

# Examining Challenges of Secondary School Managers Using Redeployment as Disciplinary Measures for Teachers: A Case Study

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## Abstract

*This conceptual paper sought to examine the challenges associated with secondary school managers using redeployment as a disciplinary measure for teachers. The main question guiding the study is: What are the challenges and implications of employing redeployment as a disciplinary tool in secondary schools? Adopting a qualitative approach, the study reviews recent scholarly literature to explore this intricate issue. The author applied an interpretive paradigm to amass deeper insights into the scholarly perceptions pertaining to the topic under discussion. Findings reveal that such practices can negatively impact teacher morale, job satisfaction and school climate, leading to perceptions of unfairness and a lack of support. The study contributes to the body of existing knowledge by revealing the complexities and drawbacks of punitive redeployment, thereby informing policy and practice. Limitations include potential biases in the literature and the case study focus which may not be universally applicable.*

**Keywords:** Disciplinary Measure, Teacher Morale, School Climate, Challenges, Redeployment

## INTRODUCTION

In this paper, the terms school managers and school principals will be utilised interchangeably, as will as the concepts of punishment or disciplinary measures and tools. Hymans (2023) posits that the execution of teacher redeployment as a disciplinary strategy by school administrators can lead to considerable negative repercussions on the quality of education and the overall school environment. This practice entails the reassignment of educators to various schools or roles as a means of discipline or punitive measure, rather than for genuine staffing requirements (Li, 2025). Although redeployment may occasionally be warranted for operational purposes, employing it as a punitive measure presents a range of significant concerns. A significant concern is that punitive redeployment may result in diminished teacher morale and reduced job satisfaction. Wang et al. (2024) highlight that teachers subjected to involuntary transfers may experience a sense of devaluation, potentially leading to diminished motivation and engagement in their professional responsibilities. Consequently, this process may adversely affect their performance in the classroom and their interactions with students. In a comparable manner, the regular movement of educators undermines the continuity of student learning and the connections among teachers, students, and the broader school community (Rhodes et al., 2024). It is clear that punitive redeployment could further intensify teacher shortages in specific subjects or regions. Institutions perceived as less favourable placements may encounter difficulties in maintaining high-caliber educators if reassignment is employed as a coercive measure. This may result in an unequal allocation of seasoned educators, thereby sustaining existing disparities among educational institutions (Mason-Williams et al., 2023).

Likewise, employing redeployment as an instrument of punishment may be regarded as a manipulation of administrative authority (Ghabrial, 2025). It has the ability to foster an atmosphere of fear and mistrust between educators and school administration, which may hinder collaboration and collective decision-making (Shiller, 2024). This method detracts from initiatives to foster a constructive school culture centred on ongoing enhancement. Significantly, there exist legal and ethical issues pertaining to punitive redeployment. Numerous jurisdictions have established policies and processes governing teacher transfers and disciplinary measures. Employing redeployment as an informal sanction may contravene these standards and infringe upon teachers' rights, particularly the principles of social justice for children (Koon et al., 2024). Conversely, although

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principals encounter pressure to uphold discipline and address performance difficulties, punitive redeployment is likely to be detrimental in the long term. Consequently, alternate strategies emphasising mentoring, professional development, and progressive discipline policies in accordance with due process may be more effective in enhancing teacher performance and school quality (Ladica & Osias, 2024). Maturi (2024) warns that employing redeployment as a punitive strategy poses considerable issues to educational quality, teacher retention, school atmosphere, and ethical leadership. Consequently, thorough research is essential to investigate the prevalence and effects of this practice, as well as to discover more effective strategies for teacher management and school enhancement in this context.

