of curriculum management and supervising the work that is done by teachers. Below are some of the utterances from the participants:

In fact, my duty is to monitor the HoDs; to check that they do their work. Do they check the curriculum from the educators? Do the HoDs ensure that all teachers attend classes? **Mr Thwala**

...I manage that they do what they are supposed to be doing. What they're supposed to be doing is to manage teachers, to see if they are doing what they are expected to do. **Mr Gwala**

Participants report that they generally work well with most of the HoDs that they supervise. Mr Gwala gives credit to the HoDs he supervises for making it easy for him to execute his duties. They do this by being cooperative and having a good relationship with one another.

I think my HoDs play a very crucial role. They take instructions and they implement them. They treat me as if I'm their son, so we've got that mother-son relationship; so it's easy for me to do my job...So I think that has helped me a lot in playing my role as a deputy principal. **Mr Gwala**

The participants also admit that they sometimes have challenges with some HoDs that do not perform their supervisory role in the way they are supposed to. The participants cited cases where HoDs did not have regular meetings with the teachers that they supervised did not do enough to monitor the work done by the teachers, and intervening when there were problems.

An HOD who is not doing what he's supposed to be doing: not having regular meetings as he is supposed to be, not having the one-on-ones, not intervening. You know your subjects in a department, and you know which subject is not doing well. **Mr Gabela**

One of my HoDs is applying laissez faire too much to her colleagues that she's supervising, and you'll find that that thing that she's doing is wrong. You call that HoD and say "But So-and-So, this is not the way to do it, it is not right to do this and that." **Miss Jali**

While the participants acknowledged the uniqueness in the characters of the HoDs, they still expected them to comply with all the directives they are given. It emerged from the participants that while they find the majority of the HoDs easy to manage, there is always that one who is a challenge to manage. Miss Nkosi supervises three HoDs. Two cooperate very well and meet deadlines, but she has a challenge with the one whom she describes as very stubborn because this particular HoD does not comply with directives given to them.

You know we're of different characters. Some people don't like to be told, they're stubborn! They want to do things in their own time, you see; not at that time when you want something... But it's only one person that I have trouble with. The other two HoDs comply very well, they don't have a problem; they meet deadlines. (Sounding irritated) OH! The other one is very stubborn! Miss Jali

Miss Nkosi also has a challenge with one of the HoDs that she supervises. This one not only challenges her, but also does not recognise the authority of any of the other SMT members including the principal. This HoD is bitter because an ex colleague was not appointed to be the principal of the school. She does not honour any of the deadlines set by the participant, and is always angry about everything. She goes against everything that the SMT does, and never cooperates with any directive given by the participants, principal or any other member of the SMT. As a result, it is very difficult to work with her.

So now what is the problem we're facing. you'll find as managers I don't know whether she doesn't recognise us or what is happening. It is very difficult to work with her, but we are trying, because she's not submitting on time. You can see that she's against everything that we're doing. I know that the current principal was not supposed to be the principal because somebody else was supposed to be the principal. And now she's very, very angry about everything. And there are times when you go to her asking for whatever you need, and you can see that she doesn't want to cooperate. The other HoDs are inexperienced, but they do their work in the way that is expected...Miss Nkosi

In most cases, the HoDs cannot meet deadlines because they also have challenges with the teachers that they manage. When teachers fail to meet the deadlines set by the HoDs, then the HoDs cannot honour the due dates set by the deputy principals. The HoDs often take their frustrations to the deputy principal as the immediate supervisor. HoDs then expect the deputy principal to talk to teachers and somehow persuade them to keep to the stipulated deadlines. The justification HoDs put forward is that teachers are more likely to act more quickly when

the instruction comes from the deputy principal because they are in a higher position than they are. Mr Shona was vehemently opposed to this notion because it then suggests that, as a deputy principal, he has to perform the duties of the HoDs as well.

*A challenge on the side of the HoDs that one manages: you delegate some duties to them. Now, there are some due dates there. Ok, when the due date is gone, you're expecting some feedback. No feedback! What happened? "I've not yet done it". "No, I went there, and some teachers have shown some resistance to it." I don't know... is it fear or... I don't know. If the work is not done by the educator they're expecting ME to do the job on their behalf, which is not supposed to be the case. So now, most of the time I resist doing that. I tell them, NO, it's your job. **Mr Shona***

While the participants acknowledge that they generally work well with the HoDs that they supervise, they do encounter challenges with at least one of them. The main source of dispute is failure to meet submission deadlines on the part of HoDs. Participants attribute part of the problem to total disregard of authority. Another reason stated is that HoDs are not firm with the teachers that they manage, and when they encounter problems with teachers, they run to the deputy principal who is expected to reprimand the transgressing teachers.

4.3.5.2 Working with teachers

Teachers are mainly supervised by the HoDs. However, according to the data, there are circumstances that require the deputy principals' intervention in the supervision of the teachers. Participants explained that they have to intervene, especially when there are teachers who fail to honour their teaching periods. Miss Jali stated that the relationship she has with teachers is not good because she is perceived as being "strict" and "inflexible". This did not seem to bother her. Miss Jali insisted that she does not bend the rules, and does not understand why she has to be understanding when teachers do not want to do their job. She remained resolute not to bend the rules.

*The relationship that I have with the teachers... no, no, it's not that good. It's not that good because they say I am strict, I don't understand; sometimes I'm not flexible, something like that. But I don't understand why should I be flexible at work when you need to do something; some work, you know! They're lazy, so they say I'm serious, I don't bend the rules. **Miss Jali***

Miss Nkosi, just like Miss Jali, faces the same animosity from some of her colleagues. Although most of the teachers at Miss Nkosi's school perform all their duties satisfactorily, there are a few who are problematic in this regard. To these problematic teachers she is perceived as a "nuisance", or an 'enemy'" because of her strong work ethic. When confronted for not attending classes, these teachers become angry, and do not understand why they have to be told by the participant to honour teaching periods. The same teachers that do not honour their teaching periods; do not submit their work on time and consequently cause delays for the entire school. The participant has learnt to ignore the hostility of some of her colleagues and focuses on what needs to be done to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place.

*Sometimes if you're deputy that wants people to work, some of them that don't like to go to class; you become some sort of what... an enemy or someone who is a nuisance. When you tell them to go to class they'll be very, very, very angry. So sometimes I have to tell myself that I need to ignore this because I have to confront the person about that, and I can see that the teacher doesn't understand why I have to tell them to go to class, yet they have not gone to class! And as a result they submit their work very late! Some of them are good, they do things according to the book; they go to class, and when you check their work, they are on a par. Absenteeism and late coming... you know, those are day-to-day issues that we need to deal with. **Miss Nkosi***

Mr Gabela shares the frustrations of Miss Nkosi about teachers who do not attend classes when they are supposed to. He noted that its usually the same individuals who are always found in the staffroom when they are supposed to be in the classroom, teaching. Another challenge highlighted by this participant was that of teachers who fail to complete the syllabus, thus not discharging their duties as they should. The behaviour of these teachers was puzzling to the participant. As a manager, he cannot tolerate or ignore such misconduct, and acts on it.

*People don't go to class, and by the way, you find that it's the same people every time! You know when you go to the staffroom so and so will not be in class! For me it just doesn't make sense! As a manager it's my duty to make sure that all the classes are attended. You cannot be in school and not go to class, then that's just one thing! Then, it's people who do not do their work as they are expected to, for example, not finishing the syllabus. You know you've got to finish the syllabus. **Mr Gabela***

Another participant, Mr Shona, experiences challenges with teachers who do not want to take responsibility for learner discipline. Teachers often refer misbehaving learners directly to the

deputy principal's office with the expectation that he will deal with them. In most cases, the participant will discover that there are no guidelines such as class rules to guide learners regarding what is considered as acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. Furthermore, when incidents of misconduct or ill-discipline occur, teachers do not follow the procedures that are contained in the learner code of conduct, despite the participant continually directing them to always do so. This suggests that teachers at this school will always opt to shift the responsibility for learner discipline to the deputy principal rather than dealing with it themselves.

I have to indicate at all material times that for teachers, the steps of disciplining the child starts in the class with you following the learner code of conduct. You find that most of the time a child that has behaved badly is told "Go to the office!" I say: "Teacher, there are steps that like you as a worker, When the child has faltered there are rules in the class the learner has to observe, and they're supposed to be hung on the wall!" When you get to the class there are no rules! "Number 2, you know as well that when a child has faltered, there are what you call warnings, verbal warnings and so forth." But the educators don't implement them. **Mr Shona**

As a deputy principal responsible for curriculum management and implementation, Mr Shona is responsible for ensuring that teachers at his school are up to date with all educational reforms. While some teachers are receptive to change, some resist it. The participant is compelled to find strategies of convincing teachers who resist change to be willing to accept it as part of life. It is crucial for teachers to be receptive to change because if there are changes to the curriculum and they do not embrace them, learners will be handicapped.

The challenge... one, there's this thing that we call change. So, they receive it differently because the personalities of the teachers are not the same. Some do love the challenge, some don't. The challenge is that if an educator is not clued up, he or she must apprise himself or herself of the change. So then I must think "How am I going to address this challenge or the behaviour of this teacher?" **Mr Shona**

Another participant, Mr Skhotha, puts emphasis on creating a harmonious working relationship in the school. He acknowledges and appreciates the support that teachers provide and adds that it is necessary that this support be reciprocated. The participant points out that while the main focus at a school is curriculum delivery, it is equally important not to forget that teachers have emotional and psychological needs that need to be taken into consideration when one deals with them. The participant indicated that no matter how brilliant the vision and goals of

management may be; they would not be possible to achieve without the support from the teachers.

*As a deputy principal of the school, it is very important to acknowledge and appreciate the support that you get from teachers. But you cannot get support if you do not support them. You must know that as much as we push curriculum delivery, we must realise that these are human beings. So you need to take care of their needs as well. It is important that you create that working relationship with the teachers because even if you have a very good vision, and set good goals; you can't achieve them as managers of the school without the support of the teachers. **Mr Skhotha***

The participants often have to intervene when HoDs face challenges in managing teachers. They have to intervene when teachers deliberately do not engage in teaching.

Such interventions are often met with resistance from teachers, and the participants become unpopular in the school. When teachers fail to implement school policies, especially on learner discipline, the responsibility is passed on to the deputy principal, who is expected to institute disciplinary measures.

4.3.5.3 Handling learner affairs

The data suggests that most of the learner issues that are brought to the attention of the deputy principals' office require them to take disciplinary action. Mr Skhotha suggested that disputes between teachers and learners are almost a daily occurrence.

