Leadership Role of School Principals in Democratic Schools in South Africa: Case Studies of Two Schools

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ABSTRACT This paper reports on a qualitative case study located within interpretative paradigm. This study aimed at understanding the role of school principals in leading and managing democratic schools. Towards that, semi-structured interviews were used to obtain data from research participants. The findings of the study reveal that leadership is a major role of principals in democratic schools, as it also extended to others in the school community; and as such, flattens traditional leadership hierarchies. Further, it contradicts predominate findings of previous researches on authoritarian leadership behavior. At both sampled schools, the principals seem to move away from assumed stereotypical authoritarian style to a shared decision-making style, that is, democratic leadership style. Based on the findings it is recommended that more can be done through the inclusion of stakeholders in major decision-making processes.