



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the
Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools**

Oluwadamilare Olufemi Sotunde

224105978

Supervisor: Prof. P.E. Myende

A dissertation submitted in the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Education in Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy (ELMP).

**College of Humanities, School of Education
Edgewood Campus**

November 2025

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Oluwadamilare Olufemi Sotunde, declare that:

- I. This research report titled *Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools* is my original work, except where otherwise indicated.
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STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation has been submitted with my approval.

Signed:

Date:

Supervisors' Name:

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to me and to the Deputy Principals of township schools in South Africa. I am proud of embarking on this challenging yet rewarding journey of exploring the complex role of deputy principals in South African township schools. This study is a testament to my unwavering commitment to understanding and addressing the educational challenges faced by our communities. I dedicate this study to my own growth, resilience, and perseverance, and as a reminder of the power of self-investment and the pursuit of knowledge in my academic career. To the township schools' deputy principals, who work tirelessly to provide quality education to their learners despite the numerous challenges they face, your dedication, resilience, and passion for education are an inspiration to us all. SALUTE!!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All glory and honour to God, the Almighty, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, for the courage, perseverance, and dedication to see me through this journey. May this work bring honour and glory to His name, and may it contribute to the betterment of our township schools.

To my supervisor, Professor Phumlani Erasmus Myende, I extend my sincerest gratitude for your unwavering guidance, expertise, and support throughout this study. Your valuable feedback, constructive criticism, and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping this research. I am grateful for your dedication, passion, and commitment to my academic pursuit, and I am honoured to have had the opportunity to work under your supervision.

To all the ELMP Department lecturers on the Edgewood Campus, your teamwork and words of encouragement have made this journey worth enduring.

To my course mates and friends, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for your continuous support and encouragement. Your camaraderie, support, and encouragement have made this challenging journey more manageable and enjoyable.

I am deeply grateful to my family, my wife, and my two boys, who have been my rock and source of inspiration throughout this journey. Thank you for your unwavering support, love, and encouragement. To my siblings, thank you for your understanding, patience, and support.

To the participants who harmoniously participated in this study—I thank you for accommodating me and freely sharing your inputs and experiences with me. Indeed, the completion of this study would not have been possible without you. Much appreciated.

ABSTRACT

Deputy Principals (DPs) in township schools play a pivotal role in ensuring the effective functioning of these schools, often in the context of significant resource constraints and socio-economic challenges. As mid-managers, DPs are responsible for a range of teaching and administrative responsibilities, which include curriculum implementation, staff management, student discipline, and community engagement, to mention but a few. However, the complexity of their role is often overlooked, under-explored in educational leadership, and yet they are expected to navigate these demands and expectations from their role sets with limited support or training.

This qualitative case study explores the complex role of DPs in township schools in South Africa, examining their perceptions of teaching and administrative responsibilities, contextual challenges, role conflicts, and tensions they experience in balancing these dual roles and strategies for navigating their demanding expectations. This study uses distributed leadership theory (Spillane, 2017) and organisation role theory (Katz & Khan, 1978) to examine the experiences of DPs in township schools across three districts in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. The study addresses the research problem through a review of empirical literature and three research questions:

How do DPs in the case study schools perceive their teaching and administrative responsibilities?

What are the contextual challenges, conflicts, and tensions that DPs encounter in their attempts to balance their dual roles?

How do DPs navigate these challenges that arise from attempting to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities?

Data were generated through semi-structured interviews with six (6) DPs and analysed thematically. Key findings reveal that DPs perceive their role as complex, unclear, and without direction, and with a cumbersome workload preceded by the dual roles. Contextual challenges include managing learners and parents impacted by substance abuse and violence, stakeholder and staffing issues, and inadequate communication and collaboration, among others became evident. Role conflicts, including conflicting expectations, overlapping roles, and vying for control within their role sets that precede work-related stress, discomfort, and burnout, also

emerged. The study found that DPs adopted strategies such as time management, continued professional development, and networking and collaboration, amongst others, to navigate these challenges.

The study highlights the need for targeted support and development programmes for DPs, contextualised to the unique challenges of township schools. Recommendations are made for policymakers, educational leaders, and support structures to empower and support DPs in their roles, ultimately enhancing the quality of education in South African township schools. This study contributes to the limited research on DPs' role and responsibilities in South African township schools, offering insights into the complexities of their role and the contextual challenges they face.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAPs	Curriculum Assessment Policy Structure
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHs	Departmental Heads
DPs	Deputy Principals
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
ELRC	Education Labour Relation Council
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
KZN-DoE	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
P	Participant
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
QMS	Quality Management System
RCLs	Representative Council of Learners
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RSA-DBE	Republic of South African Department of Basic Education
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TYE	Total Years of Experience
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UKZN-HSSREC	University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
YLE-DP	Years of Leadership Experience as a Deputy Principal
YTE	Years of Teaching Experience

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

‘Janus, the Roman Gods with Two Faces’ – An introduction to the study

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Deputy Principals (DPs) are like Janus, the Roman Gods with two faces, one looking forward and one backward.



Figure 1.1: Janus - the Roman Gods

Source: Bing image (2025)

Deputy Principals are caught between two worlds like Janus, the Roman gods, notable for balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities, and unable to fully face one direction without compromising the other. I used this metaphor to capture the essence of my research topic, highlighting the DPs’ complex responsibilities and the challenges they face in navigating these dual responsibilities. Metaphors are figures of speech that compare two unlike things to create vivid imagery, comparisons, and perspectives about something (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008; Morgan, 2006). As evident with literature, the role of DPs in South African township schools is a critical component of the country’s education system (Blose & Mbatha 2025; Jansen & Plessis, 2020; Mokoena, 2020). Blose and Mbatha (2025) metaphorically described the position of DPs as ‘wrestlers,’ wrestling to survive between their roles and responsibilities, constrained in the middle management. Jansen and Plessis (2020) categorised DPs as ‘jack of all trades, master of non’, and Mokoenas’ (2020) findings classified the role of DPs as

conflicting and most ambiguous. Serving as the principal's spanner-hand and second-in-command (DBE, 2020), DPs are entrusted with a range of responsibilities that span teaching, administrative and managerial duties, and teachers' instructional leadership responsibilities, to mention a few, hence I referred to them as 'Janus the Roman gods.' However, despite their importance, the position of DPs remains shrouded in complexity/ambiguity, with unclear expectations and role definitions (which I called "Complex Role") that can lead to confusion and conflicts, role tensions, and numerous challenges in their role expectations (Bush & Glover, 2014; Mestry & Grobler, 2020).

This complexity in DPs' role is particularly pronounced in the South African township school context, where the education system has been undertaking significant transformations since the advent of democracy in 1994 (Department of Basic Education, 2020). The introduction of new policies and legislation, such as the Labour Relation Acts of 1995 (from which I noted the Education Labour Relation Council (ELRC) derives its authority), the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document of 2022 as extracted from the Employment of Educators Act, Resolution No. 46879, 2022, and the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 2020, has led to an increased emphasis on the administrative and managerial responsibilities of DPs, while simultaneously highlighting the need for effective teaching and learning (Republic of South Africa, 1996; Department of Basic Education, 2020).

Despite these developments, there is a dearth of research addressing the complex role of Janus (DPs) in balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities in township schools within South Africa, particularly with a focus on how they are balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities since they are frequently expected to meet the demands of other stakeholders or role senders, such as learners, parents, the Department of Basic Education (DBE), and other external structures. The study focuses on addressing this knowledge gap by exploring the lived experiences and role perceptions of DPs in KwaZulu-Natal township schools as a case study on the contextual challenges, conflicts, and tensions they encounter in their attempt to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities. This chapter provides a background of my study, followed by the problem statement, rationale, significance, and the focus/aim of my study. I thereafter present the key research questions, the definition of key concepts/terms used in the study, and the organisation of the study, thereby concluding chapter one with an overview of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

As presumed by the researcher and established by empirical studies, the role of DPs in township schools is complex and multifaceted (Blose & Mbatha, 2025; Blose, 2024; Jansen & Plessis, 2020; Blose & Naicker, 2018; Mncube et al., 2022; Singh & Mestry, 2022). The role of DPs in township schools has undergone significant changes in recent years, with ongoing debates about their roles and responsibilities. In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2020) has amended in its guidelines for the appointment and roles of school managers, including DPs as middle managers, emphasise their critical role in supporting school principals in managing the school, managing teachers' instructional development, managing the demands of other stakeholders, and simultaneously engaging in teaching to enhance student outcomes. Similarly, the Employment of Educator Act (EEA, 2022) has been amended to clarify the roles and responsibilities of schools' DPs, including their teaching and administrative duties. The Post-Provisioning Norms extracted from EEA (2020) has also been updated to provide further guidance on the roles and responsibilities of school managers, including DPs.

Despite these efforts to clarify the role of DPs in South African schools, research has shown that township schools' DPs continue to experience role complexity, tensions, conflicts, and contextual challenges, particularly in their attempt to balance these teaching and administrative responsibilities based on unprecedented demands from other stakeholders or role senders in their role sets (Blose & Mbatha, 2025; Jansen & Plessis, 2020; Katz & Khan, 1978). Furthermore, none of the above mentioned South African school policies and literature has provided a guide on the time management for the role and responsibilities of DPs in township schools. Furthermore, recent studies, such as Mncube et al. (2022) and Singh and Mestry (2022), have highlighted the challenges faced by DPs in balancing their teaching and administrative duties, among others, to be workload management. As deputy principals are expected to play a critical role in supporting the principal and managing the school, they are also expected to contribute to teaching and learning, which posits the vagueness and complexity of the role (Bush & Glover, 2014). Further research also shows that DPs in township schools often experience role conflict and ambiguity due to the high demands from their stakeholders (Mokoena, 2020). For instance, a study by Mncube et al. (2022) found that DPs in South African schools spend more time on administrative tasks than on teaching and learning, teachers' developmental programmes, and instructional pedagogy, which in the long run marginalised the learners' performances and overall school effectiveness. In addition, a study by Mestry and Grobler (2020) also emphasised that lack of clear role definitions and

expectations for DPs has led to many DPs' job dissatisfaction, stress and burnout, and decreased motivation. In my further systematic review, a study by Singh and Mestry (2022) emphasises that DPs in South African township schools often feel undervalued and unsupported in their roles and personal views on matters arising within their schools.

Regarding the above assertions, this study aims to add to the prevailing body of knowledge on the role of DPs in South African township schools by exploring their perceptions towards teaching and administrative responsibilities. Identifying the challenges they are experiencing in balancing the dual roles and exploring strategies for supporting them in their roles. By doing this, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing these critical school leaders, whom I called "Janus, the Roman god with two faces."

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The study's rationale was divided into two subheadings: Personal/ professional justification and theoretical/ historical justification.

1.3.1 Personal/ professional justifications

In my more than ten years as a South African educator, I have not observed DPs come to my class, set up coaching or mentoring sessions, or attend sixty percent (60%) of the class period in their subjects, which also became evident in the interviews conducted in this study. This affirms that they have neglected these responsibilities in favour of other administrative duties. I obviously perceive this as a result of their workload, which continues to have a negative impact on student outcomes, most especially with those teaching at the Further Education and Training (FET) phase and General Education and Training (GET) phase in South African township schools observed. In addition is the compromised instructional support for teachers accrued to the responsibility of DPs as curriculum managers (in some schools called head of academic) in South African township schools. Due to their busyness, DPs frequently share forms with teachers during Quality Management System (QMS) in particular, ignoring instructional development, which emphasises the need for better student outcomes, teacher pedagogy, and school performance. The annual low student performance in South African township schools is partly caused by incompetent middle administrators and a lack of instructional coaching and mentorship for teachers (such as DPs) in preparation for the classroom, which invariably makes school management teams weaker (DBE, 2022). This instructional coaching, prominent leadership skill, and mentoring are parts of the role of

township schools' DPs as heads of academics and curriculum and are mostly marginalised for their administrative work. As a result, underperforming and newly hired teachers face vulnerability in instructional pedagogy; classes taught by DPs lack effective teaching for learning times, leading to low teacher support and low overall student outcomes. In addition, DPs as heads of the school disciplinary committee mostly spend more time on school crisis resolution than on teaching and other teacher support professional development programmes. They struggle most when it comes to instructional teaching due to time constraints to mitigate the complexity in the dual roles delegated to them. Therefore, in my personal and/or professional views, DPs in township schools face role conflicts, tensions, and contextual challenges as they struggle and juggle in mediating their role as a subject teacher, a curriculum manager, and an administrator due to their multifaceted role.

1.3.2 Theoretical justifications

Similarly to my personal and professional rationale for this study, Jubilee (2013, p. 8) “characterises the deputy principal's role as being ambiguous,” and Weller (2002, p. 13) and Nieuwenhuizen (2011, p. 10) “observe the deputy principal as a multitasking expert in no particular field.” According to Blose (2024), the deputy principal's job description is unrealistic and takes the shape of a cloud or haze, and above all, the school principal's authority to assign the DPs' tasks and responsibilities in a gigantic ethereal glow determines the level of complexity and ambiguity in such duties (Jansen & Plessis, 2020). Many of the literature reviewed on DPs roles in township schools are critical to the success of schools, but their workload and responsibilities are often overlooked which serves as a research gap for this study. This study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing DPs, which will inform strategies for supporting them in their roles.

To address this gap, this study aims to explore DPs' perceptions of their complex role, as they are often required to satisfy stakeholders', educators', and school administrators' expectations (Bush & Glover, 2019). In addition, this study aims to explore knowledge of DPs as instructional leaders, administrators, and subject teachers in their school context. This research aims to identify and analyse their concerns through semi-structured interviews. Interviews will enable an examination of their responsibilities and the challenges that result in job stress and burnout, role complexity/ambiguity, and low task effectiveness (Mestry & Sing, 2019). Recommendations will be provided for decision-makers and educational leaders on how they can evaluate DPs' leadership and identify areas for professional development. Additionally, the

results might influence school principals to re-evaluate the fundamental distributed leadership strategy that Bush and Glover (2016, p. 217) opposed and “instil in their fellow school leaders, including DPs, the display of a purposeful and restructured leadership framework in their shared leadership.”

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As I have previously highlighted in the background of the study, the responsibilities of DPs in South African schools have undergone significant transformations since the advent of democracy in 1994 (DBE, 2020), but with no guide on time management in achieving the multifaceted roles. The South African Schools Policies and the subsequent amendments from 1997 to 2024 have led to an increased emphasis on the teaching, administrative, and managerial duties of DPs (Republic of South Africa, 1996) in a complicated manner. However, the precise nature and scope of their teaching and administrative responsibilities remain unclear and complex to achieve (Blose, 2024; Jansen & Plessis, 2020; Mokoena, 2020; Mncube et al., 2022; Blose & Naicker, 2018). In recent DBE and ELRC policy developments in South African education, DPs are expected to assist principals with timetabling, assigning replacement teachers in the absence of the other, and overseeing rosters and duty loads, while concurrently attending to administrative task organisations, classroom teaching, and financial problems (DBE, 2022). The DPs are also supposed to be in charge of keeping an eye on and evaluating the teachers' performance in accordance with the QMS criteria (DBE, 2022). This entails assessing the teachers' work and offering advice on how to enhance their pedagogy—the way they teach, learn, and assess (ELRC, 2020). In addition to teaching 60% of their daily seven (7) work hours, deputy principals are expected to oversee teacher underperformance, carry out training programmes, mentor, coach, and offer support (DBE, 2022; ELRC, 2020). In accordance with the South African PAM document of 2022, it is expected of DPs to supervise and maintain an effective curriculum structure (DBE, 2022; ELRC, 2020). Curriculum structures, which are referred to as instructional pedagogy support teacher development and guarantee quality assurance in the classroom. The DPs oversee running the student representative council, holding parent-teacher conferences, and cultivating relationships with social, sports, and community organisations to promote lifetime learning (DBE, 2022). In addition, recent policy development such as the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 2020 has further complicated the role of deputy principals by introducing new expectations and responsibilities (DBE, 2020). For instance, the policy emphasises the significance of school leadership and management expected of the DPs but fails to provide clear guidelines on how

DPs should manage their time and resources between teaching and administrative responsibilities.

This lack of clarity has resulted in confusion and conflicts, tensions, and role challenges among DPs in South African township schools and their role sets, which negatively impact their job stress level and burnout, motivation, and overall task effectiveness (Bush & Glover, 2014). Anthropologically speaking, Blose (2024) contends that in the settings where DPs operate in South African township schools, greater focus is required to enhance effective leadership. Blose (2024) goes on to say that caring leadership might be the secret to enhancing DPs' practices towards better teaching and administrative responsibilities. However, years later, Blose and Mbatha (2025) reveal in their findings that contextual complexities, including a feeling of helplessness due to the inadequacy of resources and support, overwhelming workloads, and having to deal with learners from below-the-poverty-line households, continue to aggravate the complexity in the role of DPs in South African rural schools. In addition, Blose & Naicker (2018) and Van der Vyver et al. (2020) added that neglecting the workload of DPs has led to low teacher commitment, low school effectiveness, and declining student performances and outcomes. Furthermore, the complex role of the DPs may also have implications for the standard of instruction given to the learners due to the fact that they compromise their teaching time to attend administrative responsibilities, as well as the overall teachers' development, management, and governance of the schools (Mncube et al., 2022). Because of this complexity, the duties of the DPs remain mostly complex as they are assigned at the principal's discretion (ELRC, 2020; Jansen & Plessis, 2020). Based on pragmatic evidence, it is often challenging for DPs to balance their leadership duties with the teaching time allotted in the ELRC document (2022) and the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, by Minister Angelina Matsie Motshekga, who states that DPs should devote 60% of their time to teaching and 40% to administrative duties. Practically speaking to this policy statement, it is determined with empirical facts that DPs cannot fairly balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities under this job outline (Blose, 2024).

With the aforementioned, this study explores the complex role of DPs towards teaching and administrative responsibilities in at least four KwaZulu-Natal township schools, with a specific focus on understanding the DPs lived experiences and perceptions to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities as demanded of them by the South African school ACT and other stakeholders. And secondly, to explore the conflicting challenges, tensions, and

contextual challenges they experience in attempting to mitigate their teaching and administrative responsibilities and examine the strategies they adopted in navigating these tensions, conflicts, and challenges they face in attempting to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities. To address what needs to be known and how best to address the research problem, the researcher conducted a thorough analysis of pertinent literature on the phenomenon being studied. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected purposeful participants to examine their practical lived experiences to be able to offer recommendations on how DPs in township schools can mitigate role conflicts, role tensions, and contextual challenges in effective teaching and administrative tasks.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study on how DPs balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities in South African township schools is significant because it addresses a critical gap in the current literature and recent DBE amendment policies on school leadership and management. The findings of this study are expected to benefit various stakeholders, teachers, school administrators, and policymakers (if acknowledged), by providing them with a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing DPs in township schools. For example, Van der Vyver et al. (2020) note that the amendments to the Employment of Educators Act in South Africa have had a major effect on township schools' DPs' roles and responsibilities. This study explores the impact of such policy changes on the experiences of DPs within their school context. According to the RSA-DBE (2020), DPs should play a critical role in supporting the principal in managing the school. However, the ELRC (2020) notes that the role and responsibilities of DPs are often unclear, leading to role ambiguity and conflict. This study aims to address these challenges by exploring the practical perspectives of DPs on their teaching and administrative responsibilities.

As a result, this study is important because it will provide new insights into the experiences of DPs in South African township schools, which may also inform policy and practice. As Blose (2024) notes, DPs are critical to the success of schools, but their workload and responsibilities are often overlooked. This study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing DPs, which will inform strategies for supporting them in their roles. This study will also provide new ideas for school policymakers, school principals, and teachers on how to support DPs in their roles. For example, Jansen and Plessis (2020) suggest that DPs need training and development opportunities to prepare them for their roles. This study

explores the strategies in which DPs engaged to stay abreast of the leadership and teaching responsibilities. In conclusion, this study is expected to enhance the development of DPs, and through examining the cases on DPs' perceptions of their roles and strategies adopted in mitigating contextual challenges, role conflicts, and role tension, the study is expected to inform other DPs how to navigate their dual roles and pinpoint DPs' areas in need of professional development for school leadership, instructional pedagogy, and overall student outcomes in South African township schools.

1.6 RESEARCH AIMS AND FOCUS

The focus and purpose of this research study is to explore South African township schools' DPs lived experiences in their roles in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities, putting three districts, Pinetown district, Umlazi district, and Nseleni district from KwaZulu-Natal Province, under a microscope. This study will explore the confusion and conflicts, tensions, and contextual challenges that DPs in these provincial districts encounter in their attempt to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities. In addition, the study explores how DPs in KwaZulu-Natal township schools navigate these conflicts, tensions, and contextual challenges that arise from balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities. Through examining the DPs' perceptions of their roles, the study aims to benefit and inform other DPs on how to navigate their dual roles and pinpoint DPs' areas in need of professional development. Furthermore, the study aims to provide strategies and practices that DPs can use to manage the challenges, tensions, and conflicts that arise from balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities and provide valuable insights into the implications of these challenges, tensions, and conflicts on their job stress level and burnout.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is underpinned by the following research questions:

Main research question:

What are the township schools' DPs lived experiences in their roles in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities?

Sub-research questions:

- i. How do DPs in the case study schools perceive their teaching and administrative responsibilities?
- ii. What are the contextual challenges, conflicts, and tensions that DPs encounter in their attempt to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities?
- iii. How do DPs in the case study schools navigate the tensions, challenges, and conflicts that arise from balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities?

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

In this section, I provide definitions from literature for each term and clarify how I used the term in the study.

1.8.1 Complex Role

A complex role is multifaceted responsibilities that requires one to juggle between two or more duties (Gunter & Thomson, 2020) such as in the case of deputy principals balancing teaching and administrative and leadership responsibilities. Borrowing from Kumar (2019, p. 12), complex role refers to “a nebulous position that signifies a role or situation that is unclear, ambiguous, or uncertain, making it difficult for individuals to navigate or make decisions.” Similarly, a complex role can be defined as a lack of clear boundaries, roles, or expectations, leading to confusion, conflict, or role ambiguity (Jansen and Plessis, 2020). In addition, a complex role can be defined as one that is poorly defined, lacks clear responsibilities, or is subject to conflicting expectations to perform effectively (Blöse, 2024). I have used this term (complex role) to describe the position of DPs in this case study in order to gain insight into perceptions of DPs’ roles in their respective schools. This will enable me to navigate their experiences based on their leadership responsibilities and teaching practice and identify potential areas for improvement in their school leadership and management.

1.8.2 Deputy Principals

Deputy Principals are senior critical leaders (which I note as Janus, the Roman god with two faces) in schools who support the principal in managing the school and are responsible for a range of administrative, pastoral, and instructional roles (DBE, 2020). Following Vyyer et al’s. (2020) definition of Deputy Principals, these scholars described DPs as key leaders that play a critical role in schools, serving as a link between teachers, learners, and the school administration, and are responsible for leading and managing various aspects of school life. As

a result, I have selected these leaders, “Deputy Principals,” in the study to explore how they manage their time, prioritise tasks, and allocate resources (both human and physical) to fulfill their multifaceted tasks. In addition, the role of DPs in the study has enabled me to explore the position of teacher morale in terms of job satisfaction, motivation, and the well-being of teachers, learners, and non-teaching staff and identify any challenges or contradictions that the case study schools are facing in their leadership and management roles.

1.8.3 Teaching Responsibilities

Teaching responsibilities refer to the instructional responsibilities of educators, including planning, delivering, and assessing student learning, as well as creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment (South African Council for Educators (S.A.C.E.), 2020). Teaching duties encompass the design, delivery, and evaluation of instructional programmes, as well as the creation of a positive and productive learning environment that supports student success (Blose, 2024). I have used this term in the study to portray how DPs in the case study schools envision themselves in terms of instructional pedagogy, to assess the possible practices and self-introspection of the DPs, and to assess their overall task effectiveness in the whole school evaluation.

1.8.4 Administrative Responsibilities

Administrative responsibilities in township schools in South African refer to the managerial and leadership responsibilities of educators, including personnel management, budgeting, and policy implementation, aimed at supporting the effective operation of the school (RSA-DBE (2020). Borrowing from Jansen and Plessis (2020), these scholars defined administrative responsibilities as planning, organising, and managing school resources, including personnel, finances, and facilities, aimed at creating a supportive and effective learning environment. As a result, I have used the term to describe the position and core responsibilities of DPs in the case study schools.

1.8.5 Township Schools

Township schools refer to institutions that provide basic education to learners from Grade R to Grade 12 and are governed by the South African Schools Act (SASA) and other relevant policies and legislation (DBE, 2020). Sayed et al. (2020) define South African schools (which I note majority are township schools) as part of institutions that play a critical role in promoting social cohesion, economic development, and democratic citizenship and are central to the

country's efforts to address poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Adding to that, these township schools are located on the peripheries of the cities, mostly designated for the black labourers (Zulu et al., 2021) and are partly governed by traditional leaders (Myende & Hlalele, 2018). These schools are mostly at the rural end of the city (Blose & Mbatha, 2025) and therefore I have used this term 'township schools' in the study to describe the environment in which the phenomenon will be researched, the environment from which the data will be generated, and where the participants for the study will be purposively selected.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION

There are five chapters in this study. A short compendium of each chapter follows:

Chapter One

This chapter covers the study's introduction and background; it provides comprehensive details about the research problem statement by highlighting what needs to be addressed for the task effectiveness of DPs in South African township schools. The chapter also highlights the focus and purpose of the study by outlining the necessity for the study with its personal and/or professional rationale and theoretical rationale. In addition, chapter one outlines the significance of the study, stating the benefits, importance, and new ideas the study will provide upon completion. The chapter provides the key research questions that drive the research study with "what" and "how" questions, provides definitions of the key terms used in the research study, and gives a short synopsis of the conclusion of the research study with what the readers should expect in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

This chapter presents the review of relevant literature on the research topic and the theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study. Through a review of academic journal articles, books, and school policies both inside and outside of South Africa, I present this chapter with the goal of understanding the epistemology and ontology in the research questions. I do this by identifying debates and subheadings that are in line with the complex role that DPs play in teaching and administrative duties in KwaZulu-Natal township schools.

Chapter Three

This chapter deals with the research design and methodology. It covers the research approach, the research paradigm underpinning the study, the research design/methodology that drives the

study, the sampling techniques used in selecting the research sites and participants for the study, the context of the study and biographical details of the participants, the data generation method utilised in the study, the data analysis techniques to guarantee trustworthiness, the role of the researcher, ethical considerations, and a brief compendium for the reader about what the focus and purpose of the chapter were and how I attained the focus and purpose.

Chapter Four

This chapter presents the data, analysis, and discussion. It provides an introduction and background of the case study schools and participants and gives an analysis of the themes and sub-themes that drive the research questions for the study thematically. This chapter also presents the findings and interpretations of the data generated. It contains detailed discussions that emanated from the field during interaction with participants and correlated findings from the literature.

Chapter Five

This chapter presents a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations. It provides conclusions from the literature according to the research questions, conclusions from the data generated as guided by the research questions, recommendations for practices and limitations for the study, recommendations for further research, and a conclusion of the study.

1.10 CHAPTER ONE SUMMARY

This chapter introduces the research topic “Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools.” The chapter highlights the importance of DPs in the South African education system and the need for clarity around their roles and responsibilities. A review of relevant literature has revealed that DPs face numerous tensions, conflicts, and challenges in balancing their teaching and administrative duties and that role complexity/ambiguity and conflict are common challenges. The chapter also outlined the significance of the study, the research questions, and the methodology that will be employed in further chapters to explore the research problem. The next chapter will provide a comprehensive review of the literature related to the roles and responsibilities of DPs, role ambiguity, and the challenges and/or the opportunities faced by the DPs with the aim to understand the epistemology and ontology in the research questions.

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' COMPLEX ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

An overview of the main points of this study was provided in Chapter One. The concepts that led to this research study were described, and the initial stages of process organisation were explored. In this chapter, findings from a thorough literature review are presented. The study of the literature aims to explore the body of knowledge regarding the intricate function of DPs in township schools both inside and outside of South Africa. The review examines the complexities of the DPs' role, including the challenges they face in attempting to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities and the impact of these challenges on DPs' job satisfaction, stress level, and burnout; contributions towards teachers' support and instructional development; administrative task effectiveness; and student outcomes. The review also identifies strategies to navigate these challenges and explores knowledge gaps in existing research to provide recommendations for mitigating these challenges. This chapter also examines the perceptions of township school DPs towards balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities and how their roles fit into the distributed leadership framework of Spillane (2017) with the demands placed on them by teachers, school administrators, and other stakeholders. In addition to better understanding the complexity of the DPs' role, organisational role theory, created by Katz and Khan (1978), is used to examine the complexity of the role sending to the office of the DPs within their context.

2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

Zulu et al. (2021) state that in South Africa, the term "township" refers to a poor, ghettoised metropolitan area reserved for Indian, mixed-race, and African societies (previously known as non-whites). Township schools were established as a result of apartheid provisions, especially the "Group Area Act," which aimed to divide residential areas based on racial groups (Zulu et al., 2021). Its goal was to retain Black labourers in the towns and cities closest to their places of employment (Prinsloo, 2007). Townships are found outside of cities and towns. Nowadays, poverty, crime, and violence are the main indicators of a town's deprivation; at times, it has even been compared to a 'battle zone' where the safety of its inhabitants is at risk (Prinsloo, 2007; Zulu et al., 2021). Research findings indicate that township schools are under the professional leadership and administration of their principals and their DPs. Such a task is

challenging for several reasons, including the fact that school principals and their DPs, especially in township schools, must oversee schools that have inherited issues from the past while also balancing the responsibility of leading societal change at the school level (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2019; Department of Education, 2020).

Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs), School Governing Bodies (SGBs), and Teacher Unions are increasingly aware of their rights, which are safeguarded by the South African Constitution, the Schools Act, and the Employment of Educators Act (EEA). They often advocate and fight for these perceived rights and positions in their dealings with school principals and their DPs in general. As a result, sometimes the administrators of certain township schools are intimidated by these stakeholders' aggressive demeanour (in which DPs are included), and it renders teaching, student discipline, and managing township schools more complex (Zulu et al., 2021). These stakeholders' aggressive demeanour, socioeconomic inequalities, and acute awareness of their rights all contribute to tensions and conflict at the school level as members of the school administrators (which DPs are inclusive of) vie for control (Bhengu, 2005). For example, according to Spillane (2017), provisions on curriculum management and its leadership have caused confusion in some schools about who is deemed fit to be accountable (between school principals and the deputy principal) for leading teachers' instructional development. Based on information derived from my personal experiences and observations at schools, some teachers believe that DPs as academic managers should give formal pedagogy instructions in schools, while others think that principals are better suited to provide instructional leadership. Should the principal and DPs fail to satisfy these expectations, it could lead to more tensions and conflicts that, if not managed carefully, could jeopardise the school's ability to function well and eventually affect student outcomes. Additionally, there are frequent disputes over teacher management and student discipline at the school level, where the distinctions between the responsibilities of the principal, department heads (DHs), and DPs are muddled. Roles become hazy because some principals think they have the most autonomy and that their superior power should give them the last word. Despite existing laws and regulations (such as the Schools Act, EEA, and the South African Constitution) that stipulate DPs' role as head of school discipline and assistance managers to the principal, DPs' role as mid-managers in township schools has grown more complex, demanding, and difficult (Myburgh, 2021). Even though it is required that the DPs work with the principals, SGBs, SMTs, teacher unions, teachers, RCLs, and other stakeholders to enhance teaching and administrative conditions, power struggles and rights disputes, including staff Balkanization,

appear to take precedence over the intended stakeholders' role sending (Department of Education [DoE], 1996; 2020; Katz & Khan, 1978; Sayed & Motala, 2020). Based on historical context and policy, many DPs in township schools still find it difficult to manage the variety of issues and interactions between different stakeholders/ role senders in township schools.

2.3 DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

Leadership is an essential element of any organisation (Bush & Glover, 2020). School leadership is widely acknowledged as a key factor in determining student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). However, the leadership job assigned to DPs frequently has an indirect impact on student progress. Deputy Principals influence student outcomes either through their work with teachers or by creating a positive learning environment. Although many studies have looked at the relationship between school leadership and student outcomes (Griffith, 2004; Hallinger & Snidvongs, 2020; Mulford et al., 2004; Leithwood et al., 2020), many of these studies concentrated on leadership traits or styles. Few studies have looked at the specific tasks that DPs complete, how well they complete them, and the relationship between DPs' task effectiveness and student outcomes, teacher development, and instruction (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Zheng et al., 2017; Khumalo et al., 2020; Jansen & Plessis, 2020). Hence the gap for this study to examines DPs' perceptions of their roles and effectiveness in attempting to balance teaching and administrative responsibilities and to identify the relation between perceived tensions, conflict, and contextual challenges they are experiencing in attempting to balance these dual roles. Among other things, this study aims to examine the leadership strategies employed by DPs in response to their complex role in township schools. The role of school DPs in township schools has evolved, per Zuze and Juan's (2020) research report. As academic leaders and managers, they are now expected to be the standard bearers of teaching and learning activities at the school, not just as the principal's assistant managers and administrators. These scholars alluded to the fact that access to improved human and physical resource management, successful school outcomes, and leadership environments that are largely dependent on the type of school are all associated with improved deputy principal leadership. When comparing independent school DPs to township school DPs in South Africa for instance, Zuze and Juan's research findings reported that, the former stated that their parents were more supportive, their teachers were more capable, and their learners showed more readiness to learn and participate in school activities, contrarily to township schools. Additionally, they hypothesised that learners' and schools' socioeconomic status influences the relationship between academic achievement and school leadership and that the leadership styles of South African schools vary

widely by school type. The leadership style seen in independent schools raises the possibility that the autonomy of DPs is associated with better practices or that DPs in these institutions are significantly more effective with the support and shared leadership they receive from colleagues and stakeholders compared to that of township schools (Zuze & Juan, 2020).

2.4 KEY ROLES OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS IN SCHOOLS

In South Africa, the ELRC (2020) outlines the amendment duties and responsibilities of a DP's position as being “individual and varied (not discrete and precise), depending on the approaches and needs of the particular school,” which consist of the following but are not restricted to: “general/administrative tasks, teaching, extra and co-curricular activities, personnel-related issues, managing curriculum structure, interaction with stakeholders, and communication” (RSA, 2016a: A30-A31). In contrast, these roles and responsibilities expected of the DPs overlap with those of the DHs and principals in Annexures A.5 and A.7, respectively. This made the role of DPs more complicated and complex, and as a matter of fact, the PAM document (extracted from ELRC, 2020) alluded to this in section A.4.2.4, stating that the principal specifies and assigns all additional DPs’ responsibilities following discussions with the teaching staff.

The PAM document also states that DPs must carry out their primary responsibilities, as stated in paragraph A.6, both during and after the formal school day, keeping in mind that none of these activities would shorten the overall time allocated for teaching or negatively impact the curriculum. However, the scheduled teaching time for the DPs are allocated in respect of their different post levels, which also differ according to the size of the school. This suggests that principals and their DPs must teach more in smaller schools than in larger ones with larger staffing levels (ELRC, 2020; EEA, 2022; DBE, 2020). Therefore, the exact hours need to be decided in relation to the staffing organisation of the school, schedule, and curriculum requirements. Scheduled teaching time is shown as a percentage of the overall amount of time needed to teach learners in the specific grades.

In general terms, the following in the tables below may be considered as guidelines in determining the scheduled teaching time of South African school educators, including the DPs:

Primary School	Ratio per 1000 educators
Post level 1	Between 85% and 92%
Post level 2	Between 85% and 90%
Deputy Principal	60%
Principal	Depending on their post-level, between 10% and 92% NB: One-person school principals are required to teach all of the planned class time.

Table 2.1: Extracted from DBE, 2022 (EEA Resolution No. 46879 of 2022)

Secondary Schools	Ratio per 1000 educators
Post level 1	Between 85% and 90%
Post level 2	85%
Deputy Principals	60%
Principal	Between 5% and 60% depending on his/her post level

Table 2.2: Extracted from DBE, 2022 (EEA Resolution No. 46879 of 2022)

Seemingly, in schools where the ratio of learners per educator is less than 1000, the DPs scheduled teaching time is subjected to change increasingly depending on how it is distributed by the principal, and yet they still have to balance their administrative responsibilities in the absence of the principal or as distributed (Jansen & Plessis, 2020).

2.5 ROLE EXPECTATIONS OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS IN SCHOOLS

The current discourses around the necessity of changing school leadership methods assume that deputy principals should be empowered for them to carry out their responsibilities efficiently. The necessity to hire deputy principals who the South African Department of Basic Education envisions would help to raise the standard of school administration and leadership serves as the rationale for deputy principal empowerment (DBE, 1996; 2008). In a DBE report published in the year 2008, titled “A Module of the Advanced Certificate: Education School Management and Leadership” in Pretoria, the report emphasised the job description of deputy principals as a crucial supportive role to the principal, and as such, they are deemed partially responsible for their schools' improved performance. Deputy Principals are expected to perform the following duties, among others, to fulfil this important role.

2.5.1 Teaching expectations

The teaching expectations of DPs at schools are complex and challenging. Deputy principals in South African schools for instance, are expected to teach 60% of the seven-hour workday (DBE, 2020) in their area of learning and expertise and still attend other responsibilities. These include administrative roles, implementing Curriculum Assessment Policy Structure (CAPs), providing support leadership and management support for teachers, planning and preparing lesson plans that meets the needs of diverse learners in areas of their expertise, creating a range of instructional strategies to engage learners and promote learning, assessing learners and keeping records to promote student academic progress in both summative and formative assessment, and to produce and preserve a positive and productive learning environment within their school context. While striving to achieve these, there are contextual considerations that pose complexity and challenges in their roles as teachers. Amongst these are resource constraints such as limited resources, infrastructure challenges, and technology limitations (Blose, 2018). In addition is socio-economic factors that include learners' socio-economic needs and fostering resilience to learners, teachers and non-teaching staff in school (DBE, 2020). However, the position of DPs in South African township schools highlight their responsibilities in teaching, extracurricular, and cultural sensitivity. Despite this, they need to understand and respect diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and traditions within their context as part of their teaching expectations (Jansen & Plessis, 2020).

2.5.2 Administrative expectations

It is anticipated that DPs should possess a range of administrative skills to support the principal and participate in the general administration of the school (Khumalo & Van der Vyver, 2020). Drawing from these scholars, DPs in a South African township school context need to possess 'role-awareness skills to understand their role and responsibilities, including how to use their authority to fulfil their duties. Deputy Principals are expected to be technically skilled in areas of budgeting, financial management, and human resources management to perform their administrative responsibilities effectively. In addition, they need socialisation skills to interact with stakeholders, including teachers, learners, parents, and other broader community members, who are their role senders (Bush, 2020; Katz & Khan, 1978). Within the administrative expectations of DPs in schools, DPs are expected to be involved in managing student discipline and welfare, including counselling and conflict resolution. They need to be engaged in timetabling and scheduling of student teaching and learning and be responsible for managing school resources, such as textbooks, technology, and facilities (Bush, 2018).

2.5.3 Interpersonal expectations

Deputy Principals are expected to communicate effectively with teachers, providing feedback, guidance, and support on instructional pedagogy and other related matters (RSA-DBE, 2020). Drawing from American author Joseph DeVito (2022), a ‘guru’ in interpersonal communication, blending theory and research with practical skills, stressed in his 14th edition released, titled “*Interpersonal communication: Everyday encounter*,” that organisation leaders in positions of focal person, such as DPs at schools, are expected to demonstrate emotional intelligence, empathy, and self-awareness to build trust and rapport with others in their leadership role. They are also expected to manage conflicts and difficult situations in a fair, impartial, and respectful manner; build and lead high-performing teams; foster a positive and inclusive school culture; and engage with stakeholders, including parents and the broader community, to build partnerships and support student learning.

2.5.4 Expectations in QMS evaluation

Deputy Principals, along with the principals, are responsible for implementing QMS policy in their schools, ensuring that it is integrated into the schools’ overall quality management system (RSA-DBE, 2020; RSA-ELRC, 2020). It is expected of DPs to participate in evaluating teachers’ performance, providing constructive feedback, and identifying areas of improvement for teacher development. In addition, DPs are supposed to assist educators with their professional growth and self-assessment, ensuring they understand the QMS policy and its implementation. In striving to achieve the implementation of the QMS policy, DPs are expected to identify training needs for teachers and other staff members in order to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the QMS policy (Khumalo & Van der Vyver, 2020).

2.5.5 Policy-Making expectations

In South African schools for instance, DPs are expected to play a vital role in policy-making, supporting the principal and School Management Team (SMT) in developing and implementing school policies (RSA-DBE, 2020). As shared leadership, teamwork, decision-making, and promoting the empowerment of teachers and other staff members are placed as responsibilities of the DPs or as their shared functions with the principal, the DPs are responsible for implementing policies, such as the South African Standard for Principals, which outlines the expectations for school leaders (Mestry & Grobler, 2020; Mncube & Maja, 2020). In addition, deputy principals are expected to work closely with the School Governing Body

(SGB) and SMT to ensure that policies are aligned with the schools' vision and mission (RSA-DBE, 2020). In terms of policy improvement and recommendations for policy changes, DPs are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policies (Jansen & Plessis 2020).

2.6 DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' ROLE COMPLEXITY

Being the second-in-command in schools and the curriculum structure manager or disciplinary manager, DPs are essential to helping principals, overseeing daily operations, and guaranteeing that high-quality instruction is provided. However, the responsibilities of their roles can be extremely demanding and complicated, which can result in role conflict, tension, stress, and burnout (Gunter & Thompson, 2020). As schools in townships deal with challenges, such as a lack of funding, high student-teacher ratios, and socioeconomic inequality (Leithwood & Riehl, 2020). These challenges must be overcome by DPs in these schools as they balance their administrative and instructional duties. According to Leaf and Odhiambo (2017), DPs are expected to carry out a variety of tasks, such as relational tasks that stem from socioeconomic disparities, administrative duties, and distributed workloads—that is, managing teachers, managing the school as a whole in the absence of the principal, and managing curriculum pedagogy and performance standards in addition to teaching in the classroom, amongst others.

In this instance, Principals frequently use their own judgment when deciding on the role of their deputy principals, as noted by Jansen and Plessis's (2020) research. According to these researchers, principals frequently assign tasks to DPs that they themselves are reluctant to do, this view was also resonated by Jeffers et al.'s (2024) findings in their study on 'Deputy Principals: A Hidden Asset in Schools.' Research findings around the world frequently highlight the diversity and scope of DPs' responsibilities as well as the role's ambiguity or lack of definition (Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017; Sibanda, 2018; Pollock et al., 2017; Berry & Townsend, 2019; Jeffers et al., 2024). However, within this generality are some recurring acts. For example, according to a recent Irish study by Flaherty and Mannix McNamara (2024), staff members in post-primary schools perceive DPs as collaborating with the principal on administrative tasks and day-to-day operations, with management responsibilities pertaining to behavioural and discipline issues, supervision and substitution, and scheduling being mentioned as standard practices. While recently, a lot of research articles on DPs are still claiming that the role is "under-researched" for its fairness, ambiguities, fabulousness, and complexity (Blose & Mbatha, 2025; Blose, 2024; Mncube et al., 2022; O'Donovan, 2015;

Harris & De Flaminis, 2016; Jeffers et al., 2024; Khumalo & Van der Vyer, 2020; Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017).

2.6.1 Balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities in schools

According to research, DPs struggle to strike a balance between their administrative and teaching responsibilities at schools (Jansen & Plessis, 2020; Blose & Naicker, 2018; Mncube et al., 2022; Singh & Mestry, 2022). For instance, research by Mestry and Grobler (2020), published in the South African Journal of Education, asserts that DPs spend more time on administrative tasks than on teaching and instructional practices, which in the long run affects the student outcomes, teachers' developmental support, and overall school effectiveness negatively. In light of this, the South African Department of Basic Education, in an attempt to abolish this trending challenge, developed policies (SASA Act 84 of 1996; EEA of 1998; NEPA of 1996; ELRC of 2020) to support DPs in their roles, but fails to advise on the implementation process and time prioritisation in achieving these policy statements. Similarly, the National Education Policy Act (2020) also outlines the responsibilities of DPs, including their role in instructional leadership to strengthen teaching and learning, but fails to outline the time management process to achieve the implementation of the policy. In addition, the Employment of Educators Act (1998), as modified in PAM document extracted from EEA (2022), provides guidelines for the appointment and deployment of DPs but fails to provide guidelines for the distribution of their role. Basically, all these contradictions arose to more difficulties for DPs in schools to effectively balance their teaching time with their administrative responsibilities, hereby leading to role conflict, role tension, vagueness in job descriptions, extensive workload, stress and burnout, and lack of autonomy and direction of leadership style.

2.6.2 Contextualising the complexity in the DPs' teaching and administrative duties

Following the trends on the contextual challenges, conflicts, and tensions that deputy principals encounter in their attempt to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities, many scholars have contextualised the complexity in the role of deputy principals in relation to their multifaceted duties as follows:

2.6.2.1 Role conflict

The term 'role conflict' describes the conflicting expectations, demands, or responsibilities that arise from individuals' roles (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Mestry & Grobler, 2020). In the context of

DPs in township schools, role conflict may occur when DPs are expected to balance teaching and administrative responsibilities without clear expectations, leading to conflicting demands on their time and energy.

2.6.2.2 Role tension

Role tension refers to the feeling of anxiety, stress, or discomfort that arises from the demands and expectations of an individual's role (Katz & Kahn, 1978). In the case of DPs in township schools, they may experience role tension due to the high level of accountability, limited resources, and complex social dynamics or socio-economic disparities within their context (Khumalo & Van den Vyver, 2020).

2.6.2.3 Role ambiguity

Role ambiguity is the lack of clarity or uncertainty about individuals' roles, responsibilities, or expectations (Katz & Khan, 1978). Deputy principals in township schools are certain to experience role ambiguity due to a lack of job descriptions, conflicting expectations from school administrators, teachers, learners, and other stakeholders, or limited training and support (Spillane, 2017; Mestry & Grobler, 2020).

2.6.2.4 Role senders

In this case study, role senders refer to “individuals or groups of teachers, learners, school administrators, and other stakeholders who transmit expectations and demands to a role occupant or focal person” (Katz & Khan, 1978, p. 194). Role senders play a crucial role in shaping an individual's role behaviour and performance by providing cues, expectations, and feedback.

2.6.2.5 Role occupant or focal person

According to Katz and Khan (1978, p. 193), the role occupant or focal person refers to “the individual who occupies a particular role and is the focus of role expectations and demands.” In other words, the role occupant, or focal person, in this case study refers to the township schools' DPs who are responsible for fulfilling the requirements and expectations of a particular role. The focal person receives role expectations and demands from role senders, interprets and responds to these expectations and demands, and performs the tasks and behaviours associated with the role.

2.6.2.6 Job description

A job description is a written statement that outlines the key responsibilities, duties, and expectations of an individual's role (DBE, 2020). In the context of DPs in township schools, a clear job description is essential to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities and can prioritise their tasks effectively.

2.6.2.7 Workload

Workload refers to the amount of work or tasks an individual is expected to perform within a given timeframe (Gunter & Thompson, 2020). Deputy Principals in township schools often experience a heavy workload due to the demands of teaching and administrative tasks and leadership responsibilities.

2.6.2.8 Stress level and burnout

Stress level and burnout are the physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that can result from prolonged exposure to stressors, including workload, role conflict, and lack of autonomy (Maslach & Leiter, 2020). As a result of these conditions, DPs in township schools are at risk of burnout due to the high level of stress and pressure associated with their roles.

2.6.2.9 Lack of autonomy

Lack of autonomy refers to limited freedom or independence to make decisions, take actions, or prioritise tasks according to ones' willingness (Deci & Ryan, 2020). As a matter of fact, DPs in township schools may experience a lack of autonomy due to the centralised control of school districts, limited resources, or micromanaging by the school leaders.

2.7 PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

Thus far, the literature has criticised the deputy principal position for having complicated job descriptions and the high workloads of present occupants (Blose, 2018; Bush & Glover, 2019; Mestry & Singh, 2019; Myburgh, 2021). Given the DPs dispersed roles and responsibilities throughout schools, DPs at schools (as an organisation) are exposed to a variety of leadership philosophies and school environments because of their dispersed responsibilities (Spillane, 2017). As a result, their roles and responsibilities are still ambiguous and complicated (Jansen & Plessis, 2020). And despite all of South Africa's educational reforms since 1994 as a case study, the responsibilities assigned to DPs have not changed significantly (Blose, 2024),

according to the Employment of Educators Act, 76, of 1998, and the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document that were reviewed in 1996, 2016, and September 2022 (RSA, 1996, pp. C64–C65; RSA, 2016a, pp. A30–A31). Much has not changed for DPs; rather, this has resulted in complex roles or role ambiguity due to imprecise job definitions and ignorance of expected duties and responsibilities (Myburgh, 2021; Spillane, 2017).

Myburgh's (2021) research study comparing mid-level managers (deputy principal) and high-level managers (principal) revealed that mid-level managers are the most affected by role conflict. Mid-level managers (as I note to be DPs) experience the greatest role conflict, mostly because they feel forced to act against their better judgment and wish they had more freedom to approach circumstances in a different way (Myburgh, 2021). Blose (2024) supported this view, stating that the lack of job descriptions and expectations for DPs can lead to role conflict and ambiguity, which can negatively impact the performances of DPs. Bush and Glover (2019) also highlighted the importance of clear job descriptions and expectations for DPs by arguing that DPs position in an organisation need to have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in contrast to being subjected to the prerogative of their superiors (school principals). Subject to the principals' discretion in allocating the duties of their DPs, Walker (2020) noted that DPs are often faced with conflicting expectations from the demands of their principals and other stakeholders/role senders. Sidhul et al. (2020) resonated with a similar view, stating that DPs need to be able to navigate the complex web of expectations and priorities to perform their role effectively.

Deputy Principals face “ongoing uncertainty and tension brought on by unclear policies and the ongoing management of circumstances and challenges” (Cook, 2017, p. 17). In view of this, the PAM document, as extracted from EEA (2022), noted that DPs often face challenges in developing their leadership skills. As a result, DPs need to be provided with opportunities for professional development to enhance their leadership skills. Liethwood et al. (2020) echoed similar view, stating that leaders such as DPs in a schooling organisation settings need professional development to be able to manage their time and priorities effectively to balance their administrative and pedagogical responsibilities. As stress at work heralded workload (Harry, 2020; Oruh et al., 2020; Pandey, 2020; Sidhu et al., 2020), working circumstances that affect output (Oruh et al., 2020; Sidhu et al., 2020), an increase in workload that results in less efficient tasks (Walker, 2020), administrative and institutional stress that results in low school performance (Allison et al., 2020), work and job-related uncertainty (Li et al., 2018, Park &

Jang, 2017), demands and expectations at work (Wijewardena et al., 2020), limitations in time (Amirudin, 2019), conditions of work (Goswami et al., 2019), mechanisms for performance management and appraisal (Pandey, 2020), and the unpredictable nature of the working environment (Hampton et al., 2019) contribute to the ambiguity surrounding the role of DPs in South African township schools.

2.8 THE CHALLENGES IN BALANCING TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

Effective leaders, such as school DPs are expected to set specific objectives and convey them to relevant school stakeholders (Leithwood et al., 2020; Li & Liu, 2022). As a deputy principal, setting and sharing specific objectives along with a well-defined vision and mission are essential for directing the instructional approach and well-being of learners (Hallinger, 2018). Chapter A5—Role and responsibilities of educators (EEA decision no. 46879 of 2022) of the PAM document states that DPs are expected to manage a wide range of unique and different administrative chores daily, contingent upon the specific school's rules and regulations. They are expected to perform multifaceted roles, including balancing their teaching responsibilities with administrative responsibilities. However, these unclear roles can create tension and conflict, as DPs struggle to allocate their time and energy between these competing demands (Sayed & Motala, 2020). On one hand, when the principal is not in the office, DPs are supposed to fill in for them and help them with their duties to support the principal or assume responsibility for the school's financial management and supervise and guide teachers' performance and tasks. If necessary, they are also expected to participate in established school/educator appraisal procedures by holding discussions, writing, or countersigning reports to regularly evaluate their professional practice with the aim of improving management, instruction, and learning; to oversee and counsel the Learner Representative Council; and to meet with parents to talk about their children's behaviour and development. Additionally, they are required to communicate with community, social, cultural, and sports organisations and to speak with the relevant government bodies on the principal's behalf (RSA-EEA, 2022; RSA-ELRC, 2020).

On the other hand, they are also expected to be effective teachers, responsible for delivering the curriculum and supporting student learning. Deputy Principals are required by the South African Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, to spend sixty percent (60 percent) of their time teaching in the classroom. The workload of the relevant post level and the expectations of

the school should be taken into consideration when teaching. It is also necessary to assess and record the progress of the learners. Distributed leadership theory suggests that organisational leaders, such as in schools should share accountability for instructional leadership (Spillane, 2017), which makes DPs a crucial component of the instructional leadership team. Therefore, in their capacity as instructional leaders, the deputy principals must “help the principal create a work plan guide that addresses each of the seven performance objectives included in the Education Labour Resolution Council's QMS instrument” (Collective Agreement Number 2 of 2020, p. 21), support teacher development programmes in terms of coaching, mentoring, and pastoral care, and support teachers in curriculum development and its implementation (such as support on assessment plans, effective implementation of the Annual Teaching Plan, remedial work plans, statistical diagnostic plans, effective recording of student progress, etc.). Invariably, these numerous roles and responsibilities create tensions, stress, burnout, and conflicts for DPs attempting to balance the expectations of their role senders.

2.8.1 Challenges deputy principals face between teaching and administrative duties

In further review, literature has shown that DPs in schools face numerous challenges in balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities. For instance, Jansen and Plessis (2020) and Vyyer et al. (2020) noted role conflict and ambiguity; they stated that DPs often experience role conflict and ambiguity as they struggle to balance their teaching time and administrative responsibilities as required of them by the school policies, distributed by their principals, and demanded by other stakeholders. In addition is the lack of a clear job description, as noted by Mestry and Singh (2020) and Myburgh (2021). These scholars emphasised that DPs lack clear job descriptions, which leads to confusion and role conflicts. As a result of these multiple responsibilities and tasks to perform, DPs often experience a heavy workload, leaving them with little time for teaching and other important responsibilities (Blöse, 2024; Bush & Glover, 2019).

According to Spillane (2017), a theorist for distributed leadership, and Walker (2020), a philosopher of work-related stress and anxiety, DPs as one of the leaders of an organisation may often receive insufficient support from school administrators and other stakeholders on their distributed role, which can exacerbate their workload and stress level. As a result, time management challenges surface as DPs may struggle to manage and juggle multiple responsibilities and tasks (Sidhu et al., 2020; Wijewarden et al., 2020). Due to this workload and multiple responsibilities, DPs often experience a high level of stress and burnout (Pandey,

2020; Leithwood et al., 2020). In addition, DPs may often have limited time and opportunities for professional development, which can hinder their ability to perform their responsibilities effectively (Hallinger, 2018; Sayed & Motala, 2020). In addressing the challenges in managing school resources, Cohen et al. (2020) and Danielson et al. (2020) noted that DPs may often face difficulties in managing school resources, including financial, human, and material resources, because of a lack of autonomy. Fikuree (2020) and Hallinger and Snidvongs (2020) resonated similar view, stating that DPs may often lack decision-making due to lack of autonomy, which thus limits their ability to perform their responsibilities effectively. As a result, misunderstandings and conflict can arise, leading to poor communication of organisation leaders, such as DPs with school administrators and other role senders (DBE, 2020; ELRC, 2020).

2.8.2 Implications of the challenges and complex role of deputy principals

The complex role of DPs in schools is a pervasive challenge. It refers to the lack of clear understanding of one's role, responsibilities, and expectations, leading to confusion, uncertainty, stress and burnout, and decreased job satisfaction (Katz & Khan, 1978; Khumalo et al., 2020). Research has shown that the complex role of DPs in schools has significant implications for school leadership, teacher morale, and student outcomes. For example, the findings from the study "*Deputy Principals: A Hidden Asset in Schools*" by Jeffers et al. (2024) highlight the critical role of DPs and its implications for school leadership, teachers' development, and overall school task effectiveness. These scholars note that despite the role of DPs being undervalued and overlooked, DPs remain key players in school leadership, driving school improvement initiatives, developing teacher capacity, enhancing student outcomes, and building school culture. For instance, Khumalo et al. (2020), in their research study to explore problems encountered by secondary school DPs in deprived school environments in South Africa, indicated that DPs are often faced with a range of problems, including unclear roles (as a result of complexity/role ambiguity) leading to poor school leadership, inadequate training and development that leads to poor teacher morale, poor communication, and a lack of ability to manage limited resources that leads to poor student outcomes.

2.8.2.1 Implications for school leadership

The lack of clarity around the role of DPs can lead to confusion and overlapping of responsibilities, ultimately impacting the effectiveness of school leadership (Khumalo et al., 2020). As a result, DPs may struggle to assert their authority and make decisions, leading to a

power vacuum and undermining the overall leadership of the school (Jeffers et al., 2024). Furthermore, the complexity of the role of DPs can also lead to a lack of accountability and responsibilities, ultimately impacting the overall effectiveness of the school leadership (Westhuizen, 2020). As noted by Bush and Glover (2020), the top-down leadership relationship such as the principal-deputy principal relationship in this case study, is essential to the school's achievement, but this relationship can be strained if the roles and responsibilities for deputy principal are not clearly defined. As a result, the implications of the complex role of DPs for school leadership are significant and far-reaching. It is essential that schools and policymakers prioritise clear role definitions and expectations for DPs to ensure effective school leadership and governance.

2.8.2.2 Implications for teacher support

The complexity surrounding the role of DPs in schools can also impact teacher morale. Teachers may feel uncertain about whom to report to or seek guidance from, leading to frustration and demotivation (Mestry & Singh, 2020). Furthermore, the lack of clear communication and expectations from leaders such as DPs as part of the instructional leaders in a school organisation can lead to misunderstandings and conflict, ultimately affecting student outcomes, teacher support, and job satisfaction (Bush & Glover, 2020; Hallinger, 2020). Teachers may find it difficult to understand the proper implementation of the curriculum and its Annual Teaching Plan (ATP), the process of the remedial work, and proper assessment recording due to lack of instructional guidance and uncertainty in job description of DPs. As a result, a lack of clear communication from DPs can lead to a lack of trust and confidence in the leadership of the school, ultimately impacting teacher morale and their job satisfaction (Khumalo et al., 2020). As similarly noted by Sayed and Motala (2020), teachers need clear guidance and support from their leaders to perform their role effectively, but this can be lacking in the event that the deputy principal's responsibilities are unclear. Hallinger (2020) supported this view and resonated that the lack of clarity around the role of organisational leaders like DPs can also impact the relationship between teachers and DPs, ultimately affecting teacher morale and job satisfaction.

Borrowing from Bush and Glover (2020), employees like teachers need to feel recognised and rewarded for their efforts to maintain their morale and job satisfaction, but the case can be the reverse if the role of their leaders such as DPs is not clearly defined in a manner to support and guide them effectively. In actuality, the implications of the complex role of DPs for teacher

morale are significant and far-reaching, according to recent research findings. And as such, it is essential that schools and policymakers prioritise clear role definitions and expectations for DPs to ensure effective teacher morale and job satisfaction.