*The conflict between teachers and parents are rare, but the conflict between teachers and learners is almost daily. You've got a teacher that comes to the office complaining about a particular learner. That occurs more often. **Mr Skhotha***

The sources of disputes involving learners are many, and they include ill-discipline and learners not fulfilling their academic obligations. Miss Nkosi complained that there was a serious challenge of substance abuse at her school. As the SMT they constantly have to find new strategies for dealing with the problem.

Another thing that we are experiencing is that some learners are ill-disciplined, and you know that corporal punishment has been banished. At this school we have a problem of learners who smoke dagga in the school toilets during lunch break. We

constantly have to come up with new strategies of dealing with problems that we have in our school. **Miss Nkosi**

Teachers become frustrated, and sometimes HoDs cannot handle learner issues on their own, and as a result seek intervention from the deputy principal.

When teachers encounter some challenges in the classroom, they'll report to their HoDs, and then the HoDs may intervene. Sometimes they cannot resolve a particular matter; then they refer the matter to you as a deputy principal. And you need to deal with those issues. In most cases, you find that the issues that are brought to the deputy principal have to do with discipline of the learners, or lack thereof. You've got those learners who don't want to submit their work. You've got those learners who are rude to the teachers, so you need to make sure that you support teachers when they encounter those challenges. **Mr Skhotha**

Attending to learner cases of ill-discipline and misconduct requires participants to call parents to the school and conduct disciplinary hearings. Mr Gabela does not particularly like to sit for these disciplinary hearings because it takes up a lot of his time. He does it out of obligation.

What I don't like about being a deputy, by the way, is CASES! Having to sit for a case and having to call a disciplinary committee if there's a need for that tribunal, I don't like those things, so that's one thing. I do it because I have to, but I just hate it! Having to spend an hour or two hours, sometimes more, having a case with parents, etcetera, I don't like it! **Mr Gabela**

Mr Thwala was critical of some sections of the learner code of conduct as outlined in the South African Schools Act. According to the Act, when certain forms of misconduct occur, the school has to call the police. The police may take the culprit, but what normally happens is that the culprit is released and comes back to school within a short period of time. Imposing a suspension on the learner has its challenges as well. The Act stipulates that during the period of suspension, the school has to ensure that the suspended learner does not miss out on any lessons and assessment activities. According to the participants, this is very problematic, because it means they have to go to the learner to give him/her study material, and ensure that if there is an assessment he/she does not miss out on it. Such policies are very discouraging, and make the participants think twice before considering certain avenues for resolving learner issues. Involving the district personnel does not assist very much, either, because it takes a very

long time for them to respond to an issue, and in the meantime the school has to find a way of dealing with it.

There are policies which deal with learners which bring challenges. If you find a learner smoking dagga in school, the code of conduct says that as a level 4 teacher, you need to call the police. After you've called the police, maybe they'll take him/her for about an hour, and then he/she comes back! You write a letter; you submit it to Pinetown District; it takes too long for the response to come back. The code of conduct says you can suspend a learner for five days or fourteen days, and for that time you must ensure that the learner gets the study material. If there are tasks and tests that need to be done; you need to go home and provide that learner. You have to think twice: if I suspend that learner, there might be a test, so I have to go and ensure that that learner does not lose that test. **Mr Thwala**

Besides issues of misconduct, the participants expressed great concern about poor learner performance. This is an aspect that adversely affects their leadership, because their main role is improving learner performance. According to Mr Skhotha, despite numerous interventions to improve learner performance, some learners just do not want to learn. These learners often fail to submit work that has been given to them. While teachers are willing to provide extra tuition to learners, some learners are just not interested in learning. This can be discouraging for teachers.

Some of the learners don't want to learn at all! They are given assignments and essays; they don't want to submit. Sometimes we've got intervention strategies, whereby we provide extra tuition to these learners from 15h00 to 16h00. Some of them don't want to stay behind so that you can assist them. The lack of cooperation on the part of learners is my main concern because fortunately, we've got teachers who are always ready to assist and teach learners, but you find that learners do not show up. It is very discouraging! **Mr Skhotha**

Miss Nkosi highlighted the issue of learners who have learning difficulties, but cannot be placed in schools that can properly address their learning needs. Most often these learners cannot read and write properly, but the policy allows for them to be progressed to the next grade.

And then you'll also find that the learners are not all the same in class. When teachers are teaching them you'll find that there are learners who do not fit into schools like this. They should be in schools that accommodate learners with learning difficulties. You'll

find that the learner is here but they cannot read and write in Grade eight, nor even in Grade twelve; but the learner has advanced to matric. Miss Nkosi

4.3.5.4 Interacting with parents

Parents are important stakeholders in schools, and their involvement in the education of their children is critical for improved academic performance. Both Mr Skhotha and Mr Gabela acknowledged the importance of parental involvement in improving the academic performance of the learners. Mr Skhotha remarked that sometimes, as school leaders, they tend to underestimate the role that parents could play in ensuring that learners' performance improves. Parents are periodically invited to the schools to discuss the academic and overall performance of their children. Such interactions give parents an opportunity to inspect their children's work, get feedback from teachers, and discuss challenges encountered, and how they could be overcome.

... if you look at the role that needs to be played by parents, it is very important. Sometimes we tend to undermine the role that could be played by parents in terms of ensuring that their learners perform better. So, what we normally do as part of the curriculum management plan, is that we invite parents to the school so that we can give feedback to them as far as their children's performance is concerned. and identify some of the challenges that we encounter. Mr Skhotha

We deal with parents almost every day, not just when there are cases. Even if the child is doing well, we invite parents to come and view the work. We have to be in constant liaison with the parents because I believe that for the child to succeed the parent must be there, the teacher must be there, and also the child. It's a triangle. Mr Gabela

Sometimes unpleasant circumstances necessitate meetings between the participants and parents. The one scenario is where parents have grievances against teachers. The grievances can range from parents complaining about a particular teacher's attitude that they consider to be disrespectful, or cases where they complain about teachers who do not give homework, or mark their children's books. According to Mr Shona, it's important to understand that not all parents are the same. Such situations require patience on his side, because most of time these grievances are a result of parents not understanding the work that is done by teachers. So when parents come to him, he explains to them how things are done.

*You look at the behavioural patterns of parents as and when they come to report some challenges in relation to the kids; in relation to the teachers as well. Their attitude and behaviours are not the same. The parent comes; the teacher is not communicating in an acceptable manner, according to the parent. You have to now locate the grievance of the parent, whether it's legit or not. The parent comes; the teacher does not give homework to the learners. You have to check indeed if that is the case, or if it's not the case you have to explain to the parent that we've got the programme or the timetable for the homework. Okay, the work is not marked. **Mr Skhotha***

The other scenario is where parents have been called to the school for a disciplinary hearing involving their child. Miss Nkosi shared that when parents have been called to the school, they are sometimes furious because they have only heard one side of the story from their child. The participant has come to understand that the best way to deal with such situation is to remain calm, and give the parent the other side of the story. In most instances, once the parents have heard the other side of the story, they co-operate.

*The problem again with the parents is that sometimes when a parent is called to school, they are very angry when they arrive because they have heard their child's side of the story. When they get here, it's only then that they hear what really happened. **Miss Nkosi***

Sometimes there are situations where the parent will still take the learner's side despite all evidence pointing to wrongdoing on the side of the child

*Sometimes, but not always, there are those parents that always favour their children, when you discipline a learner and the parent just comes to school and fights with you. **Mr Thwala***

There are also instances where parents don't want to get involved in their children's education. They only come on the first instance they called to the school and inform the participants that they should not be called to the school again, whatever the circumstances may be.

You'll find when it comes to parents that some of them don't want to come to school, and be part of what is going on with their children; they don't want that. I remember there was a time when the parent came, and we reported that we have called you because of this and that regarding your child. The parent called his own child a "dog",

and said that he should never be called to school for whatever the child does. **Miss Nkosi**

Meetings between the participants and parents are not always a planned activity. Parents will just walk-in without making an appointment, and ask to meet with the principal. If the principal is not available, parents will ask to meet with the deputy principal instead. Mr Skhotha attributes this behaviour to the belief in the community that you can just walk into the school, and you will be attended to.

You find a parent coming to school wants to speak to the principal, and if the principal is not there, to the deputy principal. I think this one has to do with the culture in the community we're servicing as schools. Even though we discourage that, you cannot chase a parent away. So sometimes you need to attend to those parents and give feedback to them, even though there was no official appointment. They just pop in. **Mr Skhotha**

Even in cases where an appointment has been scheduled, the participants have observed that the parents still do not keep to the scheduled time; they arrive whenever it is convenient for them. Although the participants do not condone this type of behaviour, they tolerate it because they perceive it to be disrespectful to turn parents away just because they were either late or they had no appointment in the first place.

Now, that's a very, very difficult one because when the parent is there, it's not very respectful to leave the parent and go to class. But what we normally do, when you write a letter to the parent, you check which times you going to be free, and then you ask the parent to come at that time; but we know our parents! Sometimes they come earlier saying "No, I want to go to work," or they come late: "I was busy." When the parent is there, it's like a client. **Mr Gabela**

In their day-to-day dealings with different stakeholders, participants are faced with multiple and diverse challenges. When HoDs face challenges when supervising teachers, they look to the deputy principal for assistance. In the same breath, as teachers struggle to manage ill-disciplined learners, they seek intervention from the deputy principal. Learner ill-discipline and lack of interest from the parents further add to the dilemmas faced by deputy principals.

4.3.6 Human relations

The data revealed that the participants interact with multiple stakeholders. This requires them to have the ability to handle human relations. Dealing with diverse stakeholders proves to be challenging for the participants, regardless of who they may be. The statement by Miss Nkosi puts this view into perspective:

It's very hard to deal with human resources, whether parents, or sometimes teachers, because you've got to manage both of them with whatever problems they have. **Miss Nkosi**

Mr Skhotha's view is that for any leader, it is important to ensure that the working environment is healthy by maintaining healthy human relations in school. He considers mutual respect as a key factor in maintaining healthy relations and minimising conflict, especially among the SMT. Mr Skhotha encourages unity and teamwork among members of the SMT because he believes that it would be difficult to manage teachers if they were in constant conflict with one another.

