

Leadership Challenges on Service Delivery Faced by Vhembe District Municipality

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The study investigated leadership challenges affecting the effective delivery of services in Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo Province of South Africa. The South African government stipulates leadership legal frameworks for local government affairs to help people in leadership to effectively facilitate service delivery. People in leadership have been given the opportunity for growth through leadership development programmes to facilitate the delivery of effective services in municipalities. Since 1994, South African municipalities have gone through several difficulties, ranging from poor leadership, corruption, cadre deployment and financial distress. This study argues that effective leadership provides informed guidance, stand scrutiny, innovative, collaborative, goal oriented, and ethical behaviour. The study revealed that poor leadership, incompetence, and poor governance structure affect efficient service delivery in the VDM. Purposive sampling was adopted, and the study recommends adopting a strategic leadership approach which prioritises delivery of service in VDM. Primary data to select the respondents was used and the qualitative approach was adopted where a questionnaire with open-ended questions was administered to collect data from fifteen (15) purposive selected respondents. Data was analysed thematically, and the study found that challenges have been created by the hiring of unqualified personnel into leadership positions in VDM as well as lack of personnel with knowledge and skills to carry out their duties. In addition, poor planning in the municipality promotes delivery service challenges. The study recommends that the municipality would deliver appropriate services and limit leadership challenges if it reviews the cadre deployment policy, have its own revenue, and develop a visionary leadership.

Keywords: Leadership challenges, Leadership qualities, Service delivery, Cadre deployment, Vhembe District Municipality Planning.

Introduction

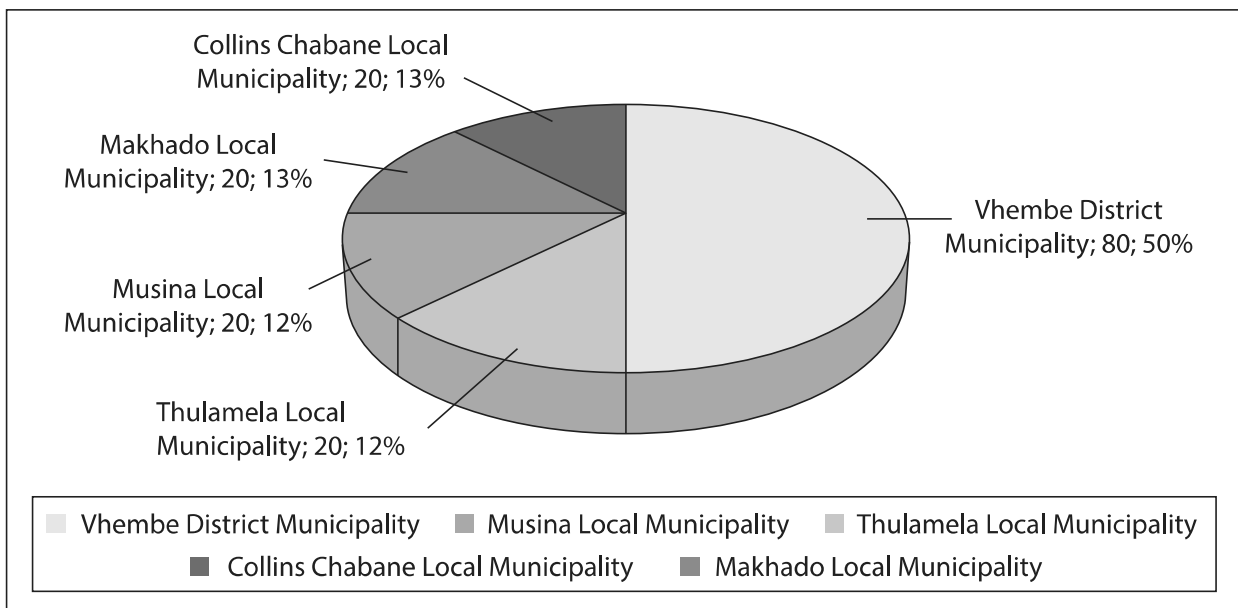
Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide subordinates and other members of an organization. In this study, leadership refers to people who occupy senior positions in Vhembe District Municipality (VDM) (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996). Leadership is about one member of the group modifying the motivation of others in a group (Spillane, 2012:19-20).

People occupying senior positions in the municipality should be visionary, accountable, establish achievable goals, take leadership roles and initiative, and be trustworthy. In addition, managers must be role models, mentor subordinates, understand their positions, be motivational speakers and share information with subordinates. Sharman & Jain (2013) articulates a similar view arguing that leadership involves making concrete decisions. The VDM comprises Thulamela Local Municipality, Collins Chabane Local Municipality, Makhado Local Municipality and Musina Local Municipality.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 provides a comprehensive system to ensure municipalities optimize the ability to deliver services to the beneficiaries. A municipality should ensure the speedy service delivery to the community. Shava and Chamisa (2018) say that leaders in VDM should deliver appropriate municipal services to the communities. Shava and Chamisa found that ineffective leadership, poor governance, and inability to read and write are other contributing factors of efficient service delivery. Municipal financial constraints, poor management affects service delivery in the municipality.

Figure 1 shows VDM and the four local municipalities, i.e. Collins Chabane Local Municipality, Makhado Local Municipality, Musina Local Municipality and Thulamela Local Municipality. Service delivery is not effective in all municipalities in the Vhembe District. Communities do not have sufficient infrastructure and services such as access roads, refuse removal and running water. Learners are unable to access education and basic needs during rainy times because of poor roads. In addition, there are communities still using unhealthy water from fountains.

Figure 1: The Four Local Municipalities Under Vhembe District Municipality



Source: Authors