

Strategic Management Practices and Governance in Local Governments: An Empirical Study of Mufindi District Council, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of strategic management practices (SMPs) in local governments, using Mufindi District Council in Tanzania as a case study. The study also investigates the adoption and implementation of SMPs in the council, and their impact on governance and service delivery. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. The findings revealed that the council has adopted various SMPs, including situation analysis, strategic formulation, strategic implementation, and strategic evaluation. However, the study also identifies several challenges that hinder the effective implementation of SMPs, including inadequate human resources, limited financial resources, and poor coordination and communication. The study concludes that SMPs have a positive impact on governance and service delivery in the council, but their effectiveness is compromised by various internal and external factors. The study recommends that the council should prioritize capacity building, resource mobilization, and stakeholder engagement to enhance the effectiveness of SMPs. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on SMPs in local governments and provide insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to improve governance and service delivery in local governments.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background information

The adoption of strategic management practices (SMPs) has become a widespread phenomenon in local governments globally, as a means of improving governance and service delivery (Bryson, 2018). In Africa, SMPs have been recognized as a key driver of local government reform, with many countries adopting various forms of strategic planning and management (Olowu, 2003). Tanzania, in particular, has made significant strides in decentralizing power to local governments, to promote participatory governance and improve service delivery (United Republic of Tanzania, 2015). However, despite these efforts, local governments in Tanzania continue to face significant challenges in implementing SMPs, including limited capacity, inadequate resources, and poor coordination and communication among stakeholders (Sulle, 2009). In Tanzania, the Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act of 1982 requires councils to adopt SMPs, but the effectiveness of these practices remains a subject of debate (Tanzania Government, 1982). Research has shown that SMPs can have a positive impact on governance and service delivery in local governments, but their effectiveness depends on various internal and external factors (Dzemyda, 2014). This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on SMPs in local governments, with a focus on the Tanzanian context.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the widespread adoption of strategic management practices (SMPs) in local governments, a persistent gap remains in the effective implementation of these practices, leading to poor governance, inadequate service delivery, and decreased citizen satisfaction (Bryson, 2018; Poister et al., 2019). Specifically, in the context of Mufindi District Council in Tanzania, the implementation of SMPs is hindered by various internal and external factors, including inadequate institutional capacity, limited financial resources, and poor coordination and communication among stakeholders (Kabool et al., 2018; Mwanga et al., 2020). Furthermore, the ineffective implementation of SMPs has led to a decline in the overall performance of the council, compromising its ability to deliver quality services to its citizens, and undermining the principles of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizen needs (UNDP, 2019; World Bank, 2020). This problem is further exacerbated by the limited capacity of the council to adopt and implement SMPs, inadequate resources, and poor coordination and communication among stakeholders (Sutcliffe et al., 2016). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the challenges facing the implementation of SMPs in local governments, and to identify strategies for improving their effectiveness, in order to enhance the governance and service delivery of Mufindi District Council.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the current strategic management practices adopted by Mufindi District Council?
2. What are the factors that hinder the effective implementation of SMPs in the council?
3. How do SMPs impact governance and service delivery in the council?
4. What are the implications of the ineffective implementation of SMPs on the overall performance of the council?

1.4 Research Objectives:

1. To examine the current SMPs adopted by Mufindi District Council.
2. To identify the factors that hinder the effective implementation of SMPs in the council.
3. To assess the impact of SMPs on governance and service delivery in the council.

4. To provide recommendations for improving the effectiveness of SMPs in the council.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Strategic Management Practices in Local Governments

Strategic management practices (SMPs) have been widely adopted in local governments as a means of improving governance and service delivery (Bryson, 2018). SMPs involve the use of strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Dzemyda, 2014). Research has shown that SMPs can have a positive impact on governance and service delivery in local governments, but their effectiveness depends on various internal and external factors (Sulle, 2009).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory is a widely accepted framework for understanding the relationship between organizational resources and performance (Barney, 1991). The RBV theory posits that organizations can achieve sustainable competitive advantage by leveraging their internal resources and capabilities (Wernerfelt, 1984). In the context of local governments, the RBV theory can be used to understand how councils can use their internal resources and capabilities to implement SMPs and improve governance and service delivery.

2.3 Strategic Planning in Local Governments

Strategic planning is a critical component of SMPs in local governments (Bryson, 2018). Strategic planning involves the development of a clear vision and mission statement, as well as the identification of goals and objectives (Dzemyda, 2014). Research has shown that strategic planning can have a positive impact on governance and service delivery in local governments, but its effectiveness depends on various factors, including the involvement of stakeholders and the availability of resources (Sulle, 2009).

2.4 Implementation and Evaluation of SMPs

The implementation and evaluation of SMPs are critical components of the strategic management process in local governments (Bryson, 2018). Implementation involves the execution of the strategic plan, while evaluation involves the assessment of progress towards achieving the plan's goals and objectives (Dzemyda, 2014). Research has shown that the implementation and evaluation of SMPs can be challenging in local governments, due to various factors, including limited resources and capacity (Sulle, 2009).

2.5 Challenges Facing SMPs in Local Governments

Despite the potential benefits of SMPs, local governments face various challenges in implementing these practices (Sulle, 2009). These challenges include limited resources and capacity, inadequate stakeholder involvement, and poor coordination and communication among stakeholders (Dzemyda, 2014). Research has shown that these challenges can be addressed through the

development of effective strategic management systems and the involvement of stakeholders in the strategic planning process (Bryson, 2018).

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. A case study design was used to examine the adoption and implementation of strategic management practices (SMPs) in Mufindi District Council, Tanzania. Data was collected through a survey of 351 council staff, using a self-administered questionnaire, and through in-depth interviews with 15 key informants, including council officials and stakeholders. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on the council's SMPs, including strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation, as well as the challenges faced by the council in implementing these practices. The interview guide was used to gather more in-depth information on the council's SMPs and the challenges faced by the council. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and thematic analysis. The study also used a conceptual framework based on the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory to guide the data collection and analysis. The framework was used to identify the council's internal and external resources, capabilities, and competencies, and how these resources are used to implement SMPs.