Any good leader should work so hard in order to make sure that the environment at school is healthy, and interpersonal relationships are good. You are bound to work together because you need to come into SMT meetings. You work with those HoDs, and one of the things you need to observe is respect. You must respect them so that they can respect you. And you must try by all means to create cohesion and collaboration, because you cannot manage teachers if you always have conflict with other members of the SMT. **Mr Skhotha**

Another participant, Mr Gabela, cited effective communication and knowledge of the school policies as vital in managing people. This enabled him to carry out his leadership role effectively. When necessary, participants have to institute disciplinary action against staff members, and this should be done fairly and in accordance with policy.

I think its effective communication that's important, and having to discipline when I have to. We know the documents; we know what you have to do as a deputy principal. **Mr Gabela**

Miss Jali is of the same opinion that it is important that, as a leader and manager, one has to be firm and consistent when dealing with people. She cautioned leaders and managers against

favouritism as some teachers can capitalise on this, and put them at loggerheads with teacher unions. She reiterates that everybody at school should be treated in the same way.

The most important thing, if you're a leader or manager, is that you need to be firm and consistent, and do your work. You mustn't have favourites, because teachers capitalise on that. You must treat everybody the same. If you are strict with this person, you must be strict with the other one, and it must be according to the policy of the school, because some teachers will take you to task and report to the unions that you are abusing their welfare, and an obstacle to their ability to perform their duties. **Miss Jali**

When dealing with human resources one has to be a good listener. The skill of listening is especially valuable in times of conflict. Being a good listener and remaining calm enables Miss Jali to manage human relations at her school. Staff members will sometimes come into her office angry about some issue. In order to contain the situation, she remains calm and tries to hear the other person out. It is also helpful not to take such incidents personally, because in most cases, they are only work-related. Having such an attitude towards conflicts enables her to be an effective and strategic leader.

You know, sometimes when there is conflict among teachers, I have to be strategic in terms of dealing with issues such as those. So I listen to them, and I find that it always works to be as calm as ever when it comes to issues, because they are not personal issues, but issues that are work-related. I cannot personalise them at all. Sometimes the teacher will come to my office furious. I know I must remain calm and listen to him or her, and then tell them that they need to calm down. **Miss Nkosi**

One of the reasons for the breakdown in human relations at schools, as cited by Mr Shona, is that colleagues often don't understand the difference between work relationships and social relationships. Mr Shona puts it very bluntly that in the workplace people are not there to make friends, or to be loved by colleagues. It should be expected that there will be disagreements in the workplace, and these should not be taken personally, or cause relationships to go sour. By virtue of his position, Mr Shona expects colleagues to comply with duties he gives, and not take things personally. Being able to separate work-related and personal issues is what enables him to manage human relations at his school.

People tend to confuse the colleague relationship because the colleague relationship is about the work; and the social relationship. Here at work we're not here to make friends and to be loved by others. So people get confused when we don't see eye to eye with you

as far as the job is concerned; then that makes the relationship sour. Here we're bound to work; you're bound to respect me as a deputy principal as I'm giving duties to you. There are conditions or times whereby we don't see eye to eye with one another. I manage it because its work-related; we're not here to beg one another! **Mr Shona**

The participants interact with different stakeholders inside and outside the school. Managing human relations proves to be a great challenge for them. Issues between staff members, learners and parents need to be managed carefully because they can have the potential of escalating to serious conflict. Participants in this study apply a variety of strategies to avoid or minimise conflict in their schools. The participants in this study have learnt not take any of the work issues personally.

4.3.7 There are not enough hours in a day!

Considering that the school day is officially allocated at least seven hours, participants regard this time as insufficient to complete all the leadership and management tasks they have to perform. All the participants were in agreement that seven hours is just not enough to prepare for lessons, attend classes, check the HoDs and teachers' work. The participants believed that if they relied on the seven official hours, they would not be able to complete all their tasks timeously.

There are no limited hours for the teacher if you're serious about your work because when you have to prepare a lesson, you have to do it outside the seven hours. So you're still doing schoolwork. Seven hours are not sufficient. **Mr Shona**

It is for these reasons that some either arrive early or leave well after working hours at school. Some like Mr Gabela and Mr Thwala even work on a Saturday in order to fulfil all the obligations of their work.

I don't work for just seven hours, unfortunately, because I am at school maybe at about half-past six until late in the afternoon, even on Saturdays. I don't have a specific seven hours because once I say I have seven hours, it won't work, it's not going to work! **Mr Thwala**

I need the extra time that I was talking to you about: coming to school early; leaving school late, and sometimes having to go there even on Saturdays. So I don't believe that I can do all these things in the notional time, the seven hours, no! Sometimes I work

here (referring to his home) checking teachers' files and sometimes checking the other people's files, the HoDs', until 12. Mr Gabela

At times it becomes necessary for the participants to take their work home and do it there.

If you're going to rely on these seven hours that you are given by the Department, you'll have a problem. Sometimes you'll find that you must come to school as early as seven, to plan. Sometimes you must go home and take your laptop and plan because you can't use the working hour to do each and every thing you know is required by the Department; you won't manage. Use extra hours to do some of the things that are expected of you. Mr Gwala

Managing time effectively poses a great challenge for the participants. One illustration of this is the case of Miss Nkosi who described that on a typical day, she finds parents already waiting for her upon her arrival at work. She finds it difficult to divide her time between the parents, the numerous duties she has to perform, and going to class to teach. She feels guilty that at times she has to close her door to the parents and not attend to them as she tries to strike a balance between tasks. She says at times she just wishes she could retire early because her job is really tiresome!

It's not enough! Sometimes you feel "You know what; now that I'm here I wish I could retire early!" Because dealing with the issues that I'm dealing with makes me feel that I'm so tired! Because when I arrive at school every day I find parents here. I end up closing the office, which is wrong because I have to leave the parents unattended with no one else to help them, because as much as I'm a manager I'm also a subject teacher; I must go to class and teach. Time is not enough! Miss Nkosi

The statements presented in this study give evidence of the enormity of the task facing deputy principals. The participants in the study concur that there is not enough time to complete all the tasks that they should.

4.3.8 Professional support for deputy principals

Having explored all the leadership, management and supervisory roles of the deputy principals in schools, this section examines the extent to which capacity building supports deputy principals. In this regard, I solicited the participants' views on professional development programmes and their effectiveness in assisting them to become efficient leaders.

4.3.8.1 Professional development

Professional development is an important aspect of capacity building. This is especially true for deputy principals, considering the multiple roles that they have to play in school. The participants in this study shared interesting and diverse views and experiences of professional development. Mr Skhotha and Mr Shona, two of the three participants with the most experience, pointed out that one of the recommendations for continuous professional teacher development (CPTD) is that professional development must be self-initiated. This means that individual teachers must identify their own areas for development, and take it upon themselves to engage in programmes that will address their needs. In that regard they have acquired academic qualifications, but should regularly attend workshops and seminars organised by the Department of Education. Mr Skhotha confirmed that he was participating in many professional development programmes to ensure that he kept abreast with the latest educational issues.

When it comes to professional development, they always say it must be self-initiated. So, yes the Department of Education has got programmes. They invite us to seminars and workshop as part of professional development, but also I need to take the initiative in developing myself, keeping myself up to date with the latest educational issues, developing myself academically. There are so many things that I pursue as far as professional development is concerned. Mr Skhotha

In addition, Mr Shona receives a lot of development from the principal whom he described as someone who is well read and well resourced. It's interesting that Mr Shona mentioned an induction workshop that he must have attended five years ago when he first assumed the position of deputy principal.

Now, the CPTD clearly stipulates that you have to undergo development by yourself. It is initiated by yourself through upgrading yourself from that degree to that degree, or from that diploma to that degree as well; myself, I have done it. Yes, I have been capacitated on leadership and management. The Department of Education also did the induction for us. There are the ongoing workshops, support programmes that are done by the circuit office. Our principal is a well- resourced person. He used to capacitate us, giving us some materials as well in understanding our roles. Mr Shona

The prevailing position on professional development from the rest of the participants was that they attended an induction workshop when they were promoted to the position of deputy principal.

I go to workshops, you know, the district and the circuit; they sometimes have these workshops for the newly appointed. So, once you get a higher position, you go to those workshops. They sort of remind you what is expected of you, what you have to do. Mr Gabela

Besides the induction workshops, participants mentioned one or two other developmental programmes they had attended. Once again it surfaced from Miss Jali and Miss Nkosi that the principal is most often the source of professional development. Miss Jali, who has been a deputy principal for twelve years, mentions that she has attended one leadership workshop and another on women in management.

We do receive support from the Department of Education through the workshops. Induction workshops for everyone who was appointed, and the team building that you do on a small scale motivate me that I must keep going. But then we also receive support from the principal. Miss Nkosi

Most of the time, the person who is supporting us is the principal. He's supporting us by capacitating us. Leadership for deputy principals – we once had it in Pinetown. The other one was for women in management. Miss Jali

4.3.8.2 The effectiveness of professional development programmes

The dominant view from the participants was that the Department of Education does not provide enough opportunities for professional development. Although the participants do admit that the few workshops they have attended are beneficial to a certain degree, they mostly feel that they are not enough to address their needs. The content of the workshops has very little to do with real management issues.

Some, yes, to a certain extent, but when it comes to reality at school, you see that even if you apply the things that they are saying, sometimes they don't work in the situation. When you're facing the situation you feel as if you can call that person to come and assist you! So partly they are assisting, they are capacitating you. Miss Jali

Participants thought that the workshops they had attended thus far were of a “one size fits all” design. They thought that these workshops did not take into consideration the different contexts under which schools function. To contextualise this point, Mr Gwala referred to a workshop he attended with deputy principals from former Model C schools whose context was totally

different from his school's. The expectation was that since they had attended the same workshop, they should be able to manage their schools in the same manner.

*It's not enough! You'll be called into a workshop for two hours, then that's it!! You're expected to deliver. I think you must be workshopped on how to manage, how to manage funds, how to manage disputes; how to plan. Some of the things that I learnt there we're not using - we're not implementing them because the environment is not conducive. A deputy principal from a former Model C school was given the very same workshop as I, knowing very well that the schools and their conditions are totally different, which is not right because the reality is this: the environment is different! **Mr Gwala***

The greatest challenge for the participants is that when it comes to the reality of their schools, they are unable to implement what they had been capacitated on when they attended the workshop because it was not suited to the context of their school. Mr Skhotha's perspective was that as leaders, they have to be innovative when applying what has been learned at these workshops.