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Blackmore et al. (2024) present the view that teacher redeployment serves as a mechanism for reallocating educators to address staffing requirements across various schools. Nevertheless, certain school administrators have exploited this policy as a means of discipline towards teachers, potentially leading to considerable negative effects on educational quality, the overall school environment, and the wellbeing of educators (Kesim et al., 2025). This phenomenon clearly involves principals employing the threat of involuntary transfer to other schools as a method of discipline or retaliation against teachers they consider problematic within the school (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2024). Instead of addressing issues through appropriate channels, certain principals misuse their authority by instigating unjustified redeployments as a means to penalise or eliminate teachers they have a personal aversion to. Zhang (2024) posits that this unethical conduct fosters an atmosphere characterised by fear and instability, impacting both teachers and their students.

Consequently, the detrimental impacts on the quality of education are significant. Involuntary transfers undermine the continuity of effective instruction and displace seasoned educators from their established roles of performance (Mastropaolo, 2024). Pupils forfeit the opportunity to engage with educators with whom they have cultivated meaningful connections, while educators are compelled to acclimatise to unfamiliar academic settings. This process, it is important to note, introduces a degree of instability and may also negatively affect overall student achievement. Once more, Qi (2024) discovered that the school climate is adversely affected when redeployment is employed as a punitive measure or strategy. In numerous cases, it cultivates scepticism between educators and administration, undermines staff morale, and engenders a climate of apprehension (Shiller, 2024). As a result, educators may find themselves reluctant to express concerns or dissent from principals due to the apprehension of facing repercussions such as involuntary transfers.

In a comparable manner, the wellbeing of educators is profoundly affected by punitive redeployment. It engenders considerable stress and ambiguity for educators who might find themselves displaced from their communities (Brown et al., 2024). Consequently, there are occasions when teachers may encounter feelings of depression, burnout, and a decline in job satisfaction as a result of involuntary transfers implemented as a form of punishment. Yan (2024) articulates that the improper application of redeployment policy presents significant challenges, as it detracts from its intended goal of addressing staffing imbalances and, in fact, intensifies teacher shortages in certain regions. It further undermines confidence in the efficacy of school leadership and the execution of educational policies. The ramifications present significant concerns for educational frameworks worldwide, particularly in Africa and South Africa. Leonard (2024) posits that the misuse of redeployment authority by principals can lead to the exodus of seasoned educators from the profession, intensify teacher shortages, and foster antagonistic school climates that ultimately undermine student learning. It is imperative for educational leaders to guarantee that redeployment policies are subject to appropriate oversight and are not employed as punitive measures against teachers.

**The purpose** of this study is to examine the challenges and implications secondary school principals face when using redeployment as a disciplinary measure for teachers.

**The main question** guiding this study is: *What are the challenges and implications of employing redeployment as a disciplinary measure in secondary schools?*

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study's theoretical framework is based on the principles of organisational justice (OJ) and transformational leadership (TL). Veseli & Çetin (2024) assert that the notion of organisational justice underscores the significance of equity in administrative decisions, especially in personnel management. It asserts that when principals employ redeployment as a punitive measure, it may engender perceptions of injustice among teachers, consequently impacting morale and job satisfaction. Transformational leadership theory posits that effective school leadership entails inspiring and motivating personnel through the cultivation of a positive school climate (Kilag et al., 2024). When principals engage in punitive redeployment, they may significantly impair their leadership effectiveness and potentially foster a hostile work environment. This paradigm aids in comprehensively understanding how leadership attributes and decision-making processes negatively affect teacher performance, motivation, and the entire school culture. It underscores the necessity for principals to implement equitable and ethical methods in the administration of school staff, along with other critical issues (Kyambade et al., 2025).