4. Discussion and Analysis of Findings

4.1 Factors for effective implementation of strategic management practices

The implementation of SMPs, in most cases, depends upon different factors to complete the stated activities during plan formulation. From recent literature, authors have named factors based on different grounds of operation. SM literature reveals that some key factors are considered significant in influencing the effectiveness of SMPs. These factors are extramural and intramural to organisations. Intramural features include organisational structure, culture, leadership, human resources, organisational resources, and capabilities. The external factors include economic, political, industrial, technology, and globalization. The researcher formulated those factors as independent variables and tested their relationship with the dependent variable, governance, regarding accountability and transparency. The reviewed literature shows that SMPs influence the organisation's performance differently in achieving goals. According to Thompson (1998), SMPs are influenced by environmental, organisational, and decision-specific factors. A study done by Kiptoo and Mwirigi (2014) observed that SMPs are influenced by organisational structure, organisational culture, leadership, and human resources.

Similarly, Dominic and Theuvsen (2015) concluded that firm characteristics (age, size, formulization status), firm resources (level of investment, information access, firm's expertise, and pressure), and pressure from the external environment (extent of input availability, access to public infrastructure and access to external fund) plays a significant role in influencing SMPs. On the other hand, Sassi, Pihlak, and Hadma (2017) documented that SMPs are influenced by external and internal factors. It can be concluded from the literature that strategic management performance tends to appeal depending on many factors existing in a particular environment. The same statement has been shown by Thompson and Strickland (2014), who argue that resource factors could affect the implementation of strategic management activities of a particular organisation in most organisations. Furthermore, Theresia and Ludwig (2015) argue that an organisation's potential to attain its objectives is influenced by the resources it has and the management of the resources. Their position is that well-utilized resources enable better strategic practices. This study crafted seven main factors and tested them to assess whether the council implemented them as part

of the SMPs adopted. The results in Table 7.20 show that 15.7% of the responses concluded that the council staff did periodic reviews of the formulated strategies during implementation as part of SMPs. Effective management control of council staff's behaviour and stakeholder involvement implemented by the council were mentioned by 14.9% and 14.8 %, respectively. The council implemented the remaining factors, particularly effective resource allocation by 13.8%, established annual objective policies by 13.7%, linking performance. They formulated a strategic management plan and council by 13.6%, and autonomy from interference by the central government was found by 13.4%.

The findings imply that SMPs in the council had been adopted in a way that allowed the council to link the performance of the council with formulated strategic management plans on all matters of the council works.

Table 1: Whether the given factors implemented are part of SMPs in the council

Main factors implemented as part of SMPs	Responses*		Percent of Cases (%)
	n	Per cent	
Councils' autonomy from interference by the central government	248	13.4	72.7
Effective management control of the council's staff behaviour	277	14.9	81.2
Effective resource allocation	256	13.8	75.1
Established annual objective policies	255	13.7	74.8
Linking performance and formulating strategic management plan	253	13.6	74.2
Periodic review of the formulated strategies during implementation	292	15.7	85.6
Stakeholder involvement	275	14.8	80.6
Total	1856*	100.0	**

*351 respondents gave 1856 responses

**The percentage does not add up to 100% because multiple responses were allowed

Sources: Field data (2020).

These findings are equivalent to the conclusion made in a study by Dominic and Theuvsen (2016), who argued that the performance of firms or organisations is threatened by different factors emanating from the grounds of the concerned environment. They further commented that lack of technical knowledge of staff, less experience, poor capability to manage resources, and low involvement of critical stakeholders are significant factors that affect the efficiency of implementing SMPs formulated in organisations, especially in small and medium enterprises.

4.2. Benefits the council obtained from implemented SMPs on Governance

Effective strategic plan implementation in any organisation is vital for the organisation's achievement, particularly in performance in general. Most of the literature shows that organisations perform well when they adopt strategic management practices when implementing activities. In contrast, organisations that work without SMPs have been identified as not achieving their stated objectives, and their managers feel compelled to compete with the new market environment of organisational management. For the fourth specific objective of this study, the researcher evaluated the effectiveness of the implementation of SMPs on governance by looking

into the benefits the council obtained from strategic activities implemented in the council's daily activities. The Central government designed local governments through the Local Government Act to create order in ways that democratically serve the general public. The general public elects the leaders they have the most faith in to run an effective local government. In electing leaders, the public gives these elected officials the power to do whatever is necessary to perform their functions and to achieve the municipality's objectives, including giving the officials the power to levy taxes on citizens. In exchange for their power, local citizens expect their government to be fair and to spend their resources wisely and without waste. Citizens expect government workers to work as efficiently as possible so that their allocated resources are put to the best use. The evolution of board portals for effective local governments is the best and newest solution for bringing efficiency and effectiveness into homes and communities. An effective local government is run by understanding the original intents and purposes of local government. The purpose of local government is to provide an organized system whereby councils exercise their power and responsibilities to work together for peace, order, and good governance of the given councils. As part of their duties, council persons are expected to work towards improving social, economic, and environmental viability and sustainability for the benefit of their district. Their duties also entail promoting appropriate business and employment opportunities for citizens. Effective local governments provide overall quality of life for those residing in their communities.

Local councils are composed of board members or board trustees. The town clerk arranges for a public election at various intervals when registered voters can vote democratically for their choice of public officials to represent them. The role of the council staff is to achieve the best outcomes for the local community with a focus on long-term quality of life and continued community growth.

Federal and state laws exist to protect citizens. Disability laws ensure that the services and facilities provided by local government are accessible and equitable to everyone in the community. While not all duties and responsibilities are defined at the local, state, and federal levels, the public holds certain expectations for those they elect. Citizens expect that their elected officials will abide by laws and regulations. Beyond that, they expect their officials to use their resources efficiently, effectively, and in ways that provide the most value.

Along those lines, citizens expect that the government provides what most citizens expect for the rates they get charged for services. Citizens expect their elected officials to be accountable for their actions and decisions. Accountability considers local citizens entitled to information transparency, except for confidential information.