*They assist us because we get a lot of information. But they are generic because they're not designed for your own school. So it's very important that you become innovative and creative in terms of how you can information that you acquired from those workshops and apply it in your school context, because our schools are not the same. So that is the challenge. **Mr Skhotha***

Mr Thwala and Mr Shona added two contrasting perspectives to the argument on the current state of professional development for deputy principals. On the one hand, Mr Thwala believed that there was very little focus on professional development for deputy principals in comparison with the HoDs. His view was that while there are workshops that are specifically designed for HoDs, there are no developmental programmes that are specifically for deputy principals. In fact, he said he did not recall being called to a workshop that was specifically aimed at professional development for deputy principals. In his opinion, if he intends to develop himself he should attend programmes that are meant for principals, although that has its own challenges.

With HoDs it's easier – you attend workshops; there are those that are specific for HoDs. But for the deputies, there is little that you get. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, I don't remember any workshop that said "We invite deputies to come to sit in that meeting." I don't remember! There's nothing much that is happening for deputies! The

only thing, if you want to increase your knowledge, is to attend a meeting or workshop which is called for principals, not specifically for deputies. Mr Thwala

On the other hand, Mr Shona disputed claims that there are no developmental programmes for deputy principals. He said that he did not know where this notion emanated from. His dispute was based on the knowledge that the Department of Education releases a management plan that details professional development workshops for that year. In that management plan there are workshops or programmes that are specifically aimed at deputy principals. Mr Shona said that at his school the principal was a transparent person. So when there were circulars inviting teachers to training programmes, the principal ensured that they received such circulars. There were a few reasons that he thought caused the other participants not to be aware of the developmental programmes. He speculated that either the participants were not given the relevant circulars, or when they were given them they did not read them thoroughly.

I would tend to differ with that one because here at this school, as I'm saying, our principal is a transparent somebody. When circulars come, he gives the circulars to the relevant person. There's a management plan for the workshops from the Department. There's a workshop for the deputy principal on such-and-such a date and at such-and-such a time. Maybe they're not given the circulars, or they're given the circulars, but they don't read them, or they're given the circulars, and they just skim and scan. But I remember there are circulars which are addressed to or which require the deputy principal to attend some leadership courses or some leadership workshops or training. So I don't know why they are making this complaint. Mr Shona

The dominant view shared by the participants was that there was very little done by the Department of Education to build the leadership capacity of deputy principals. The professional development programmes in place did not adequately address the diverse needs of schools.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The data were presented under the following themes: working with the principal; the leadership role of the deputy principal; transitioning to the role of deputy principal; sharing of responsibilities between deputy principals; effective curriculum management; working with different stakeholders; human relations; there are not enough hours in a day; and capacity building. The data revealed in the subthemes that deputy principals play a supportive role to the principal, and that the relationship between these two leaders has implications for school

leadership. As leaders and role models, the participants were instrumental in the implementation of the schools' vision and mission. They gave their views on leading from the middle. The experiences of supervising HoDs, working with teachers, managing learner affairs and interacting with parents were also explored. The data revealed the participants' experiences and attitudes towards professional development programmes and their effectiveness in building capacity for deputy principals. In the next chapter I discuss the main findings of this study in alignment with existing literature and the research questions.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore deputy principals' understanding and experiences of their leadership role. Data were generated through in-depth interviews to respond to the critical questions of the study. As the first phase of analysis, data generated from the interviews were presented in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I present the second level of analysis. Owing to the thickness of the data, a further analysis of the data took place until themes that correlated with the critical research questions emerged. An in-depth discussion of the emerging themes follows.

5.2 Discussion of emerging themes

The themes presented below are a culmination of a rigorous process of data analysis. The themes represent the main findings of this study. The main findings discussed in the subsections that follow are in relation to literature and correlate with the critical research questions.

5.2.1 The principal's right-hand man/woman

The main role that the participants played as deputy principals in their schools was that of being the principal's right-hand man/woman. Being the principal's right-hand man/woman held diverse interpretations in different contexts. There was a unanimous consensus among the participants that as the principal's right-hand man/woman, the paramount leadership role that the deputy principal played in the school was providing support to the principal. They viewed the support they provided to school principals as critical for effective school functionality. This perception of the deputy principals' role is widely held and well documented in literature (Cranston et al., 2004; Kwan, 2009; Wong, 2009; Barnett et al., 2012; Goksoy, 2016; Clayton & Bingham, 2018). The deputy principals in this study perceived themselves as leaders (Blöse & Naicker, 2017; Abrahamsen, 2018). They understood that together with the principal, they were responsible for providing leadership in the school.

The concept of collaborative leadership between the members of the SMT also surfaced. The concept of collaborative leadership was informed by the view that principals, together with deputy principals, play an important role in developing and carrying out the vision, mission and strategic plans of the school, working with other members of the SMT (Gurley et al., 2015). As the principal's right-hand man/woman, the deputy principal expected the principal to delegate duties to him/her (Abrahamsen, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2018). One of the duties delegated to deputy principals in the study was to manage and supervise the HoDs (Macharia et al., 2014; Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018). In addition, deputy principals were tasked with holding the fort and providing leadership in the absence of the principal (Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018). Being the principal's right-hand man/woman therefore required deputy principals to be knowledgeable about policies and prescripts that were applicable to school leadership and management. At the core of the partnership between the principal and the deputy principal was the nature of the relationship these leaders had. Numerous scholars (Wong, 2009; Abrahamsen, 2018; Mitchell et al, 2018; Shore & Walshaw, 2018) identify a relationship that is based on trust and respect as a critical ingredient for a successful partnership between the principal and the deputy principal. In Chapter 4, the utterances of the deputy principals attested to this. While most participants reported that they had a good relationship with their principals, Mr Thwala's relationship with his principal had to be carefully managed because of the power struggle between them. The nature of the relationship between principals and their right-hand men/women was important to their partnership because it often set the tone for the relationship between the deputy principal and other staff members.

5.2.2 Deputies as leaders with limited authority

In the preceding theme, the deputy principal's portrayal as the principal's right-hand man/woman brought about the assumption that authority is also equally shared between the two of them. This, however, does not always seem to be the case. Deputy principals are expected to lead and manage staff even though they do not possess the same authority and power as the principal (Cohen & Schechter, 2019). Dispossessed of the principal's status, power and authority, deputy principals often encounter challenges when it comes to exercising their authority in the school. According to the experiences shared by Mr Gwala and Mr Thwala in Chapter 4, deputy principals had to constantly seek approval from the principal before making crucial decisions. Mitchell et al. (2017) and Cohen and Schechter (2019) attribute deputy principals' lack of total authority for decision making to the fact that their authority is

exclusively determined by the principal. Mr Gwala demonstrated this point clearly when he stated that because of the limited authority he had as a deputy principal, there were decisions that he could not take without prior consultation with the principal. In extreme cases, the deputy principals' lack of authority made them vulnerable to being undermined by junior staff members under their supervision. According to Mr Thwala's experiences, teachers would go as far as approaching the principal to find out if he concurred with the decisions that he had made. Abrahamsen (2018) and Mitchell et al. (2017) also bear testimony to the fact that teachers often by-passed the deputy principals and went straight to the principal, thus undermining the authority of the deputy principal.

The spotlight also fell on the relationship between the deputy principal and the principal. While it was true that most deputy principals enjoyed a good working relationship with the principal, there were exceptions to this belief. Shore and Walshaw (2018) have observed that where there was a strong relationship between the deputy and the principal, the deputy principal enjoyed more autonomy for decision making. Conversely, Cohen and Schechter (2019) point out that where there is discord or lack of trust between the deputy principal and the principal, the deputy principal's authority may be intentionally or indirectly undermined by the principal. Mr Thwala recounted instances where his authority was overtly undermined by the principal. Consequently, staff members did not take decisions made by him seriously because they were aware that such decisions could be overturned by the principal. Staff members could quickly discern when to disregard the deputy principal's authority based on the relationship the deputy had with the principal. It is therefore necessary for the principal to clearly define the lines of authority to both the deputy principal and the staff.

5.2.3 Managing the curriculum and administration

Barnett et al. (2012) explain that what complicates the roles and responsibilities of deputy principals is that their explicit responsibilities are determined by the specific needs of other staff members such as the principal and the teachers. What may work for one school may not necessarily work for another. As a result, the roles of deputy principals varied between schools, districts and even across different countries.

With the numerous roles and responsibilities that the principal had to assume in the school and community; and the emergence of leadership models that encouraged the distribution of leadership to different leaders in the school, instructional leadership was mostly delegated to the deputy principal (Gurley et al., 2015; Leaf & Odhiambo 2017). As instructional leaders, the

participants were responsible for curriculum management. The participants considered effective curriculum management as a critical requirement for improved learner performance. Like their counterparts internationally, the deputy principals in the study engaged in different activities to ensure effective curriculum delivery (Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018; Shore & Walshaw, 2018). The participants regarded planning as the fundamental basis for successful curriculum delivery. Bloese and Naicker (2017) concur with this view. They even caution that lack of proper planning could render the school dysfunctional. The deputy principal's strategy towards curriculum planning was doing it as a collaborative effort as SMT members. Khan et al. (2009) and Petrides et al. (2014) recommend and encourage collaboration when it comes to planning and organising curriculum matters, as this allows for free sharing of ideas, and establishing a common vision for successful curriculum delivery.

In addition to planning, the participants also played an important role in supervising and monitoring all activities related to teaching and learning. In Chapter 4, the participants mentioned the various curriculum management activities they perform. The participants also played a role in ensuring that the school environment was conducive for teaching and learning (Bloese & Naicker, 2017). They did this by making certain there were adequate resources needed for teaching and learning, and that the school was a safe place for both teachers and learners.

The participants acknowledged that at the heart of successful teaching and learning are the teachers, who are the curriculum implementers, and the HoDs, who are the curriculum monitors and supervisors. The participants worked very closely with the HoDs in ensuring that the annual syllabi were completed, and that learner assessment programmes were meticulously planned and executed (Petrides et al., 2014; Milondzo & Seema, 2015). The deputy principals in the study also engaged in building capacity for teachers and the HoDs, especially in matters of policy, thus providing them with much needed knowledge and support so that effective teaching and learning could take place in the classroom. One other thing that the participants engaged in was providing mentorship, especially to the HoDs as their immediate supervisors, because they were mostly responsible for successful and effective curriculum delivery.

In addition to curriculum management, deputy principals were also expected to engage in or oversee a wide range of administrative activities. The admission of learners and capturing of all school-related and assessment-related data were some of the administrative duties that the participants had to oversee. In schools where there were no administration clerks to assist with administration, as was the case at Mr Gwala's school, administration became his sole

responsibility as deputy principal. Van Wyk (2015) suggests that it is imperative for deputy principals as administrative leaders to be knowledgeable on the use and function of the SASAMS programme, because it would ease the burden on administration.

