

**Schools Principal Leadership Styles in Selected Public Secondary Schools in the  
Vhembe District, Limpopo Province.**

*by*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of principal leadership styles on school performance in the Vhembe District, Limpopo. Education in South Africa is currently going through various reforms. Previous studies and statistics have noted evidence of poor performance in public school in the Post-Apartheid South Africa. This study sought to analyse the leadership styles of principals and school performance of secondary schools in Vhembe District, Limpopo.

The study was carried out using the mixed methodology model. The mixed model design combines qualitative and quantitative approaches within different phases of the research process. In this regards, two phases of data collection instruments were employed. The first phase focused on the collection of data through questionnaires. The questionnaires were used to assess the effect of principal leadership styles on school performance as perceived by the principal themselves and teachers who are members of the School Management Team. The second phase of the investigation focused on the collection of data through interview. The interview schedules were used to assess the effect of principal leadership styles on school performance as perceived by the principals themselves.

This study has shown that principals' leadership style is a critical variable in school performance. The study has also revealed that autocratic leadership style is the most practiced style by school principals in the Vhembe District, Limpopo. The study has further established that the inappropriate choice of leadership styles by school principals affects the school learning culture which has an effect on learner's results. Both literature review and empirical research have confirmed that principals of good performing schools are flexible when practicing leadership styles. This research has established that unless principals are well equipped with knowledge, skills and principles of leadership, they will not be able to improve school performance.

Considering the findings of this study, it is recommended that school principals should imbibe a mixture of different leadership styles at their schools. It was also noted that the principals' leadership style is a critical variable in school performance. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the Department of Education should make it compulsory for school principal to go for refresher courses on Leadership skills ad principles. The researcher further recommends the Department of Education to give educators opportunity to further their studies in line with their professional development.