The words "effective" and "efficient" are expected to be used together, although they hold very different meanings. While the two words have starkly different definitions, they often go hand-in-hand. From the literature, the term effectiveness refers to the process of producing a desired intent or result, and it requires doing the right thing to make it happen. On the other hand, efficiency refers to preventing or minimizing wasting materials, energy, effort, money, or time. We can further break down the word efficiency by categorizing it. Technical efficiency refers to doing the most or making the most of something. A common idiom that relates to technical efficiency is "getting the most bang for your buck" (Azarnivand & Banihabib, 2017).

Allocative efficiency refers to using resources that produce the highest value. An excellent example of allocative efficiency is opening a coffee shop near a train station. This type of business is attractive and convenient for commuters who enjoy grabbing coffee during their morning commute. Such a coffee shop also receives a boost for the business as the traffic from the trains will help them become profitable quickly. Dynamic efficiency refers to better and easier ways of doing the same thing. A board portal system by Compass, a diligent brand, provides a perfect example of how local government boards can work more effectively and efficiently.

4.3 Expectations for Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Role of the Council

In addition to having legal responsibilities for ensuring good governance, council members must consider the health and welfare of the citizens they represent. Council members must effectively serve as community representatives, considering they must reasonably account for the community's diverse needs when making council decisions. Influential council members encourage their constituents to actively engage in civic matters and foster cohesion among community members.

Each council member is responsible for working as part of a team to establish strategic objectives and monitor progress toward achieving them. Transparency is necessary to ensure the council responsibly manages the government's resources. Citizens hold the council members and local governments accountable for their duties as efficiently and effectively as possible. Local governments are part of larger communities. In this role, council members should advocate for the interests of their local community and other local governments and communities. Along those lines, influential council members are responsible partners in government when they also consider the needs of neighbouring communities.

Table 2: The position of the council obtained from implemented SMPs

Position of the council obtained from implemented SMPs	Responses*		Percent of Cases (%)
	n	Per cent	
Availability of teamwork to employees and departments	273	7.9	77.8
Availability of short-term and long-term strategic management plans	266	7.7	75.8
Availability of training, meeting, and staff motivation on SMPs	277	8.0	78.9
Consistent government by-laws, guidelines, frameworks, and subventions	270	7.8	76.9
Council can re-define the purposes and design long-term plans	286	8.2	81.5
Availability of risk management plans	229	6.6	65.2
Multidimensional communication that information flows	263	7.6	74.9
Organisational structure has shown clarity of duties, responsibility	224	6.4	63.8
Revenue collected as per plans	261	7.5	74.4
The council conduct formulating, implementing, and evaluating strategies	271	7.8	77.2
Vision, mission, and values displayed and communicated	291	8.4	82.9
Availability of formal reviews, including annual reviews of SMPs	296	8.5	84.3
Every employee knows their immediate target to accomplish tasks on time	269	7.7	76.6
Total	3476*	100.0	**

*351 respondents gave 3476 responses

**The percentage does not add up to 100% because multiple responses were allowed

Source: Field data (2020)

4.4 Ways of tracking implementation of SMPs

In the management context, academicians believe that implementing any particular task needs to be controlled through tracking actions planned before implementation. Likewise, in this study, the researcher conducted an assessment in which literature suggests proper ways of tracking the implementation of strategic management practices adopted in the council. The analysis of this aspect made the researcher develop several statements explaining ways of tracking SMPs in the study area. Measurement of these statements looked upon the respondents' opinions in the questionnaire to determine whether they agreed, disagreed, or were uncertain about the formulated statements based on what was happening to MDC. The measurement focused on laws and regulations, council charts, communication, necessary adjustments, conversion of strategic plans, resources, staff competence, information flows, implementation process, rewards, motivation, and translation of SMPs into operational terms.

Table 3: Tracking the implementation of SMPs

Ways to track implementation of SMPs	Frequency	Per cent
Disagree	54	15.4
Uncertain	274	78.1
Agree	23	6.6
Total	351	100.0

Source: Field data 2020

4.5 Grounds/conditions that Make SMPs implemented more effectively

One of the determinants of SMP operation is the environment in a particular organisation. The achievement of given firms or organisations where the aspects assessed could give a clear picture of what was happening regarding managing stated strategies. Consideration needs to be made regarding the availability of qualified professional staff, organisational openness, implementation status of activities, resource utilization, stakeholders' involvement, cooperation, integration, and employees' involvement, including external stakeholders. Moreover, in most cases, the local environment uses traditional practices characterized by a lack of strategic dimensions such as work analysis, employment, training, compensations, and wage management, which are in government offices and neglect recent effective SMPs. In Table 4, the study found that most respondents accepted the extent of effectiveness of implemented SMPs by 65.5%. Only 23.9% were not supported in this study, while uncertain responses were 10.5%. This implies that the implementation of SMPs in MDC was adequate, which enhanced the improvement in governing the council regarding service delivery and resource allocation. Through this implementation, staff were automatically accountable for their action; hence, improved services were experienced in the fifth regime of the Tanzania government.

Table 4: The extent of effectiveness of implemented SMPs (n = 351)

Effective implementation	Frequency	Per cent
Disagree	84	23.9
Uncertain	37	10.5
Agree	230	65.5
Total	351	100.0

Source: Field data 2020

4.6 Functions of Strategic Management Practices

The function of SMPs is part and parcel of an organisation in bringing achievement to a particular organisation. A particular management team automatically adopts SMPs when implementing significant administrative tasks. The findings revealed that almost all respondents agreed about the functions of SMPs at MDC, with 70.7 % indicating that the extent of SMPs functioning effectively achieved MDC. Only 21.4%% indicated that their agreement disagreed that SMPs were functioning to achieve the council goal. However, only 8% of the respondents indicated that SMPs did not function to bring changes and achievement of the council under the study. The study also found that involvement in SMP practices was moderate, with 29.1% and 10.3% indicating high and low extent, respectively. This implies that a low understanding of the staff on the primary functions of SMPs rated the council in a position of not adding the improvement of accountability and transparency; as a result, changes were not identified for staff involved in implementing SMPs. The information in Table 4 provides an accurate picture of what was happening in the Mufindi district council and the practices carried out to bring changes in the council's governance.