2.8.2.3 Implications for student outcomes

The complexity of the role of DPs can also have a negative impact on student outcomes. When DPs are unclear about their role and responsibilities on curriculum development and implementation with the needful instructional pedagogy, they may struggle to provide effective support and guidance to teachers, ultimately affecting the quality of teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2020). Furthermore, the lack of clear leadership and direction in terms of the distributed leadership style employed by the school administrators can lead to a lack of focus and priorities, ultimately impacting student outcomes (Spillane, 2017; Sayed & Motala, 2020). According to the South African School Act (1996), section 16, “the principal and deputy principal of a public school must ensure that the school is managed and governed in a manner that promotes the best interest of the learners.” However, the lack of clarity around the role of DPs in instructional pedagogy and curriculum structure and implementation can lead to a lack of focus and priorities (DBE, 2020).

In a research study by Bush and Glover (2020), the relationship between teachers and learners is critical to the success of the school, but this relationship can be strained if the roles and responsibilities of the DPs as instructional leaders between these stakeholders are not clearly defined. Accordingly, the DBE policy (The National Education Policy Act, 1996) on school leadership emphasises the importance of clear role definitions and expectations for DPs in schools to improve student outcomes but fails to outline the time guidelines and effective framework for its implementation, thereby making the position of the DPs unclear, complex, ambiguous, and imprecise.

2.8.3 Managing the challenges faced by deputy principals: Strategies for success

Deputy Principals in schools play a vital role in supporting the principal and leading the school. However, they often face numerous challenges in balancing their teaching and administrative duties. As aforementioned in section 5.2.1, these challenges can lead to stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction, ultimately impacting the effectiveness of the school and its student outcomes. To mitigate these challenges, it is essential to identify and implement effective strategies that support DPs in managing their roles and responsibilities. In addressing these

challenges, Jansen and Plessis (2020) and Vyyer et al. (2020) noted and resonated with clear job descriptions as the utmost strategy to avoid role conflict and tension. There is a need to develop clear job descriptions that outline the roles and responsibilities of DPs in schools. Blose (2024), in his empirical finding, suggested the need to provide training on effective time management strategies to help DPs prioritise their tasks and manage their workload. Mestry and Singh (2019) and Myburgh (2021) supported this view and alluded to a similar view that deputy principals need to be encouraged by being given the autonomy to delegate tasks effectively to other staff members to reduce their workload and increase productivity.

To enhance needful leadership and management skills for DPs, there is a need to provide opportunities for continued professional development programmes (Hallinger, 2018; Sayed & Motala, 2020). DPs need to be engaged in leadership development programmes focused on school improvement planning, instructional leadership, managing staff performance, student welfare, conflict resolution, curriculum development, data analysis, inclusive education practices, financial management, community engagement, and effective communication strategies, with options like workshops, seminars, online courses, mentorship programmes, and school-based action research projects. Spillane's (2017) assumption of shared leadership resonated similarly and emphasised that effective communication and collaboration in institutional/ organisational settings, such as in the case of a school, between deputy principals and principals and other staff members are crucial to promote a positive school culture and reduce conflict. In addition, Hallinger and Snidvongs (2020) and Katz and Khan (1978) also asserted that middle managers such as DPs at schools need to be provided with autonomy and decision-making authority to enable them to take ownership of their responsibilities and make informed decisions in their role sets.

Borrowing from Pandey (2020) and Leithwood et al. (2020), managers such as DPs need to be encouraged to maintain a healthy work-life balance by prioritising their well-being and taking regular breaks. Although responsibilities call for different school contexts, DPs need to be provided with mentoring and coaching opportunities to support their professional growth and personal development (Cohen et al., 2020; Danielson et al., 2020). This is essential in promoting collaborative leadership and enhancing support for the role of DPs (RSA-DBE, 2020). In addition, Sayed and Motala (2020) and Myburgh (2021) emphasised the need to develop and implement policies that support the role of DPs in schools. By implementing these strategies, schools can support their DPs in performing their roles effectively, ultimately

enhancing the quality of education, school leadership, and student outcomes. Recently supporting this claim is the study by Blose and Mbatha (2025) that posits the impossibility of DPs' workload policy of 60% teaching and 40% administrative time in South African township schools. These scholars suggested a need to develop a practically possible policy that will support the role of DPs in township schools.

2.8.4 The need for clarity and support for DPs

A recent study by Jeffery et al. (2024) found that many DPs in schools are still lacking job descriptions and expectations, leading to role complexity and confusion. This lack of clarity and support is presumed to have far-reaching consequences, including decreased job satisfaction, increased stress, and reduced effectiveness in leading and managing schools (Hallinger, 2020). Furthermore, Mestry and Singh (2020) emphasise the role of DPs as often unclear, leading to confusion and frustration among teachers, learners, and school leadership. In addressing the gap from the systematic review, this research aims to explore the need for clarity and support for DPs in these case study schools, with a particular focus on exploring their perceptions towards balancing their complex role and responsibilities, identify the contextual challenges, conflicts and tensions arising from their complex role, and explore the strategies employed to navigate these challenges within their role sets. In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education, (2016a, p. 7), along with explicit guidelines and standards outlining the performance requirements expected of school administrators, including DPs, highlights the need for DPs to upgrade their abilities by stating that “inept middle managers will make school management teams weaker.” Comparably, “the capabilities, expertise, and nature of the DPs are related to the main contributor of underperformance and dysfunctionality in schools” (Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa, 2016a, p. 4).

A deputy principal is responsible for a wide range of duties. Therefore, understanding the specific duties or competences that DPs require is necessary to promote student accomplishment. Numerous studies on the effectiveness of deputy principals focus on instructional leadership, neglecting administrative duties and external relationships in the process of improving student performance. According to Fikuree (2020), learners' academic progress was also predicted by the tasks associated with institutional management of schools' DPs. According to the PAM document (EEA, 2020) and Fikurees' (2020) research, some DP assignments can improve student performance, school leadership, and teacher motivation if well clarified. Among these suggested tasks are supporting data-driven instruction and

assessment (Hallinger & Snidvongs, 2020), supporting initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (Ladson-Billings et al., 2020), and increasing learners' engagement and motivation (Fredricks et al., 2022). Other tasks include motivating educators to collaborate and create teams (Hord & Sommers, 2022), fostering the autonomy and inventiveness of educators (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2022), supporting educators' professional development (Danielson et al., 2020), promoting academic excellence by rewarding learners (Cohen et al., 2022), supporting the program's learning and evaluation goals (Lee & Kim, 2022), fostering an organisational culture that is favourable (Cohen et al., 2022), and encouraging social mobilisation (Lee & Kim, 2022).

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework presents a formalised and abstract set of presumptions to direct the planning and execution of a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this framework, the distributed leadership theory of Spillane (2017), as echoed by Smit (2017), is used in examining the phenomenon “deputy principals’ perceptions of balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities” in their different contexts. There is a need to pay attention to the leadership of township schools' DPs in their differential context (Smit, 2017), particularly their daily encounters and countless unprecedented contextual responsibilities. This view of Smith (2017) identifies leadership as an important instrument to deal with the challenges in township schools and echoes the sentiments of Spillane's theory of distributed leadership as one of the key elements for transformation in schools. Furthermore, in country like South Africa, the South African Standard for Principals Policy makes it very clear that leadership needs to be “shared.” The rapport between the DPs and the principal's offices (RSA, 2016b, p. 8), which Spillane (2017) suggests as a link between his model of distributed leadership theory, offers valuable explanations for each of the research questions about the teaching and administrative responsibilities of DPs in township schools.

To understand the epistemology and ontology in the complexity of the role of the case study township schools’ DPs, a contemporary “Role Theory” developed by Katz and Khan (1964; 1966; 1978) is used to examine the complexities of DPs’ roles and how they navigate these multiple responsibilities received from the role senders. Additionally, Kahn et al.’s theory of organisational role dynamics (1964) was deemed fit to examine the role conflict and tension the DPs are experiencing as they work to support teaching and administrative duties within their institutions. Katz and Kahn’s organisational role theory (1966; 1978) explains that

“human organisations attain constancy and stability in terms of the relationships among their units, rather than in terms of the units themselves” and sees a schooling institution as an open system of role episodes (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 172).

2.9.1 Distributed Leadership Theory (Spillane, 2017)

Drawings from the construct of Spillane’s (2006) distributed leadership suggests that leadership is not solely the responsibility of one individual but rather is distributed among various individuals and groups within an organisation. According to Spillane (2017), the principal as the head of a schooling organisation should address the spread roles and responsibilities of the DPs to promote effective and essential distributed leadership in the school, rather than spilling too much on the DPs’ portfolio. This theory enacted how the role of DPs as one of the school leaders should be encouraged to share leadership responsibilities with other school leaders as a focal person. Based on the DPs’ administrative workload management and management of the curriculum, empirical research has validated these assumptions (Blose & Mbatha, 2025; Hallinger & Snidvongs, 2020; Spillane, 2017). Their findings indicate that while distributed leadership has a direct effect on schools' capacity to improve instruction, it also has an indirect effect on task effectiveness if not shared purposefully. By highlighting the small but significant contributions of various leadership sources, Spillane's (2017) research claims that curriculum management indirectly affects student achievement through distributed leadership if the flow of interactions among leaders, followers, and contextual situations are not purposefully shared. This concepts of Spillane (2017) and other empirical studies shows that, in the school context, school achievement is significantly impacted by the distributed leadership style used to create a favourable learning environment in schools, underscoring the crucial role that principals and their DPs play in enhancing learning environments (Griffith, 2004; Hallinger, 2005; Mncube et al., 2022; Mulford et al., 2004; Robinson et al., 2008; Suskavcevic & Blake, 2004).

2.9.2 Understanding the key role of deputy principals in classroom management

The crucial roles that DPs play in instructional teaching in township schools have been the subject of continuous scholarly debate. Deputy Principals need to understand their role in classroom management, not just in their area of expertise but also as inclusive teachers and student pedagogical developers (Hallinger & Snidvongs, 2021). These scholars stressed the essence of DPs to instructional management as of vital important, especially when it comes to

their distributed roles by their principals. They emphasise the importance of DPs in supporting teacher development and improving student outcomes.

Spillane (2017) resonated with the same view by emphasising the importance of distributed leadership in enhancing teaching and learning in institutions such as schools in this case study, without solely concentrating on DPs. This scholar's findings offer a basis for comprehending the part that school administrators, including DPs, play in classroom management and learning. In order to enhance teaching and learning, educators, administrators, and other stakeholders need to collaborate under distributed leadership and not to be dedicated to an individual's role, as it appears to be with DPs in schools (Spillane, 2006).

In an attempt to balance their teaching responsibilities with their other administrative roles and strive to improve student outcomes, distributed leadership can allow teachers and DPs to work together to develop and implement effective instructional strategies in actualising the implementation of the curriculum (Hallinger & Heck, 2020). Whilst still understanding the key role of DPs in classroom management and leadership practices, Kumar (2019), Chitamba and Jita (2023), and Bush (2018) provide valuable insights into the key role of DPs in instructional teaching. Teaching and learning are positively impacted by distributed leadership practices, according to Kumar (2019).

According to this researcher, DPs' function in allocating duty loads to educators and other stakeholders improves student outcomes and the efficiency of DPs' work as a whole. In accordance, Chitamba and Jita (2023) explored the instructional leadership practices of DPs in Zimbabwean high schools. Their research showed that DPs' participation in instructional leadership, known as curriculum structure activities and classroom management, such as lesson supervision, student progress tracking, and teacher feedback, improves student learning outcomes and teacher development. Similar to this, Bush (2018) offers a framework for comprehending DPs' role in instructional teaching and highlights the importance of adopting a distributed approach to improve teaching and learning. As a matter of fact, the findings of these studies suggest that DPs play an essential part in curriculum and classroom management, particularly in the context of distributed roles in an attempt to balance teaching and administrative responsibilities.

2.9.3 Organisational Role Theory (Katz & Khan, 1966, 1978; Khan et al., 1964)

According to Katz and Khan, organisational role theory is a “...process of learning the expectations of others, accepting them, fulfilling them, and influencing behaviour motivation in the workplace” (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 173). As part of the process of assuming organisational roles, members of a role set engage in continuous interactions within role episodes (Katz & Kahn, 1966; 1978). Deputy Principals are expected to balance the role of teaching and administrative responsibilities between members of a role set, assuming the process of interactions within role episodes can be difficult and complex based on the individual role sender's behaviours, units, and context. This study examines the role episode, the context of the role episode, and the dynamics of organisational role theory to address the complexity in the DPs' mediating role of teaching and administrative responsibilities around township schools. The study places emphasis on the complex role of the DPs in township schools as follows:

2.9.3.1 Deputy Principal interaction with role episode

As claimed by Katz and Khan (1978), members of a role set perform role episodes with one another. The people or units that the focal person (DPs in this case study) will interact with as part of their role responsibilities or workflow structure make up their role set. Two actions that the DPs must perform in attempting to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities make up the fundamental model of a role episode: role-sending and role-receiving. The role episode occurs through a series of four elements between a role sender (role expectations and sent role) and focal person (received role and role behaviour), as shown in Figure 2.1.

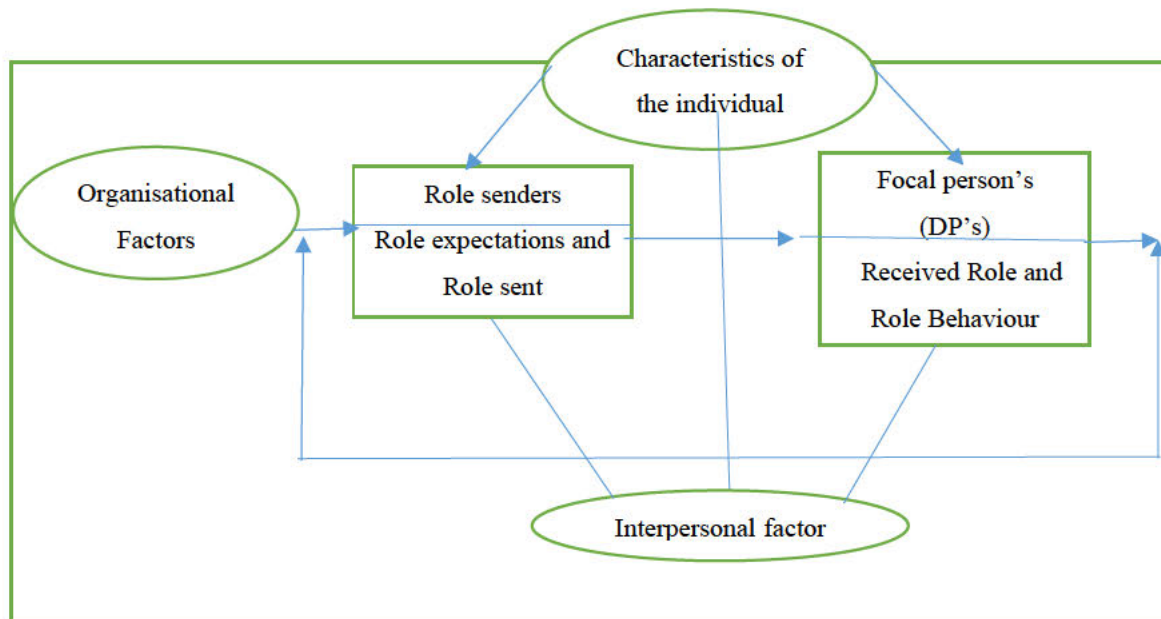


**Figure 2.1: A theoretical model of factors involved in the taking of organisational roles
Katz & Khan (1978)**

A role episode begins with the role sender's expectations, impressions, and evaluation of the focal person's actions. These encounters then have an impact on the sent role, which is made up of role details conveyed in a way that exerts pressure or influence on the focal person. Based on the behaviour and expectations of the senders, this pressure can lead to a variety of outcomes, including stress, conflict, and challenges for the focal person. The received role then causes the role episode to change from the role sender to the focal person. The role that is received depends on how the role sender and the focal person view it. The focal person's response, or role behaviour, comes after the received role. Following that, the focal person will react in one of three ways: resistance, compliance, or coping. Following the focal person's role behaviour, the role episode continues in a cyclical fashion. The focal person's role behaviour has an impact on role senders' expectations for the future, both now and in the future, as evidenced by a feedback loop that cycles back to the role sender. Additionally, according to Katz and Khan (1966; 1978), three more factors - organisational, interpersonal, and personality have an impact on the ongoing role episode, which takes place within an organisation.

2.9.3.2 Deputy Principal's interaction with context of role episode

Role episodes do not just happen. The relationship between a role sender and focal person is influenced and mediated by socioeconomic disparities, including organisational, interpersonal, and personality factors (Figure 2.1). These are "...not the fleeting events of the role episode,

but persistent states of the organisation, the individual, and the interpersonal relations between the role senders and the focal person” (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 186). The organisation or a subsystem inside the larger organisation may be the source of influencing organisational factors. These organisational factors, which can include the organisation's size or subunits, workflow or hierarchical structures, role specifications, culture, and/or purpose, frequently affect the role expectations of a role sender. A role sender's role expectations are not created on their own; rather, they are the result of the organisation's ingrained, continuous factors. In addition to mediating the sent role expectations and focal person role behaviour response, the focal person's (DPs') personality traits, demographics, and experiences may also lead to altered expectations of the role sender. As a matter of fact, interpersonal factors mediate the role expectations and response of the focal person, and they also have an impact on the modified expectations of the role sender, much like personality traits do. Such influences are a result of the ongoing connections between the focal person and other participants in their role set (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

2.9.4 Theory of Organisational Role Dynamics

The theory of organisational role dynamics developed by Kahn et al. in 1964 makes a distinction between the perceived, or psychological environment that an individual experiences within an organisation and the objective environment of the organisation. It is important to distinguish between the two when analysing role conflict that DPs encounter in the context of their various township schools.

2.9.4.1 Deputy Principals encounters with role conflict

Role conflict is described as the “...concurrent occurrence of two (or 21 more) role sendings in a way that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other” (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 184). As a result of multiple role sending, there are possibilities for DPs to encounter a variety of role conflicts when attempting to perform their roles within their school context: intra-sender conflict, inter-sender conflict, person-role conflict, and role overload (Kahn et al., 1964). When one member of a role set sends the focal person several incompatible expectations, this is known as intra-sender conflict; when another member of the role set sends expectations that are incompatible with one another, this is known as inter-sender conflict. When there is inter-sender conflict, the focal person's adherence to one set of expectations may go against the other's expectations. Conflict between person and role occurs when the focal person's expectations and those of other participants in the role are incompatible. These self-

sending expectations are impacted by the needs, morals, values, and/or abilities of the focal person. As demonstrated in this case study of DPs juggling teaching and administrative demands, role overload usually arises when several members of a role set send the focal person reasonable and compatible expectations; the focal person, however, cannot complete all the tasks in the allocated time and/or with the necessary quality (Kahn et al., 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1966). Although there are many kinds of role conflicts, they are all connected by a “...lack of agreement or coordination among role senders [that] produces a pattern of sent expectations that contains logical incompatibilities...” (Khan et al., 1964, p. 21). Apart from role conflict, role ambiguity is another pattern of ineffective role sending that a focal person within an organisation may encounter.

2.9.4.2 Deputy Principals’ encounters with role ambiguity

Complex roles lead to role ambiguity, and it is described as “...a direct function of the discrepancy between the information available to the focal person and that which is required for adequate performance of his role” (Kahn et al., 1964, p. 73). Role ambiguity frequently arises from two main causes: either no information or insufficient communication of information needed by a focal person to carry out their role activities. The focal person, who in this case study represents DPs, frequently has a hazy understanding of the extent of their role responsibilities, knows what they need to do but may not know how, interprets expectations as ambiguous and/or inconsistent, and/or is unsure of how others perceive them or how satisfied they are with their work. Information that a focal person in a role set has access to may be hidden or contradictory, which frequently leads to a connection with role conflict and difficulties that the focal person faces (Kahn et al., 1964). As a result, one can link the focal person's boundary position within their school context with both role conflict and role tension.

2.9.4.3 Deputy Principals encounters with system boundaries

“Certain members of the role set are said to be in a boundary position when they are located in a different system, such as a different division within the same organisation or a different organisation entirely” (Kahn et al., 1964, p. 101). In particular, departmental boundary contacts within township schools are the most important aspect of this research study's inquiry. The deputy principal as focal person will often be required to engage with role senders from across departmental lines. Because of this, DPs will have to create, across departmental lines, goals, incentives, and ways of working that are specific to the various subsystems where they carry out their duties. The hierarchical or workflow structures of an organisation frequently link a

focal person to members outside of their role. Boundary conflicts have been linked to issues of power and misunderstanding. As such, DPs occupying boundary positions may have no influence over role senders outside of their departments, leading to vying for control. Additionally, the further role senders are from the DP's department, the more incomplete their understanding of the DP's boundary position will be, often resulting in increased role conflict (Kahn et al., 1964).

2.9.5 Application of Role Theory Framework to the research problem

When enacting the dual roles and responsibilities expected of DPs to deliver collaborative, job-embedded professional development, DPs report experiencing tension when navigating differing teaching and administrative expectations and demands (Bloese, 2024; Jeffers et al., 2024; Jansen & Plessis, 2020; Khumalo & Van der Vyer, 2020). Deputy Principals perceive and feel role conflict because of such tension preceded by frequently incompatible sent responsibilities from various members of their role set (Katz & Khan, 1978). Combining the sent roles from multiple members of their role set with their own self-sending expectations influenced by their beliefs, values, and capacities creates an additional level of complexity when navigating their teaching and administrative responsibilities. Additionally, the process of organisational role their school is taking can become more complex when dual roles, such as teaching and administrating, are required concurrently in a subsystem (Katz & Kahn, 1978). While DPs often view themselves as a link between learners, teachers, parents, and school administration (Myburgh, 2021; Sayed et al., 2020), they have also described the tension caused by shifting between more than one role as being in a state of constant flux, causing pressure, stress, burnout, and conflict that often needs to be negotiated (Mestry & Grobler, 2020; Mncube et al., 2022; Mokoena, 2020; Vyver et al., 2020). As a matter of fact, many DPs have described their work experience as less than adequate, as being a 'nebulous position,' and as a 'jack of all trades' (Jansen & Plessis, 2020). See Figure 2.2 for the position of DPs in the role theory framework within a school context:

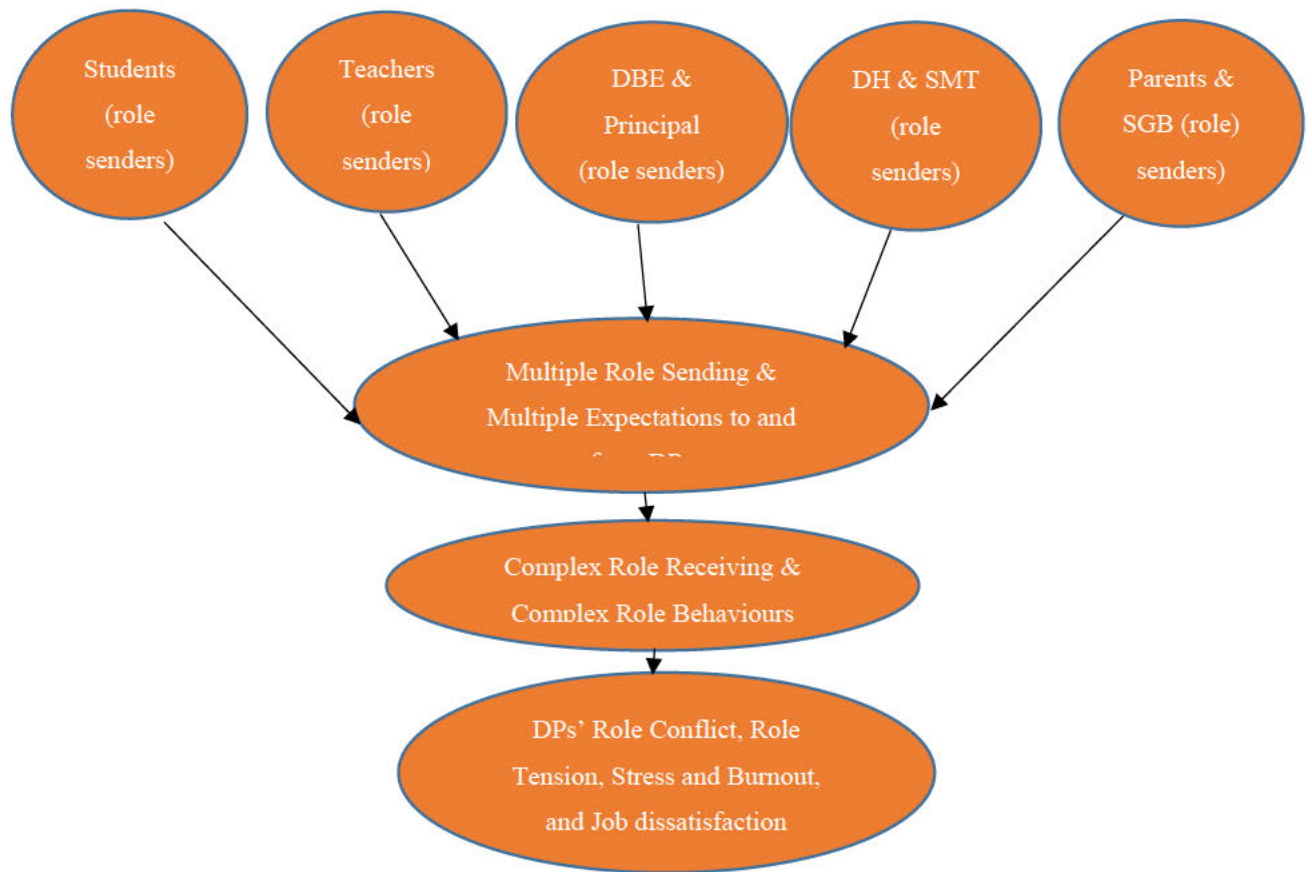


Figure 2.2: DPs' role engagement within their role sets

In general, the two theories collectively frame the study by examining the complex role of deputy principals in township schools. While organisation role theory (Katz & Khan, 1978) focuses on the role expectations, tensions, and conflicts within the school organisation, distributed leadership (Spillane, 2017) highlights how leadership emerges from interactions among leaders, followers, and contextual situations. In their collective framing, these dual theories reveal how DPs manage competing demands from their role sets, informing strategies for support and development.

2.10 CHAPTER TWO SUMMARY

In this chapter, an overview of a township school was explained, as well as the DPs leadership and the key roles with expectations of DPs in schools. Thereafter, an exploration of how DPs balance teaching and administrative responsibilities with contextualisation of the complexity in the DPs' teaching and administrative roles was highlighted. Furthermore, scholarly perceptions towards the role and responsibilities of DPs, including the conflict, tension, and challenges DPs are experiencing and how they can navigate these conflicts, tensions, and

challenges, were reviewed through literature. Looking through the lens of the distributed leadership theory by Spillane (2017), DPs' teaching and administrative responsibilities were explored. In addition to the DPs' complex role, organisational role theory developed by Katz and Khan (1978) was used to explore the complexity (such as role conflict, role tension, and role ambiguity) entangled in the role of the DPs in schools. True to the title of this study, role complexity, role conflict, and role tension experienced by DPs were then focused on, and special attention was paid to the contextual difficulties they encounter, and the demands placed on them. Considered in the context of previous studies conducted in this field and examined in this chapter, it is evident that DPs deal with difficulties such as role tension, role conflict, and contextual challenges, and they are not always clear about what is expected of them or how to take autonomy of their tasks. Similar research studies were found amongst DHs and principals, but it became glaring that most research in this field was conducted on principal-ship task effectiveness. Additionally, it appears that the phenomenon is not a newly studied topic, and there are currently few materials available on it. The topic of school leadership effectiveness, and more specifically the dual role of DPs in educational settings focusing on DPs' task effectiveness that enhances positive school leadership and student outcomes, lends itself to and calls for further explorations and research. The design and methodology employed in the research's empirical portion will be dissected in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature on the complexities of the DPs' position, particularly the challenges they face in trying to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities, was summarised in Chapter Two of this study. In every research study, the researcher needs to select a design that will structure the research, and according to Kumar (2019), research methodology is “a way to systematically solve a research problem” (Kumar, 2019, p. 4). This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology that underpinned this study. This study was aligned with a qualitative approach, which is consistent with the topic and guided by the primary research question. In order to address the research questions, in this chapter I describe the research design, which includes the methodical and scientific approach to data generation, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). The chapter ends with a discussion of the study's limitations and ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

One primary research question served as the foundation for this study, which was bolstered by three supporting questions that explored the DPs lived experiences in juggling their teaching and administrative responsibilities in their respective contexts. The primary research question was “What are the township schools' deputy principals' lived experiences in their roles in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities?” The following critical questions were addressed to guide the research study:

1. How do deputy principals in the case study schools perceive their role in relation to teaching and administrative responsibilities?
2. What are the contextual challenges, conflicts, and tensions that deputy principals encounter in their attempt to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities?
3. How do deputy principals in the case study schools navigate the tensions, challenges, and conflicts that arise from balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities?

3.3 AN OVERVIEW OF THIS CHAPTER

Table 3.1: Research methodology overview

Research Topic	Balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities: Examining the complex role of deputy principals in township schools
Research Paradigm	Interpretivist Paradigm
Research Approach	Qualitative
Design	Intrinsic Case Study
Research (data generation) instruments	Interview protocol
Selection of participants	Purposive sampling: Six deputy principals from progressive and functional township schools were chosen. Convenience sampling: The deputy principals that were chosen as participants for the study were those the researcher had access to.
Data generation methods	Semi-structured interviews
Data analysis method	Thematic Analysis: Inductive and deductive thematic analysis
Ethical consideration	As a non-participant investigator, the researcher acquired the participants' informed consent. Confidentiality was guaranteed, voluntary participation was guaranteed, and permission letters were requested from the appropriate authorities. All participants are protected from harm.