In a similar vein, the theoretical framework is grounded in relational leadership (RL), which underscores the significance of cultivating positive relationships and promoting collaboration within the school community. Relational leadership champions inclusive and ethical practices through the cultivation of mutual respect and trust between principals and teachers (Sharma & Adeoye, 2024). The punitive application of redeployment has the potential to undermine relationships, fostering an environment characterised by fear and mistrust. This perspective underscores the detrimental effects that the improper exercise of authority can have on the culture within educational institutions and the overall morale of educators. The framework underscores the importance of relational dynamics, highlighting the necessity for principals to adopt leadership practices that are fair, transparent, and supportive in order to foster a healthy school environment (Burnett, 2024).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This is a qualitative study which is constituted primarily by literature review as a research method. A systematic literature review was conducted drawing evidence based on scholarly books and articles published in (2018-2025). *Examining Challenges of Secondary School Managers Using Redeployment as Disciplinary Measures for Teachers: A Case Study* Minerbo & Briton (2022) elucidate that integrative literature review is a form of research that reviews, critiques and synthesises representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new perspectives on the topic are generated. Thus, an integrative literature review is a special kind of systematic literature review that permits the combination and synthesis of findings (Oliveira et al., 2025). In the analysis of the reviewed scholarly books and articles in understanding the topic, the interpretivist paradigm was used within a local context with its limitations that have deep social and cultural foundations (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2023). The reflections are based on the researcher's subjective perspectives about the topic under review.

### **Data Collection**

A systematic literature review was conducted drawing evidence which is based on books and articles published in recent year (2018 -2025) sources.

### **Data Analysis**

In the analysis of the reviewed books and articles in understanding the topic, "*Examining Challenges of Secondary School Managers Using Redeployment as Disciplinary Measures for Teachers: A Case Study*" the interpretivist paradigm was used within a local context with its limitations that have deep social and cultural foundations (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2023). The reflections are based on the researcher's subjective perspectives about the topic under discussion.

### **Findings**

Principals participated in workshops focused on the effective implementation of redeployment strategies. In addition to the workshops, they received a document outlining the procedures to be adhered to. The guidelines explicitly indicate that in instances where multiple educators vie for the same position, the principle of "last in,

first out" (LIFO) is to be implemented. This necessitates that the principal must possess a deeper understanding of the composition of their staff. It is essential to place the interests of students and the institution at the forefront of our considerations. The principal bears the responsibility for identifying any surplus teachers. Conversely, in exercising his judgement The principles of *jurisprudence* dictate that actions and practices must be characterised by fairness, reasonableness, transparency, and an absence of prejudice. Consequently, it falls upon the principals to exemplify leadership that is free from unjust practices, victimisation, and discrimination, while actively fostering equity within rural primary schools. Nonetheless, certain principals have intentionally chosen to exploit this policy directive as a means of punishment towards educators, resulting in detrimental effects on the quality of education, the atmosphere within schools, and the overall wellbeing of teachers.

## DISCUSSION

The author's objective was to investigate the difficulties and ramifications of using redeployment as a disciplinary measure in secondary schools. Although the redeployment process is unquestionably a crucial tool for managing staff across schools, principals may misuse it to fire instructors they personally disapprove of, which could have a negative impact on the environment, culture, and climate of the school as a whole as well as on individual teachers. Principals occasionally use the redeployment process to further their own agendas, which presents grave ethical and professional issues (Liyanage & Ranaweera, 2023). These methods, in particular, lower teacher morale, cause friction between instructors and principals, and may result in complaints, grievances, or even legal action against the principal. Consequently, low teacher morale and discontent frequently impact productivity, resulting in absenteeism and subpar student achievement (Werang et al, 2023).

The malpractices of authoritative school managers significantly undermine both the professional reputation of the institution and the broader educational field. Ratnaningrum et al (2023) argue that the redeployment of teachers, especially when implemented as a punitive action, can lead to feelings of insecurity and instability. When principals employ redeployment as a punitive strategy against teachers, it is evident that the sense of belonging diminishes, leading individuals to retreat into a state of fear and dissatisfaction. It is significant to note that educators who perceive their roles as perpetually precarious may encounter heightened levels of anxiety, stress, and demotivation, which can have a direct impact on their professional performance (Li et al, 2024). Regrettably, the dynamic between the principal and the teachers may deteriorate, leading to a perception of the principal as an authoritarian figure instead of a nurturing leader.