Table 5: The extent of SMPs functioning (n = 351)

Functions of SMPs	Frequency	Per cent
Disagree	75	21.4
Uncertain	28	8.0
Agree	284	70.7
Total	351	100.0

Source: Field Data2020

4.7 Respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of strategic management practices

Perception of the council staff on the effectiveness of the implementation of strategic management activities they conducted in the council was investigated, with the. This parameter aimed to check the respondents' understanding of the context of SMPs implemented in achieving the council goals. The results show that most respondents suggested that SMPs were essential for achieving the council goals and, hence, that they should be considered in every annual budget for follow-up in all departments to improve implementation. On the other side, 26.8% of the respondents said that SPs in the council were very important in the allocation of resources and deliverance of services to their clients, but 17.4% said that SMPs were not essential and perceived that things always were done without the consideration of SMPs. Unlike that view, 3.7% of the respondents had contrary views on applying SMPs and suggested that SMPs were unnecessary in their council.

Table 6: Staff opinions on the effectiveness of SMPs in the council (n = 351)

Your perception of the effectiveness of SMPs	Frequency	Per cent
Not needed at all	13	3.7
Not important	61	17.4
Important	183	52.1
Very important	94	26.8
Total	351	100.0

Source: Field data 2020

Participants in an FGD said:

“.....the ruling system of the late president made effective application of SMPs in our council and has made some governance indicators to have significantly proven since 2015. For example, during this regime,

it made proper use of internal collection that resulted in increased implementation of the council activities based on a proposed annual budget, access to information, trust in local government, and reduced corruption, the financial accountability of LGAs also appeared to have improved” (30/12/2020).

4.8 Respondent’s opinions on working relationships among leaders

Staff work in cooperation to implement different activities in various government departments. This study measured the opinions of various council staff to understand the relationship among workers implementing SMPs to achieve the council's goals in service delivery. The opinions were rated from very good to very bad; the results showed that 49.3% of the respondents concluded that the relationship among leaders in the council was good. Other responses concluded that 37.9% found the relationship to be very good. Other opinions found that the relationship was not good or bad: 8.5% and 4.3% of the respondents, respectively. This is in line with an argument by Sulle (2009) that organisations working in transparency allow their staff to access complete information received from supervisors. This implies that the relationship between employees and supervisors is essential in implementing SMP activities. Valued employees take an active part in attaining organisational goals.

Table 7: The opinion on the working relationship between SMPs unit and departments

Respondent’s opinion	Frequency	Per cent
Too bad	15	4.3
Not good	30	8.5
Good	173	49.3
Very good	133	37.9
Total	351	100.0

Source: Field data 2020

Similar results were shown by one of the key informants about the relationship between leaders in the council; he argued as follows:

“... In implementing council activities, leaders are very cooperative in bringing true information and assistance to subordinates required to attain their assigned tasks. In case of misleading information, council staff communicate to reach consensus to avoid unnecessary conflicts among workers” 30/12/2020.

4.9 Factors threatening the effectiveness of strategic management practices

According to Dzemyda (2014), a successful strategy is obtained from the effective implementation of SMPs from the common elements that are simple and consistent, long-term goals, proper understanding of the competitive environment, and objective appraisal of the resources. Successful implementation of SMPs depends upon the environment prepared before implementation and the commitment of the implementers in executing their assigned activities. Herminia (2006) argues that the effectiveness of SMPs is constantly threatened by many challenges prevailing in the organisation. Moreover, the performance of an organisation depends upon the formulation and effective communication of the organisation's vision, mission, objectives, values, and commitment that will fulfil the designed activities. Issues like action plans and allocation of resources of a particular organisation are factors to be viewed by leaders to check whether the objectives are achieved. Leaders and managers formulate specific strategic management plans with the

expectation of transforming the organisational objectives. The smooth operation of the council or organisation has been affected by several factors depending on the areas of operation. Among the identified ones include the human resources available, supervision of the management of subordinates, training, capital resources, worker's experiences, age of the council, and information required for effective implementation, coordination, communication, and guiding policies. In addition, the issues of transparency, motivation, participation, and the nature of technology are the ones to be considered to threaten the effectiveness of SMPs. The strategy implementation stage in SMPs considers the execution of activities done by the implementers based on the formulated strategic plan. Successful implementation originates from strategy formulation; the formulated strategies influence the execution of good strategic inputs.

Strategy implementation is affected by several factors based on the reviewed literature; for example, Waterman et al. (2018) have documented seven implementation drivers, namely strategy context, structure, system, style, staff skills, and subordinates.

Moreover, LGAs have been challenged by insufficient budget collected from internal sources, and as a result, the implementation of SMPs became poor in a particular council. As shown in Table 8, the results revealed that 76.9% of the multiple responses said that the number of staff in the council threatened the implementation of SMPs. This study found that in MDC, the established staff required for implementation was insufficient to implement all activities effectively; hence, there was a shortage of human resources for effective implementation, as reported in departments. Management ability to supervise subordinates and staff participation were found to be threatening SMPs; these were said by 75.2% and 74.4%, respectively, of the respondents. The result shows that MDC has a shortage of qualified technical staff and incredibly professional staff in human resource management and planning. The council required 4748 employees to work as permanently employed staff by 2015. Despite these efforts, staff allocated to work with MDC is mismanaged; still, there is a significant shortage of employees due to the insufficient budget of the council, which is evident in the emphasis on RBV's poor utilization of resources, which brings poor performance in the council.