5.2.4 Managing conflict and maintaining healthy relations

Deputy principals often have to deal with conflict that arises among the various stakeholders in the school. According to the information shared by the participants in Chapter 4, the sources of conflict at schools were many and varied. The most common source of conflict that the participants had to deal with was between teachers and learners. Conflict between teachers and parents, and among staff members, did take place, albeit to a lesser degree. The main sources of conflict between teachers and learners were the learners' failure to submit work on time, and ill-discipline. HoDs often failed to resolve the conflict, and solicited the intervention of the deputy principal. Conflict between teachers and parents was often a direct consequence of conflict between teachers and learners, because parents were often called to the school when their learners were involved in cases of ill-discipline, or when they failed to meet the obligations of their studies. Conflict among staff members was inevitable because of the diversity in thought, character and many other dynamics at play in the school. The participants understood that it was important to manage conflict and maintain healthy human relations in the school. The participants were under no illusion that maintaining healthy relations would be an easy task, as stated by Miss Nkosi in Chapter 4. They identified managing human relations as an area in which they required development (Goksoy, 2016).

Mr Skhotha stressed the importance of having good interpersonal relations with staff members, and advocated for values such as respect and teamwork in maintaining healthy relations in the workplace. The ability to communicate effectively, treat staff with fairness, and be consistent in the way they dealt with staff issues were considered to be critical skills for deputy principals to possess, because they interacted with various stakeholders, including teachers, parents and leaders in the community (Cranston et al., 2004; Goksoy, 2016). Drawing lessons from literature, the participants acknowledged the importance of having good communication skills (Barnett et al., 2012). They were also conscious that conflict can arise out of inequality in the way people are treated by those in positions of authority, so when dealing with staff, the participants applied the principles of fairness and consistency. Closely linked to effective communication was being a good listener (Barnett et al., 2012). Being a good listener often assisted Miss Nkosi when staff members came into her office about issues that had infuriated

them. Mr Shona attributed the breakdown in human relations to people's inability to distinguish between work-related issues and personal issues. Both Miss Nkosi and Mr Shona strongly emphasised not personalising issues at work. Good relations among stakeholders created a healthy environment that was conducive for teaching and learning.

5.2.5 Factors that enhance deputy principals' effectiveness

The participants considered the relationships they had with the principal and the rest of the staff as very important. The participants held the belief that the support they received from the principal, SMT members and teachers not only made daily challenges bearable, but also ensured that they were able to carry out their leadership roles successfully (Shore & Walshaw, 2018). For the majority of the deputy principals, the principal was perceived as someone who was approachable and easy to talk to. The principal contributed to the growth of the deputy principals by giving recognition for excellence, and constructive criticism where necessary. The relationship that the deputy principals had with the principal was perceived as a partnership (Wong, 2009). Although having the principal's support and care was reported by the majority of the participants, it was notable, however, that Mr Thwala's case was exceptional. He did not receive much support from the principal, but instead experienced constant interference and having his authority undermined (Shore & Walshaw 2018). Mitchell et al., (2017) also encountered such deviance in their study, and although they could not find reasons for it, they attributed it to the principal's leadership style.

The deputy principals in this study also attributed the effectiveness of their leadership to the personal and professional qualities they had. The qualities of effective communication, fairness, consistency and being a good listener not only helped in resolving conflict, but also strengthened the leadership role the participants played (Goksoy, 2016). Their thorough knowledge of curriculum-related matters, and a clear understanding of educational policies and prescripts also contributed immensely to the effectiveness of their leadership (Cranston et al., 2004; Barnett et al., 2012). The deputy principals declared that they their leadership was effective because they were role models; they "walked the talk". The deputy principals in Blose and Naicker (2017) also believed in modelling the right kind of behaviour. By doing so, the deputy principals were able to positively influence the behaviour of other staff members. The participants achieved this by being exemplary when it came to teaching, management and leadership. By being good role models and leading by example the participant minimised the occurrence of deviant behaviour.

5.2.6 Factors that hinder deputy principals' effectiveness

The discussion below zoomed in on factors that hindered deputy principals' effectiveness in executing their leadership roles.

5.2.6.1 Non-compliance by HoDs and teachers

In their day-to-day practice of leadership, deputy principals work closely with HoDs and teachers to ensure that the goals that have been set for teaching and learning are accomplished (Abrahamsen, 2018).

The participants worked closely with the HoDs as their immediate supervisors. They indicated that they sometimes experienced insubordination at the hands of the HoDs. Miss Nkosi related that one of the HoDs she supervises did not recognise her authority, nor that of the entire SMT, and consequently did not perform any of the duties or responsibilities delegated to her. That made working with her very difficult for Miss Nkosi. Mr Gabela and Miss Jali also complained about HoDs that did not perform their supervisory role satisfactorily, like not having meetings with teachers, and not intervening when things were not going well in their departments (Khumalo et al., 2018; Shore & Walshaw, 2018). Miss Jali used the term "laissez faire" to describe one HoD's management style of allowing teachers in her department to do as they pleased. The HoDs managed by Mr Shona struggled to get teachers to comply with submissions and due dates set. When teachers showed resistance to instructions, the HoDs took their frustrations to Mr Shona in the hope that he would use his authority as a deputy principal to get the guilty parties to comply. In this way, the HoDs would shift taking the responsibility of disciplining the teachers away from themselves. Mr Shona was strongly opposed to this notion, and never entertained such requests from his HoDs. On the one hand, the actions of the HoDs placed more burdens on the shoulders of deputy principals who were already overstretched with management, administration and whatever duties were delegated to them by the principal. On the other hand, the actions of the HoDs were an indication that they were not adequately capacitated to manage the teachers they supervised. The deputy principals should also view such actions as opportunities for them to come up with programmes to develop the HoDs in leadership and management.

HoDs were not the only ones hindering the deputy principals from playing their leadership role effectively. Teachers also added to the woes of the deputy principals. A major challenge encountered by the participants was that of teachers who failed to honour their teaching periods.

These teachers would come to school, but instead of going to class to teach, they would simply sit in the staffroom. When confronted for not going to class, these teachers became angry. The participants admitted that they had become very unpopular with teachers because of their intolerance for this kind of behaviour, and their refusal to bend the rules. The consequence of teachers not attending classes were failure to complete the syllabus timeously, and late submission of work. In international studies on deputy principals, the issue of teachers who do not attend classes does not feature among challenges faced by deputies. The main complaints expressed by deputy principals were dealing with teacher complaints, non-compliance with policies and directives (Shore & Walshaw, 2018), conflict, low morale and lack of motivation (Barnett et al., 2012). This behaviour by teachers in this study was both puzzling and disturbing. It is puzzling that a teacher would come to school but not attend classes without any valid reason. It was also disturbing that these teachers were indifferent to the adverse effect their behaviour could have on the learners' academic progress and on the school's overall academic performance.

A second hindrance cited by the participants was the teachers' resistance to change (Barnett et al., 2012). With the many educational reforms taking place, change was inevitable. The teachers' indifference or hostility towards change hindered progress in the school, and policy implementation became slow and challenging. Educators who resisted change did not realise that such an attitude was self-destructive, because change was meant to assist teachers in their practice and improve learner performance. Lastly, the deputy principals complained that teachers often passed the buck to them as far as learner discipline was concerned. Teachers did this despite the existence of the school's code of conduct that clearly spelt out the processes that needed to be followed when a learner violated the school rules. Even in instances where learners had committed minor offences, teachers would be very quick to send them to the deputy principal's office without following the processes that were stipulated in the learners' code of conduct. The next subtheme discusses in depth what the consequences of dealing with learner discipline are for the deputy principal.

The views expressed by the participants in Chapter 4 confirm the findings of Shore and Walshaw's (2018) study wherein deputy principals' job satisfaction was greatly reduced because they were constantly confronted with managing conflicts involving disgruntled teachers who did not comply with school regulations, and were resistant to change. The failure by both HoDs and teachers to perform their roles effectively burdened the deputy principals with increased responsibilities, thus hindering them from playing their leadership role.

5.2.6.2 Learners' ill-discipline and misconduct

As discussed in the previous theme, the responsibility for learner discipline is often shifted to the deputy principal. According to the participants, incidents of learner ill-discipline and misconduct were almost a daily occurrence (Clayton & Bingham, 2018). Most incidents of learner ill-discipline occurred in the classroom, where teachers complained that learners were rude to them. Although classroom-related issues of learner ill-discipline were supposed to be handled and resolved by teachers and HoDs, that was rarely the case.

As the disciplinarian, the issues always ended up in the deputy principal's office (Cranston et al., 2004; Barnett et al., 2012; van Tuyle, 2018). In addition to that teachers complained that some learners did not complete tasks, submit assignments timeously, or simply did not want to learn. Despite various intervention strategies put in place to support learners in their learning, and the willingness of teachers to assist them, some learners were simply not interested in learning. The participants were gravely concerned by this kind of attitude because it impacted directly on the performance and results of the school. More serious cases of learner misconduct, reported by Miss Nkosi and Miss Thwala in Chapter 4, were of learners who smoked dagga on the school premises.

With the abolition of corporal punishment, participants had to constantly come up with new strategies to try and deal with learners' ill-discipline and misconduct. Mr Thwala pointed out that the learner code of conduct as contained in the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) offered no real solutions regarding certain acts of misconduct such as substance abuse. The Act does allow the school to call the police, or suspend those found with or under the influence of drugs, but it was also the responsibility of the school to ensure that such learners were provided with teaching material and academic support during their period of suspension or absence from school. As a consequence, the participants were reluctant to take this route because it required them to focus on that one individual learner or a few learners. Participants lamented that dealing with cases of learner discipline often took time that could be used to focus on issues of improving teaching and learning (Navarro-Corona & Slater, 2017; Clayton & Bingham, 2018; van Tuyle, 2018).

