

***Ukuthwala* “Bride abduction” and Education:
Critical Challenges and Opportunities Faced by
School Principals in Rural Kwazulu-Natal**

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ABSTRACT The present research study explores how the school principals in rural KwaZulu – Natal, South Africa, experience bride abductions in their schools. It draws on systems theory. Data was collected using purposive sample and in-depth interviews with four school principals and two superintendents of Education Management. All interviews were conducted in isiZulu, tape – recorded, then transcribed and translated in English for wider readership. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. Findings suggested that bride abductions had negative impact on schooling and education at large such as the high rate of absenteeism, drop-outs and matric failure rate. The researcher argued that this is against the policy on compulsory school attendance. Further, the governance of every public school is in the hands of the school governing body, of which the principal is a member. As a way of looking forward, the researcher locates principals at the centre of bringing about change to negative cultural practices that impact negatively on education in their schools and argues that principals have power and influence on the communities which they serve and therefore must use it to end bride abductions in the communities which they serve.