3.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM

As the researcher of this study, I positioned myself within the interpretivist paradigm to explore the lived experiences of DPs in their roles in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities within their school context. A research paradigm is “a philosophical framework, comprising presumptions, ideals, and guidelines, that directs the research process and influences the research question, techniques, and data interpretation” (Creswell, 2018, p. 5). Hence, according to Kuhn (2012), the interpretivist paradigm assumes that researchers should examine phenomena through specific philosophical framework or set of approved approaches. Furthermore, according to Bless et al. (2017, p. 12), a study paradigm is “a

thorough framework that includes axiological (values and ethics guiding research), methodological (research methods and procedures), ontological (assumptions about reality), and epistemological (assumptions about knowledge) presumptions that direct research.”

As a result, I aligned the study with the above-mentioned assumptions in order to guide the research process in answering the critical and probing research questions. Epistemological assumptions, the primary area of philosophy that examines the main branch of philosophy that investigates the mode and source of knowledge in studies based on three central questions, were used to analyse the knowledge behind the study (Bless et al., 2017):

- What knowledge is explored? (How do DPs balance teaching and administrative responsibilities?).
- What is known? (Mediating responsibilities of their complex role).
- What is knowing? (How do Deputy Principals respond to navigating the responsibilities of their teaching and administrative roles?).

On the other hand, the nature of the study's reality is examined using ontological assumptions, which are the branch of philosophy that uses a system of classifications and awareness to address the nature of existence (Creswell, 2018). Hence, the nature of social reality in the phenomenon for the study was subject to context and constructed by individual participant DPs' perceptions.

3.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

In this research study, I employed a qualitative research approach, an interpretive, qualitative methodological approach that allowed me to produce and analyse data in accordance with Berryman's (2019) recommendations of how people relate with phenomena in study within their context. Using scholarly literature as a guide, an interpretive, inductive, naturalistic approach to studying individuals, instances, phenomena, and social contexts serves to clarify how people perceive the world in relation to their surroundings (Creswell, 2007, p. 37; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, 2005, p. 3; Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 6-7; Patton, 2002, pp. 39-41). The qualitative methodological approach was considered pertinent by the researcher to explore the perceptions of the DPs concerning their mediating roles as subject teachers, administrators, and a curriculum manager in their unique school context. Because this approach presumes that findings are not predetermined but rather based on the interaction between the researcher and participants in understanding ‘what’ and ‘how’ things are the way they are (Creswell, 2014).

Numerous scholars have stated that employing an interpretive approach assists the researcher in realising that the phenomenon being studied cannot be comprehended from the viewpoint of a single individual or participant (e.g., Bless et al., 2013; Bless et al., 2017; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2015; Creswell, 2018; Kuhn, 2012). Therefore, a research study's findings must be guided by numerous and socially created realities. Furthermore, because context dictates what is known and understood in interpretive research, knowledge is therefore generated by the findings, and understanding the participants—deputy principals—is more important than understanding general laws, which precede interaction between the researcher and research participants, inevitable to achieve validity and reliability (Creswell, 2018).

3.5.1 Rationale for qualitative approach

I strategically chose the qualitative approach to fit the research design. As this study aligned with constructivist theory, which is interpretative by nature due to its emphasis on the social environment and how individuals engage with it within their own context. I was able to get first-hand participant experiences related to the topic being studied using this approach. It was predicated on the anticipated data-generating techniques, which are adaptable and social context-sensitive. Numerous empirical studies have employed this approach to explore a broad range of social milieu aspects, such as the events and texture of daily life, as well as the comprehension, experiences, and imagination of research participants. For this reason, I chose to align the study's design with a qualitative approach to produce a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the phenomenon “Examining the complex role of deputy principals in township schools towards teaching and administrative responsibilities” based on rich, nuanced, and detailed data. In addition, according to Creswell (2009, p. 18), “qualitative research helps individuals to understand and explain the meanings that participants attach to the central phenomenon of the research study better.” This, in addition, piqued my interest in choosing a qualitative method because the study was based on the daily occurrence of events, products, and outcomes, as well as the participants’ perceptions and experiences as they carried out their distributed responsibilities and addressed demands from their role senders. This qualitative study focused on semi-structured interviews with the selected case study participants. This kind of research allows me to relate the participants' emotions and sentiments to the research problem and data generated while also offering a comprehensive perspective of the topic being studied. Above all, the qualitative method gave me access to a variety of idiosyncrasies and the distinctive characteristics of the participants and procedures in the research study.

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

Borrowed from Yin (2018, pp. 12-14), “A research design outlines the overarching strategy or plan that directs a specific study, including the choices of data generation and analysis techniques, while a research methodology deals with the methodical and theoretical analysis of the procedures, methods, and techniques used in the generation and interpretation of data.” Following that, it became evident that the background of both the researcher and the participants influence the choice of research design in a particular study (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the researcher, in an attempt to gain an in-depth examination of a single phenomenon under study, “examining the complex role of deputy principals in township schools,” employed a case study design in directing the research study. But in contrast to Creswell's version, Yin (2017) emphasised that the context of the study and the research questions determine the choice of research design. However, the researcher in this study posits that this qualitative research design should be based on an intrinsic case study that focuses on understanding a specific case or phenomenon in-depth, gaining rich insights, and developing a nuanced understanding of six conveniently and purposively selected deputy principals drawn from five purposively identified schools within Pinetown district, Umlazi district, and Nseleni district to enhance the applicability and relevance of its findings (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018).

3.6.1 Research methodology

This study is based on intrinsic case study methodology. Following Yin's (2018) supposition, an intrinsic case study is a pragmatic research study that examines a contemporary phenomenon in its natural setting, especially when it can be challenging to comprehend how the phenomenon interacts with its surroundings. Deputy Principals are seen as Janus, the Roman gods, juggling between two roles and not knowing which to fully concentrate on based on the demands placed on them by different role senders to their office. Hence, the DPs’ roles became a case that needed to be examined to see how they mitigated these responsibilities that rested on their shoulders daily in their specific context. Similarly to this assumption, an intrinsic case study methodology is described by Rule and John (2017) as a comprehensive, systematic examination of one or a limited number of cases with the goal of offering an understanding, contextualised comprehension of the phenomena. In accordance with the aforementioned declarations, the researcher adhered to these academics and selected an intrinsic case study research methodology to explore a comprehensive, contextual understanding of the five purposively identified township schools’ deputy principals' perspectives on the phenomenon.

3.6.2 Rationale for case study design

A case study, as defined by Harling (2012), is a holistic inquiry that looks at a current occurrence in its natural environment. According to this scholar, a case study explains how to learn about a complex phenomenon by thoroughly describing and analysing that event in its context. This scholar echoes similar sentiments to the aim and focus of this study, which is to explore “the township schools' deputy principals’ lived experiences in their roles in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities in their contextual settings.” The following reasons led me to select an intrinsic case study design:

1. An intrinsic case study is designed to carry out empirical research with the goal of exploring current events while maintaining the context in order to obtain in-depth knowledge (Collis & Hussey, 2009; Mujtaba & Preziosi, 2006).
2. It allows the researcher to carry out a comprehensive and significant exploration, gathering thorough information from a range of sources that is rich in content (Harling, 2012).
3. It enables the researcher to preserve the comprehensive and significant aspects of actual occurrences (Kohlbacher, 2006).
4. An intrinsic case study is a comprehensive methodology that addresses data generation methods, design rationale, and particular data analysis methodologies (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2018).

In addition, Yin (2018) asserts that in defining research questions, one should clearly articulate the research questions to guide the case study and ensure that the questions align with the study aims and context. This scholar further attests that an intrinsic case study design is particularly well-suited for answering “what” and “how” questions in research. It helps to answer “what” questions by providing an in-depth examination of a phenomenon, process, or context, and similarly, it helps in answering “how” questions by examining the processes, mechanisms, or strategies that lead to a particular outcome or phenomenon.

3.7 SAMPLING

Sampling is the process of selecting a sample of a population from an individual or a big group for a particular kind of research goal (Cohen et al., 2018; 2008). This process involves selecting a subset of individuals or cases from a larger population to gather data and make generalisations about the population. Accordingly, this study focused on the township schools' deputy principals at five of the reformist schools in KwaZulu-Natal province as the target population.

The schools were chosen for a specific reason based on their Mother Nature, and most importantly, their deprived context (township).

To emphasise more on research sampling, Creswell (2007) postulates that sampling is a process of steps used to generate and analyse information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue. This scholar stresses that sampling is an essential step in the research process, for it allows researchers to select a representative sample from the population. Of the eight (8) deputy principals initially envisaged for the sample size for this study from four schools in different districts of KwaZulu-Natal province, six (6) were selected from now at five (5) schools in three different districts (Pinetown, Umlazi, and Nseleni); two (2) are women, while the others are men. Three of the participants are veteran deputy principals who have taught for more than 25 years and held leadership positions for more than 10 years, while others have been deputy principals for approximately or more than five years. Although this was not intended, it resulted from the deliberate selection and identification of deputy principals and schools that are effectively managed and continue to make progress in relation to their underprivileged environment. This, according to Morse (2009), is one of the prominent techniques in qualitative research, where he argues that sample sizes in qualitative research should be sufficient and should be in the minimum range of 6 to 10 participants to reach data saturation.

3.7.1 Change in sample size

As I have explained previously, all the chosen school deputy principals showed positive interest in taking part in the study. Though I encountered difficulties with a few, I had great interactions with others. Even though I occasionally had to rearrange my trips because of, firstly, the nature of the participants' workload and the time convenient for them; most of them were fully engaged with in- and out-of-school responsibilities. At some point, we had to reschedule to late hours and weekends to be able to have the interview sessions.

The second challenge prompted by the first is time constraint; some of the initially agreed participants end up withdrawing from participating in the study due to time and space within their schedules and workloads. Some became sceptical due to the nature of research question two. They alluded to the fact that their space within the school will not permit them to share such information freely. Some confide to their referral, saying they are not sure if I am an investigator from the Department of Education or even a journalist that is set up to expose them; some posit I am a friend of their principal sent to hear their views based on their

contextual issues. Despite having the gatekeeper's consent before engaging with these individuals, as suggested by Kay (2019), and sharing with them the different principles and regulations that the researcher must follow, as covered in detail later in the chapter on ethical considerations, these few participants remain doubtful of the purpose of the research. I engaged in a lot of explaining about the purpose and benefit of the study, but few still denied me their permission. Hence, I opted to recruit two extra participants from two additional schools. The process of recruiting a sample size was not easy because of these challenges, but with perseverance I was able to recruit a purposeful sample size of 6 participants to the standard of a qualitative research study (Born & Preston, 2016; Morse, 2009; Patton, 2002).

3.7.2 Sampling of participants

According to Patton (2002), a small, diverse sample may be selected to provide a thorough description of the complete population as well as the significance and universal patterns that are present in every case. In this examination, I decided to use convenience and purposive sampling techniques. Two participants were chosen from one school and one from four other schools, respectively, across three different districts (Pinetown, Umlazi, and Nselele) in KwaZulu-Natal townships using a convenient and purposeful sampling technique. These participants were selected based on their experiences and proximity. Purposeful sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was employed to select participants who are thought to possess pertinent knowledge regarding the topic under study (De Vos et al., 2011; Maree, 2012). Therefore, to choose research sites and participants, purposive sampling, also referred to as judgmental sampling, was employed. Six (6) deputy principals were selected from the five selected case study schools within KwaZulu-Natal townships, for a total of six (6) participants. With this technique, I was able to select participants who showed a high potential for providing the data needed to answer the research questions by using purposive selection approaches (Born & Preston, 2016). Convenience sampling, also known as opportunity sampling, is the process of choosing the participant who is closest to participate in the study as a respondent (Cohen et al., 2009). Another crucial factor in this situation is that the researcher needs to select conveniently accessible participants and research sites. This assisted in deciding to reduce the sample size to six (6) participants that are thought to be representative of the other South African schools.

3.8 DATA GENERATION METHOD

Data generation methods in qualitative research refer to the various techniques used to collect and create data (De Vos et al., 2011). According to De Vos et al. (2011), Kvale (2007), and Nieuwenhuis (2012), some common data generation methods in qualitative research studies include interviews, focus groups, observation, and document analysis, which are mostly characterised by the flexibility in the approach needed, in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives, and contextual understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives. Most importantly, these scholars encourage that data generation methods should enrich nuanced insights into complex phenomena and provide valuable insights into participants' experiences and perspectives within their context, and in terms of flexibility, they can be adapted to suit various research designs and objectives. Based on this, the researcher used the interview method of data generation in this study. The researcher aligned the study to a semi-structured interview. Following Kvale (2007), an interview method is a way for the researcher and participants to directly interact or engage in a one-on-one conversation in order to generate data. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, allowing for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives.

3.8.1 Semi-structured interview

In a qualitative research method, the advantages of both structured and unstructured interviews are combined in a semi-structured interview (De Vos et al., 2011). According to Nieuwenhuis (2012) and Merriam (1998), semi-structured interviews involve a set of predetermined questions to answer the research questions in the phenomenon under study but also allow for flexibility and exploration of new ideas or themes that emerge during the conversation. Using semi-structured interviews promotes freedom to probe and explore new ideas or themes that emerge during conversation, allows for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives, and provides the researcher with rich, nuanced data that reflect participants' experiences and perspectives in their specific context (Creswell, 2008). In terms of theoretical and methodological considerations, semi-structured interviews are based on interpretivist or constructivist paradigmatic assumptions, which emphasise the importance of understanding participants' experiences and perspectives in their naturalistic context (Creswell, 2018), as in the case of this study. However, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), semi-structured interviews have several limitations that researchers need to take cognisance of; these scholars assert that the interviewers' own biases, experiences, and expectations can influence the data generation process, potentially leading to biased or incomplete data. In a similar view, Kvale

(2007) posits that participants may respond in a way that they think is socially desirable, rather than sharing their true thoughts or experiences towards the research objectives. To mitigate these limitations, I engaged in reflexivity to acknowledge and manage my own biases and assumptions. I opted for pilot testing the interview guide questions and procedure with a school deputy principal to identify and address potential issues before conducting the rest of the interviews. To increase the validity and reliability of interview data, I engaged in investigator triangulation. The transcribed data of the pilot testing interview and the interview guide questions were shared for review with my secondary investigator (supervisor) before proceeding with the rest of the interviews.

Because the participants' offices were spread out geographically, participants in the semi-structured interviews were interviewed one-on-one to maintain confidentiality. With the participants' permission, interviews were audio recorded. Each interview lasted between forty-five (45) and sixty (60) minutes because I had to be flexible with the interview timings to accommodate the participants' work schedules. I had to work with each participant to determine the best time and location for our interview to minimise disruption to their busy workdays. Some interviews were on weekends, some during the weekdays' working hours, and some late in the evening. To be honest, there were moments when I felt a little annoyed, upset, and frustrated, most especially for the delayed and late evening interviews. To some extent, I wished I could have generated data from other sources instead of depending on people. However, among the most valuable life lessons I took away from conducting fieldwork was to be patient and thankful for the success, because this would not have been possible if there had been no trust between the participants and me.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

In research, data analysis is critical for examining participants lived experiences within the context of their situations and developing themes for additional information and explanation of some of the responses provided. According to Braun and Clarke (2020), data analysis involves a systematic and rigorous process of coding, categorising, and interpreting data to uncover underlying themes, patterns, and meaning in the phenomenon under study. Braun and Clarke (2006) outlined four typologies of thematic analysis, including inductive, deductive, semantic, and latent. In this study, I analysed the data using the inductive and deductive thematic analysis approach, where themes emerged from data and are predetermined based on theory or research questions.

3.9.1 Inductive and deductive thematic data Analysis method

Following Guest et al. (2012) and Braun and Clarke (2006), these methods assist researchers in identifying and analysing patterns in qualitative data. They emphasised the importance of systematically coding and categorising the data to identify themes. To align myself with the steps in these thematic analysis approaches, I began to immerse myself in the data by listening to the recordings a few times to gain a thorough understanding of the content. This process, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is referred to as familiarisation with data, which is a crucial step in thematic analysis. During this process, I transcribed notes on initial impressions and ideas of each participant. In honesty, the process was not an easy one, as it required me to be actively engaged with the data rather than passively listening to the recordings. With this, I realised familiarisation is an iterative process that may involve revisiting earlier stages of analysis (Bless et al., 2017). After transcribing all the interview recordings, I employed the ideas of Saldana (2013) of generating initial codes by identifying patterns and themes in the data, laying the foundation for further analysis and interpretations. The themes that surfaced from the generated data were guided by the research questions with the aim and focus of gaining an insight into what the township schools' deputy principals lived experiences are in their complex roles in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities. Subsequently, I grouped the codes into potential themes that capture the essence of the data, reviewed and refined the themes to ensure they accurately represent the data generated from the interviews, and finally defined and named the themes to capture the essence of the research questions guiding the study.

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

When conducting qualitative research, the researcher's values for the participants, data, and readers should be considered, as suggested by Bless et al. (2017). In this regard, trustworthiness in qualitative research is crucial to ensure the readers of the credibility and reliability of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, I argued that my research findings are reliable. As a result, the paragraphs that follow discuss how the research study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were implemented.

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the confidence in the truth and accuracy of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is one of the key criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative

research in ensuring that findings accurately represent participants' experiences. In addition to understanding findings' credibility, with the provision made by Shenton (2004), the scholar emphasised that researchers need to adopt well-established methods that enhance the essence of the phenomenon under study. Accordingly, I aligned the findings of this study with Patton's (1999) investigator triangulation and peer debriefing by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Using triangulation and peer debriefing in this study ensured an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon for both the researcher and participants. As I have initially indicated in chapter 3.8.1, I consulted with a pilot test using the research questions guide with a peer deputy principal in a semi-structured interview; the findings were then reviewed and critiqued by my peer investigator in this study (named the Supervisor) before proceeding with data generation. In addition, the credibility of the research findings was further enhanced by my supervisor's ongoing advice and recommendations, which came in the form of virtual meetings or written comments on the findings throughout the study.

3.10.2 Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research refers to the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts, settings, or populations beyond the original sites of the study (Patton, 1999). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), transferability is crucial for enhancing the applicability and relevance of qualitative research findings. Ensuring comprehensive descriptions of research settings, participants, and circumstances to aid readers in understanding how findings may apply to their situations is one of the crucial strategies to enhance transferability in qualitative research (Mile & Huberman, 1994). In addition to this is Patton's (1999) provision that in ensuring transferability, researchers should select participants who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon to increase the relevance and applicability of research findings. I have, in accordance with these two provisions provided above in this chapter, explained the methodological approach to sampling of the research sites and participants with their contextual circumstances that satisfy this research problem, aims, and objectives. Therefore, I am of the view that the findings of this research study might enable readers to be aware of positionality, values, and biases.

3.10.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of findings; it is a process whereby researchers ensure that the research process is systematic, transparent, and conventional (Houghton et al., 2013). In this regard, Cope (2014) resonated that dependability is enhanced

through transparency in research methods, data generation, and analysis, enabling other researchers to understand and potentially replicate the study in their differential context. Following Anney's (2014) provision, in this study, I believed I have presented the research process logically, traceably, and in a well-documented approach that will allow other researchers to replicate the study in their differential context.

3.10.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which findings are shaped by the participants and the phenomenon under study, rather than research bias or perspective (Shenton, 2004). Andrew Kenneth Shenton further amplified that confirmability is ensured when findings are grounded in the data and not influenced by researcher preconceptions or biases. In similar sentiments, Anney (2014) shared that confirmability involves ensuring that findings are based on participants' responses and experiences, rather than researchers' assumptions. In adherence to these scholars' assertions and to guarantee the confirmability of my research, I conformed rigorously to an iterative process of transcribing participants' interview audio recordings to eliminate any form of documenting my own biases and assumptions (Cope, 2014).

3.11 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical issues in research refer to acceptable and unacceptable actions by researchers when conducting research (Rule & John, 2017). In all situations, any form of research should be conducted rigorously, scrupulously, and in an ethically defensible manner (Cohen et al., 2018). Different research institutions, professional bodies, and organisations prescribe certain conventions that researchers within their terrain should follow prior to, during, and following the research project (Bless et al., 2017). This study was carried out in accordance with the rules established by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The first step was to request authorisation to carry out the study in the selected district from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDoE). In my application, I outlined my intended research methodology and objectives in detail. Contrary to what I envisaged, obtaining approval from KZNDoE went more swiftly and easily than I had anticipated. Thereafter, I submitted an online application to the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (UKZN-HSSREC) for ethical permission to carry out the study. This was a drawn-out procedure with many rules to follow. As the gatekeeper for my study participants, I also had to ask the

principals of the research sites for permission. After receiving approval from these various offices, I was then able to begin my fieldwork.

Considering ethical issues regarding participant consent, confidentiality, and anonymity is one of the norms in qualitative research that directly uses individuals as the primary source of data (Bless et al., 2017; Cohen et al., 2018; Wiles et al., 2008). Participants were fully informed in writing about the nature of the research, its intended goals and focus, and how it was to be done in order to ensure that such issues were addressed in the study. Thereafter, in accordance with the presumptions of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), participants were asked to sign informed consent forms. They were informed that, among other things, their involvement in the study would be entirely voluntary, that they may leave at any moment, and that there would be no financial gain or loss associated with their participation. Participants were also told that pseudonyms will be used to conceal their true identities, including district, school, and personal names, to guarantee their anonymity (Wiles et al., 2008). Following Beauchamp & Childress's (2001) report on beneficence and non-maleficence, participants were informed that any data generated during the interviews would only be shared with the research supervisor and used for guidance purposes and would not be shared with third parties for any negative objectives. This was shared with participants in order to increase the participants' comfort level when answering interview questions (Rule and John, 2017).

3.12 CHAPTER THREE SUMMARY

Within this chapter, I presented the research design, methods, and tools used to generate data for the study on the lived experiences of deputy principals in South African township schools in their complex roles towards teaching and administrative responsibilities. I outlined the methodological and paradigmatic frameworks that guided the research. Additionally, the researcher's position and role were declared and justified. I also described how the sample size was decreased, with six participants instead of the original eight. After a detailed discussion of the interview method's features, advantages, and disadvantages, the data analysis technique used in the study, the study's credibility, and ethical considerations to guarantee validity and reliability were covered.

CHAPTER FOUR - DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three the research design and methodology for this study were explained. The research paradigm and design that underpinned this study, the demographic and sampling methodologies, and the data generation and analysis methods were all explained. There was also an explanation of how to address the study's ethical and trustworthiness issues. The research questions of this study focus on possible complexities in the role and responsibilities of DPs in township schools in attempting to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities. To address the research questions, the researcher presents the data analysis and findings in this chapter along with the themes that emerged from the research findings.

4.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUND

In this section, I present a clear understanding of the research context and participants in attempts to enable the readers and researchers to interpret findings considering the research context and participants' characteristics and help inform potential areas for future study. In addition to this is to ensure transparency, validity, and applicability of this study.

4.2.1 Research sites

Providing the contextual understanding for the study enables readers to understand the environment and setting the research findings came from and helps readers and other researchers to assess the study's applicability to other settings or populations. This study was conducted in three different districts - Pinetown district, Umlazi district, and Nseleni district—within the KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa, with five purposefully selected schools dispersed within the townships of these districts. The researcher, within his convenience and effort to ensure applicability of this study, decided on five township schools within these three districts in KwaZulu-Natal.

4.2.2 Participants' background

As stated in section 3.7, this research engaged six (6) participants, all with a minimum of five years of teaching and leadership experience. The participants' background information is presented in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Summary of participants' background

P	YTE	YLE-DP	TYE
MRS NELLY	26	5	26
MR PETER	9	5	9
MR JOHN	30	15	30
MS ABOSEDE	9	5	9
MR JAMES	13	5	13
MR PAUL	29	11	29

P: Participant; **YTE:** Years of Teaching Experience; **YLE-DP:** Years of Leadership Experience as a Deputy Principal; **TYE:** Total Years of Experience

4.3 PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

To address the potential complexity in the role of DPs in South African township schools in trying to balance their administration and teaching responsibilities, research questions were created. To this attempt, data was generated by interviewing purposefully selected township schools' DPs to gain understanding of their perceptions of their positions and the roles they play in their schools. To preserve the information for transcription and analysis, these interviews were recorded. The verbatim transcriptions of the interview tapes were made.

To align myself with the data analysis process, I followed the inductive and deductive thematic analysis approaches, which allow themes to emerge from the data itself and are based on researched questions, rather than being predetermined by existing theories or frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2020). I began to immerse myself in the data by listening to the recordings a few times to elicit thorough knowledge of the content. During this process, I transcribed notes on initial impressions and ideas of each participant. After transcribing the interview recordings, I generated initial codes by identifying patterns and themes in the data, laying the foundation for further analysis and interpretations (Saldana, 2013). The themes that emerged from the generated data were guided by the research questions, with the aim and focus of gaining insight into what the township schools' deputy principals lived experiences are in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities. Subsequently, I grouped the codes into potential themes, reviewed and refined the themes to ensure they accurately represented the data generated from the interviews, and finally defined and named the themes to capture the essence of the research questions guiding the study.

4.4 DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

Presented in this study are data generated thematically from the research interviews and directed by the research questions of this study. From these interviews, quotations taken verbatim serve as proof of what surfaced from each participant's responses in their interview sessions to assure the readers of the credibility and reliability of the research findings. Following this was the interpretation of the analysis regarding its relationship to the research questions, literature reviewed, and the theoretical framework that guides the study. Data and interpretation of the analysis are presented under the following themes, which are drawn from the three research questions of this study:

4.4.1 Deputy Principals' perceptions of their role and responsibilities

4.4.2 Contextual challenges, role conflicts, and role tensions experienced by DPs

4.4.3 Deputy Principals adopted strategies for balancing their complex role

4.4.1 Deputy Principals' perceptions of their role and responsibilities

In this section the intention was to understand how deputy principals perceive their roles of teaching and administrative leadership. During the interviews, the DPs' multiple perceptions of their role and responsibilities emerged. Amongst all the participants, the role of a DP was perceived as a complex role or a role that is not easy, not clear due to unprecedented roles, has a cumbersome workload, and is as difficult to balance as prescribed by South African school policy and expected of them by other school stakeholders. In addition, the DPs also perceived the school principals as the main source of the complexity of their roles in terms of clear job descriptions and expectations preceded by the delegated duties from the principals. The participant DPs' perceptions of their role and responsibilities are presented and interpreted as follows.

4.4.1.1 Being a DP is complex

The participating DPs in this study all described their role as difficult and complex. A position that is not easy but hectic and physically and emotionally draining. It surfaced from the participants that at the heart of this complexity is the reality that they have to perform multifaceted roles of teaching and administrative responsibilities. Furthermore, the role is perceived to be complex in that DPs see themselves as responsible for working with every stakeholder in the school. To explain the above perceptions, the participants explained: Mrs. Nelly indicates:

I find it difficult to balance the two, teaching and administration work since I'm playing the dual role of being an administrator as well as a curriculum manager. In the first place, we have no office, which frustrates mostly. So, by that, it means even the employment of an administrative clerk is not possible. Therefore, you find yourself being an administrator 100%.

Sharing similar sentiments, Mr. Peter expresses:

In most cases, the principal will be away attending meetings and seminars. So, you get that feeling of being responsible for the entire school and the activities that unfold in the school. So, it is physically draining. You see, at times, according to the scope of work, I'm supposed to be working with the departmental heads to coordinate curriculum, working with the departmental heads to monitor the interventions that is planned for the institution. And obviously, working with them to get some statistics that is required from the educators and compile that and report that to the principal.

With the perception shared by participants in the interviews that being a deputy principal in township schools is not an easy task, Mr. John, in his over thirty (30) years' experience in teaching and fifteen (15) years' experience in deputising echoes as:

Okay. Uh, for me, as deputy principal, for me it's never been an easy task. In my school, from my experience, it's not an easy task. With the amount of work that one is carrying, on my shoulders.

In further explaining the perceptions of DPs on the complexity of their role, it becomes challenging to keep all the balls in the air since they feel as though they do not have enough hands to handle everything. In this struggle to get everything done, they start experiencing feelings of exhaustion as resonated with in Katz and Kahn's (1978) organisational role theory in Chapter Two, section 2.9.3 and evident in the following responses:

I always feel overwhelmed. Well, when I got the post, I was first fascinated. I was over the moon thinking at my age and little did I know, what its entails being a deputy principal (Ms. Abosede).

Yeah, it's a very hectic experience, I must say, especially during the first two years of being a DP, I was trying to set my feet where I'm supposed to be, but I find it so difficult (Mrs. Nelly).

Yeah, it's complex, but it actually, it's complex for the fact that even if you've planned as a DP that you might do everything in planning according to the policy and also has planned with different structures at school but your planning will not be implemented as you have it, that is why it is challenging (Mr. Paul).

In the same vein, Mr. Peter and Mr. James viewed the role as complex, but they further indicated that it is a manageable and interesting role. They state:

I think it's an interesting position with a lot of experiences. And that's because most of the time, you get a feeling of how to be a principal. You act as a principal when the principal is away. You take responsibility for the entire institution (Mr. Peter).

I think the role is complex. Yes. As for me, it is manageable. And I'm actually delivering every single thing you can think of (Mr. James).

The overall message emanating from the data is that the roles of DPs are not a simple task. As discussed, these participants have linked these difficulties with their dual roles, having to work with the principals and having to work with everyone in the school and other outside stakeholders. This makes it hard to predict what their plan in a day would be. In Chapter Two, section 2.6, I shared literature on the complexities of being a DP, and this literature revealed that the role of DP is complex and poorly defined. Observed in the findings of this study and the existing literature is an agreement that the role is complex. This similarity could be linked with the fact that the studies highlighted in Chapter Two, section 2.6, the variety and breadth of duties performed by DPs, along with the role's ambiguity or complexity, are recurring themes (Harvey, 1994a; Grant, 2014; Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017; Sibanda, 2018; Pollock et al., 2017; Berry & Townsend, 2019; Jeffers et al., 2024). In contrast to what is believed by Flaherty and Mannix McNamara (2024) that, staff members in post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland perceive DPs as collaborating with the principal on administrative tasks and day-to-day operations, with management responsibilities pertaining to behavioural and discipline issues, supervision and substitution, and scheduling being mentioned as standard practices (Chapter

Two, section 2.6), this study findings and recent research articles conducted in South Africa and other continents on DPs' position claimed otherwise that the role is "under-researched" for its fairness, ambiguities, fabulousness, and complexity (Blose & Mbatha, 2025; Jansen & Plessis, 2020; Singh & Mestry, 2022; Khumalo & Van der Vyer, 2020). Similar to the findings of this research study is the sentiment shared by the assumptions of Katz and Kahn's (1978) organisational role theory in Chapter Two, section 2.9.3. The theorist postulated that organisational role is a process of learning the expectations of others, accepting them, and fulfilling them to influence behaviour motivation in the workplace. Participants in this study shared that they have to interact with every stakeholder within their role sets. As DPs are expected to take up multifaceted roles within their teaching and administrative responsibilities, the theory findings and this research agreed that participant DPs' interactions within their role episodes appears very difficult, and complex based on the individual role sender's behaviours, units, and context.