Table 8: Factors threatening the effectiveness of SMPs

Factors Threatening the Effectiveness of SMPs	Responses*		Percent of Cases (%)
	n	Per cent	
Number of staff in the council	270	8.6	76.9
Management ability to supervise subordinates	264	8.4	75.2
Training	219	7.0	62.4
Resources	231	7.4	65.8
Experience	222	7.1	63.2
Age of the council	233	7.4	66.4
Information	235	7.5	67.0
Coordination and communication	242	7.7	68.9
Guidance policies	237	7.6	67.5
Motivation	243	7.7	69.2
Transparency	233	7.4	66.4
Staff participation	261	8.3	74.4
Technology	247	7.9	70.4
Total	3137*	100.0	**

*351 respondents gave 3137 responses

**The per cent does not add up to 100% because multiple responses were allowed

Source: Field data 2020

The findings from the data analysis provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of strategic management practices within the Mufindi District Council. The responses suggest that while there are positive aspects, such as a clear strategic direction, areas also require improvement. The mixed responses regarding resource allocation, decision-making, and responsiveness to citizen needs indicate a need for the council to reevaluate its processes and engage in continuous improvement. Enhancing these aspects of strategic management will likely positively impact the overall governance effectiveness and service delivery of the council.

Additionally, the challenges identified in Table 8 underscore the importance of addressing capacity gaps, resource constraints, and coordination issues. Improving these areas can empower the council to implement strategic management practices more effectively and enhance their governance capabilities.

The study's findings contribute to the broader understanding of the management-performance hypothesis in local governments. By analyzing the specific context of the Mufindi District Council, the study offers insights into the complex relationship between strategic management practices and governance effectiveness.

4.10 The influence of the functions of SMPs and factors influencing adoption of SMPs

The researcher tested the variables in the conceptual framework for the study by running the inferential analysis to look for the influence of the independent variables, specifically management factors, resource factors, and institutional factors, on the dependent variable, which was the governance of LGAs in the efficient SMPs adopted to achieve the council goal.

4.10.1 Mann-Whitney U Test model applied two independent conditions

Mann-Whitney U Test in this study was used to compare the distribution of overall scores of the factors threatening the effectiveness of the SMPs unit in the council and cross-category of overall scores of factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. The findings showed that the analysis of 0.005, less than a critical value of 0.05, made a researcher reject the null hypothesis. This implies that there was a significant difference in overall scores of the responses on factors threatening the effectiveness of the SMPs unit in the council and cross-category of overall scores of the factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. The Mann-Whitney U test was undertaken to determine whether any significant difference exists between adopting SMPs on governance. Except for SWOT analysis, the results indicate a significant difference between strategic models and SMPs.

Furthermore, the study analysis focused on the median using descriptive statistics. The median for factors threatening was 17, and for factors influencing, it was 24 (the study showed that the median differed significantly from the two overall scores of factors threatening and factors influencing, respectively). The study in Table 9 revealed that the extent of factors influencing SMPs positioned the council to be involved with SWOT analysis to a large extent by 53%. At the same time, the exact measurement found that the factors under the study moderately influenced the council. When analyzing the responses from the council, it was concluded that the factors under the study had a low influence, only 4.6%. This difference study revealed that the council had to position itself in allocating resources when developing a strategic plan. During implementation, one of the requirements was to involve staff in all steps of implementing SMPs. Overall, the table indicates that most respondents (95.4%) perceived SMPs as having at least a moderate level of influence in their organisation or context. This suggests that SMPs are generally considered important and

impactful by a significant majority of participants. The large applied category, with over half of the responses, highlights the recognition of the significant influence of SMPs in shaping strategic direction and decision-making processes.

However, it is worth noting that a small proportion (4.6%) of respondents perceived a low level of influence, indicating that there may be variations in the adoption or effectiveness of SMPs across different contexts or organisations. This variation could be due to factors such as organisational culture, leadership support, or the specific challenges and barriers faced in implementing SMPs. The results provide valuable insights into how SMPs are perceived and implemented in practice, highlighting the need to investigate further the factors that contribute to successful adoption and the potential barriers that hinder their full integration.

Table 9: Extent of influence in implementing SMPs

The extent of influence	Frequency	Per cent
Low applied	16	4.6
Moderate applied	149	42.5
Large applied	186	53.0
Total	351	100.0

Source: Field data 2020

4.10.2 Kruskal-Wallis test model on comparison and difference of implementation practices of SMPs in MDC

The Kruskal-Wallis test model was undertaken to compare independent variables crafted for the study. The model was undertaken to determine whether any significant difference existed between the responses collected from employees between departments in the council regarding the adoption and implementation of SMPs. The model was used to compare the factors influencing the adoption of SMPs and implementation practices of SMPs, particularly the level of participation, stakeholders' roles, governance changes, tracking implementation, and factors for effective implementation. The model was adopted because the data collected did not fulfil the conditions for parametric analysis. That means the responses collected were scaled and ranked; hence, the analysis was based on the overall scores obtained from the respondents. The analysis tested eight study variables to look for the distribution of overall scores of the response's opinions collected from council staff on the statements presented in each variable. The results obtained after data analysis through this model are summarised in Table 10.

Table 10: Kruskal Wallis t-test on the factors influencing the adoption of SMPs

S/no	The factors influencing the adoption of SMPs compared to;	Test statistic	Degree of freedom	P-value	C- value	Decision
1	Implementation practices of SMPs	29.199	18	0.095	0.05	Accepted
2	Stakeholder level of participation	16.445	18	0.562	0.05	Accepted
3	Stakeholder roles in SMPs	24.776	18	0.131	0.05	Accepted
4	Governance changes before 2015 & 2015 to 2020	46.546	18	0.000	0.05	Rejected
5	Tracking the implementation of SMPs adopted	9.111	18	0.957	0.05	Accepted
6	Aspects making effective implementation of SMPs	15.181	18	0.650	0.05	Accepted
7	Functions of SMPs	27.165	18	0.076	0.05	Accepted
8	Factors threatening the effectiveness of SMPs	37.156	18	0.005	0.05	Rejected

Source: Field (2018)

From Table 10, the model analysis indicated that Governance changes before 2015 and 2015 to 2020 and Factors threatening the effectiveness of SMPs had $P\text{-value} < C\text{-value}$, deciding on rejection of the hypothesis tested under the study. This indicates that the two variables statistically significantly influenced the adoption of SMPs in MDC. This was because implementing the strategic plan was accompanied by applying strategic models and adherence to good governance, specifically accountability and transparency.