5.2.6.3 Lack of parental support and involvement

The participants acknowledged the importance of the role parents play as stakeholders in the school. When the deputy principal met with learners' parents, the objective was mainly to

discuss the learners' progress and behaviour (Navarro-Corona & Slater, 2017; Khumalo, et al., 2018). Improving learner performance is the core function of deputy principals in schools. As important stakeholders, parents are often invited to schools to discuss the progress of their children with the teachers. The parents' lack of interest in their children's performance at school was a source of great concern for the participants, considering that some of the learners were not motivated to learn, while others had learning difficulties. Schools were further plagued by various forms of learner ill-discipline and misconduct, which necessitated a meeting between the parents and the participants (Cranston et al., 2004; Barnett et al., 2012). When parents were called to school to sit in for their children's disciplinary hearings they either did not show up, or came with misconceptions about what had transpired. In her experience, Miss Nkosi has observed that as a consequence of hearing only the learner's side of the story, parents would be furious when they came into her office, and as a result she often had to put up with emotional outbursts from angry parents (Barnett et al., 2012). As previously discussed, what assisted the deputy principals in such situations was the ability to remain calm, being good listeners and being solution oriented. Although this approach usually worked, it was very disappointing that some parents still took their children's side despite overwhelming evidence of their children's guilt. Parents who were frequently called to the school because of the involvement of their children in cases of misconduct ended up informing the deputy principals they should no longer call them to the school to sit for disciplinary cases because they would not come. The participants were expected to find a way of dealing with those learners without any parental support. Without meaningful parental involvement and a collaborative relationship between the school, learners and parents, improved learner performance is near impossible.

5.2.6.4 Time constraints

According to the deputy principals in this study, no two days were ever the same, and there was never a dull moment as they discharged their daily duties. Mr Gabela even likened his office to a "Home Affairs office" because of the manner in which different stakeholders like teachers, learners, parents and district officials kept coming in and going out.

All the participants in this study voiced their frustrations at not being able to divide the time they had between all the managerial, supervisory, administrative, disciplinary and pastoral roles they had to play. In addition to these roles, the deputy principals had teaching loads and performed many other duties, mostly unplanned, that were delegated to them by the principal. (Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018). The challenge of time management and its implications for the

professional and personal lives of deputy principals has been well documented in literature (Barnett et al., 2012; Searby et al., 2017; Bulawa & Mhlauli, 2018). The activities discussed in this study do not reflect all the activities that the participants engage in. There were countless tasks that the participants performed that were outside the scope of this discussion. The participants complained that with the numerous tasks they had to perform, the normal school hours were simply just not sufficient. Their inability to complete all their tasks within the allocated school hours compelled them to arrive early and depart late from work. Sometimes even that did not help, so they had to take their work home, or use time during the weekend to catch up. Their work ended up clashing with family commitments. Needless to say, the participants' excessive workload caused them a lot of stress (Searby et al., 2017). Miss Nkosi even wished that she could just retire because of the stressful and demanding nature of her job. Because of time constraints, the deputy principals' job resulted in an endless struggle to maintain a balancing act.

5.2.7 Capacity building for deputy principals

Building capacity for deputy principals was essential because it assisted them to better perform their leadership role. The participants in this study identified professional development as a key aspect to improving their leadership capacity (Gurley et al., 2015). Professional development should start with the individual, and then progress to what other stakeholders like the Department of Education can provide. Cranston et al. (2004) and Khumalo et al. (2017) emphasise that for effective professional development to take place, it is incumbent upon the individuals seeking development to identify areas in which they need development and the skills they need to play their role effectively. In this way they personally engage in activities that are suited to address their professional development needs. The more experienced participants like Mr Shona and Mr Skhotha understood this, and had taken the initiative for their own development. The less experienced participants relied on the Department of Education to provide opportunities for professional development. The majority of the participants in this study indicated that there are not enough professional development programmes to prepare and support deputy principals in executing their roles (Gotsky, 2016; Khumalo et al., 2017). They further elaborated that the few workshops they had attended were only partially effective because they were generic in nature. In fact, when asked about workshops they had attended, the participants mentioned the induction workshop they had attended when they first assumed duties as deputy principals, and vaguely mentioned one or

two others. In Chapter 4, the participants demonstrated how the few workshops they had attended did not cater for their different schools' contexts and needs, and as a result were of very little benefit to them. All the participants except Mr Shona were of the view that there were very few developmental programmes aimed specifically at enhancing the leadership of deputy principals compared to those for principals. Mr Shona was adamant that his principal had made him aware of a schedule of workshops that were specifically aimed at deputy principals' development. He suggested that his colleagues' ignorance of such workshops could be due to lack of transparency from the principal. The participants mostly credited the principals for providing much needed professional development for them (Gurley et al., 2015; Cohen & Schechter, 2019). For most of the participants, the principal was regarded as the mentor who helped them navigate the leadership challenges they encountered. Principals were perceived as great sources of knowledge, especially because they were also responsible for capacity building. By their own admission, the participants clearly articulated the need for programmes that build their capacity to become better and more efficient leaders.

5.3 Deputy principals' sensemaking

What has emerged from the data is that deputy principals sensemaking is to a very large degree shaped by the principal. The data revealed that deputy principals' enactment of their leadership role is somewhat limited by the fact that they do not have the same authority as the principal when it comes to decision making (Mitchell et al., 2017; Cohen & Schechter, 2019). When deputy principals are faced with ambiguous situations that require them to make decisions, they are sometimes unable to make decisions that are based on their own experiences and perceptions of the situation but rather have to accept whatever decision has been made by the principal.

The deputy principals in the study expressed that the time they had at their disposal was never enough for them to fulfil all their obligations and as a result they often felt overwhelmed by the demands of their work (4.3.7). In their sensemaking, deputy principals choose to complete certain tasks while ignoring or postponing others. This choice is largely based on what seems logical and accurate to them at a given moment. Deputy principals' sensemaking is also shaped by school environment and the interactions they have with the different stakeholders (Brown et al., 2014). The deputy principals in this study revealed that in their day to day they interaction with stakeholders, they often encountered challenges.

This often inhibited their leadership and sensemaking however, the support they received from the principal and other stakeholders often mitigated the effects of the disabling environment. As Kudesia (2017) alluded, sensemaking is an ongoing process as people are always confronted with new experiences in their lives. Deputy principals are forever engaged in sensemaking as they are confronted with different experiences in their execution of leadership.

5.4 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I presented a comprehensive discussion of the main findings of the study. As I draw towards the end of this study, I intend to provide some answers to the research questions that were posed in the introductory chapter. In the next chapter, which is the finale, I present a summary of the entire study, conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this study I sought to explore deputy principals' understanding and experiences of their leadership roles. The study began with a problem statement, and the rationale and purpose of the study. This was followed by a set of critical questions that would have to be answered in order to fulfil the purpose of this research. The objectives of this study were addressed by the critical research questions. Using a qualitative case study methodology, thick and descriptive data were generated from seven deputy principals. The findings presented in this chapter are a culmination of a thorough process of thematic analysis of raw data generated from the participants. This chapter begins with a summary of the study, followed by a summary of the findings. I then present conclusions drawn from the study. The recommendations and implications for future research follow, and lastly, a concluding statement.

6.2 Summary of the study

Chapter One introduced the study. The purpose of the study was to explore deputy principals' understanding and experiences of their leadership roles. The background of the study revealed that studies on school leadership focused on the principal, resulting in limited research being conducted on the leadership of deputy principals. The rationale for conducting this study was based on personal as well as professional reasons. The problem statement highlighted the need for hearing the voices of deputy principals in the South African context to fill the void that had been left by studies that mainly focused on the leadership role played by the principal. The critical research questions and clarification of the concept of deputy principal were also presented.

In **Chapter Two**, the review of related literature brought forward some of the recurring themes about the position of the deputy principal. These themes present dominant literature debates about deputy principals. These recurring themes revolve around deputy principals' understanding and perception of their leadership role; their experiences of their leadership role; professional dilemmas deputies face, and factors that affect how they execute leadership; the relationship between the deputies and the principal; and capacity building. The chapter also presented the sense-making theory as the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

In **Chapter Three**, I explained how studying of the perceptions and experiences of deputy principals through the interpretive paradigm, adopting the qualitative approach and case study research design, and conducting semi-structured interviews enabled me to generate rich and descriptive data from purposively selected participants. Using thematic analysis, I was able to generate themes that correlated with literature and the critical research questions.

Chapter Four introduced and provided a brief profile of the participants. In the first level of analysis, data were presented in broad themes that reflected the perceptions and experiences of the participants' leadership role. The data were further substantiated by verbatim quotes from the participants who gave insight into the meaning they attached to being a deputy principal. They also gave details of the managerial and leadership role they played and their experiences of the role and shared their views on professional development.

In **Chapter Five**, I presented the second level of analysis. The richness and thickness of the data required a further analysis. What emerged were unique and common themes that correlated with the critical research questions. It emerged that deputy principals perceive themselves to be the principals' right-hand person. However, they are leaders with limited authority. It also surfaced that factors that enabled deputies to play their leadership role effectively were outnumbered by factors that hindered their effectiveness. There are, for example, inadequate professional development programmes to build their leadership capacity.

6.3 Summary of the Findings

The summary of the research findings is in response to four research questions posed in this study. The main research findings are addressed and interpreted in relation to the data generated from the participants and the larger body of literature on the leadership of the deputy principal. They are also linked to the theoretical framework of sense-making by which deputy principals constantly try to interpret their experiences in order to make sense and understand what their leadership role is.

6.3.1 Research Question 1: What do deputy principals perceive their leadership role to be?

Deputy principals perceived that their main leadership role was to assist the principal in managing the school and ensuring that there was effective teaching and learning. The

perception that the participants had was consistent with what is stated as one of the roles of the deputy principal as contained in the Employment of Educators Act (RSA, 1998). As a principal's right-hand man/woman, the deputy principals provided much needed support to the principals, thus enabling them to be more effective in running the school. Among the participants, it was also understood and expected that the principal would delegate duties to them. These were many, diverse and delegated according to the discretion of the principal. Deputy principals also perceived themselves to be both leaders and managers. They used the terms "leadership" and "management" interchangeably, which led me to believe that to the participants the terms had the same connotation. As leaders and strategic partners to the principal, deputy principals collaborated with HoDs and other stakeholders to ensure that the vision and strategic goals of the school were realised. As leaders, and as prescribed in the job description of a deputy principal, the participants took up leadership in the absence of the school principal. They understood that they were expected to perform similar duties to those of the principal. By their own admission, they were aware that they had to be knowledgeable about the roles and responsibilities of the principal so that there would be no leadership crisis in the latter's absence.

6.3.2 Research Question 2: How do deputy principals play their leadership roles?

The findings of this study indicated that the roles played by deputy principals varied depending on the needs of the different schools. One of the most prominent roles delegated by principals to deputy principals was instructional leadership. As instructional leaders, deputy principals engaged in curriculum management activities and worked collaboratively with HoDs in planning and organising curricular activities that were in line with the vision and strategic goals of their schools. Together with the HoDs, they also had to ensure that effective teaching and learning activities took place. Another duty delegated to deputy principals was supervision of HoDs. Their supervisory role was to see that HoDs performed their duty of ensuring that teachers adhered to the annual teaching plan to achieve successful curriculum implementation, and that planned and scheduled assessment activities were executed. In schools that had administrative assistants and cleaners, it was also the deputy principals' duty to supervise their work. As instructional leaders, it was incumbent upon deputy principals to identify and provide opportunities for teacher development.