4.4.1.2 A feeling of no direction

As second-in-command and a spanner-hand to the principal, it became apparent from the interview sessions of this study that DPs are entrusted with a range of responsibilities that span teaching, administrative, and unprecedented leadership roles. Participant DPs in this study alluded that their daily expectations mostly depend on how they are delegated by the principal and demanded by outside stakeholder engagements, leaving them with no direction or planned agenda for a day. It then emerged from participants that despite their importance as an advisor to the principal, their position remained shrouded with an unclear role and no direction to their daily activities. In this vein, the participants echoed their sentiments, as Ms. Abosede explains:

My biggest problem is the principal. Like I said to you, planning for me is everything. I plan like this is how my work is going to be, you know. And then the principal just comes and will be like, Mrs Abosede, I need one, two, three, and four. And I'm like, but that's not my focus. So that's the only thing that makes me at some points feel like I'm failing. Sometimes I feel like I don't even know what I'm there for.

In a similar notion, Mr. John maintains:

Sometimes, you might find that during the day, there's a meeting that the principal is supposed to go and attend. But only to find that there are also other meetings that the

principal has to attend. But at the same time, the principal will delegate me, Mr. John just go and attend this meeting for me. Yeah, also with the external structures as I said to you because whatever that is, because the principal is just a fore-front person. Whatever that is needed, or whatever is required from the principal. The principal will come back to me.

Mr. Paul expressed his perceptions about the outside stakeholders leaving them with no direction or plan, and he expresses:

If your ward manager for example arrives at school while you are having a meeting or teaching, we have to stop everything and focus on the departmental official who is there.

These perceptions I metaphorically described in Chapter One, in the introduction part, as “Janus, the Roman gods with two faces” caught between two worlds, amplifying that DPs are torn between their teaching responsibilities and administrative duties, unable to fully face one direction without compromising the other. In agreement with my assumption that township school DPs are “Janus” is the assertion made in Chapter Two, section 2.9.5, by Jansen and Plessis (2020) and supported in Katz and Khan’s (1978) organisation role theory framework that the work of DPs and their roles in their role sets (South African township schools) is influenced by the behaviour of their role senders and empirically proven as less than adequate, being a “nebulous position” and a “jack of all trades, master of none.”

In further eliciting the perceptions of participant DPs on the clarity of their role, this study in Chapter Two, section 2.7, agreed with Spillane's (2017) distributed leadership theory in relation to shared leadership in organisations like township schools. According to the theory, DPs' dispersed roles and responsibilities throughout township schools expose them to a variety of diverse school contexts and leadership styles, which can consequently lead to imprecise job descriptions and ignorance of their role expectations. In support of this assumption, Bush and Glover (2019) stressed in Chapter Two, section 2.7, the importance of clear job descriptions and expectations for DPs by recommending that DPs need to have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in contrast to being subjected to the prerogative of the school principals. In support of this assumption, participant DPs recount:

The main role of the deputy is more of being a principal of the school. All the cases, most of them are brought to the deputy principal. There are very minimal that are taken straight to the principal himself, even conducting the meetings with the parents. So you will find yourself in there not knowing which role I actually play now (Mrs. Nelly).

There are things that you are able to do efficiently. There are things where you also need support. There are things where you need to be educated on because sometimes you don't have clarity on how things need to be done (Mr. James).

Sharing the same sentiments, Mr. Peter, in his diplomatic way of responding, described the role as being the middleman with a dilemma of not having a clear direction to cascade information between the senior management and the staff. He explains:

So, at times, you become the middleman between the principal, the senior management, and the staff because all those stones that are casted to the principal, at times they fall on your side. And when the principal wants to cast the stones to the staff, at times those stones are going to fall on yourself.

Mr. Peter's sentiments can be linked to Bush and Glover's (2020) assertion in Chapter Two, section 2.8.2.2, that the implications of the complex role of DPs are significant and far-reaching according to recent research findings. And as such, it is essential that schools and policymakers prioritise clear role definitions and expectations for DPs to ensure task effectiveness and job satisfaction. This emerged from the responses of participant DPs towards their perceptions of their role as being a DP in township schools. This study affirmed that the role of South African township schools' DPs remains unclear with no direction of job description but rather is based on delegated roles and demands from other school role senders (stakeholders).

4.4.1.3 Cumbersome workload

Several DPs who were interviewed revealed in their comments that they feel job overload in several ways. They struggle to cope, feel overwhelmed by the amount of work they have to do, and worry about having to spend their family time and go the extra mile to cover for the undone work, most especially with the teaching responsibilities placed on their shoulders. According to the PAM document extracted from EEA (2022), a shared South African school policy document in Chapter Two, section 2.4 and articulated in Spillane (2017) leadership practice

can be described as a product of interaction between leaders, followers, and situation, the roles and responsibilities of a deputy principal's job are individual and varied (not discrete and precise), but based on the specific school's approaches and requirements. This may include but are not restricted to the following: managerial/administrative tasks (catered for 40% of their daily hours), teaching (catered for 60% of their daily hours), extra and co-curricular activities (not catered for), personnel-related issues (not catered for), managing curriculum structure (not catered for), and interaction with stakeholders and communication (not catered for)' (RSA, 2016a: A30-A31). While this is the standard expectation of the DPs from different role senders (stakeholders) both within and outside the schools as stipulated by Katz and Khans' (1978) assumption of organisation role theory, time limitations to effectively balance these roles befall the participant DPs, and they express the following:

I'm from work today (Saturday). I work almost all weekends because I'll have to cover up what was left undone. I'm a deputy principal academically. I'm a deputy principal administratively. Apart from that, I'm leading some committees. I'm part of the school-based support team where I'm leading the learner support agents. You can just imagine seeing all the cases on learners are on me. There's this new policy that has just been shared, the one that instructs schools to allow learners to change subject, I mean FET phase deputy principals. You can just imagine. I'm taking control of such changes. So, it becomes hectic (Mrs. Nelly).

Sharing on how the policy time allocation interferes with and impacts DPs' workload, Mr. Peter explains:

Of course, the time interfere. Of course, they do because uh, just right now, the principal is away. So, part of the core duties of the deputy principal is to act on behalf of the principal when she or he is away, you see. So, that is not catered for in the expected duties of a deputy principal. Is just that we manage by compromising our time and saying, no, let me not compromise the administrative time. Let me compromise the instructional time. I'll compromise mine to cover the instructional time. So, this is why we spend a lot of time in school. Yes, yes, because obviously I think that requirement is not fulfilled by anyone, by any person. You cannot fulfill that requirement as a deputy principal unless if you are then neglecting the administrative duties, then maybe you can make it 100% in class.

As prescribed by policy (EEA, 2020; 2022; RSA-DBE, 2016a: A30-A31), in Chapter Two, section 2.4, the workload of South African schools' DPs should be synchronised with a time load of 40% administrative and 60% teaching. Mrs. Nelly also expressed her challenges toward the combined workload. She states:

As explained in my response earlier, that 60% I cover it during my spare time because I know that I need to spend more in classes than administration, but it never happens that way because there are daily activities that I come home planning for, and there will be just those impromptu ones that will come in while you've been in the class teaching.

Echoing similar sentiments is Ms. Abosede, who also finds her workload difficult, with 60% of her time needed for teaching. She had this to say:

It is overwhelming, see next week opening. While I'm doing the analysis and the end term reports, the principal is sitting there doing absolutely nothing. While the educators are busy preparing their lessons for the coming term. I am doing analysis, I'm doing end term reports, and I'm also planning for term three. I mean trying to make sure that term three there will be excursions. I need to compile a list of important dates. Two, I need to compile a list of scheduled meetings. What is forgotten I do is..... choose two staff who will be leading us in the assembly, who will be on the gates, who will be doing the ground duties, all of that is done by me. So now imagine, when will I do the lesson plans and have 60% teaching time?

Ms. Abosede's voice resonates with Blose's (2024) and Bush & Glover's (2019) assertion in Chapter Two, section 2.8.1, that multiple responsibilities and tasks performed by DPs often lead them to experiencing a heavy workload, leaving them with little time for teaching and other important responsibilities.

In the same vein, Mr. John, Mr. James, and Mr. Paul viewed their workload as cumbersome in that they found it difficult to cope with time available for other tasks. In their responses, they lament as follows:

I coordinate the relationship between the teacher and the learner, the relationship between the parent and the institution, the relationship between the school and other stakeholders. By stakeholders, I mean the district officials from different sections, the governance section, and the curriculum section. I coordinate the whole communication, the principal is just a fore-front person (Mr. John).

It's all about the time because during the day you have to make sure that you complete these duties. And find yourself as being part of other committees within the school that would have their own communication, their own things that needs to be done. For example, you have to make phone calls, you have to take down notes, and you also cascade information to committee members and also cascade information to the management team (Mr. James).

Mr. John and Mr. James resonated with the assumption of Leaf and Odhiambo (2017) in Chapter Two, section 2.6, which asserts that township DPs' role complexity emanated from being subjected to relational tasks that stem from socioeconomic disparities, administrative duties, and distributed workloads—that is, managing teachers and managing the school as a whole in the absence of the principal. In line with this, Mr. Paul expresses his concerns:

Sometimes, you will find out that, when the principal leaves or goes elsewhere for workshops or meetings, he/she leaves all the shoulders to you as a deputy principal to manage the staff. You have to look at and ensure that the blocks are being managed for learners not to roam around. Also, ensure that the teachers are in class. Always, you have to carry a timetable like this, which is a composite timetable. You have to reprimand that teacher and telling him, it's your period, you have to go class. It's a lot.

The above participant's DP responses show that a cumbersome and overwhelming workload is perceived in their differential context. It became evident with emerged data that they struggled to strike a balance between their teaching and administrative responsibilities as delegated to them by the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998), as amended in PAM (2022), and as demanded of them by different role senders within and outside their school contexts. This finding aligns with the assertions made by several scholars in Chapter Two, section 2.7, that DPs in township schools are having complex job descriptions and current incumbents' excessive workloads with limited time for teaching and other important responsibilities (Blöse,

2018; Blose & Naicker, 2018; Bush & Glover, 2019; Mestry & Sing, 2019; Blose, 2024; Blose & Mbatha, 2025; Myburgh, 2021; Jansen & Plessis, 2020). DPs often receive insufficient support from school administrators, teachers, and others. In addition, the above extract responses of the participant DPs also agreed with the assertion of Spillane (2017), Sidhu et al. (2020), and Wijewarden et al. (2020) in Chapter Two, section 2.8.1 that the distributed role exacerbates workload and stress levels and leads to time management challenges as DPs struggle to manage and juggle multiple responsibilities and tasks.

4.4.1.4 Challenging role with conflicting policy demands

Apart from the role of DPs being perceived to be complex and having a feeling that the position of a DP is of no direction due to unprecedented roles delegated to DPs with cumbersome workloads, the study participant DPs also perceived difficulties in balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities amongst other tasks distributed to them. When Participant DPs were asked how they are managing to strike a balance between their teaching and administrative policy-time demands, they revealed the impossibility of the stipulated school policy of 60% teaching and 40% administrative time. Mrs. Nelly recounts her experiences in class with administrative responsibilities as follows:

Definitely I don't. While you've been in the class teaching. You find that there is a messenger coming in running, Mrs. Nelly you are being called to attend such and such a case. So, you must leave everything like that and go and attend that urgent matter. So, it always occurs like that.

Educators are there. They need to be administered as well because some of them can resist even going to classes. Therefore, this is where my administration stretches even in seeing to it that they are there in classrooms.

Mr. John also stresses both school and external programmes as determinant factors for him to balance his teaching time and administrative time. He explains:

So, as I said to you, meeting the 60% of my teaching depends on the programme, on the planned programme of the week. But with the outside programme, I don't.

In similar sentiments to Mr. John, Ms. Abosede shared her experiences with the nature of the workload entangled with other stakeholders and non-supportive parents as a determining factor. She said:

Honestly speaking, I don't, I don't meet the 60% teaching, it is overwhelming. Every stakeholder, external stakeholder when they come in through, you know, partnership with us, who communicates with them, I am always the liaison officer. Then do you think I'm teaching these learners accordingly? Because at times I'll be called while am in class, IMAGINE? In the midst of everything, then you'll find parents who want to complain about a certain child who was, I can't even say this with my mouth, but you will find parents who want to complain about, you know, just little things but I don't want to sound offensive.

Ms. Abosede's challenges reverberated the voices of Jassen and Plessis (2020) and Van der Vyver et al. (2020) in Chapter Two, section 2.8; they noted role conflict and ambiguity precede DPs' position as they struggle to balance their teaching time and administrative responsibilities as required of them by the South African school policies, distributed by their principals, and demanded by other stakeholders.

In further explaining the participant DP's perspective on balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities amongst other tasks distributed to them Mr. James highlights the pressuring time for administrative tasks over teaching time and explains as follows:

It's difficult to strike a balance between the 60% and 40%, it's really difficult, because you find that you are not teaching but you are only delivery the curriculum. You are not teaching. Because now you find that the work is pressing with the administrative pressure.

Mr. James raised difficult challenges that can be linked to the assertion of Sayed and Motala (2020) in Chapter Two, section 2.8, and the theoretical framework of this study, that performing multifaceted roles, including balancing their teaching responsibilities with administrative responsibilities, can lead to DPs struggling to allocate their time within their role sets (Katz & Khan, 1978) when juggling boundaries, and stress between these competing demands within their distributed practices/roles (Spillane 2017).

Despite the difficulties perceived by participant DPs in balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities, preceded by workload, Mr. Paul seems to see the silver lining as he explains:

Planning. If there are no emergencies, you even go extra mile. For instance, you know, sometimes if there are emergencies, you are being disturbed to go to the class. But because you have to finish up your ATP (Annual Teaching Plan), so you have to plan in such a way that you can see that this week, I have lost maybe two hours in a certain class, or I have lost maybe one hour. So, you have to go in an extra mile in making sure that you do extra classes. So, that's the thing I usually do. And even on holidays, I'm teaching. In terms of administrative duties, at school level, we make planned meetings, that on this day, we make a plan meeting where we find that all the SMT members are not in class.

These findings resonate with literature and critique the imperfection in South African school policy outlining the roles and responsibilities of township schools DPs. For instance, from literature in Chapter Two, section 2.6.1, it is claimed by several research studies that DPs struggle to strike a balance between their teaching and administrative responsibilities policy time, which echoes the same sentiments as the data generated above (Blose & Mbatha, 2025; Blose, 2024; Jansen & Plessis, 2020; Naicker, 2018; Mncube et al., 2022; Singh & Mestry, 2022). In addition, a study by Mestry and Grobler (2020) titled “The role of deputy principals in school leadership and management,” published in the South African Journal of Education, also asserts that DPs spend more time on administrative tasks than on teaching and instructional practices, which in the long run affects their instructional time and impacts their student outcomes negatively, teachers’ developmental support, and overall DPs’ task effectiveness negatively (see Chapter Two, section 2.6.1). This also resonates with what participant DPs revealed in the data generated. Although the South African Department of Basic Education, in an attempt to abolish this trending challenge, developed policies (SASA Act 84 of 1996; EEA of 1998; NEPA of 1996; PAM of 2020; 2022) to support DPs in their roles but fails to advise on the implementation process and time prioritisation in achieving these policy statements (Chapter Two, section 2.6.1). Nevertheless, the assumptions of Spillane's (2017) distributed theory in Chapter Two, section 2.9.1, contend with these claimed challenges above and propose that rather than spilling too much on the middle managers' (deputy principals') portfolio, the

manager (principal) should promote diffused leadership in the school that is both efficient and intentional when delegating DPs' roles and responsibilities. This theory enacted how the role of DPs as one of the school leaders should be encouraged to share leadership responsibilities with other school leaders as a focal person (Spillane, 2017).

From data generated from participant DPs, it became evident that DPs within the Pinetown district, Umlazi district, and Nseleni district perceived their role as being a deputy principal as highly complex, not clear, and with no direction due to unprecedented roles, leading to multiple excessive workloads that they have to struggle with and juggle on a daily basis. In addition to this is the fact that the nature of their job description is perceived to be so hectic, confusing, and conflicting and sometimes leaves the DPs in a position that is shrouded, and this prevents them from fully facing one direction without compromising the other. As a matter of fact, this study findings align with other empirical studies as stipulated in Chapter Two, section 2.9.1, that while distributed leadership has a direct effect on schools' capacity to improve instruction, it also has an indirect effect on some school leaders, such as DPs' task effectiveness (Blose, 2024; Blose & Mbatha, 2025; Hallinger & Snidvongs, 2020; Spillane, 2017). The following theme presents the contextual challenges, role conflicts, and role tensions experienced by DPs in their differential contexts.

4.4.2 Contextual challenges, role conflicts, and role tensions experienced by DPs

To answer question two of this research study, three categories of themes emerged (contextual challenges, conflicting roles, and role tensions) from generated data with their sub-themes. Presented below are these themes and their sub-themes, along with their interpretation.

4.4.2.1 Contextual challenges

Certain sub-themes surfaced regarding the contextual challenges participants DPs in this case study face in their attempts to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities. These sub-themes are presented and interpreted as follows to explain these contextual challenges.

4.4.2.1.1 Managing learners and parents impacted by substance abuse and violence

During the interviews with the participant DPs on what they experience as contextual challenges in attempting to play their role and provide professional leadership and management for the functioning of their schools, they revealed that learners from their township schools are coming from single-parent-led families; some are from child-led families with no discipline;

some come to school with all kinds of weapons and drugs; some come to school drunk; and many come to school hungry and hope for the kitchen alone. In addition, some come to school to perpetrate violence and fight with teachers. In this regard, Mr. Paul recounts his challenges with learners and parents coming to school with a mission to fight teachers, and he said:

Learners are coming to school with drugs, coming to school with weapons. They fight; they all do these things. So, they come with that notion to school and say....., others even want to fight with us (educators). So what I am trying to say to you is that other parents do not actually support especially in our township. Parents do not support the schools when it comes to their children. Yeah, so even the parents they do have a problem. Others are scabengos, others have been jailed doing things, you know. Those are the experience we are having.

The learners also they fight also. They are very stubborn. And they want to fight with educators sometimes. Sometimes they look at the teachers and say that I can fight with these teachers. And then you will end up having a problem as a deputy principal because you need to resolve all those things. You have to call parents. That so and so want to fight teachers. You have to call parents; you have to sit down. And while sitting down, looking at..., I mean reciting on these cases, you don't have time also to cover the syllabus. So, the classes are compromised. You know, that's the problem we are experiencing.

In a similar vein, Mr. Peter, a DP in one of these case study schools and a physical science teacher, shared his experience relating to crime, explaining:

It's unfortunate that in this community, burglary is common. You see. So, in the beginning of term two, we had criminals coming in here and they stole about 25 computers from the IT room. So, how are we going cope in teaching related subject like mine? So, yes, it's something that is very stressing at times because the ICT department had to be closed. Part of those factors is that our school is in the lower level of a township. So, around our school, we have the informal settlements. So, whenever they do not have a certain resource, they see a school as a potential to come and take that resource.

Again, the other issue is poverty. So, you find that about 80% if not 90% of our kids are coming from families with a disadvantaged background, with a poor background. So, at times, while you are here trying to ensure that they are in class, the teachers are there, some of them come to this school hungry even in the morning. They will tell you that they're going to be active after break because they would have got something to eat from the kitchen. So, we do have the soup kitchen to try and mitigate that.

Mrs. Nelly echoed her experiences as being difficult in managing schools with learners from substance impacted, single-parents led families, and child-headed families with no discipline. She explains:

All right, the main contextual factor is the environment in which our learners are coming from. Most of them are coming from single parents-led families. Most of them are coming from the child-headed families. Most of them do not have proper homes and discipline. Some are not even with their parents at home. It's a township that is influenced mostly by alcohol and these single mothers.

The second challenge is the small space in my school. My school is overcrowded and is not on the permanent structure. We have these mobile classes. Some of them have been there since 2007. You can just imagine. They are now having no windows. They are having damaged floors. As I am speaking to you, we are using a mobile class as the main office. The principal and the deputy are occupying a mobile class.

Coming to my role as learner support personnel. I find it difficult even to get a space of sharing these confidential matters with learners, even with teachers. So, we have to move outside if there's a confidential matter I have to address. Even the poverty, the poverty level as well as the use of drugs which is influenced by the environment is what makes it more difficult to perform these two tasks of teaching as well as administration as a deputy principal.

The findings above align with the Department of Education's (Republic of South Africa, 1996a, 1996b; 2020) policy, Katz and Khans' (1978) framework, and Sayed & Motala's (2020) assertions that many leaders such as DPs in this case study, still find it difficult to manage the variety of issues and interactions between different stakeholders within their role sets (see Chapter Two, sections 2.8 & 2.8.2). This poses a big challenge in mitigating their dual role of

teaching and administrative responsibilities. The data from this study also supports Prinsloo (2007) and Zulu et al.'s (2021) views in Chapter Two, section 2.2, that much of township life is now primarily linked to deprivation in the form of poverty, crime, and violence; at times, it has even been compared to a 'war zone' where residents' safety is jeopardised. Participant DPs in this case study alluded to these assertions with their responses in the interviews, highlighting that one of the challenges is dealing with learners from townships that are influenced by drugs, alcohol, and violence. As the South African school policy mandates principals and their DPs to provide professional leadership and management for these township schools (PAM, 2022; SASA, 76 of 1998). For a variety of reasons, such a task becomes evidently difficult, as shared by the literature in Chapter Two, section 2.2, and emerging from the participant DPs' responses in this case study. In these attempts, it surfaced that these schools' principals and their DPs, particularly in township schools, must manage learners and parents impacted by substance abuse and violence while concurrently juggling the duty to spearhead social change at the school level (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2019; Department of Education, 2020).

4.4.2.1.2 Staffing issues

While still getting answers to the puzzle surrounding question two of this research study, it surfaced during the interviews that DPs are encountering multiple challenges to the available human resources known as staffing. Amongst all the participants, the following staffing issues emerged: shortage of teachers leading to DPs' role overload, challenges allocating teachers' duty loads, malicious compliance from teachers, and teachers' hostility. In terms of the shortage of teachers leading to DPs' overload, Mrs. Nelly has this to say:

Yes, we are having the staffing challenges since the department is in this position. There are teachers who are not replaced. We cannot find any replacements. So, it becomes a challenge because they end up overloading everyone including myself. Loads a teacher who should be standing in on his or her position.

Mr. Peter echoes similar sentiments with Mrs. Nelly and says:

Perhaps, I should say the only case in this institution is the overload of work. I think when they now appoint the second deputy principal, then a big difference will be clear because she/he will take over the administrative duties, the issues of the attendance registers, period of staff, and I will only have to focus on the academic side of it.

To buttress the point on the shortage of teachers and admin staff leading to DPs' overload, Mr. Paul expressed his dissatisfactions on the lack of provision for teachers and admin clerks by the Department of Education. He had these to say:

I don't think we are perfectly supported by the department of education. Why I'm saying that I have two reasons. The first one entails the educators. If there is somebody, a teacher, let's say it's a female and has to go on leave, maternity leave. On that time, even if you can submit documentation for the department to consider that there's somebody who's going to go on leave, they will make sure that they will take about two to three months to respond in declaring the post for a person who can substitute that person. These are the problems we are having.

Secondly, the issue of admin. We are having problems with the admin clerks. Those are the people who assist us with entering marks in this system they call it SASAMs in which we keep the data phase for everybody, the teachers, the subjects, the learners, the performance of learners, the analysis, everything is there and it's supposed to be easy if there is a clerk. But you find that the department of education is no longer in supports of the schools with providing the clerks.

In further interviews on identifying the staffing challenges, Mr. John and Mr. Paul alluded to challenges allocating teachers' duty loads. They express:

*One of the challenges that we come across, normally, the deputy is the head of management when it comes to allocation of duties. That is one of the main challenges that we come across. Especially with teachers, Allocation of teaching loads, subjects to be taught by teachers, allocating effective class teachers to the teachers because that one is done by me and the principal (**Mr. John**).*

*For assessment planning, these timetables and other teachers are giving us a headache. You put a timetable, let's say it's for teaching and also for invigilation in terms of assessment. You find that other educators complain to say, they will say look at me, I'm invigilating for seven times whereas so and so is invigilating for five times (**Mr. Paul**).*

Still stressing over staffing challenges, Mr. James and Mr. Paul expressed their experiences with malicious compliance from teachers. They maintain:

So, in other cases, you find that you experience malicious compliance when teachers would agree to get certain things done, and you find that those administrative duties are not done. So, considering that we have submission dates and very short time frames to complete certain tasks, you find yourself completing work that needs to be done by other individuals. Probably is an SMT members or is a teacher (Mr. James).

There are other educators who might not, you know, be in pal with what you are thinking, with your vision. If you want to put the school elsewhere, other educators who would like to play truant while at school, that might be by coming late. And this gives you a headache because while this one educator is not in the class and the next educator is in the class, the learners from that class where there's no educator are going to disturb the ones who are punctually honouring their periods. This is one of the contextual factors I am encountering in this school (Mr. Paul).

As acknowledged by other participants, managing staff is an issue and Mr. James resonated with Katz and Khan's (1978; 1966) theory in Chapter Two, section 2.9.3.2, that DPs' (focal person) interaction with the context of the role episode is not the fleeting events of the role episode but persistent state of the organisation, the individual, and the interpersonal relations between the role senders and the focal person. He hypothesised this due to the teacher's hostility he is experiencing at his school and explain:

Women are very emotional beings. They're very emotional beings and they make working environment very difficult. It's very difficult to occupy a space with women. Female colleagues are very difficult to work with. Because for them it's always more of how they feel, who they prefer. It's always those kinds of things. So, if you have a personality that is not of their own liking. It shows and it makes the working environment around me very toxic.

The above extracted findings align with Zuze and Juan's (2020) research study and assumption of Spillane's (2017) distributed leadership practices that the function of school DPs in township schools has changed beyond expected. As academic leaders and managers, they are now

expected to be the standard bearers of teaching and learning activities and their implementation resources at the school, not just managers and administrators (see Chapter Two, section 2.3). These scholars and the findings of this research study alluded to the fact that access to improved human and physical resource management, successful school outcomes, and leadership environments that are largely dependent on the type of school are all associated with improved deputy principal leadership.

4.4.2.1.3 Inadequate collaborating system

Deputy Principals in this case study expressed a feeling of inadequate collaboration systems but varied in their differential context. Amongst the inadequate collaborating system challenges that emerged from the data are principal practices, lack of stakeholder support, and lack of collegial support. Expressing their frustrations in terms of principal practices, they mention:

The principal's practices are another issue he doesn't share anything with any SMT member. That's the problem. Because you'll find that there is a meeting where the principal is sharing something, and you know that this is not done in this way. It will be difficult for you as a deputy to confront the principal in the staff meeting. That's the problem. So, you don't get enough support with that one (Mr. Paul).

Yeah, a bit. Um what I can say my principal is a perfectionist. And he is so autocratic, if I may put it that way. As he supports you, but you can feel the pain that I'm supported but in a hard way. When he needs something that was said to be done, he will ask, where is it? Where is it?" In that tone, where is it? Because this was supposed to be submitted by now. If you are trying to explain yourself that but Mr. Principal, I was busy with one, two, and three, you have been seeing me around. No, that cannot be the reason for you not to submit this (Mr. principal response). So, the support I get, I can say yes, it's there. But it's a 50/50 support (Mrs. Nelly).

Echoing similar sentiments is Mrs. Abosede, who finds the principals' practices so challenging and has found it difficult to vie for respect and support from her colleagues. She explains:

I do the duty roster, I do the schedule of meetings, I do um analysis. I do end term reports, I chair meetings. I empower and train educators based on what the findings from the QMS. I do all those things. Where is the principal? Nowhere, no support. The

principal is sitting there and listening to music or playing Tik-Tok, the principal of our school knows who eats with whom. Every gossip in the school, she knows. So, she'll be like, I'm doing my rounds, only to find out that she's busy gossiping. So, imagine what staff do we have? Do you think every staff member will respects and support me? Because the principal gossips with them about me. For me, I always say the culture and the tone of the school is set by the principal alone. Exactly.

Still probing on inadequate collaborating system with participant DPs, Mr. Peter and Mr. John also acknowledge the lack of support from some of their role sets; however, they seem to embrace some of their collegial support and look at it from a non-complaining position. These are what they express:

In terms of teaching, I am coping in terms of teaching physical sciences and taking care of the administrative role in the office. Yeah, I was joined by a lady and a gentleman who are also teaching physical sciences now because I was the only one by the time I came in this institution. So, they joined me. We practice team teaching and collaborate well (Mr. Peter).

In terms of support, fortunately, in my department, we support each other. I do get support from my fellow educators. I do get support from my HOD, I do get support from other educators. That's why we call it team teaching (Mr. John).

Mr. Paul and Mr. James also stress parental support and collegial support as a challenge they face in their township schools. They explain:

In terms of other stakeholders like the parent component, the parents, others come to school with a notion that their children have not committed a certain misconduct. And you will then find that there is now a difference in terms of different perspective. Perspectives in terms of observing the learner at school because this learner is with us at school for seven hours. So, the parents are with him or her in the afternoon. So, the parents don't know all these wrong misconducts that are done by their children (Mr. Paul).