The redeployment of teachers as a punitive measure significantly undermines the integrity of the teaching and learning processes within educational institutions (Menzies, 2023). In numerous cases, the performance of a teacher experiencing difficulties deteriorates as they become disengaged from their responsibilities, which also hampers their interactions with peers. It is clear that regular alterations in the teaching personnel due to punitive actions can result in deficiencies in curriculum implementation, disparities in instructional approaches, and an overall deterioration in the quality of education. The punitive redeployment measures contribute to a destabilisation of the school culture, climate, and environment, leading individuals to experience feelings of uselessness, powerlessness, and emptiness, ultimately resulting in burnout and attrition (Doughty, 2024). This method of punitive action may result in a disheartened workforce, interruptions in the educational process, logistical challenges, conflicts, and ethical quandaries. Consequently, discerning mitigation strategies are essential in addressing these unfavourable malpractices and ensuring the implementation of ethical leadership styles that promote the achievement of outstanding performance among teachers and students in secondary schools (Preston et al., 2025).

### Guiding principles of Redeployment

The principle of "last in, first out" (LIFO) serves as a criterion for determining teacher access. The Last In, First Out principle is utilised in scenarios where multiple teachers vie for an identical position. The principle of "last in, first out" serves to address the competition that arises among two or more educators vying for a single position. Consequently, Fuegen & Hatchett (2024) discovered that educators with extended service or tenure exhibit a higher likelihood of retention, primarily due to their accumulated experience and prolonged engagement in their positions. Certain critics contend that this approach may compel educational institutions to dismiss newer, potentially highly qualified or innovative educators, despite their superior performance.

Clearly, the implementation of this as a foundational principle necessitates transparency and broader consultative efforts by the principal to prevent discrepancies and biases (Galderisi et al., 2024). Consequently, the school managers are required to implement a relational leadership approach in the execution of this policy imperative. One must possess attributes such as honesty, trustworthiness and loyalty which will ultimately foster an environment grounded in fairness and objectivity (Dartey-Baah et al., 2025).

### **Redeployment Procedures to Be Applied in Rural Primary Schools**

The redeployment procedure constitutes a cyclical process, as it is not a singular, definitive action. The process commences with a preliminary survey, followed by the establishment of a management plan, the identification of surplus educators, and the subsequent matching and absorption procedures. Consequently, the pivotal aspect of these processes lies in the identification of an excess educator. Following a formal meeting and subsequent consultation with the teaching staff, the principal may propose the reassignment of educators to current or forthcoming vacancies (Harrison & Lim, 2024). The principal ought to consider the teachers' experience, rank, competencies, and qualification profiles when re-matching them. Teacher redeployment is a process characterised by the transfer of educators from one institution to another, influenced by various factors such as surplus staffing, diminishing student enrolment, or alterations in the curriculum (Dadvand et al., 2024). Nevertheless, while it's a legitimate tool for managing resources within the educational system it could also be manipulated by the rural primary school principal.

### **Relational Leadership to Be Emulated in Rural Primary Schools' Contexts**

According to Oliver et al. (2024), developing positive relationships and working collaboratively is a key aspect of relational leadership. When instructors perceive that redeployment decisions are influenced by favouritism, it can breed distrust between teachers and school administrators. If some teachers believe they are being relocated unfairly while others are protected, this can harm relationships and morale. Leaders who demonstrate unethical leadership, on the other hand, are likely to act in ways that are not just immoral but also illegal, and they may persuade followers to engage in unethical behaviour. If principals exploit the redeployment process to target teachers they dislike, it may result in unpleasant work environments. It generates a culture of dread and mistrust among instructors, who may believe they are under threat of dismissal due to personal differences rather than professional merit. According to Chanin (2024), the job of principals in redeployment is to remove teachers who do not meet the demands of the school and place the correct ones in that specific rural primary school.