Overall, the Kruskal-Wallis H test results provide insights into the factors that significantly influence the adoption of SMPs. Governance changes over time and factors threatening the effectiveness of SMPs appear to have a notable impact on their adoption. However, other factors, such as implementation practices, stakeholder participation and roles, tracking of implementation, and aspects of effective implementation, do not show statistically significant differences in this context.

4.10.3 The influence of the implementation practices with adopted SMPs

The distribution of overall scores on implementation practices of SMPs was compared with overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. The results showed that the p-value was 0.095, more significant than the critical value of 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, the overall scores on implementation practices of SMPs were almost the same across categories of overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. The overall scores did not differ significantly ($H(18) = 29.199$, $p = 0.095$). More details have been displayed in the figure attached in Appendix 1. The Kruskal-Wallis test result suggests that there is no statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of the implementation practices of SMPs. This indicates that the factor of implementation practices does not significantly influence the adoption of SMPs in the context of the study.

4.10.4 The influence of the level of participation with adopted SMPs

The distribution of overall scores on stakeholder levels of participation in terms of overall scores was compared with factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. Results showed that the significance/P-value=0.562 is greater than the critical value of 0.05; we accept the null hypothesis. Therefore, the overall scores on stakeholder levels of participation are the same across categories of overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council because the overall scores did not differ significantly. $H(18) = 16.445$, $P = 0.562$. More details have been displayed in the figure attached in Appendix 1. Similarly, the test result for stakeholder level of participation indicates no statistically significant difference between the groups. This suggests that the level of stakeholder participation does not significantly influence the adoption of SMPs.

4.10.5 The influence of the level stakeholder roles with adopted SMPs

The distribution of overall scores on stakeholder roles was compared with overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. Results showed that the significance/P-value=0.131 is greater than the critical value of 0.05; we accept the null hypothesis. Therefore, the overall scores on stakeholder roles are the same across categories of overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. The overall scores did not differ significantly. $H(18) = 24.776$, $P = 0.562$. More details have been displayed in the figure attached in Appendix 1. The test result for stakeholder roles in SMPs also shows no statistically significant difference between the groups. This implies that the defined roles of stakeholders do not significantly impact the adoption of SMPs.

4.10.6 The influence of the governance changes with adopted SMPs

The distribution of overall scores on governance changes before 2015 and 2015 to 2020 were compared with overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. Results showed that the significance/P-value=0.000 is less than the critical value of 0.05; we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, the overall scores on governance changes before 2015 and 2015 to 2020 are the same across categories of overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council because the overall scores differed significantly. $H(18) = 46.546$, $P = 0.000$. More details have been displayed in the figure attached in Appendix 1. The Kruskal-Wallis test result for governance changes indicates a statistically significant difference between the groups. This suggests that governance changes before 2015 and from 2015 to 2020 have a significant influence on the adoption of SMPs.

4.10.7 The influence of the tracking implementation with adopted SMPs

The distribution of overall scores on tracking the implementation of SMPs adopted in the council was compared with overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs. Results showed that the significance/P-value=0.957 is greater than the critical value of 0.05; we retain the null hypothesis. Therefore, the overall scores on tracing the implementation of SMPs adopted in the council are the same across categories of overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs because the overall scores did not differ significantly. $H(18) = 9.111$, $p = 0.957$. More details have been displayed in a figure attached in Appendix 1. The test result for tracking the implementation of SMPs adopted shows no statistically significant difference between the groups. This indicates that tracking the implementation of SMPs does not significantly influence their adoption.

4.10.8 The influence of the effective implementation with adopted SMPs

The distribution of overall scores on aspects making effective implementation of SMPs was compared with overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. Results showed that the significance/P-value=0.650 is greater than the critical value of 0.05; we retain the null hypothesis. Therefore, the overall scores on tracing the implementation of SMPs adopted in the council are the same across categories of overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs because the overall scores did not differ significantly. $H(18) = 15.181$, $P = 0.650$. More details have been displayed in the figure attached in Appendix 1. The test result for aspects making effective implementation of SMPs indicates no statistically significant difference between the groups, suggesting that these aspects do not significantly influence the adoption of SMPs.

4.10.9 The influence of the functions of SMPs with adopted SMPs

The distribution of overall scores on functions of SMPs was compared with overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. Results showed that the significance/P-value=0.076 is greater than the critical value of 0.05; we retain the null hypothesis. Therefore, the overall scores on functions of SMPs adopted in the council are the same across categories of overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs because the overall scores did not differ significantly. $H(18) = 27.165$, $P = 0.076$. More details have been displayed in the figure attached in Appendix 1. The Kruskal-Wallis test result for functions of SMPs suggests no statistically significant difference between the groups, implying that the functions of SMPs do not significantly influence their adoption.

4.10.10 The influence of the factors threatening SMPs with adopted SMPs

The distribution of overall scores on factors threatening the effectiveness of SMPs was compared with overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council. Results showed that the significance/P-value of 0.005 is less than the critical value of 0.05, so we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, the overall scores on implementation practices of SMPs are not the same across categories of overall scores on factors influencing the adoption of SMPs in the council because the overall scores differed significantly. $H(18) = 37.156$, $P = 0.005$. More details have been displayed in the figure attached in Appendix 1. The test result for factors threatening the effectiveness of SMPs indicates a statistically significant difference between the groups. This suggests that addressing these factors is crucial for the successful adoption of SMPs.

4.11 Findings on the impact of implemented SMPs to variable correlation

The analysis of the data collected involved the correlation of different variables, specifically on the overall scores in the function of SMPs and tracking implementation of SMPs, factors threatening the effectiveness of SMPs and aspects making effective implementation of SMPs, implementation practices, and factors threatening SMPs. Furthermore, the correlation analysis is based on overall scores of strategic implementation, strategic evaluation, stakeholders' roles, governance changes, and factors threatening the implementation of SMPs.