Yeah. And you know, another thing you will find is that in your working environment, you are not being encouraged to take risks. When you make a mistake, it's like you you've been crucified. Me as a manager, I encourage people to make mistakes because I want them to learn. I believe that when you make mistakes, you don't lose but you learn. So, because if you don't lose, that means you're not learning (Mr. James).

The extracted data aligns with Singh and Mestry's (2022) findings that DPs in South African schools often feel undervalued and unsupported in their roles and personal views on matters arising within their schools (see Chapter One, section 1.2). Taking note of this background is the research study by Zuze and Juan (2020) in Chapter Two, section 2.3 that asserts that leaders such as DPs are significantly more effective with the support and shared leadership they receive from colleagues and stakeholders in their school context. In addition, Spillane (2017), a theorist for distributed leadership who emphasises and focuses on how leadership is a collective effort, rather than the sole responsibility of a single individual, and Walker (2020), a philosopher of work-related stress and anxiety in Chapter Two, section 2.8.1, postulate that leaders such as DPs, who often receive insufficient support from school administrators and other stakeholders in regard to their distributed role, exacerbate challenging workloads and high stress levels. It is also evident in the study by Bush and Glover (2020) in Chapter Two, section 2.8.2.1, that the principal-deputy principal relationship is critical to the success of the school, but in situations where this relationship is strained, it can lead to poor school leadership with derailed student outcomes.

4.4.2.2 Conflicting roles

Drawing from the interviews with participant DPs, they expressed experiencing conflicting expectations and demands or complex responsibilities that arise from individuals' roles sending to their office as a focal person. This finding resonates with Katz and Khan's (1978) organisational role theory assumptions that focal persons are likely to experience role conflicts, tension and strain in their interactions with their role sets. In the context of this case study interviews, it became evident that DPs in township schools are expected to balance teaching and administrative responsibilities with other unprecedented roles from role senders (stakeholders) across boundaries, which led to conflicting expectations from stakeholders (e.g. DHs, Principals, and even teachers), overlapping roles with stakeholders, and vying for control on matters arising with their role senders. These challenges surfaced as sub-themes and are presented separately below.

4.4.2.2.1 Conflicting expectations

Participant DPs in this case study alluded to the differing stakeholders' priorities and inconsistency of expectations as key factors that contribute to their conflicting role, leading to their role complexity, conflicts between them and staff, and exacerbating their stress level. Based on these allusions, Mrs. Nelly shared her experiences on the inconsistency of expectations from educators at her school. She said:

You'll find that there is disorder. There is disorder around the school and yet educators (DH) are there as well as the teachers. When you come to school, you'll find that the school hasn't started even if it's supposed to be and yet people are there. You'll have to intervene, moving them out of their staff rooms and you see, this brings another perception that the only person who is running this school is this person, which is what I find very challenging in in my position.

Still on conflicting expectations, she expressed the ambiguity in her role due to the inconsistency of expectations from class teachers in her boundary and said:

With the class teachers, they don't care even about the attendance of their learners. We've discovered that a learner has been absent for more than 10 days without being reported. I have to find time in ensuring that I focus on Grade 10 this week and do the thorough administration for Grade 10, checking their period registers, checking their attendance registers. When I reach Grade 12, you'll find that there are learners of Grade 11 that are no longer there in grade 12.

Sidhul et al. (2020) resonated with a similar view to Mrs. Nelly's challenges in Chapter Two, section 2.7, stating that DPs need to be able to navigate the complex web of expectations and priorities from role senders to be able to perform their role effectively.

In a similar vein to the experience shared by Mrs. Nelly and what has been revealed in the empirical study of Sidhul et al. (2020), Mr. John and Mr. James expressed their challenges in regard to conflicts arising between them and their difficult colleagues. They explain:

There are things or there are people whom we are working with and are very difficult in terms of their personality. That you cannot change about them. In terms of their behaviour. Your expectations when it comes to work delivery, can be more. But you find out because of their personalities you have to intervene. You have to get in. You have to be in their shoes. You have to take over. Remember by taking over you are covering yourselves. You are protecting yourselves as the management of the school (Mr. John).

In a similar response to Mr. John, Mr. James expressed the human element as a factor that dictates differential stakeholders as a challenge in his context. This he alluded to individuals' consistency to expectations, and he said:

Considering human element as one of the conflicts in this school, sometimes you feel that if I put these two individuals together, nothing will get done, there's nothing that will be achieved. So, you end up having to work with certain individuals for certain things because you know their abilities and their intensions in terms of personal relationships and in terms of human relations. You know, it is really difficult.

However, Mrs. Abosede echoed in her context the claim made by Blose (2024) in Chapter Two, section 2.2, that principals thinking of having the most autonomy and that their superior power gives them the last word precedes township schools' DPs' conflicting role and stress levels. In this regard, Ms. Abosede said:

Remember I said to you, I'm a woman of principles. I work with policy. You can't just come to me and say, uh, please tell the staff that we're leaving at 1:00. You need to tell me why we're leaving at 1:00 and how are we going to cover for those 2 hours that we're going to lose. So, the principal is just like that. So, she'll say, aaah aah a, Ms. Abosede do things by the book. Am I wrong?

Still unpacking the puzzle surrounding conflicting roles, Mr. Paul stresses the inconsistency of expectations from his principal leading to conflicts between him and some of his teaching colleagues. He explains:

You know when you discuss a misconduct with the educator, it's not the intention of charging. You can see what this educator does. You have to find the bone of contention, the problem, what is the cause of the educator behaving like this so that you will provide counselling, developmental support to where he/she has a problem. So, as a principal, she is supposed to support on all those proceedings but that is where they leave us in the ledge with the educators. So, the educators will blame you saying, hey, this deputy, the principal is better than this deputy because the deputy is always reprimanding us for everything, he is charging us. Even if you're not charging, they will say you are charging because they don't understand the word charging.

Contrarily to other participant DPs' responses, Mr. Peter, though he acknowledged role conflict in township schools, claimed less of it in his school, as he illuminated:

You see as you are coming in here, I was speaking with the principal. So, we have that bond as the SMT and the SMT itself with the staff. It's just those minor issues where they do not attend classes and so on. So, we have to call for corrective sessions. But we are not at war, we are at work, you see. It's about giving clear instructions and knowing where to give instructions and where to give advice.

Taken from the above extracted findings is that participant DPs experienced conflicting expectations based on stakeholders' priorities and inconsistency of expectations in their context. This finding agrees with the assumption of Katz & Kahn (1978) in Chapter Two, section 2.6.2, who express role conflict as the experience of conflicting expectations, demands, or responsibilities that arise from individuals' roles. In support is also the study of Walker (2020) and Mestry and Grobler (2020) that found that DPs often face conflicting expectations from the demands of their principals and other stakeholders (see Chapter Two, section 2.7).

4.4.2.2.2 Overlapping roles

While still interviewing the participant DPs on the role conflicts they experience in attempting to balance their dual roles and responsibilities, it surfaced that participant DPs shared similar responsibilities, tasks, or expectations, leading to potential duplication of effort or confusion with other stakeholders in their role sets. When the participant DPs were asked about their conflicting roles, they expressed the confusing responsibilities they share with different role senders in their boundaries. Mr. Peter said:

Sometimes, I have to go low as low as checking if the educators are in the classroom because obviously when the principal is not here, you should ensure that you cover this phase and the gap between the teaching staff and the principal.

In a similar response, Mrs. Nelly reaffirmed Mr. Peter's challenge and said:

With the principal, there's a lot that overlaps... All the cases, most of them are brought to the deputy principal. The first overlapping role that I feel is unnecessarily is the one for monitoring the attendance of classes by educators. You will find that the DH is there, but the educators are not attending classes under his or her supervision.

Still on overlapping roles, Mr. John regurgitated how extensively his role overlaps with that of his principal and said:

Whatever that is, because the principal is just a fore-front person. Whatever that is needed, or whatever is required from the principal. The principal will come back to me, you are the one who is supporting the principal and guiding the principal in whatever the principal cannot see, whatever the principal cannot hear, whatever the principal cannot see, I'm his eyes. Whatever he cannot hear, I'm his ears.

Ms. Abosede responded by explaining how muddled and hazy her responsibilities became due to overlapping roles and the fact that the principal has the power to delegate her role. She had this to say:

So basically, whatever I do as a deputy principal, the principal should do it as well. But let me tell you something. I share myself. Because the principal doesn't. I plan, i supervise the plan, I plan term, week, and month and also, I do that with the actual days.

4.4.2.2.3 Vying for control

Most of the participant DPs attest to boundary conflicts; they alluded to having issues of power and misunderstanding amongst their role sets. DPs occupying boundary positions alluded to having no significant influence over role senders in and outside of their departments, leading

to vying for control (Katz & Khan, 1978). Mrs. Nelly, in this regard, acknowledges vying for control amongst the conflict experienced within her context, but she embraces the protocol line of the organogram available at her school to strengthen her autonomy and ability to balance her role and responsibilities effectively. She had this to say:

There is a hierarchy. We are reporting in what we call the protocol. That need to be observed. The educator reports to the immediate senior, who is a departmental head. Should the departmental head fail to resolve or find it difficult to resolve that issue, it is then taken straight to me. If I also fail, I direct it straight to the principal himself. But this is how we work.

In a similar vein, Mr. Peter shared his experience on vying for control, and he explains:

Sometimes the issue of instructional leadership, we do not choose a type of leadership but by doing the perfect thing at the right time. Obviously, the leadership style then becomes instructional, you see. So, I use a lot of instructional leadership by just coming in prepared and in advance, coming and give instructions and check if those instructions are being followed. So, I think that's what keeps me going in both the classroom and with the staff.

Contrary to what is shared by Mrs. Nelly and Mr. Peter on vying for control, Mrs. Abosede, Mr. John, Mr. James, and Mr. Paul express the following:

*As I have indicated earlier that when you are at school, other people are gunning for the position that you are in. They will make it a point that you do not succeed in whatever you are doing. And when you don't do well, the department is going to charge you. It's going to sue you for that. And these are the same people who are going to expose you to the departmental officials that look at so and so, he's not doing his work, whereas this is their intention that you should fail (**Mr. Paul**).*

*Because other people's behaviour, they want to see you failing. They want to see you as a failure. Now, to avoid or to solve that conflict you have to step in. You have to step in as a leader. Because sitting down and arguing now with the person knowing very well that you cannot get something that will take you forward is pointless (**Mr. John**).*

Remember what I told you earlier about being principled? If i need to deal with you, i need to deal with you. It's not that I hate you, but it's just my job. But imagine doing that and telling a teacher what you did is wrong. And it's not like in a hard or sad or bad manner of approach. You will find that once I've dealt with the teacher like make her see what she did and tell me how she is going to rectify or he's going to rectify that. Then they'll go to the principal, and they will be like, oh, your deputy principal think she is the principal now, she wants to take your post. And the principal will take that up and be like, yeah neh, I'll need to observe her (Ms. Abosede).

As I have also indicated before to you, women are very emotional beings. It's very difficult to occupy a space with women. Female colleagues are very difficult to work with. It shows and it makes the working environment around me very toxic (Mr. James).

With the extracted data from participant DPs on vying for control to address the challenges in managing school resources, with a focus on human resources, these research findings correlate with Cohen et al.'s (2020) and Danielson et al.'s (2020) assertion in Chapter Two, section 2.8.1, that DPs as school managers often face difficulties in managing school resources, including financial, human, and material resources, as a result of a lack of autonomy. Fikuree (2020) and Hallinger and Snidvongs (2020) support this view, stating that DPs often lack decision-making due to lack of autonomy, which thus limits their ability to perform their responsibilities effectively. As a result, misunderstandings and conflict often arise, leading to poor communication of DPs with school administrators and other role senders (DBE, 2020; 2022).

Data generated from the cases above in regard to the conflicting role of township schools' DPs conform with Sayed and Motala's (2020) and Katz and Khans' (1978) finding, which posits that DPs performing a wide range of special and varied administrative tasks on a daily basis precede them struggling with different role sending, and this leads to conflicting expectations in balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities (see Chapter Two, sections 2.8 & 2.8.2). It became more evident that DPs occupying boundary positions may have no influence over role senders in and outside of their departments due to differing stakeholder perspectives or priorities and inconsistency of expectations, thereby leading to vying for control (Kahn et al., 1964). Additionally, the further role senders are from the DP's department, the more

incomplete their understanding of the DP's boundary position will be, often resulting in increased role conflict (Chapter Two, section 2.9.4.3).

Considering the responses shared by the case study participant DPs about role conflict, these responses can also be linked to Walker's (2020) assertions, who found that DPs are often faced with conflicting expectations from the demands of their principals and other stakeholders based on the fact that the principal in particular has the power in allocating the duties of their DPs (see Chapter Two, section 2.7). The facts extracted above also became evident in the literature in Chapter Two, section 2.2, that the ongoing disputes over teacher management and student discipline at the school level, where the distinctions between the responsibilities of the principal, department heads (DHs), and DPs are muddled and roles become hazy, leading to overlapping roles, still link with some principals thinking that they have the most autonomy and that their superior power should give them the last word (Blose, 2024). The data is aligned with Khumalo et al.'s (2020) and Jeffers et al.'s (2024) views in Chapter Two, section 2.8.2.1, that confusion and overlapping of responsibilities ultimately impact the effectiveness of school leadership. As a result, DPs may struggle to assert their authority and make decisions, leading to a power vacuum and undermining the overall leadership of the school. Despite existing laws and regulations (such as the Schools Act, EEA, PAM document, and the South African Constitution) that stipulate DPs' role as head of school discipline and middle managers, this study's findings affirm that DPs' role as teachers and middle managers in township schools continues to grow more complex, demanding, and difficult (Myburgh, 2021). Even though it is required that the DPs work with the principals, SGBs, SMTs, teacher unions, teachers, RCLs, and other stakeholders to enhance teaching and administrative conditions, it is affirmed in Chapter Two, section 2.2, and the generated data of this study that power struggles and rights disputes, including staff balkanisation, appear to take precedence over the intended stakeholders' role, as expressed in this case study interview (Department of Education [DoE], 1996; 2020; Katz & Khan, 1978; Republic of South Africa, 1996a, 1996b; Sayed & Motala, 2020). As is evident, multiple roles sent to the DPs often precede a variety of role conflicts when attempting to perform their roles within their school context: intra-sender conflict, inter-sender conflict, person-role conflict, and role overload (Kahn et al., 1964).

4.4.2.3 Role tensions

Participants' DPs in the case study expressed their role episodes with members of their role sets as stressful, with high tensions and discomfort arising from the demands and expectations of

individuals' role senders in their role sets which resonate with the organisational role theory of Katz and Khan (1978). Based on the vagueness in their job descriptions, extensive workload, stress, and burnout, DPs revealed that in township schools they experience feelings of anxiety, stress, and discomfort (role tension) due to the high level of accountability. They express the following:

It is very stressful. I cannot lie to you. With everything that we have just shared. I've just shared with you. It brings a lot of tension. A few weeks ago, I had a severe headache, and I could feel it was caused by the pressure that I had at work. Where I had to meet the deadlines at the same time balancing all the duties of being a teacher and being an administrator at the same time (Mrs. Nelly).

I think I'm lucky because I'm young. So, if I was at an age of the BP, the diabetes and whatever, I think I will be having that. I'm not sure. Maybe because I don't get tested, maybe I'm having those already (Mr. Peter).

This for me, this makes me feel like I'm failing as a deputy, as a young deputy principal. So, I think I've been or let me say I'm being suppressed. I mean, in this cage. Like I'm a deputy principal by name, by the hats am wearing, but the roles.... No. So I have a corner at home from where I cry and do everything. You know, that's where I scream and shout at the principal, shout at whoever made me feel that way. That works for me (Ms. Abosede).

Mr. John also acknowledges the high level of discomfort and stress, amongst other tension revealed by participant DPs, but he seems to have it under control based on his over thirty (30) years' experience, which he explains as:

I am that person, who don't stretch and stress himself that much. Yes. Because if there is something that I cannot handle myself, I go and consult. I go and look for support.

Mr. James stresses how role senders in his role set allow their anxiety level to precede the tension and pressure that emanated in enacting his role as a teacher and as an administrator. He explains:

In terms of anxiety, there's always tension, there's always tension, also pressure. People are not focused on the objectives when we are within the working environment towards things. They're more concerned about emotions and express emotions by their actions. And now it becomes very difficult to get people to work together. You end up having working properly with one individual on something where it requires more individuals because of the tensions. So now, the question is do you want to deal with the problem, or do you want to get the job done? Therefore, this situation becomes Very stressful. Very stressful.

In a similar vein, Mr. Paul expressed role tension in his context based on the interactions within his role episodes and claimed it to be difficult and complex about the individual role sender's behaviours and units. He explains:

There is a lot. You know, when teachers are fighting you for nothing, that's where you began to have problems. You know, in our school this year, we have changed the duty load for 3 times. There was a duty load we made in 2024 for 2025 last year. And it was agreed to be implemented. And this year, when the principal has left, seconded to another position. They start complaining about the duty load. The question is, this duty load was discussed last year, and it didn't have a problem. Why do you have a problem with this duty load now that the principal is gone? That's a problem. You find that even the SMT members are involved there. That's the issue. Sabotaging begins. And they want to see you being a failure.

These claims from the participant DPs on the role tension they experience conform to the theoretical model of factors involved in the taking of organisational roles by Katz and Kahn (1978); see Chapter Two, section 2.9.3.1. These theorists claimed that a role episode starts with the expectations, perceptions, and assessment of the focal person's behaviour (DP's behaviour) by the role sender (stakeholders or role sets). These encounters then have an impact on the sent role, which is made up of role details conveyed in a way that exerts pressure or influence on the focal person, as revealed in the generated data above. Ms. Abosede, for instance, cries at home due to exerted pressure; Mrs. Nelly has headaches due to role overload; Mr. Peter envisages high blood pressure due to work-related stress, and so on. This pressure can be the result of many things, among which can be tension, conflict, and challenges, depending on the senders' behaviour and expectations. Grounded in this research finding, DPs in township

schools experience role tension due to the high level of accountability, limited resources, and complex social dynamics or socio-economic disparities within their context. This claim I further aligned to Khumalo and Van den Vyvers' (2020) research study cited in Chapter Two, section 2.6.2, on "Critical skills for deputy principals in South African secondary schools." The following section presents the themes that emerged as the strategies adopted by DPs in navigating the contextual challenges, role conflicts, and role tensions experienced in attempting to balance teaching and administrative responsibilities.

4.4.3 Deputy Principals adopted strategies for balancing their complex role

As emerged from the research interviews, township schools' DPs often face numerous challenges emanating from conflicting expectations, contextual challenges, and multiple role overload from different role sets in their context while attempting to balance their teaching and administrative duties. As aforementioned in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 in this chapter, these challenges, as revealed by participant DPs, have led to stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction, ultimately impacting the effectiveness of the participant township school DPs in their role and distributed responsibilities. To mitigate these challenges, it is essential to identify and implement effective strategies that support DPs in managing their roles and responsibilities. In addressing these challenges, certain themes and sub-themes emerged from the interviews with the participant DPs. Amongst these themes are DPs engaging in continued professional development programmes that focus on how to stay abreast of professional practices as a DP, engaging in effective time management plans to balance their dual role, creating effective communication and collaboration systems between stakeholders to promote positive school culture that combats contextual challenges and reduces conflicts, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance to reduce tension such as stress, burnout, and discomfort experienced in attempting to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities. These strategies are presented and interpreted separately below.

4.4.3.1 Engaging in continued professional development programmes

From the interviews, all participant DPs assented that it was of vital importance to engage in a form of continued professional programmes or networks, external workshops, and DBE organised workshops as means of shared leadership which Spillane's distributed leadership theory articulates as its core assumption to stay abreast of their teaching and administrative responsibilities. They assert to this strategy by revealing as follows:

In terms of administration, I think the most important strategy that we use as an institution is networking. We do a lot of networking. Yes. So, I am involved in some of the sessions from the province in a project leading learning for digital education in the society. I'm also involved in teacher development in the district. So, I use that's a lot to capacitate me and to keep me updated with stuff. I'm also a PhD student as well. So, with that, with going around different provinces, facilitating workshops, I get to be exposed to different strategies and updates of leadership and strategies of classroom and curriculum delivery. I attend workshops outside the school to develop myself (Mr. Peter).

Ms. Abosede shared similar sentiments and elaborated on how she embraced the idea of staff development, including herself, to stay abreast with current practices. She explains:

So, for me, hence I'm doing my master's in education. And I always make sure that I find people with different skills then I will ask them to come empower us. Like honestly, you know, for me, I ensure that every time I find someone to come and develop the staffs. Even if it's on the importance of values. I think last time I called a guy who does everything in terms of integrated technology system. Remember I said that we have lap laptops, remember I said we have projectors. So, I called him just to have a short staff development to show them how they can, you know, enhance their lessons in class and use the projectors, especially in the foundation phase. Because the small ones, they want to learn by seeing, touching things.

In further interviews with the interviewees, it emerged that some participant DPs rely most on networking with colleagues from other performing schools and other forms of community of practice to keep current on best practices. They had these views to share:

I think it lies with other professionals, professionals like other deputies who are successful, whom I can trust, and they are performing very well. That is the remedy I use. And also attending the workshops. There are professional workshops that are organised even though it's very rare, but I always give myself a chance to be there. I think they help me a lot because it's where we share the challenges that we are having around the schools. And sometimes I'm using what I accumulated during my training

or my academic qualifications. I did Honours in school leadership and the Masters. So that is what keeps me going (Mrs. Nelly).

As a deputy principal, I network a lot. I network a lot. But for me, I just think when I have a pool of information is better, whenever we go for extracurricular activities and accountability workshops. I make sure that I do have a new contact. I make contacts, so if there's an issue on something or resources, my contacts are just a phone call away (Mr. James).

I do attend workshops, and also, there is the group I belong to but unfortunately, it involves not only leadership, even the subjects. Our group comprises of English educators, specific to start with. And furthermore, there are subject advisors. There are teachers like myself, deputies, there are also even principals. So, whenever we are having things, we all share it together in that group (Mr. Paul).

With the above-generated data, the research findings align with Sayed and Motala's (2020) assertions that DPs need to be engaged in leadership development programmes focused on school improvement planning, instructional leadership, managing staff performance, student welfare, conflict resolution, curriculum development, data analysis, inclusive education practices, financial management, community engagement, and effective communication strategies, with options like workshops, seminars, online courses, mentorship programmes, and school-based action research projects (see Chapter Two, section 2.8.2.4 above). In support of Sayed and Motala's assertions, this generated data and Leithwood et al.'s (2020) study on "Seven strong claims about successful school leadership" in Chapter Two, section 2.7, stress that DPs need professional development to be able to manage their time and priorities effectively to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities. Furthermore, it is also a mandate for DPs to capacitate their leadership and teaching pedagogy as noted in the PAM document (2020) amendment; DPs often face challenges in developing their leadership skills. In this regard, the study highlights the opinion that DPs need to be provided with opportunities for professional development to enhance their teaching and leadership skills (see Chapter Two, section 2.7).

While still gaining insightful strategies on how township schools' DPs stay abreast of their professional development, Mr. John's response indicates that he solemnly depends on the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) support as he explains:

It is the support from the Department of Education. We do get a support from the Department of Education. On the side of management, we do have a support from our officials at circuit level. We do get a support at the district level. There is a section for government that deals with the learner affairs, the parent affairs and Curriculum affairs which deals with the examination and also deals with teaching and learning. So, we do get support in this aspect. As I said to you, quarterly there are workshops and there are meetings.

His response and some of the participant DPs' points to the possibility that DPs in township schools do receive sufficient support and professional development workshops from stakeholders like DBE, contrary to the assertion made by Walker (2020), a philosopher of work-related stress and anxiety, that proven with empirical facts, DPs in township schools often receive insufficient support from school administrators and other stakeholders in regard to their distributed role, which can lead to unclear job descriptions (see Chapter Two, section 2.8.1). It also surfaced that when enacting the dual roles and responsibilities expected of DPs to deliver collaborative, job-embedded professional development, DPs report experiencing tension when navigating differing teaching and administrative expectations and demands, hence, the need for continue professional programmes is of vital importance. This claim I made from the study-generated data and supported by empirical studies of Blose (2024), Jeffers et al. (2024), Jansen and Plessis (2020), and Khumalo and Van der Vyer (2020) in Chapter Two, section 2.9.5.

4.4.3.2 Engaging in an effective time management plan to balance the dual roles

Several participant DPs mentioned time management as one of the challenges that hindered their effective prioritisation of teaching and administrative responsibilities. They (participant DPs) relate this challenge to the stipulated time of 60% teaching and 40% administration. In an attempt to mitigate and lessen the gravity of this challenge on their responsibilities, they need to strategise with an effective time management plan as the duties demand or as been distributed (DBE, 2020; Spillane, 2017). Indicative of this are responses such as answers to the question of how participant DPs navigate challenging roles and responsibilities towards balancing teaching and administrative time:

What I usually do is to keep time with working so that I can position myself thoroughly and know from here where to. I have my routines. I know what to do as I arrive at

school. Then it becomes the routine. Then should anything fort comes in, I'll have to attend to it in its own way, on its unique way (Mrs. Nelly).

I sacrifice family time. So, I spend most of the time here. And then I would, let's say have family time during the holidays. So, weekends, I'm here at school from 6 o'clock probably up to 4 o'clock. Yeah, so that's how I find ways to cope with the dual role. And also, during the week, I dedicate the first 6, 7 hours of school just for teaching. And then after work, I'll put 2 hours after work for administrative duties, just to prepare for submissions and whatsoever (Mr. James).

Sharing similar sentiments to Mr. James, Mr. Peter explains:

I do six to six sometimes as extra classes to cover. If I plan an intervention, I should be in the forefront to monitor that intervention and to ensure that it is becoming a success.

Mr. John laments how challenging it is to prioritise between his dual roles. He explains:

With administrative duties, it goes a long way. It involves a lot of things, human resource management, learner's affairs, parent affairs, and real time management plan. Balancing the teaching time, I have to conduct extra time. It's not easy. It's not easy, especially with grade 12, you have to, I have to organize myself, I have to organize the learners. I have to also interact with the parents of the learners to conduct the extra classes, extra classes, it can be Saturdays, and it can also be Sundays.

His explanations rings true when viewed in relation to Sidhu et al.'s (2020) and Wijewarden et al.'s (2020) findings in Chapter Two, section 2.8.1, that time management challenges surface as DPs struggle to manage and juggle multiple responsibilities and tasks and that there is a need to engage with and provide training on effective time management strategies to help DPs prioritise their tasks and manage their workload. In support is also Blose's (2024) findings on the influence of school context on leadership practices, putting DPs under a microscope, who also agreed with this assertion (see Chapter Two, section 2.8.1).

In a similar vein to Mr. John's sentiments, Ms. Abosedo agrees with the assertion in literature that it is challenging to prioritise between both roles, and as such, she tries to do her job diligently and plan as much as she can. She explains this in few words:

I do my job diligently. I plan. Because for me, if you fail to plan, definitely you are planning to fail. So, for me, planning is everything.

With regard to the findings of this study and systematic review studies, it surfaced, as echoed in Chapter Two, section 2.6.1, that little is researched on time management strategies for DPs in township schools to mitigate the excessive loads in their portfolio. Many research studies still recommend that DPs be provided training on effective time management strategies to balance their role and responsibilities (Blose & Mbatha, 2025; Blose, 2024; Jansen & Plessis, 2020; Naicker, 2018; Mncube et al., 2022; Singh & Mestry, 2022). Even though the South African Department of Basic Education has attempted to abolish this trending challenge and developed policies (SASA Act 84 of 1996, EEA of 1998, NEPA of 1996, and PAM of 2020) to support DPs in their roles, it fails to advise on the implementation process and time prioritisation in achieving these policy statements.

4.4.3.3 Creating an effective communication and collaboration system with stakeholders

Participants DPs in this case study suggested the need to create effective communication and collaboration strategies with stakeholders, including the school principal, the departmental heads, the teachers, the parents, and other outside school role senders to mitigate some of their contextual challenges and conflicting expectations. The interviewee relates this strategy to communicating the school culture and values to the core business at school and contextual challenges arising and collaborating with stakeholders like SGB and DBE to intervene in major contextual challenges arising. The following responses prove how participant DPs have used the effective communication and collaboration system available to them in mitigating some of their contextual and conflicting challenges. Mr. Peter recounts his school strategies of communicating the school culture to the core business of the school:

The school culture, as much as these contextual factors are there, but I think that is our weapon. We use the school culture to encounter some of them because inside the school premises, we have less cases of uh of stealing between the kids and less cases of abuse or bullying or whatsoever.

The daily prayer because some of these kids, they are not praying at their homes. So, obviously we do not say you pray using this remedial. So, it's a general daily prayer that helps to encourage these kids to say there is hope, you see, before they go to class. And obviously, with the kitchen, they see that, okay, we have prayed, we have been channelled to different classrooms and the soup kitchen, the soup in the kitchen has been prepared. So, it creates the sense of belonging in them (the learners).

The above responses from Mr. Peter echo Joseph DeVito's (2022) assertion, a 'guru' in interpersonal communication, blending theory and research with practical skills, who stressed in his 14th edition released, titled "*Interpersonal communication: Everyday encounter*," that organisation leaders in positions of focal person, such as DPs at schools, are expected to demonstrate emotional intelligence, empathy, and self-awareness to build trust and rapport with others in their leadership role. Furthermore, they need to foster a positive and inclusive school culture and engage with stakeholders, including parents and the broader community, to build partnerships and support student learning (see Chapter Two, section 2.5.3).

