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Leadership Approaches and Academic Progress in Rural Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe: Enhancing Educational Practices through Research and Development

By

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Abstract

This chapter explores the relationship between leadership ideologies and academic achievement in secondary schools in rural Zimbabwe. In the study, 500 principals were surveyed on their approaches to leadership and instructional techniques using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. The findings show a positive relationship between distributed and instructional leadership approaches — which are characterized by student-centered learning, teacher empowerment, and teamwork — and academic achievement. Conversely, autocratic leadership is associated with lower academic attainment. There were no statistically significant correlations between demographic profiles (age, gender, experience) and leadership styles or school progress. This suggests that these factors alone may not be strong predictors of a principal's effectiveness. These findings highlight the importance of leadership development initiatives that equip principals with the skills necessary to implement effective leadership practices in remote school settings.

Key words: Zimbabwe, Leadership Approaches, Rural Secondary Schools, Education, Research, Development