Findings revealed that respondents agreed based on the overall scores and showed that the function of SMPs was statistically significantly correlated with the tracking implementation of SMPs. When tracking the implementation of SMPs, the two variables revealed a strong negative correlation, indicating a statistically significant correlation in Table 11

Overall, the correlations presented in Table 11 provide insights into the relationships between various aspects of SMPs and their implementation. While some correlations are weak, they still suggest potential areas for improvement. The statistically significant correlations highlight the importance of addressing specific factors and practices to enhance the effectiveness of SMPs and, consequently, improve governance within the Mufindi District Council.

Table 11: Correlations of different variables tested through Pearson correlation

Overall scores on functions of SMPs	Pearson Correlation	.176**		Correlation Accepted
Tracking implementation of SMPs	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		
Overall scores of the factors threatening the effectiveness of SMPs unit in the council	Pearson Correlation	-		Accepted
Aspects making effective implementation of SMPs	Sig. (2-tailed)	.107*		
Overall scores on implementation practices of SMPs	Pearson Correlation	.138**	.128*	Accepted
Factions of SMPs and factors threatening SMPs	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.016	
Overall scores on SI statements	Pearson Correlation	.107*	.714**	Accepted
Function of SMPs and implementation practices of SMPs	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	.000	
Overall scores on SE statements	Pearson Correlation	.561**		Accepted
Implementation practices of SMPs	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
Overall scores on the statement of stakeholder roles	Pearson Correlation	.212**	.152**	Accepted
Implementation practices of SMPs and strategy evaluation	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.004	
Overall scores on governance chances before 2015 and 2015 to 2020	Pearson Correlation		.218**	Accepted
Factors threatening the implementation of SMPs	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field (2018)

4.12 Discussion of the Results

The fourth specific objective of the study aimed to establish the best mechanisms to institutionalize the implementation of SMPs in the study council. This was aimed at obtaining the frameworks that could be followed by the implementers of SMPs to enhance the governance of LGAs and attain improved accountability and transparency that could, in the future, bring better performance of the council and enable the council to compete with other LGAs on delivery of the same community services, based on the unique bundle of resources that they possess. The principles of Resource Theory were upheld in the study to advocate the extent of thought in the implementation of SMPs for governing LGAs in Tanzania; its effectiveness is still questionable, as revealed in the findings. Findings from the study noted that, despite the implementation of SMPs, the magnitude of accountability and transparency in service deliverance and resource allocation has improved. However, this was affected by an insufficient budget collected from internal sources, and the implementation of SMPs in a particular council became poor. The findings clearly showed that departmental meetings and management meetings were used to create awareness among staff on changes in activities planned for implementation. As a result, the theory resulted in the fragmentation of service delivery and the establishment of proper mechanisms to track the

implementation of SMPs in the council. The study suggests that the government of Tanzania should consider comprehensive management reforms that reflect the effectiveness of implementing SMPs on the governance of LGAs. Globally, it is imperative to establish a management system that will ensure the effective implementation of SMPs and the active involvement of stakeholders to reduce the frequent conduct of council management and workers.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

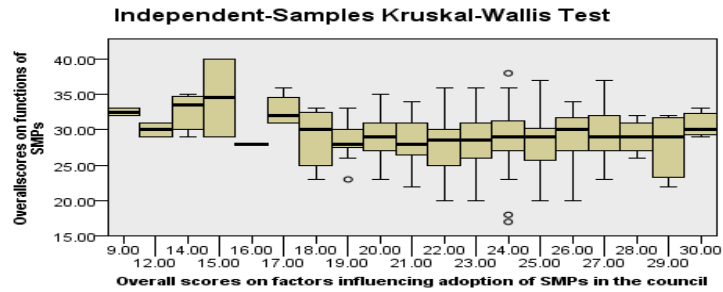
In conclusion, the study found that Mufindi District Council has made progress in adopting and implementing Strategic Management Practices (SMPs), which has positively impacted governance and service delivery. However, the effectiveness of SMPs is compromised by internal and external factors such as inadequate human resources, limited financial resources, and poor coordination and communication. To address these challenges, the study recommends that the council prioritize capacity building, resource mobilization, and stakeholder engagement to enhance the effectiveness of SMPs. Specifically, the council should invest in training and development programs for staff, explore alternative sources of funding, and establish effective communication channels with stakeholders. Additionally, the study suggests that the government of Tanzania should consider comprehensive management reforms that reflect the effectiveness of implementing SMPs on the governance of Local Government Authorities (LGAs). By addressing these challenges and implementing these recommendations, the council can improve its governance and service delivery, ultimately leading to better outcomes for its citizens.

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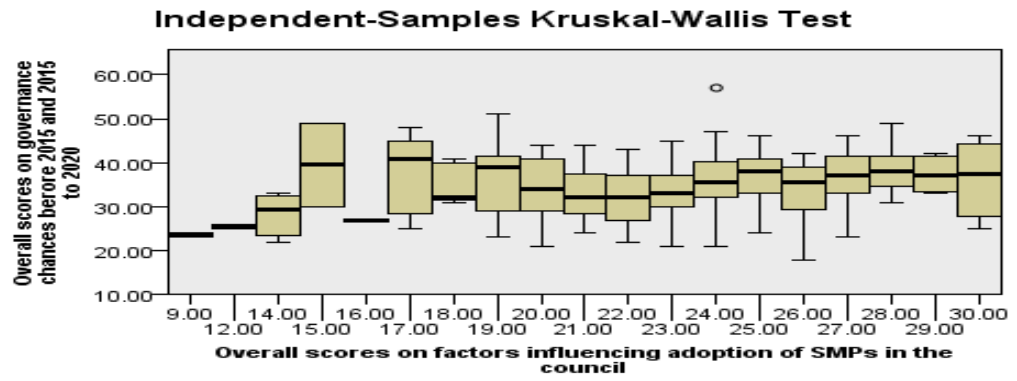
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Appendix 1: Figures presenting results of the Kruskal-Wallis test run by the researcher