In the same vein as the assertion of Joseph DeVito, Ms. Abosede (interviewee) and Mrs. Nelly (interviewee) expressed their strategies of using effective communication of school policy and hierarchy to navigate contextual challenges they face with their role sets. They explain:

So, for me to address whatever issue, and for me, I always say, they mustn't take what I say to them personally because I work with policy. For instance, I can't just come to you and be like why you come and come so late? come sign late arrival. No. I don't do that. I'll just be like, okay, do you remember the values? Can you share them with me? Then I will ask you, what do you understand we discussed this? So, basically, that person will now say, Eish, I was late and I signed in the time book the time that I did not actually arrive. (Ms. Abosede)

We are reporting in what we call the protocol that need to be observed. The educator reports to the immediate senior on cases or matter arising, who is a departmental head. Should the departmental head fail to resolve or find it difficult to resolve that issue, it is then taken straight to me. If I also fail, I direct it straight to the principal himself. But this is how we work (Mrs. Nelly)

Mr. John shared similar strategies with Mrs. Nelly but focused on how he addresses the contextual challenges he faces with teachers in his school context when it comes to allocating teachers' duty loads. He explains:

Yeah, with administrative duties and instructional duties, it goes a long way. But what I normally do, the HODs they submit their duties load from their department for us to combine the timetables. Then I go to the principal we sit down together. So, with this person that you intend to place in grade 12, we are not happy. We are not happy mainly because of their results, or because of his or her personality, and because of his or her behaviour, you know teachers are behaving in different ways. Same as class teachers as part of administration of the school because that one is also very sensitive.

While engaging with stakeholders, including parents and the broader community, to build partnerships and navigate challenges to reduce conflict, Mr. Paul expressed his collaborative strategies as involving the SGB in major contextual challenges and conflicts arising; he states:

Let me be specific to our school. Our school so far have a disciplinary committee. For the disciplinary committee, we invite the SGB members when we have the serious cases. But for minor cases, we deal with them at school.

In a similar vein, Mr. Peter expressed consulting with circuit managers in the absence of his principal as a collaborating strategy, and he explains:

I think it's my nature of consulting. I do a lot of consulting. So, I think as a deputy principal one should be of that nature to say as much as the decision need be taken by yourself in the absence of the principal. But a lot of consultation makes that decision to be accurate. When cases arises and I cannot get a hold of the principal now, I consult the circuit manager. I consult the senior circuit manager to say I have this issue right now; how do I address it?

These responses from Mr. Paul and Mr. Peter echo Spillane's (2017) assumption in Chapter Two, section 2.8.2.4, that effective communication and collaboration between deputy principals and principals and other role senders (stakeholders) are crucial to promote a positive

school culture and reduce conflict. In further interviews to gain more insights on how participants DPs in the case study navigate conflicting roles and expectations using communication and collaboration strategies, Mrs. Nelly expressed complying, “doing what I can do and what I am asked to do,” as her method of collaborating and navigating conflicting roles and expectations. She states this in her words:

I just comply. I do what I have to do and I don't even complain about it to anyone. I complain it within myself. So, I comply and do whatever I have to do at that particular time, which is what makes my 60% of teaching load not to be possible.

Still gaining insights from participants on how participant DPs navigate role conflict using communication and collaboration strategies, Mr. Peter further expressed his collaborative strategies as "acting on behalf of the principal but not as a second principal,” he explained:

It is always important that the deputy principal, not necessarily a friend of the principal, but they have an understanding and one vision with the principal. Obviously, as a deputy principal, you are not the one who is having a vision. You sit with the principal, you listen to the vision of the principal, and you look at how best you can support that vision. You expand the vision to the departmental heads. The principal is wishing that we achieve this this this this, and this, how best we can support the principal. You should act on behalf of the principal when the principal is away. But you should not act as a second principal.

This response from Mr. Peter can be linked to the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2020) guidelines for the appointment and roles of school managers, including DPs as middle managers, to emphasise their critical role in supporting the school principals in managing the school and implementing school policies, but it seems the reverse is the case, as posited by the responses from the majority of participant DPs that principals often allocate duties to deputy principals they themselves are not keen to do. This claim aligns with Jansen and Plessis’s (2020) assertions in Chapter Two, section 2.6. In a similar notion, the Employment of Educator Act (ELRC, 2020), as amended, clarifies the roles and responsibilities of DPs, including their teaching and administrative duties as supporting the principal. Also in agreement are the studies by Mestry and Grobler (2020) and Mncube and Maja (2020), who found that implementing school policies is part of the shared functions of the DPs with the principals (see Chapter Two,

section 2.5.5). It emerged that DPs also face challenges when it comes to supporting the principals' visions and missions and other role senders in their role set. To this point, Mr. Paul highlighted keeping quiet about matters arising and reciprocating respect to other staff as the strategy he uses in communicating and collaborating with his senior and junior role senders in navigating conflicting roles and expectations received. He states:

For me as a deputy, it's very difficult, even if you've told the principal that why you don't discuss this and you find that the principal continues to go to the staff first. You just be quiet. And then others, you know we are not the same, even the departmental heads, they will tell him in front of the staff. They will say principal you are doing wrong. You should have discussed this with us SMT before coming to the staff as one to have one word. You see now we are having different ideas just because you didn't share this your agenda with us. But for me, myself, I don't have to do that. I will just be quiet.

In terms of teaching, it's just that our attitude is not the same, on my side, honestly speaking when HOD reprimand me for the subject because I underperform, i respect the position. Yes, I'm the DP. I have a higher position. But in terms of subject management, she's the one appointed for that. Therefore, I have to respect his or her position.

This strategy expressed by Mr. Paul resonates with Katz and Khan's (1966) assumption of organisational role theory, where they stressed that DPs' role episodes with their role sets should be enacted as a process of learning the expectations of their role senders, accepting them, fulfilling them, and using them to influence behaviour motivation in the workplace (Chapter Two, section 2.9.3).

Sharing similar assumptions with Katz and Khan and similar sentiments with Mr. Paul on conflicting expectations from role senders, Mr. John expressed 'stepping in' as his strategy of navigating conflicting roles, and he expresses:

You know at some stage in one year.... As a deputy principal, I'm not expected to be a class teacher. But because there was a conflict. There was a conflict between that person who was allocated to be a class teacher for that particular class. We had some

issues with that particular person. But to resolve that matter in a polite way I have to step in on top of the workload that I have. I have to step in and become a class teacher.

4.4.3.4 Maintaining work-life balance to reduce stress and burnout

During the interview sessions with the participant DPs, the feeling of anxiety, stress, or discomfort that arises from their responses is alluded to the demands and expectations of the individual's role sending from their role sets. It emerged from participant DPs' responses that their role expectations preceded tensions and always led to a high level of stress, burnout, and discomfort daily. In this regard, participant DPs were asked how they are managing and navigating this unprecedented situation. Many alluded to engaging in healthy work-life strategies such as taking a break from work, spending time with families, engaging in a pleasing consequence action, adhering strictly to South African Schools policy, and keeping aware of social dynamics to manage the exacerbated tensions such as stress, burnout, and discomfort. In their responses, several verbatim emerged, as they explain below.

Mr. James expressed his strategy of mitigating role tension and keeping a healthy work-life balance as “keeping aware of the social dynamics within the school,” and he explains:

I make sure that by all means; I am aware of the social dynamics. We have to be aware of the social dynamics within the school so that you can manage things. It becomes easier by doing that. You make sure that you don't put negative minded people together. And you make sure that you don't put that fuel with this fuel. Because there will be fire. So, you make sure that you don't put them in the same place to be able to achieve the objectives for the school.

On the other hand, Mr. Paul expressed using “South African schools’ policies” (such as the EEA, ELRC, and the SA School Act) as a strategy to navigate the complexity in the role sending from system boundaries within his role set. To this point Mr. Paul explained his strategy in navigating the stress and discomfort imposed on him by the teachers on duty load timetable and said:

So, I said to them, from now I'm no longer moving, and I will be using the policy. You can go to the department of education if you have a problem with any of my decisions. But remember you will be hanging yourself because the department will use the PAM

document. I say whoever have a problem now, I'm no longer going to attend. That's it for the last time.

Similar to Mr. Paul's sentiment, it is echoed by Kahn et al.'s (1964) assumption, who found that the further the role senders are from the focal person's (DPs) department, the more incomplete their understanding of the DP's boundary position will be, often resulting in increased role conflict and tension on the focal person's (DPs) interaction. In this case, they see Mr. Paul as not being the principal with the final say, which makes Mr. Paul struggle and vie for control within these role sets. However, Ms. Abosede voiced her strategy to mitigate tension posed on her through high demanding expectations from role senders within her role set as "pleasing consequence action." She explained how she uses a certain behaviour (like crying in a personal corner of her home) to manage others' expectations and draining needs that lead to stress and burnout. She explains:

So, I have a corner at home from where I cry and do everything. You know, that's where I scream and shout at the principal, shout at whoever made me feel that way. That works for me if I'm not at work or after school, because this hat am wearing as a deputy principal is not child's play.

Still on strategies to navigate role tension, Mrs. Nelly conveyed "taking a break to relax" as her strategy to get going when things get more strenuous and stressful. She exclaims and explains:

Heeeish! I cannot have a straightforward answer on this one. But in most of the cases, I just try to be relaxed and become calm, which is what also I can attest that I'm failing to do because I'll find myself moving around doing one, two, three at the same time. But in most cases, that is what I do. When I feel that now it is more strenuous, I just move out of this office and take a walk. Because even outside as i am taking a walk, I still have to monitor. This is how I relieve my stress. I move around. I know I'll be meeting some learners outside, try to crack some jokes with them and to move along. That comes as a relief a bit. Just leaving the office. That is what I've learnt to do. Just leave the office maybe to go a departmental head and have some other discussions with him or her and leaving what is on my table, then I'll come back with a fresh mind to carry on. But the stress levels are very high.

Similarly to spending time away from the office to relieve oneself from the stress level and discomfort preceded by role tension, Mr. Peter articulated “spending time with family” as his strategy to navigate these challenges. He explains:

Now it's only me and my kid. So, it makes it easier because I know that the helper will be taking care of the kid while I take care of the work. And then after work, I go home and then I spend some time with her and so on. So, I think the kid uh are not complaining about time. It's our partners who complain. So, for now, I don't have a partner, which makes it easier for me. Yes, to execute.

Following the responses that emerged from the study participant DPs, the findings from the data analysis resonate with Katz and Kahn's (1978) role theory in Chapter Two, section 2.6.2; 2.95, where they found that DPs in township schools (as organisational leaders) may experience role tension due to the high level of accountability, limited resources, and complex social dynamics or socio-economic disparities within their context. Khumalo and Van den Vyver (2020) agree with this assumption (see Chapter Two, section 2.9.5). Furthermore, the findings that emerged from participant DPs' responses are coherent with the assertion made by Pandey (2020) and Leithwood et al. (2020) in Chapter Two, section 2.8.2.4, that DPs need to be encouraged to maintain a healthy work-life balance by prioritising their well-being and taking regular breaks to sustain role tension such as stress, burnout, and discomfort. Although responsibilities may call for different school contexts, DPs need to be provided with mentoring and coaching opportunities to support their professional growth, personal development, and a healthy work-life (Cohen et al., 2020; Danielson et al., 2020).

4.5 CHAPTER FOUR SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher presented the data and the data analysis process, as well as the interpretations of the findings. This chapter focused on interpreting the data to answer the research questions as stated in Chapter One. These research questions were related to the perceptions of DPs towards their role and responsibilities, the contextual challenges, role conflicts, and role tensions experienced while attempting to balance their dual roles. It also unpacked the strategies participant DPs adopted to navigate the contextual challenges, role conflict, and role tension experienced in attempting to balance their dual roles. Throughout the chapter, comparisons were drawn with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Furthermore, a

relation was drawn between the distributed leadership theory and the perceptions of participant DPs toward balancing their delegated teaching and administrative responsibilities.

With regard to gaining grounded insight into the complexity of participant DPs' role, a relation was drawn between Katz and Khan's theory of organisational role. To conclude the chapter, strategies for navigating complexity in the role and responsibilities of township DPs were formulated for township schools based on what participant DPs conveyed during the interview process, as well as what was found in literature.

Chapter Five summarises the most important aspects of this study and presents the conclusions in relation to the research aims and problem. To conclude the chapter, the limitations to the theoretical framing of the study will be discussed in terms of recommendation, as well as recommendations brought forth by the outcome of the study.

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CHAPTER FIVE - SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is organised into three sections: Summary, conclusions, and recommendations. The summary provides an overview of the research study, including its focus/research problem, methodology, and key findings based on the research questions. The conclusion section interprets the findings based on what emerged from participant DPs' response to each research question. The recommendations section offers practical suggestions for DP's practices, stakeholders' practices, theory, and future researchers.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study was based on the assertion that the role of township DPs is complex and requires a deep understanding of how DPs balance their responsibilities and other role senders' expectations. Relating to this view, the purpose of this study was to explore the South African township schools' DPs lived experiences in their roles in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities. Through examining the DPs' perceptions of their roles, the study report was designed into five different chapters, each with an objective as presented below.

In Chapter One the research was introduced with the metaphoric concept “Janus, the Roman Gods with Two Faces” to buttress the key argument in the research problem and background of the study. With this, I introduced the study and provided the background and problem statements for the study as it was perceived by my rationale for the study and systematic review of evidence that South African township school DPs struggle and juggle to balance between their complex roles and responsibilities. The problem statement and rationale for the study highlighted the challenges faced by and expectations placed upon South African township schools DPs, as second in command in South African township schools, to determine the extent of role conflict, tensions, and contextual challenges they experience. From this problem statement and rationale for the study, the significance of the study was explained, followed by the aims and focus of the study, and thereafter the research questions were formulated.

In Chapter Two, I presented literature both within and outside the purview of South Africa on the complex role and responsibilities of deputy principals in township school contexts as it relates to how they perceive and balance their roles and responsibilities in their differential contexts. During my systematic review, it emerged from the perceptions of different scholarly debates that the role of public school DPs remains complex, shrouded in complexity/ambiguity, with unclear expectations and role definitions. Although, as it is evidently ascertained, some Irish philosophers such as Flaherty and Mannix McNamara (2024) still perceive the complexity in the role of schools' DPs as standard practices. In further review, it surfaced that education bodies, the South African Department of Basic Education in the case of this study, need to support abolishing the trending challenges embedded in the job description of public schools' DPs by developing policies to support DPs in their roles, implementation process, and time prioritisation in achieving the South African school policy statements. In addition, I aligned myself with distributed leadership theory and organisational role theory with an emphasis on how township schools' DPs perceived their delegated roles and responsibilities and navigated the complexity in the role episodes they received from role senders within their role sets. Through these two theoretical framings, it became evident that the distributed role of DPs is perceived as more effective with the support and shared leadership they receive from colleagues and stakeholders, and the role conflicts, tension, and contextual challenges they experience are preceded by the kind of organisational role sending they receive.

Chapter Three addressed the research design and methodology used in this study. A comprehensive explanation of the research paradigm as well as the research design was provided with constructivist-interpretivist underpinning the study, and a qualitative approach used to explore the nature of role conflict, tensions, and contextual challenges experienced by township schools DPs. The population and sampling techniques used were specified, and the purposive sampling process was explained. The data generation procedure, with specific focus on individual semi-structured interviews, was discussed. The interview process was explained in more detail, followed by a description of how the data analysis procedure took place. Thereafter, the issue of trustworthiness was addressed in more detail, and the chapter concluded with a compendium explanation of the ethical considerations that were considered.

Chapter Four presented the empirical data by way of an analysis and interpretation of data generated during interviews. Firstly, the process of data analysis was explained, and the

participants were introduced, followed by interpretation of the identified themes. The interpretation of the identified themes took place under the following headings:

1. Deputy principals' perceptions of their role and responsibilities
2. Contextual challenges, role conflicts, and role tensions experienced by DPs
3. Deputy principals adopted strategies for balancing their complex role

Thereafter, I presented a synopsis of the integrated interpretation of the research. It presents and correlates, where possible, the findings of the literature study and the data analysis. The next section presents the summaries of the findings of the study.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The summary of the findings reported on in this section seeks to answer three research questions. The first question explores how participant DPs in the case study schools perceive their teaching and administrative responsibilities; the second focuses on the complexity of the participant DPs' role in terms of conflicts, tensions, and contextual challenges that participant DPs encounter in attempting to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities; while the third question concentrates on the adopted strategies participant DPs engaged with to navigate the conflicts, tensions, and contextual challenges that arise from balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities. The summary of the findings on these three research questions is presented in the subsequent sections.

5.3.1 How do DPs in the case study schools perceive their teaching and administrative responsibilities?

In exploring the perceptions of participant DPs on their role and responsibilities, four themes emerged. Firstly, they perceived being a DP as complex. Secondly, participant DPs attest to the fact that their daily expectations mostly depend on how they are delegated by the principal and demanded by outside stakeholder engagements, leaving them with no direction or planned agenda for a day. In addition, the third theme, a cumbersome workload emerged, and they expressed feeling overwhelmed with the number of tasks they must perform. They expressed finding it difficult to cope, and they worry about spending their family time and going the extra mile to cover for the undone work, most especially with the teaching and administrative responsibilities placed on their shoulders. Lastly, the findings revealed that participant DPs perceived their role as being a challenging role with conflicting policy demands. The findings

reveal that participant DPs experience significant complexity in their roles, characterised by the emerged themes and presented below.

5.3.1.1 Complexity

Participant DPs perceived their role as multifaceted and demanding, with unclear expectations and boundaries. DPs see themselves as responsible for working with every stakeholder/role sender in the school. They perceived the role as a position that is not easy but hectic and physically and emotionally draining. It surfaced from the participants that at the heart of this complexity is the reality that they must perform multifaceted roles of teaching and administrative responsibilities. Based on the complexity of their role, they expressed a feeling that they do not have enough hands to do everything, and it becomes difficult to keep all the balls in the air. In this fight to get everything done, they expressed a feeling of exhaustion.

5.3.1.2 Lack of direction

The findings reveal that DPs often feel uncertain about their responsibilities and priorities, leading to confusion and frustration. As it is further revealed from the findings, participant DPs' daily expectations mostly depend on how they are delegated by the principal and demanded by outside stakeholder engagements, leaving them with no direction or planned agenda for a day. Based on this finding, participant DPs revealed that they remain as "Janus, the Roman god with two faces," caught between two worlds, torn between their teaching responsibilities and administrative duties, unable to fully face one direction without compromising the other.

5.3.1.3 Cumbersome workload

It became evident with the findings on perceptions of participant DPs that DPs in township schools experience a heavy workload, with administrative tasks encroaching on teaching responsibilities. They feel overwhelmed with the number of tasks they must perform and find it difficult to cope. The participant DPs align the cumbersome workload attributed to their role as preceded by the Employment of Educators Act (2022), a South African school policy document that defines the roles and responsibilities of a deputy principal. It states that a DP is an "individual and varied (not discrete and precise), but depending on the approaches and needs of the particular school, which include, but are not limited to, the following: managerial/administrative tasks (catered for 40% of their daily hours), teaching (catered for 60% of their daily hours), extra and co-curricular activities (not catered for), personnel-related

issues (not catered for), managing curriculum structure (not catered for), and interaction with stakeholders and communication (not catered for)” (RSA, 2016a: A30-A31).

While this is ascertained to be the standard expectation of the DPs from different role senders (stakeholders) both within and outside the schools, the findings as revealed by participant DPs alluded to time limitations to effectively balance these roles that befall them. Based on the responses of the participant DPs, it shows that a cumbersome and overwhelming workload is perceived in their differential context as they struggled to strike a balance between their teaching and administrative responsibilities as delegated to them by the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998), as amended in PAM (2020), and as demanded of them by different role senders within and outside their school contexts.

5.3.1.4 Conflicting policy demands

The findings reveal that DPs face challenging policy requirements that conflict with their teaching and administrative responsibilities, exacerbating role tension and stress. In this regard, Participant DPs’ responses to how they strike a balance between their teaching and administrative policy-time demands revealed the impossibility of the stipulated school policy of 60% teaching and 40% administrative time. In line with this, participant DPs noted role conflict and ambiguity that precede township schools DPs’ positions as the factors that aggravate the struggle to balance their teaching time and administrative responsibilities as required of them by the South African school policies, distributed by their principals, and demanded by other stakeholders/role senders.

5.3.2 What are the contextual challenges, conflicts, and tensions that DPs encounter in their attempt to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities?

Having gained insightful understanding of the participant DPs on how they perceived their role and responsibilities, I then proceeded with question two to explore the broader consequences of unclear roles and responsibilities of DPs in terms of contextual challenges arising, leadership care and support given to them, and their stress level as preceded by their delegated duties. I further explored conflicting policy demands to identify potential areas for improvement in their school leadership and management practices. The findings reveal that participant DPs encounter numerous challenges in their attempt to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities. Amongst these challenges were contextual-related challenges, operational challenges, role-related conflicts, and emotional toll. These challenges are presented below.

5.3.2.1 Contextual-related challenges

It emerged from findings that participant DPs in township schools face significant contextual-related challenges that impact their ability to balance teaching and administrative responsibilities. These contextual challenges include DPs having to manage learners and parents affected by substance abuse and violence. They highlighted this as a disturbing factor that leads to disruptive behaviour and safety in their classroom and school environment. They also explained that it creates emotional trauma and decreased academic performance among their learners and strains relationships between parents, DPs (as disciplinary managers), and educators. In addition to these context-related challenges, DPs revealed the challenge of having to address the consequences of poverty, such as managing learners lacking basic necessities, like food, and limited parental involvement and support due to lack of resources. Findings also emphasised that participant DPs navigate complex contextual expectations, including demands for increased community involvement and engagement and balancing school needs with community expectations and priorities. Safety and security concerns emerged from findings as part of the contextual challenges participant DPs have to address, which include dealing with crime and gang activity in the surrounding community, vandalism and theft of school property, and ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for learners and staff.

5.3.2.2 Operational challenges

Township school DPs face challenging operational issues that span from staffing issues to inadequate collaboration systems, conflicting expectations, and administrative burdens. Firstly, with staffing issues, findings reveal that DPs have to manage staffing shortages, high teacher turnover, and inadequate training of staff, leading to their increased workload and stress. In addition to this, DPs are experiencing poor communication and collaboration among staff, departments, and other role senders/stakeholders, resulting in siloed decision-making and a lack of shared vision between them and their role sets. Secondly, findings reveal that DPs face conflicting expectations from DBE policies and priorities in terms of their time allocations and delegated responsibilities, coupled with having to manage the demands from other role senders/stakeholders. While battling and juggling staffing issues, inadequate collaboration, and conflicting expectations from role senders, it emerged from findings that DPs face a heavy administrative workload that encroaches on their teaching responsibilities and compliance with regulations and policies.

5.3.2.3 Role-related conflicts

Findings also reveal that participant DPs experience numerous role-related conflicts that stem from overlapping responsibilities with other staff members, such as the principal, departmental heads, and teachers; struggles and competing interests among stakeholders/role senders leading to vying for control; unclear role boundaries leading to confusion about responsibilities and expectations; overlapping or duplicated efforts that create gaps in the accountability and responsibility of DPs; and conflicting priorities that include teaching and learning, administrative tasks, and other stakeholders' expectations. These role-related conflicts required DPs to be skilled in communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution, often necessitating careful management of relationships and priorities to maintain a positive and productive school environment.

5.3.2.4 Emotional toll

Further findings reveal that participant DPs in township schools experience a momentous emotional toll due to the challenges and stressors associated with their role. This emotional toll manifested in various ways, amongst which are DPs experiencing anxiety and stress related to managing complex and conflicting priorities, meeting high expectations and demands from their role sets, and having to cope with limited or no support from the role senders within and outside their boundaries. Secondly, DPs expressed a risk of burnout and exhaustion due to heavy workload, long hours of working to cover undone work, and lack of work-life balance and self-care. It surfaced from findings that the emotional toll impacts DPs' overall well-being, including their physical health problems, as indicated by a participant DP in section 4.4.2.3, that he may be having high blood pressure (hypertension); mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety disorder leading to headaches, as expressed by another participant in section 4.4.2.3 too; and strained relationships with one's role sets, as expressed by the majority of the participants in the same section.

5.3.3 How do DPs in the case study schools navigate the tensions, challenges, and conflicts that arise from balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities?

Having established what the contextual challenges, conflicts, and tensions are that township school DPs face in attempting to balance their dual roles, I further explored the strategies adopted by participant DPs to manage this complexity in their role and stay abreast of best practices to fulfil their multifaceted responsibilities. The findings showed that participant DPs engaged in continued professional development to stay abreast of best practices; they engaged

in effective time management planning to attain balance between their teaching and administrative responsibilities; they created an effective communication and collaboration system to ensure support from stakeholders and enhance accountability of their responsibilities; and they maintained a work-life balance approach to reduce stress level, burnout, and discomfort entangled with their multifaceted roles. The findings further revealed that the various adopted strategies that were set up served specific purposes, with the decisive goal of ensuring effective classroom teaching and learning and administrative responsibilities distributed to them. These purposes are summarised under each of the strategies adopted by participant DPs in subsequent sections.

5.3.3.1 Continued professional development

Deputy Principals in this case study schools recognised the importance of continued professional development (CPD) in enhancing their leadership skills and staying current with best practices. It surfaced from findings that CPD activities help DPs to update their knowledge and skills in areas of leadership, management, and teaching and learning, as some alluded to engaging in lifelong learning (some are doing their master's programmes in educational leadership, while some are doing their PhD programmes in educational leadership); network and collaborate with other educators and share experiences and learnings from other DPs in similar roles; attend workshops and conferences organised by stakeholders to learn from experts and network with peers; and stay informed about best practices in education, including new technologies, teaching methodologies, and assessment strategies. The findings revealed evidently that CPD boosts DPs' confidence, empowering them to take on new challenges and responsibilities, and enhances DPs' career prospects, preparing them for more future leadership roles.

5.3.3.2 Effective time management planning

Participant DPs adopted effective time management strategies to balance their complex role and multiple responsibilities. It emerged from findings that effective time management enables DPs to prioritise tasks, focusing on high-priority activities that align with school goals and objectives, although it became evident that administrative time dominates their teaching time. With a time management strategy, DPs were able to manage multiple responsibilities, including teaching, administration, and leadership tasks, by allocating their school-hour time and family time effectively. Using this strategy, they were able to delegate tasks to other members of their role sets, which they are in good communication and collaboration with, such as teachers and

administrative staff, to free up time for high-priority school activities. From these findings, it was further revealed that time management enables DPs to reduce stress and anxiety and manage their workload more effectively.

5.3.3.3 Communication and collaboration

Participant DPs in this case study in section 4.4.3.3 recognised the importance of effective communication and collaboration in building strong relationships and support with stakeholders/role senders in their role sets and promoting a positive school culture. Effective communication and collaboration, as expressed in the findings of this study, enables participant DPs to build trust and rapport with their role senders, such as teachers, parents, SGB members, DBE officials, and other extended stakeholders, towards fostering a collaborative and supportive school leadership; communicate the schools' vision and goals in ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned and working towards common objectives on cases arising; and resolve conflicts and issues by promoting positive and respectful school culture.

5.3.3.4 Work-life balance

From the established findings in section 4.4.3.4, participant DPs revealed that maintaining a work-life balance is of vital importance to reduce stress and burnout. These interviewees attest that work-life balance enables township DPs to manage stress and pressure emanating from their multiple distributed roles by prioritising self-care and personal well-being. To serve this purpose, some of the participant DPs alluded to setting boundaries between work and personal life, some align with spending time with family, some engaged in effective time management, and some seek support from colleagues, family, and friends to manage work-related stress, while some engage in some kind of certain pleasing behaviour, such as "pleasing consequence action," to mitigate stress levels and draining demands from their role sets.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS: LEARNING FROM THE FINDINGS

Learning from the findings of the first research question reveals that DPs in township schools perceive their teaching and administrative responsibilities as complex, challenging, and often overwhelming. The findings indicate that township school DPs within the South African context experience a sense of uncertainty and lack of direction in their role, coupled with a cumbersome workload preceded by unprecedented roles from stakeholders/role senders and conflicting policy demands from policymakers. Hence, the role of township school DPs surfaced as multifaceted and complex, requiring DPs to navigate teaching, administrative, and

leadership responsibilities. Based on findings, it reveals from question one that DPs require clear direction and support to navigate their role effectively and manage competing demands from their role sets. However, with what has been established in literature, the findings from this study agree with the empirical facts of the literature that township school DPs within the South African school context face complexities and challenges in attempting to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities.

Taken from research question two of this study and as established by the literature review is that, township school DPs face complex contextual challenges, conflicts, and tensions in balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities. The findings from the participant DPs in correlation with literature reveal myriad challenges participant DPs encounter in township schools, including having to manage learners and parents impacted by substance abuse, poverty, and violence; addressing staffing issues; dealing with inadequate collaboration systems; dealing with conflicting expectations from different role episodes emanating from different boundaries; overlapping roles from colleagues and staff; and vying for control within and outside their role sets. These challenges contribute to feelings of anxiety, stress, burnout, and discomfort, underscoring the need for targeted support and resources for the role and responsibilities of township schools' DPs in South Africa. Amongst the key learnings from the findings is that, as township schools DPs face unique contextual challenges that require specialised support and resources, there is also a need for effective leadership and management skills to navigate staffing issues, inadequate collaboration systems, conflicting expectations, clear role definitions and boundaries to manage overlapping responsibilities and vying for control, and emotional well-being to manage anxiety, stress, and burnout.

In addressing research question three, the findings reveal that participant DPs in township schools adopt several strategies to balance their complex role and stay abreast of best leadership practices, including participating in continued professional development to enhance their leadership skills, engaging in time management plans to prioritise tasks and manage their workload, creating effective communication and collaboration with stakeholders to foster a collaborative and supportive learning and teaching environment, and maintaining a work-life balance to reduce stress and burnout. With regard to the perceptions of participant DPs of their role and the contextual challenges, conflicts, and tensions they experience in attempting to balance teaching and administrative responsibilities, this study emphasised the importance of

empowering township school DPs within the South African context and sub-African continent with the skills and strategies necessary to excel in their complex role.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are made to different stakeholders to address and reduce the complexity in the role of township schools DPs. Hopefully, this may lead to improved functioning of township schools' DPs and create more effective management structures within South African township schools.