### **Mitigation Strategies to Be Executed in Primary Schools**

Transparent discussions between principals and teachers regarding the rationale for redeployment should occur to mitigate concerns. Principals must highlight the importance of the procedure. Zhu and Du (2024) assert that redeployment decisions should be perceived as equitable, grounded in objective criteria rather than favouritism or bias. Consequently, McQueen & Williams (2024) assert that providing support for redeployed educators, such as counselling services or relocation aid, can alleviate anxiety and foster trust. Engaging teachers in the decision-making process, or at minimum seeking their feedback, can enhance their sense of value and mitigate feelings of alienation.

### **Social Justice the Context of Rural Primary Schools**

The concept of social justice within the framework of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in rural primary schools necessitates the promotion of equitable participation and representation in the governance of educational institutions (Kapelela et al., 2025). It underscores the importance of inclusive decision-making, wherein the perspectives of all stakeholders, including parents, educators, and community members, are acknowledged and taken into account (Alcaraz et al., 2024). Rural educational institutions frequently encounter distinct obstacles, including constrained resources and socio-economic impediments that consistently hinder effective participative management. By confronting these challenges, SGBs can strive for equitable and democratic governance, thereby cultivating an educational atmosphere in which every student enjoys equal access to quality education, irrespective of their background or circumstances.

## Millenium Developmental Goals within Rural Primary Schools

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially those aimed at attaining universal primary education and advancing gender equality, are pertinent to the issues encountered by School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in rural primary schools. Effective participatory management by SGBs is essential for establishing inclusive and equitable educational settings. Nonetheless, Meka & Venkateswarlu (2024) identified that obstacles such as insufficient resources, socio-economic inequalities, and restricted community involvement can hinder advancement towards these MDGs. By surmounting these challenges, SGBs can advance the overarching objectives of mitigating educational disparities, guaranteeing that all students receive quality education, and empowering communities through informed and participatory school governance.

## CONCLUSION

It is important to recognise that school governing bodies in rural primary schools encounter a range of pervasive challenges in their efforts to implement participative management effectively. Their challenges encompass restricted access to essential training and resources, frequently leading to insufficient skills among SGB members for effective participation in decision-making processes. Similarly, the interplay of socio-economic factors and cultural dynamics within rural communities can both intensify and hinder the active engagement and cooperation among stakeholders. The absence of reliable communication and support from educational authorities exacerbates these challenges, hindering SGBs in their efforts to cultivate a genuinely participative environment. Addressing these challenges necessitates the implementation of thoughtfully crafted interventions, such as capacity-building initiatives, enhanced communication pathways, and robust policy backing, all aimed at empowering SGBs and augmenting their contribution to fostering participatory management in rural primary educational institutions.

## Recommendations

In an effort to address the challenges faced by School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in rural primary schools, several essential recommendations are necessary and encompass the following: It is essential to implement meticulously designed and designed training programs aimed at augmenting the skills and knowledge of SGB members, with a particular emphasis on governance, financial management, and effective communication. Educational authorities ought to establish continuous support frameworks that include consistent mentorship and guidance for SGBs, enabling them to adeptly navigate complex decision-making processes. Insightful approaches to cultivate community engagement ought to be adopted, including awareness initiatives that underscore the significance of participatory governance. The establishment of clear communication channels among schools, SGBs, and educational authorities is essential. This will facilitate ongoing support and resource allocation, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of participative management in rural contexts.

## Limitations of the Study

This study has limitations by its emphasis on rural primary schools, perhaps overlooking the comprehensive issues encountered by School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in many contexts, including urban or suburban environments. Similarly, the study may be limited by the availability and reliability of data, especially in under-resourced rural areas. Cultural and contextual disparities among diverse rural groups may restrict the applicability of the findings to other regions or educational settings.

## Author Biographies

Dr. Saltiel Khololo Collen Mataboge is a Senior Lecturer at the University of South Africa in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. Research interests encompasses instructional leadership in schools, Transformative leadership and management in schools, School safety, violence and social justice for students in schools, Schools' financial management, school governance, mentorship and mentoring. I authored and published several articles regarding contemporary issues in the field of education.

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