Total N	351
Test Statistic	27.165
Degrees of Freedom	18
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.076

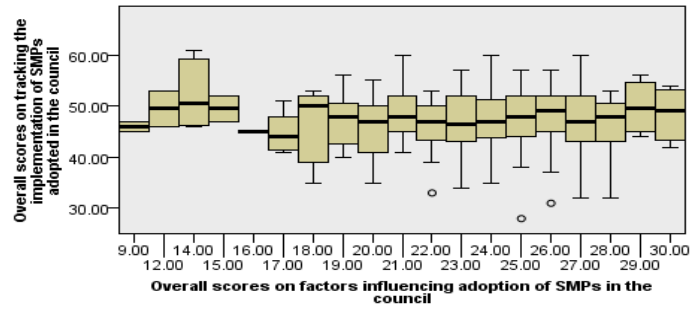
1. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.
2. Multiple comparisons are not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.



Total N	351
Test Statistic	46.546
Degrees of Freedom	18
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.000

1. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

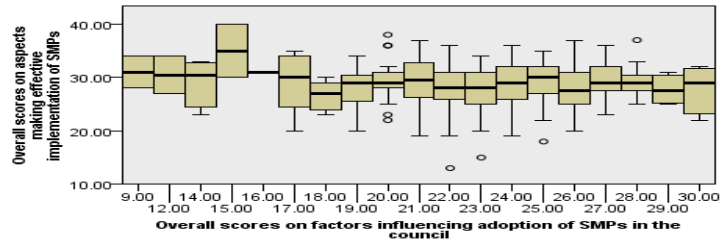
Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test



Total N	351
Test Statistic	9.111
Degrees of Freedom	18
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.957

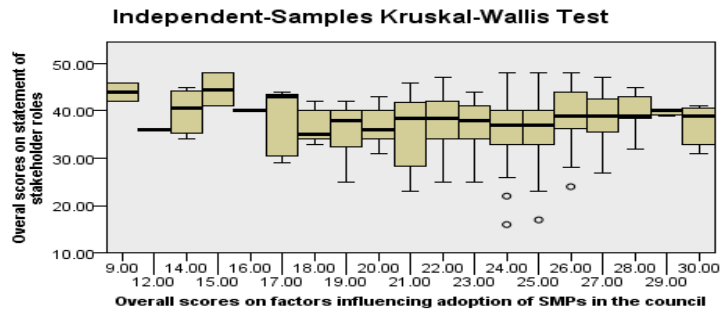
1. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.
2. Multiple comparisons are not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test



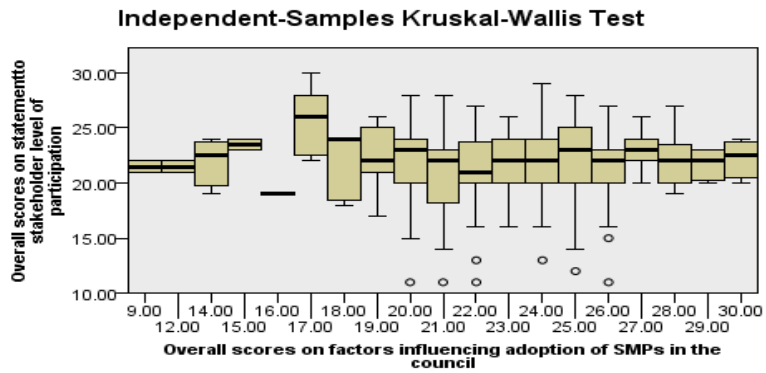
Total N	351
Test Statistic	15.181
Degrees of Freedom	18
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.650

1. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.
2. Multiple comparisons are not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.



Total N	351
Test Statistic	24.776
Degrees of Freedom	18
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.131

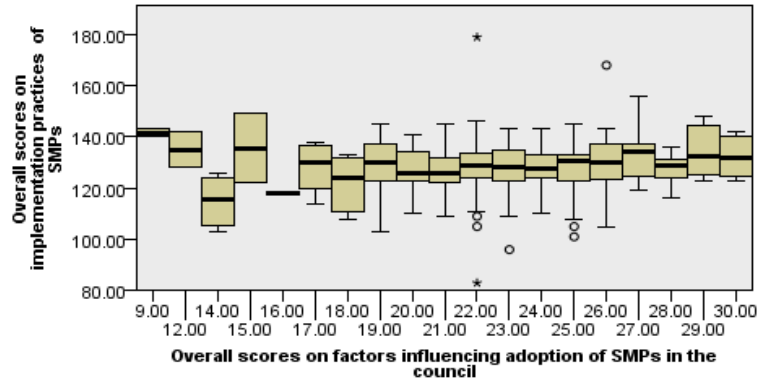
1. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.
2. Multiple comparisons are not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.



Total N	351
Test Statistic	16.445
Degrees of Freedom	18
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.562

1. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.
2. Multiple comparisons are not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.

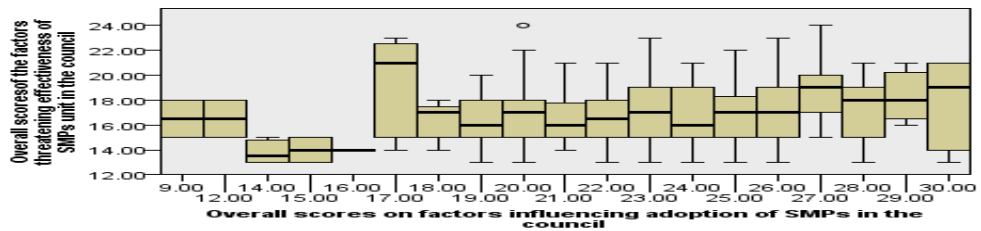
Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test



Total N	351
Test Statistic	26.199
Degrees of Freedom	18
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.095

1. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.
2. Multiple comparisons are not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test



Total N	351
Test Statistic	37.156
Degrees of Freedom	18
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.005

1. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.