Participants were also involved in managing various administrative tasks like learner admissions, and supervising the capturing of all school-related data on SASAMS, amongst

others. Administration was a major challenge for schools that did not have administrative assistants because the deputy principals had to perform some of the administrative tasks themselves. The participants also had to play the arduous role of resolving conflict and maintaining healthy and cordial relations among staff, learners, parents and other stakeholders in the school. By their own admission, they considered this role as one of the most difficult, and one they were least prepared to play. What made this role challenging was that conflict is an unavoidable part of all organisations, so participants were constantly involved in conflict resolution. The potential conflicts were those between teachers and learners; teachers and parents; and among staff members. The participants cited conflict between teachers and learners as more frequent, and an almost daily occurrence. In many instances, conflict between teachers and learners occurred in the classroom, and was escalated to the deputy principal for resolution because neither the teachers nor the HoDs were willing or able to resolve it. The participants had to be strategic when dealing with conflict because this had a direct bearing on relations in the school. The participants expressed the desire to acquire more skills to manage conflict and maintain good relations in the workplace.

6.3.3 Research Question 3: What are the factors that enable deputy principals to play their leadership roles effectively or those that inhibit them from doing so?

Deputy principals considered relationships to be very important for their leadership to be effective. As the principal's right-hand man/woman, the effectiveness of the leadership of the deputy principal was largely dependent on the relationship between them. Most, but not all, deputy principals stated that the relationship they had with the principal was deeply rooted in trust and respect. They also valued the unwavering support they received from the principal. The principal was perceived as someone approachable and dependable. The deputy principals deemed it essential for them to have a good relationship with the principal because that set the tone for other relationships in the school. They also reasoned that a relationship that was characterised by distrust would result in divisions among the staff, with some taking the principal's side and others the deputy principal's. The participants also credited HoDs' and teachers' support for enabling their leadership to be effective.

The deputy principals also attributed their effectiveness to personal traits such as having the ability to communicate effectively, being good listeners, and exercising fairness and consistency. Professional qualities such as thorough knowledge and understanding of curriculum-related matters, policies and prescripts further enhanced the deputy principals'

effectiveness. Deputy principals also enhanced the effectiveness of their leadership by modelling good and exemplary behaviour in teaching, management and leadership.

Factors that hindered the leadership effectiveness of deputy principals were far more than those that enhanced it. The position itself presented some challenges for some deputy principals. It was problematic that they were leaders, but had limited authority, because their authority was exclusively determined by the principal. There were decisions they could not take without the principal's approval. For some participants this lack of total authority resulted in their decision-making authority being questioned and undermined by both the principal and junior colleagues. In certain instances, decisions made by the deputy would be disregarded by junior staff because there was a possibility that those decisions would be overturned by the principal. Although this was not the case for all participants, those that experienced having their authority being undermined also did not enjoy a very good relationship with their principal. The deputy principals' lack of total authority put them in the vulnerable position of being undermined.

The deputy principals' leadership was also hampered by various forms of learner ill-discipline and misconduct. As disciplinarians, deputy principals had to deal with learner issues almost on a daily basis every day. As a result, they spent a lot of their time sitting for learner disciplinary hearings. Most of them complained that disciplinary hearings took away time they could use to perform other more important managerial duties. Serious cases of learner misconduct were more prevalent at high school than at primary schools. Deputy principals were also concerned by learners who were simply not interested in learning, because they were the ones who were often involved in cases of misconduct. Apathy from the parents further added to the deputy principals' dilemmas. It was the deputy principals' view that parents had a significant role to play in improving their children's performance. They were concerned by parents who had no interest in their children's performance. They also complained that they often had to deal with angry and uncooperative parents. Dealing with such parents required a lot of patience and calm.

Some HoDs and teachers also played a part in making the leadership role of the deputy principals less effective. The deputy principals found some HoDs difficult to work with. The main challenge they faced was that of teachers who did not go to class to teach when they were supposed to. Consequently, these teachers failed to complete the syllabus, and caused delays when it came to submitting work. Some of the problems encountered with teachers were a direct result of HoDs not playing their supervisory role as was expected of them. When HoDs encountered resistance from teachers, they sought the intervention of the deputy principal, thus

shifting the responsibility of disciplining the transgressing individuals. They did this as they felt deputy principals were better suited to deal with these cases than they were because of the authority they had.

Added to the already numerous roles that deputy principals had to play was a teaching load. With all these responsibilities resting on their shoulders, it came as no surprise when they complained that those responsibilities had an adverse effect on their time management. They often had to arrive very early, or leave work late, or take work home in an attempt to finish all the tasks they had to do. All the deputy principals lamented their inability to strike a balance between their professional and personal lives. They all spoke in one voice that there was just not enough time to complete all the work they had to do.

6.3.4 Research Question 4: What support do deputy principals receive to better perform their leadership roles?

The views expressed by most of the deputy principals in the study indicated that there was not much done, especially by the Department of Education, to support them in their leadership journey. When questioned about professional development programmes they had been exposed to, most referred to workshops they had attended to induct them when they were appointed as deputy principals. They pointed out that even those workshops were generic, and did not cater for the different contexts under which schools operated. As a result, they found them to have been only partially effective. Besides the induction workshops, the deputy principals vaguely mentioned some other workshops they had attended, but could not provide details of the impact that those workshops had. The more experienced deputy principals had taken the initiative for self-development, as it had been their understanding that professional development always started with the individual. The deputy principals credited the principals for providing them with much-needed professional development and guidance. They relied on the principals' mentorship, guidance and support to play their leadership role effectively. They expressed a need for more opportunities for professional development to build their leadership capacity.

6.4 Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study. The first conclusion drawn is that even though deputy principals consider themselves to be leaders and to share some of the leadership responsibilities with the school principal, how they enact their leadership is largely determined by the principal. They cannot take important decisions without prior

consultation with the principal. The authority that deputy principals have over staff members is also largely dependent on the principal's willingness to share their power and authority. The nature of the relationship between the principal and the deputy is of great significance in the leadership role of the deputy principal. Where the relationship is based on trust and respect, the deputy principal's leadership is enhanced. Where the relationship is characterised by distrust, the leadership and authority of the deputy principal can be undermined.

The second conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of this study is that deputy principals were overburdened with responsibilities. Some of those responsibilities were not part of the scope of their work. The inability of HoDs to properly manage teachers that they supervised and the teachers' inability and reluctance to deal with learner discipline pointed to a lack of capacity for leadership, a failure to follow disciplinary procedures and implement school policies. Consequently, deputy principals struggled to divide their time among the many tasks and roles that they had to play.

Thirdly, deputy principals receive very little support from the Department of Education in terms of capacity building and professional development. While it is true that professional development has to start with the deputy principals themselves, the responsibility also rests with the Department of Education to provide on-the-job training to enhance the leadership capacity of deputy principals. The Department has thus far focused mainly on the professional development of school principals, and has lagged behind on providing professional support for deputy principals. Thus, the principal becomes the major source of professional development for the deputy principal. This is a major concern, because deputy principals also have to provide professional development for HoDs and teachers.

6.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from this study, I put forward the following recommendations to school principals, deputy principals and the Department of Education.

Principals play a significant role in how deputy principals execute their leadership role. They should use the power and influence they possess to institute changes in the way in which deputy principals enact leadership. They should be willing to share their power with deputy principals, and see them as strategic partners, not adversaries. It is a recurring theme in literature, and also a finding of this study, that deputy principals are leaders with limited authority. The boundaries of the principal and deputy principal's authority should be clear to both the deputy principal

and the entire staff. As compasses that give direction to deputy principals, principals should provide ongoing mentoring to the deputy principal to not only strengthen the relationship between them, but also improve the deputy principal's leadership capacity.

The findings of this study also indicated that deputy principals play many leadership roles, which also means that they have many responsibilities on their shoulders. Consequently, they had excessive workloads. Adopting a distributive style of leadership, where HoDs and senior teachers are empowered to carry out some of the duties that would normally be performed by deputy principals, would assist in alleviating the burden of excessive workload for deputy principals. Deputy principals should set strict boundaries for both HoDs and teachers so that they do not have to deal with issues that could be easily resolved by implementing school policies. The issue of learner discipline, which seems to take up a lot of deputy principals' time, should be dealt with at a strategic level where there are ongoing engagements between the SMT, SGB and parents about the learner code of conduct and more effective forms of learner discipline.

The Department of Education has the obligation to provide ongoing, context-based professional development and on-the-job training programmes to improve the leadership capacity of deputy principals. I further recommend that deputy principals take responsibility for their own professional development by enrolling and participating in management and leadership courses and programmes to enhance their leadership capacity. Deputy principals' excessive workloads are further exacerbated by having excessive teaching loads. The teaching load of deputies should be reviewed and reduced to provide them with extra time to perform their leadership and managerial duties.

6.6 A final word

This study has provided insight into how deputy principals understand and experience their leadership role. The recommendations made in this study could assist in improving the leadership practice of deputy principals. Though on a small scale, this study has contributed to literature on the leadership of deputy principals in the South African context. Even though the findings of this study may not be generalised to all deputy principals in South Africa, in all contexts; they can be transferred to other studies of similar contexts.

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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Date Time

Participant code/ pseudonym

Title: Deputy principals’ understanding and experiences of their leadership role.

Introduction

The purpose of the interview is to generate data to answer the research questions based on the study mentioned above. Prior to the commencement of the interview, the interviewer will give a brief background to the study. The participant will be assured that his or her identity will never be revealed and that the information gathered during the interview will be confidential and will be used only for the purposes of research. The interviewer will explain to the participant how the interview is structured and that it will take 40-60 minutes. The participant will be made aware that the interview will be audio- recorded, that the interviewer will be taking notes and the reason for this shall be explained. The interviewer will make sure that the participant is comfortable and ready to commence with the interview.

Questions:

1. Tell me, what does being a deputy principal mean to you?
2. What do you understand the role of the deputy principal to be in the school?
3. What role do you play as a deputy principal?
4. Share with me some of the experiences you have had regarding your leadership role as a deputy principal?
5. What are some of the factors that enable you to play your leadership role effectively?
6. What are some of the factors that hinder you from executing your leadership role effectively?
7. How would you describe your relationship with :
 - 7.1 the teachers,
 - 7.2 the departmental heads and
 - 7.3 the principal
8. Have you attended any professional development programmes to support and assist you in your leadership role?