5.5.1 Recommendations for policy

Based upon the fact that the PAM document as extracted from ELRC (2020) and EEA (2022) describes the roles and responsibilities of a deputy principal's job as being "individual and varied (not discrete and precise), but depending on the approaches, principals' discretion, and needs of the particular school," it makes the core duties assigned to township schools' DPs more complex and shrouded in complexity/ambiguity, with unclear expectations and role definitions, and overlapping with those of the DHs and principals in Annexure A.5 and A.7, respectively, within the PAM document. The DBE and other school policymakers should consider reviewing the PAM document in respect to the role of DPs, with a focus on creating more specific and concise job descriptions for township school DPs, DHs, and principals (see section 2.4). By effecting this change, both role conflict and role ambiguity, unclear and no-direction job descriptions, and heavy workloads preceding high tension leading to stress and burnout amongst township schools' DPs can be reduced. In addition to this, if this change is effected, DBE can then possibly achieve the standard performance expectations of school administrators, including township schools DPs, and compare their capabilities, expertise, and nature to the main contributor of underperformance and dysfunctionality in South African schools as alluded to in section 2.8.2.5.

5.5.2 Recommendations for practice

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations and their synopsis motivations are made for South African schools DPs' practice and members of their role sets (principals, DH, teachers, parents, and other external structures).

5.5.2.1 Recommendations for DPs' practice

As evident from this study's findings, DPs in township schools within Pinetown, Umlazi, and Nseleni townships in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, expressed facing unique challenges that require tailored support and training to effectively navigate their multifaceted role. In this regard, this study recommends that township schools DPs should be encouraged to engage in design leadership development programmes that address the context-specific needs of DPs. These design programmes should, among other things, focus on context-specific support and resources to address their unique contextual challenges. In addition to capacitating the township schools' DPs' skills and confidence needed to excel in their role and promote a positive teaching and learning school environment, these school leaders need to be encouraged to engage in lifelong learning that regularly updates their knowledge and skills, probably through workshops, conferences, and training programmes. Another recommendation is to identify colleagues, mentors, or coaches who can offer guidance, support, and encouragement, and create a schedule that balances administrative, teaching, and personal responsibilities.

As a guide against role conflict, this study recommends that township schools DPs ensure clear understanding of their own role and responsibilities and communicate these understandings to stakeholders for clarity. It further recommends developing strategies for managing conflicts within their role sets, such as imbibing the act of active listening, empathy, and problem-solving. Township schools DPs need to be encouraged to improve their practice and stay organised to lead. DPs need to use tools and systems such as calendars, to-do lists, and project management software to stay abreast of their practice and focus and regularly seek feedback from stakeholders and support from mentors or coaches to improve practice.

In mitigating the role tension entangled with township schools' DPs' responsibilities, this study recommends with its findings that DPs need to prioritise their self-care by making time for activities that promote physical, emotional, and mental well-being, such as taking a break from work when feeling exhausted, exercising, meditating, and spending time with loved ones. In addition, DPs need to stay positive and resilient in their role, focus on strength, celebrate successes, and maintain a growth mind-set to navigate challenges and setbacks.

5.5.2.2 Recommendations for stakeholders' practice

It is recommended that township DPs should be encouraged to engage in design leadership development programmes that address their context-specific needs to combat the challenges

they face in attempting to balance the complexity in their role. This study recommends that DBE should provide such context-specific support, resources, and training tailored to the unique challenges faced by township school DPs, such as managing substance abuse and violence, and recognise their achievement to enhance DPs' teaching, administrative, and leadership capacity and promote job satisfaction and motivation. In addition, this study recommends that DBE should reduce the bureaucratic burden on township schools' DPs by streamlining their administrative tasks, review the prerogative power of the principal to discretely determine the responsibilities of their DPs, and reduce paperwork to allow DPs to focus on high-impact activities, such as teaching.

In ensuring clear role expectations for township school DPs, this study recommends that stakeholders, such as SGB, parents, and community members, foster collaborative relationships, provide support, volunteer, and participate in school activities that value DPs' contributions to promote a positive school environment. Additionally, principals, teachers, and staff should cultivate a positive school culture that values DPs' contributions, collaborates with DPs, and offers support.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can support township schools' DPs in balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities, promoting a positive and productive school environment, and improving learners' outcomes.

5.5.3 Recommendations for theory

This study was grounded in distributed leadership theory by Spillane (2017) to understand the perceptions of township schools DPs in relation to their delegated roles. An organisational role theory approach was presumed appropriate to gain in-depth understanding of the complexity in the role of township schools' DPs. From the findings of the study, it became evident that distributed leadership theory emphasises the importance of distributed leadership roles in organisations such as schools, highlighting the role of various stakeholders in leadership and the complexity of leadership that presumes the need for collaboration and shared responsibilities. Coming to DPs' shared leadership or delegated roles, the theory approach established a shared vision and goals among stakeholders, such as the principals, DPs, teachers, and parents, to promote a sense of collective responsibility and ownership towards shared goals, but in its weakness did not fully capture the power dynamics and hierarchical structures that can impact leadership distribution in differential context (township schools in this case).

The theory approach gave limited attention to the specific challenges faced by township school DPs within their role episodes. For instance, in section 4.4.3.3, amongst the cases examined in this study, a participant alluded to the issue of hierarchical structure that led to the complexity of her distributed role and indicated, “I just comply and do what I am asked to do” as a way of surviving the power dynamic and hierarchical structure embedded in her shared responsibilities. It is therefore recommended, with the findings that surfaced in this study, that the theory approach be revised (if necessary) in its implementation in terms of power dynamics and hierarchical structures contributing to the complexity of shared responsibilities in organisations like township schools.

In clarifying the complexity entangled in the roles and responsibilities of the township schools' DPs, organisational role theory approach provides a framework for understanding the roles and responsibilities of individuals within an organisation, such as township schools in this case study, highlighting the importance of role clarity and management in reducing role conflict and ambiguity. The theory ensures alignment with organisation leaders' roles and responsibilities to manage expectations of stakeholders and offer support and resources to leaders such as DPs at school for promoting a sense of role efficacy and confidence within their boundaries, but in its weakness, it gave limited consideration to the impact of contextual factors on role expectations and experiences of the focal person, such as DPs in township schools as an organisation of its own. The theory approach did not fully capture the complexity and nuances of the organisational leaders in their context, leaving them with no identified strategies for managing this complexity in their demanding expectations. Therefore, it is recommended, based on the findings of this study, that the theory approach be revised in its implementation to focus on context-specific experiences and challenges, rather than being implemented in its holistic view of an organisation.

5.5.4 Recommendations for further research

This study was conducted in a small-scale proximity, utilising three districts, five (5) township schools, and purposefully selected six (6) participants within these districts' schools located in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa (see section 3.7). In ensuring generalisability of findings in this study, I therefore recommend that a similar study be conducted at a larger scale to explore the experiences of township schools' DPs in balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities. This can further include longitudinal studies to track the experiences of DPs over time, identifying changes and development in their roles and

responsibilities. I further recommend examining the impact of education policies on the role and responsibilities of DPs in township schools, identifying areas for policy improvement, as this for now contributes to the ambiguity of their position. In addition, further research needs to be undertaken to explore the experiences of DPs in specific contexts, such as schools with high levels of poverty or violence, highlighting unique challenges and opportunities for school leaders like DPs.

By addressing these recommendations, future research can build on the findings of this small-scale study, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of township schools' DPs in South African school settings and informing strategies for support and development.

5.6 FINAL WORD

The role and responsibilities of township schools DPs in South Africa surfaced as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. However, there is a strong claim from the literature and this study that the role and responsibilities of many township schools' DPs are less than adequate, as they are a 'nebulous position' and a 'jack of all trades,' which I called "Janus, the Roman God with Two Faces." In accordance with what literature affirmed, this study therefore argues that the functionality, capabilities, expertise, and nature of the township schools' deputy principal leadership expected by the DBE and other stakeholders are subject to nuanced understanding of the contextual realities faced by these leaders. Furthermore, as per the distributed role, DPs as focal persons to enhance teaching and learning, administration, and leadership, all levels of role sets, including principals, educators, administrators, and other stakeholders, need to collaborate under purposeful distributed leadership and not be dedicated to an individual's role. By acknowledging the complexity in the role of South African schools' DPs and providing support, we can empower township schools' DPs to excel in their leadership positions and ultimately enhance the quality of education they provide for learners in these schools. Finally, I hope that the findings of this study will spark conversations, inspire reflections on clarifications of the role and responsibilities of South African schools' DPs, and inform strategies for supporting DPs in South African township schools for enhanced performance and functionality.

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APPENDIXES:

APPENDIX A: KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCTION RESEARCH WITHIN ITS SCHOOLS



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X 9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200

Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201

Enquiries : Ms Phindile Duma

Email : phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za

Ref: 2/4/8/472

Tel : 033 392 1063

Mr. Oluwadamilare Olufemi Sotunde

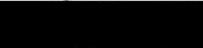


Dear Mr. Sotunde

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DOE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "BALANCING TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES: EXAMINING THE COMPLEX ROLE OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS IN TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS", 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 31 March 2025 to 31 March 2027.
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 above.
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.



Mr. GN Ngcobo
Head of Department: Education
Date: 31 March 2025

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

APPENDIX B: UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER



19 June 2025

Oluwadamilare Olufemi Sotunde (224105978)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear OO Sotunde,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00008686/2025

Project title: Balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities: Examining the complex role of deputy principals in township schools

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 07 May 2025 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) 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.

Incidents of adverse events and serious adverse events (AEs and SAEs) should be reported in writing to HSSREC, the study sponsors, and any regulatory authority (where appropriate), within 7 working days of the occurrence for local sites and 14 days for all other South African sites.

This approval is valid until 19 June 2026.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

Doctor Shamila Naidoo (Interim Chair)

/nng

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX C: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE RESEARCH SITES PRINCIPALS (AS GATE KEEPERS) TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

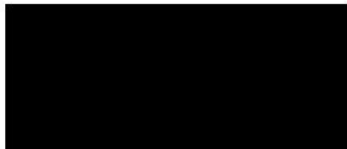
UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.



Date: 14/07/2025

Dear Principal,

Re: Application for Permission to Conduct Research at (name of school/research site)

My name is Oluwadamilare Olufemi Sotunde from the Discipline of Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy (ELMP) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal with student number 224105978.

I am seeking permission to utilise (name of school/research site) as my research site.

I am conducting research on the topic “*Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools.*” My study aim is to explore the township schools deputy principals’ lived experiences in their roles in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities since they are frequently expected to meet the demands of stakeholders, teachers, and school administrators. The study explores the role conflicts, tensions, and challenges that deputy principals encounter in their attempt to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities. In addition, the study intends to explore how deputy principals in KwaZulu-Natal township schools navigate these role conflicts, tensions, and challenges that arise from balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities. Through examining the deputy principals’ perceptions of their roles, the study aims to inform other deputy principals how to navigate their dual roles and pinpoint deputy principals’ areas in need of professional development.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSSREC/00008686/2025), and attached to this letter is my proof of registration that satisfies me as a diligent Master of Education in ELMP student.

Participants will be asked to provide written consent before the research begins. The research will involve collecting data from deputy principals in your school through semi-structured interviews that will be conducted for the duration of the study, and each interview will take about 30-45 minutes. These semi-structured interviews will be audio-recorded and used for research purposes only. The duration of participants, if they choose to enroll and remain in the study, is expected to be eight months. Within the eight months, a day will be scheduled for the semi-structured interview of 30-45 minutes, and subsequent interview questions will be telephonic.

The study does not involve any risks and/or discomforts. Furthermore, the study will provide no direct benefits to participants. However, it is hoped that the findings will be relevant to all educational stakeholders who have an interest in how support for deputy principals benefits school leadership, teachers' morale, and student outcomes. Participation in this research is voluntary, and participants are welcome to withdraw participation at any point, and in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation, the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled.

The anonymity of the case study participants will be guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms. The participants will be informed that the information they will provide in this study will not be used against them and that the generated data will be stored in a secure storage in the supervisor's office and will be destroyed after five years.

In the event of any inquiries or concerns/questions, you may contact the researcher at [REDACTED] my supervisor (Professor Phumlani Myende at myendep@ukzn.ac.za or 031 260 3965/ 033 260 5291), the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Therefore, I kindly request written permission to conduct my research at your school. The permission letter should be on your school letterhead, signed and dated, and stamped with the official school stamp. It should also specifically refer to my name and the title of my study.

I thank you while I await your response.

Yours Sincerely,

Oluwadamilare Olufemi Sotunde

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANT IN RESEARCH AND CONSENT FORM

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 14 July 2025

Dear Deputy Principal,

My name is Oluwadamilare Olufemi Sotunde from the Discipline of Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal with student number 224105978.

You are invited to consider participating in a study titled “Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools.” The aim of this research is to explore the KwaZulu-Natal township schools deputy principals’ lived experiences in their roles in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities since they are frequently expected to meet the demands of stakeholders, teachers, and school administrators. This proposed study explores the tensions, conflicts, and challenges that deputy principals encounter in their attempt to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities. In addition, the study intends to explore how deputy principals in KwaZulu-Natal township schools navigate these tensions, challenges, and conflicts that arise from balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities. Through examining the deputy principals’ perceptions of their roles, the study aims to inform other deputy principals how to navigate their dual roles and pinpoint deputy principals’ areas in need of professional development. Furthermore, the study intend to provide strategies and practices that deputy principals can use to manage the challenges, tensions and conflicts that arise from balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities, provide valuable insights into the implications of these challenges, tensions, and conflicts on their job satisfaction, leadership role, motivation, support for teacher morale, support for student outcomes, and overall task effectiveness, and provide recommendations for school policymakers, school leaders, and educators on how to support deputy principals in balancing their teaching and administrative roles.

In total, the study is expected to enroll at least eight participants from the case study schools within the KwaZulu-Natal province. It will involve the following procedures: Data will be generated through the use of semi-structured face-to-face or online Zoom interviews. This semi-structured interview will be audio-recorded and used for research purposes only. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted for the duration of the study, and each interview will take about 30-45 minutes. The duration of your participation, if you choose to enroll and remain in the study, is expected to be eight months. Within the eight months, a day will be

scheduled for the semi-structured interview of 30-45 minutes, and subsequent interview questions will be telephonic. The study is not funded.

The study does not involve any risks and/or discomforts. Furthermore, the study will provide no direct benefits to participants. However, it is hoped that the findings will be relevant to all educational stakeholders who have an interest in how support for deputy principals benefits school leadership, teachers' morale, and student outcomes. The findings will be shared with you so you can draw some lessons, interpret your experiences, and determine how to reflect critically on your interaction with your roles and duties as stipulated by the South African school policies, distributed by your principals, and as demanded by the stakeholders.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number : HSSREC/00008686/2025).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions, you may contact the researcher [REDACTED] or my supervisor (Professor Phumlani Myende at myendep@ukzn.ac.za or 031 260 3965/ 033 260 5291), the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary, and you are welcome to withdraw participation at any point, and that in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation, the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. You can choose to participate, not participate, or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action. Should you as the participant decide to withdraw from the study, you must inform the researcher for the researcher to commence the process of recruiting new participants for the study. Study participants will be terminated from the study should they believe that their rights are being violated or they are not protected.

There are no costs that will be incurred by the participants as a result of participation in the study. Further, the researcher will explain that the participants will not receive any financial benefits from being part of the research study since it is for academic purposes only. The anonymity of the case study participants will be guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms. The participants will be informed that the information they will provide in this study will not be used against them and that the generated data will be stored in a secure storage in the supervisor's office and will be destroyed after five years. The data will be used in such a manner that the identities of the deputy principals will remain unknown.

CONSENT

I....., have been informed about the study entitled *Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools* by Sotunde Oluwadamilare Olufemi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits I am usually entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher [REDACTED] or the researcher Supervisor, Professor Phumlani Myende at myendep@ukzn.ac.za (email) or 031 260 3965/033 260 5291

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers, then I may also contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

The following additional consent, is required for this study.

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Data generation instrument (Interview Schedule Tool)

Participant's Name..... Date:.....

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Deputy Principals

1. Brief explanation of the purpose, rationale, significance, confidentiality of the processes, expectations, and use of voice recorders.
2. Ask if there are any questions from the participant.
3. Consent form: Read, complete, sign and collect.

Research Topic:

Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools

Main Research question:

- ❖ What are the township schools deputy principals' lived experiences in their roles in relation to balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities?

Sub-Research Questions one

- ❖ How do deputy principals in the case study schools perceive their role in relation to teaching and administrative responsibilities?
 - 1.1 Can you please share with me how you feel about being a deputy principal at your school?
(Probing) Role definition, whether it is complex with high tension, conflicting, and challenging or not.
 - 1.2 Based on your experiences as a teacher and an administrator, could you share with me in terms of workload management whether these roles interfere with each other? If it does, how?
 - 1.3 Do you feel you are equipped with the capacity (resources) to perform these dual roles at your school?

Sub-Research Questions Two:

- ❖ What are the contextual challenges, conflicts, and tensions that deputy principals encounter in their attempt to balance their teaching and administrative responsibilities?
 - 2.1 What are the contextual challenges in terms of socio-economics disparities and administrative expectations that you are encountering in attempting to balance these dual roles?

- 2.2 What are the role conflicts and tensions in terms of conflicting expectations, demands, or responsibilities that arise from your roles (e.g. conflicting expectations and tensions that arise from engaging with school administrators, teachers, students, and other stakeholders, or due to limited training and support)?
- 2.3 How do you feel about these conflicting roles and tensions in terms of the feeling of anxiety, stress, or discomfort that arises from the demands and expectations of your role due to the level of accountability, available resources, and social dynamics or socio-economic disparities within your context?

Sub-Research Questions Three

- ❖ How do deputy principals in the case study schools navigate the tensions, challenges, and conflicts that arise from balancing their teaching and administrative responsibilities?
- 3.1 What strategies do you adopt as deputy principal to prioritise your tasks and manage your workload?
 - (Probing) How do you allocate your time between teaching and administrative responsibilities?
 - 3.2 What strategies do you use to navigate these conflicting roles, tensions, and challenges? (for example, collaborating with stakeholders, teachers, and other administrators to achieve school goals)
 - 3.3 What strategies do you use to stay current with best practices in teaching and administrative leadership?
 - (Probing) What professional development opportunities do you access to support your teaching and administrative roles?
 - (Probing) How do you seek support from colleagues, mentors, and supervisors to navigate the challenges of your roles?

I thank you

APPENDIX F: TURNITIN REPORT

Olufemi Sotunde. Final Dissertation - 1.1con.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

8 %	6 %	2 %	3 %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	2 %
2	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	1 %
3	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	1 %
4	scholar.ufs.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
5	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
6	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	<1 %
7	ujcontent.uj.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
8	library.oapen.org Internet Source	<1 %
9	digitalcommons.odu.edu Internet Source	<1 %
10	Ramashego Shila Mphahlele, Mncedisi Christian Maphalala. "Contextualising Rural Education in South African Schools", Brill, 2023 Publication	<1 %
11	Tsediso Michael Makoelle, Thabo Makhalemele, Pierre du Plessis. "School	<1 %

APPENDIX G: EDITOR'S LETTER

NERESHNEE GOVENDER COMMUNICATIONS (PTY) LTD

REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2016/369223/07

DR NERESHNEE GOVENDER (PhD)

neresh@ngcommunications.co.za

WRITING PRACTITIONER • EDITOR • COPYWRITER • TRAINER

PhD-Management Sciences: Marketing (gender and media); PG DIP - Higher Education - Academic Developers (Cum laude); M-Tech Public Relations; B-Tech Public Relations (Cum laude); B-Tech Journalism (Cum laude); N-Dip Journalism

19/11/2025

OLUWADAMILARE OLUFEMI SOTUNDE

Master of Education

224105978

Supervisor: Prof. P.E. Myende

UKZN

RE: EDITING CERTIFICATE

**TITLE: BALANCING TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES:
EXAMINING THE COMPLEX ROLE OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS IN TOWNSHIP
SCHOOLS**

A dissertation submitted in the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy; College of Humanities, School of Education, Edgewood Campus, UKZN.

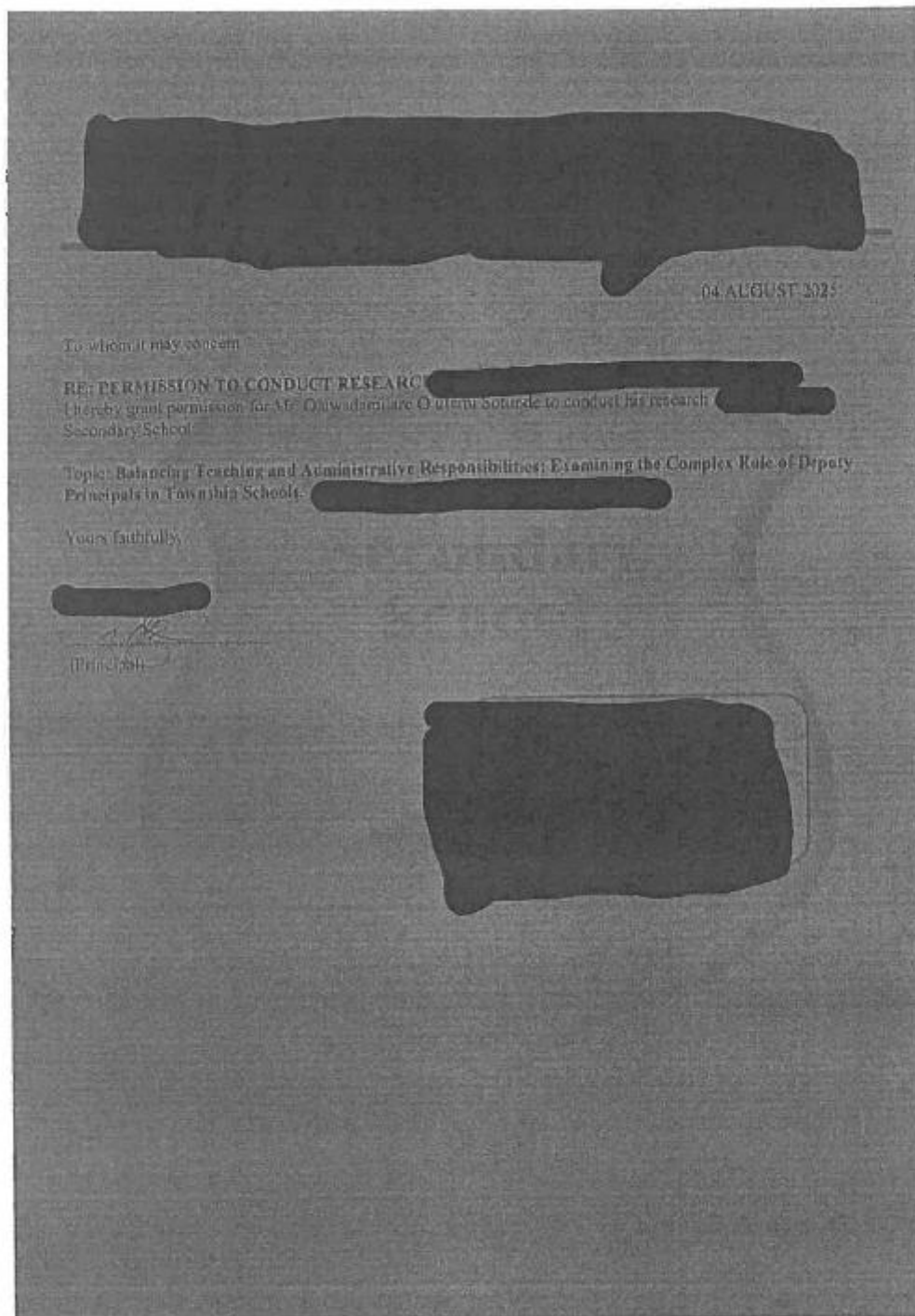
This serves to confirm that this thesis has been edited for clarity, language and layout.

Kind regards,



Nereshnee Govender (PhD)

APPENDIX H; PERMISSION LETTERS FROM RESEARCH SITES



[REDACTED]

DATE: 01/08/2025

To Whom it may concern

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [REDACTED]

Whereby we give permission for Mr. Oluwadamilare Olufermi Sofunde to conduct his research at [REDACTED] Primary School.

Topic: Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools

Yours faithfully,

School Principal

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DATE: 20/08/2025

To whom it may concern

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [REDACTED] SCHOOL

I hereby grant permission for Mr. Oluwadamilare Oluwalai Sotunde to conduct his research at [REDACTED] HIGH SCHOOL.

Topic: Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

01 August 2025

To whom it may concern

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [REDACTED] PRIMARY SCHOOL

I hereby grant permission for Mr. Oluwadamilare Olufemi Sounde to conduct his research at [REDACTED] Primary School.

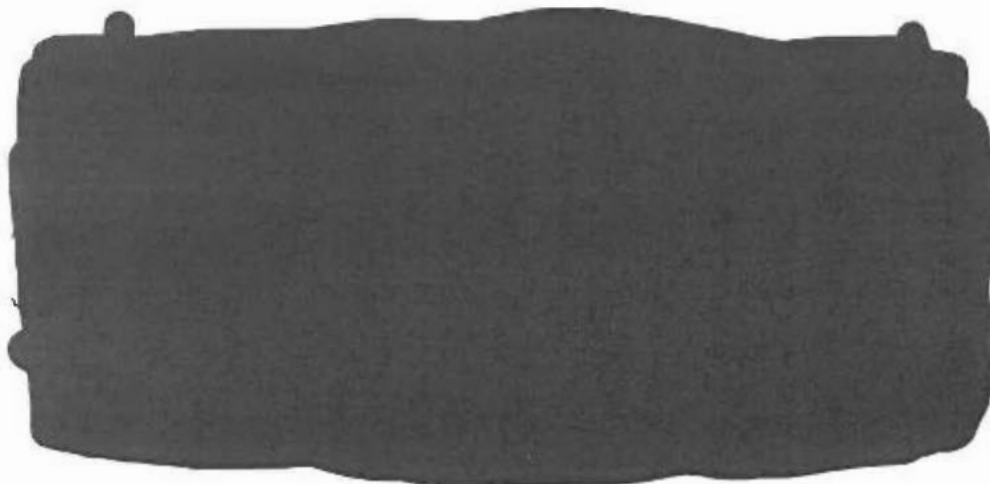
Topic: Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]
Principal

[REDACTED]
Signature

[REDACTED]



To whom it may concern

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [REDACTED] SECONDARY SCHOOL

I hereby grant permission for Mr Oluwadamilare Olufermi Sotunde to conduct his research at [REDACTED] Secondary School.

Topic : **Balancing Teaching and Administration Responsibilities : Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools .**

Yours faithfully

Sign

Name

Title (The Principal)

APPENDIX I: SIGNED CONSENT FORMS FROM PARTICIPANTS

CONSENT

I, [REDACTED], have been informed about the study entitled *Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools* by Sotunde Oluwadamilare Oluferi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits I am usually entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the [REDACTED] the researcher Supervisor, Professor Phumani Myende at myende@ukzn.ac.za (email) or 031 260 3965/033 260 5291.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers, then I may also contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
6000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 260 4557 Fax: 27 31 260 4609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

The following additional consent is required for this study:

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio record my interview / focus group discussion ☒ YES / ☐ NO

[REDACTED] 05/08/25
Signature of Participant Date

[REDACTED] 05/08/25
Signature of Witness (Where applicable) Date

[REDACTED] H/A
Signature of Translator (Where applicable) Date

CONSENT

I, [REDACTED], have been informed about the study entitled *Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools* by Sotunde Oluwagamilare Olatemi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits I am usually entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at [REDACTED] or the researcher Supervisor, Professor Phumilani Myende at myendep@ukzn.ac.za (email) or 031 260 3965/033 260 5291

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers, then I may also contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

The following additional consent, is required for this study.

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

[REDACTED]
Signature of Participant

03/08/2025
Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

CONSENT

I, _____, have been informed about the study entitled *Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools* by Soounde Oluwadamilare Olufemi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits I am usually entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at _____ or the research Supervisor, Professor Phumlani Myende at myende@ukzn.ac.za (email) or 031 260 3965/033 260 5291.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers, then I may also contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za.

The following additional consent, is required for this study.

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Signature of Participant

15/07/2025

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

CONSENT

I, [REDACTED], have been informed about the study entitled *Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals In Township Schools* by Sotunde Oluwadamilare Olufemi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits I am usually entitled to.

If I have any questions or concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher, Prof. Sotunde Oluwadamilare Olufemi, the researcher Supervisor, Professor Phumle M. Mande at myender@ukzn.ac.za (email) or 031 260 3965/033 260 5211.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers, then I may also contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2634111 Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

The following additional consent, is required for this study.

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

[REDACTED]
Signature of Participant

25/07/2025
Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

CONSENT

....., have been informed about the study entitled *Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools* by Setunde Cluvadamllare Olufemi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits I am usually entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at or the researcher Supervisor, Professor Phumlani Myende at myende@ukzn.ac.za (email) or 031 260 3965/033 260 5291

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers, then I may also contact:

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Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 • Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

The following additional consent, is required for this study.

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

.....

Signature of Participant

07/05/2025
Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

PROCEEDURES

8

CONSENT

I, [REDACTED] have been informed about the study entitled *Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities: Examining the Complex Role of Deputy Principals in Township Schools* by Sotunde Oluwadamilare Olufemi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits I am usually entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at [REDACTED] the researcher Supervisor, Professor Phumtani Myende at myenceps@ukzn.ac.za (email) or 031 260 3965/033 260 5291.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher's, then I may also contact:

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KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

The following additional consent, is required for this study.

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion: YES / NO

[REDACTED]
Signature of Participant

01/03/2025
Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date