9. If yes, what kind of professional development programmes have you attended? Are these programmes effective?

10. If no, what kind of professional development programmes do you need to support you in your leadership role?

11. Is there anything that you like to share regarding your leadership role that has not been covered in this interview?

CONCLUSION

Upon the completion of the interview, the interviewer will thank the participant for their time and willingness to participate in the study. The interviewer will ensure that she has the correct contact details of the participant in case there is a need for a follow up interview. The participant will be informed when feedback may be available.

APPENDIX B - ETHICAL CLEARANCE



25 July 2019

Ms Lindlwe Maria Thabethe (216075216)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Thabethe,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0342/019M

Project title: A case study of Deputy Principals' understanding and experience of their Leadership role

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 04 April 2019, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr PE Myende
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Ansurie Pillay
cc School Administrator: Ms Sheryl Jeenaraia

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bsg 254001, Durban, 4003

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/3252/4567 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4608 Email: ethics@ukzn.ac.za / secretariat@ukzn.ac.za / msc@ukzn.ac.za

Website: ethics.ukzn.ac.za



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APPENDIX C - CLEARANCE FROM DOE



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063

Ref.:24/8/1803

Ms LM Thabethe
PO Box 1061
Kloof
3640

Dear Ms Thabethe

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"A CASE STUDY OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENCE OF THEIR LEADERSHIP ROLE"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 03 June 2019 to 04 January 2022.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Pinetown District


Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 05 June 2019

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

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Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • Fax.: +27 033 392 1203 • Email: Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za • Web: www.kzndoe.gov.za

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APPENDIX D- PERMISSION LETTER FROM GATE KEEPERS (SCHOOL PRINCIPALS)

P. O. Box 1061

Kloof

3640

25 February 2019

The Principal

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am Lindiwe Thabethe doing a Master of Education degree in the field of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Education (Edgewood Campus). One of the requirements for this degree is that I write a dissertation. The dissertation requires me to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek your permission to conduct research at your school.

The title of my study is: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership Role**. The purpose of this study is to explore the leadership role that is played by deputy principals at schools. The planned study will focus on the deputy principals' understanding of leadership as well as their experiences as leaders in school. The experiences of the participants in the study will contribute to what is not known about the leadership role of the deputy principal, what challenges they face and how they can be better equipped and supported. The participants will also have an opportunity to introspect about their leadership practices as they are second in charge in the school.

The study will involve interviewing purposively selected participants who are deputy principals. The duration of the interviews will be 60 minutes and the interviews will be audio recorded. The interviews will be conducted during the participants' free time outside their working hours.

Please note that:

- The identity of participants and research sites (schools) will be protected and will not be revealed at any stage during and after the reporting process in the study. In this regard, pseudonyms will be used instead of the school's and participants' names.

- All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Participation will be voluntary, meaning that participants may withdraw their participation in the study at any time without suffering any harm
- Kindly note that there will be no financial benefits that the participant will accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.
- The participant will be notified in advance about the interview dates and times.
- Participants are at liberty to peruse the transcripts on completion.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor or the research office whose contact details are as follow:

Dr PE Myende (supervisor): Tel. (office hrs) (033) 260 5291 and cell No: 083 968 1361;
Email: myendep@ukzn.ac.za.

Name of researcher: Lindiwe Maria Thabethe, contact details: Cell: 083 289 0555; email:
lindiwet17@gmail.com.

UKZN Research Office: P. Mohun HSSREC. Research Office Tel. (office hrs): (031) 260 4557,
E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.

Thanking you in advance for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

Miss LM Thabethe

APPENDIX E- DECLARATIONS FROM GATEKEEPERS (SCHOOL PRINCIPALS)

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL

I, the principal of

give consent to Lindiwe Maria Thabethe, a student from University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct her study at my school provided that the study will not interfere with the official business of the school. I also confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project for the study: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership** roles. I am aware that participants may withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to do so, without any negative consequences for the participants or the school. I am also aware that there is no financial benefit that will be accrued by the participant or the school as a result of participation in this study.

Signature of the principal: Date: 17/03/2019

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL

I, the principal of
give consent to Lindiwe Maria Thabethe, a student from University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct her study at my school provided that the study will not interfere with the official business of the school. I also confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project for the study: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership** roles. I am aware that participants may withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to do so, without any negative consequences for the participants or the school. I am also aware that there is no financial benefit that will be accrued by the participant or the school as a result of participation in this study.

Signature of the principal: [Redacted] Date: 26-01-2020

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL

I, the principal of

give consent to Lindiwe Maria Thabethe, a student from University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct her study at my school provided that the study will not interfere with the official business of the school. I also confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project for the study: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership roles**. I am aware that participants may withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to do so, without any negative consequences for the participants or the school. I am also aware that there is no financial benefit that will be accrued by the participant or the school as a result of participation in this study.

Signature of the principal: Date: 26/01/2020


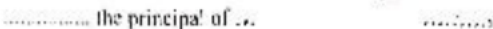
DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL

I, _____, the principal of _____


give consent to Lindiwe Maria Thabete, a student from University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct her study at my school provided that the study will not interfere with the official business of the school. I also confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project for the study: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership roles**. I am aware that participants may withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to do so, without any negative consequences for the participants or the school. I am also aware that there is no financial benefit that will be accrued by the participant or the school as a result of participation in this study.

Signature of the principal: _____ Date: 13 | 03 | 2019

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL

I,  the principal of 

give consent to Lindiwe Maria Thabethe, a student from University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct her study at my school provided that the study will not interfere with the official business of the school. I also confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project for the study: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership** roles. I am aware that participants may withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to do so, without any negative consequences for the participants or the school. I am also aware that there is no financial benefit that will be accrued by the participant or the school as a result of participation in this study.

Signature of the principal:  Date: 26/01/20

APPENDIX F- LETTERS TO PARTICIPANTS

P.O. Box 1061

Kloof

3640

25 February 2019

Dear Participant

My name is Lindiwe Maria Thabethe. I am a Master of Education student in the Educational Leadership, Management and Policy field studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education (Edgewood Campus). As part of the requirement for completing the degree, I am required to conduct research.

The title of my study is: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership Role**. The purpose of this study is to explore the leadership role that is played by deputy principals at schools. The planned study will focus on the deputy principals' understanding of leadership as well as their experiences as leaders in school. The experiences of the participants in the study will contribute to what is not known about the leadership role of the deputy principal, what challenges deputy principals face and how they can be better equipped and supported in their role. The participants will also have an opportunity to introspect about their own leadership practices as they are second in charge in the school.

I have purposefully selected you to participate in this study. Therefore, I kindly request your permission to be one of the participants in my study. You will be required to participate in audio-recorded, interviews. The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference. The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference. The dates and times for these interviews will be negotiated with you in advance.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.

- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating at any stage in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor or the research office whose contact details are provided below.

Thank you in advance for your contribution to the study.

Yours sincerely

Miss Lindiwe M Thabethe

Researcher's details: Miss LM Thabethe [REDACTED]

Email address: lindiwet17@gmail.com

Supervisor's details: Dr PE Myende: Tel No: 033 2605291, [REDACTED] Email: myendep@ukzn.ac.za

Faculty of Education HSSREC Research Office

University of KwaZulu Natal Tel no.: 031-260 4557

School of Education Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX G – PARTICIPANTS’ INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT BY PARTICIPANTS

I, (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed and am fully aware of the purpose of the study, **Deputy Principals’ Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership Role**, its nature and procedures that will be followed. I consent to participating in the study. I understand that I can withdraw at any time from the research project should I wish to do so. I also understand that there will be no financial benefits accrued to me as a result of my participation.

Additional consent, where applicable

Conditions	YES	NO
I give consent to audio-record my interviews	✓	
I understand that there will be no financial benefits accrued to me	✓	
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.	✓	

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....
[Redacted Signature]

DATE

.....
27.01.2020

INFORMED CONSENT BY PARTICIPANTS

I, (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed and am fully aware of the purpose of the study: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership Role**, its nature and procedures that will be followed. I consent to participating in the study. I understand that I can withdraw at any time from the research project should I wish to do so. I also understand that there will be no financial benefits accrued to me as a result of my participation.

Additional consent, where applicable

Conditions	YES	NO
I give consent to audio-record my interviews	X	
I understand that there will be no financial benefits accrued to me.	X	
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.	X	

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....


DATE

.....
20/10/2019

INFORMED CONSENT BY PARTICIPANTS

I, (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed and am fully aware of the purpose of the study: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership Role**, its nature and procedures that will be followed. I consent to participating in the study. I understand that I can withdraw at any time from the research project should I wish to do so. I also understand that there will be no financial benefits accrued to me as a result of my participation.

Additional consent, where applicable

Conditions	YES	NO
I give consent to audio-record my interviews	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that there will be no financial benefits accrued to me.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....

DATE

26/01/20.....

INFORMED CONSENT BY PARTICIPANTS

I, (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed and am fully aware of the purpose of the study: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership Role**, its nature and procedures that will be followed. I consent to participating in the study. I understand that I can withdraw at any time from the research project should I wish to do so. I also understand that there will be no financial benefits accrued to me as a result of my participation.

Additional consent, where applicable

Conditions	YES	NO
I give consent to audio-record my interviews	✓	
I understand that there will be no financial benefits accrued to me.	✓	
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.	✓	

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....


DATE

11 / 11 / 2019

INFORMED CONSENT BY PARTICIPANTS

I, (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed and am fully aware of the purpose of the study: **Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experience of Their Leadership Role**, its nature and procedures that will be followed. I consent to participating in the study. I understand that I can withdraw at any time from the research project should I wish to do so. I also understand that there will be no financial benefits accrued to me as a result of my participation.

Additional consent, where applicable

Conditions	YES	NO
I give consent to audio-record my interviews	✓	
I understand that there will be no financial benefits accrued to me.	✓	
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.	✓	

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....
.....

DATE

26/01/2020

APPENDIX H – TURNITIN REPORT

1/27/2021

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APPENDIX I – LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that I have been responsible for the language editing of Lindiwe Maria Thabethe's Master of Education dissertation for the University of KwaZulu-Natal, entitled *Deputy Principals' Understanding and Experiences of Their Leadership Roles*.



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