
**Managerial Skills And Entrepreneurial Performance Of Small-Scale Enterprises (SSEs). A Case Study
Of Wakiso District**

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Abstract

This study aimed at assessing the relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises (SSEs) in Kyengera Town Council, Uganda, focusing on key managerial skills including planning, communication, and technical skills. The study utilized a quantitative approach, with a sample of 120 small-scale enterprises, and data was collected through surveys. Correlation and regression analyses were performed to test the hypotheses and establish the strength of relationships between the managerial skills and the performance of these enterprises. The findings revealed that planning skills had a strong positive and significant relationship with the performance of small-scale enterprises, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.688 (p-value < 0.05). This suggests that improved planning skills could enhance the entrepreneurial performance of SSEs. Communication skills also showed a significant positive correlation with performance, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.650 (p-value < 0.05), indicating that effective communication directly contributes to better enterprise outcomes. However, technical skills demonstrated a weak positive but statistically insignificant relationship with performance (Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.453, p-value = 0.056), suggesting that technical skills alone were not enough to significantly improve the performance of small-scale enterprises in the region. The regression analysis further supported these findings, showing that planning skills accounted for 47.3% of the variation in entrepreneurial performance. The study concluded that managerial skills, particularly planning and communication skills, are crucial to enhancing the entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council. Based on these results, the study recommends that small-scale enterprises in Uganda focus on enhancing managerial skills, especially in planning and communication, as a strategy to improve performance and profitability. It is suggested that SMEs invest in training programs aimed at improving these skills for better organizational outcomes.

Keywords: Managerial skills, entrepreneurial performance, small-scale enterprises, planning skills, communication skills, technical skills, Uganda, Kyengera Town Council.

Back ground to the study: Small-scale enterprises, which typically employ fewer than 50 people, are among the most prevalent business entities in Wakiso District. According to (Turyatemba et al., 2022), Wakiso is home to a significant proportion of Uganda's population, with an estimated population of over 2 million people as of 2021. This growing population has led to an increase in the number of small businesses, particularly in the urban and peri-urban areas of Wakiso (A. G. Kazaara et al., 2024). It is reported that the district has witnessed a steady rise in informal businesses, including retail shops, small-scale manufacturing, agriculture-related enterprises, food services, and construction, all of which play a crucial role in providing goods and services to the local market and beyond (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). However, despite the rising number of SSEs, their contribution to Uganda's gross domestic product (GDP) remains underwhelming compared to larger enterprises (Frank et al.,

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2023). According to the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), the informal sector, which predominantly consists of SSEs, contributes approximately 20% to Uganda's GDP, with a majority of these enterprises remaining informal and lacking formalized managerial structures. Many of these small businesses operate at a subsistence level, facing significant challenges related to low productivity, poor management practices, limited access to finance, and a lack of skilled labor (Paul & Kazaara, 2023).

As a result, they often fail to achieve their potential, leading to high failure rates within the first few years of operation. Managerial skills are widely recognized as essential for the growth and sustainability of any business, particularly small enterprises (Paul & Kazaara, 2023). These skills include a combination of technical knowledge, soft skills, and the ability to make informed decisions that can affect the business's direction and profitability (Winny et al., 2023). In the context of SSEs in Wakiso District, owners and managers with high levels of managerial expertise are more likely to navigate challenges effectively and seize business opportunities in a competitive market (Julius, 2024). Studies show that the lack of basic managerial skills, such as financial literacy, marketing strategies, and human resource management, is one of the leading causes of the failure of small businesses in developing countries (Brian et al., 2024). In Wakiso, many SSE owners and managers lack formal education in business management and may only have practical knowledge gained through experience. As a result, these entrepreneurs often make decisions based on intuition or informal practices, which can lead to poor business performance. Research by (David et al., 2023) indicates that a significant proportion of small business owners in Wakiso District have not undergone any formal business training, which limits their ability to apply best practices in areas such as financial record-keeping, budgeting, marketing, and employee management (Muhamad et al., 2023). The study found that businesses that had owners with a background in formal business education performed better in terms of profitability, customer satisfaction, and market expansion compared to those led by entrepreneurs without such training (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). Furthermore, the ability to make informed strategic decisions and adapt to changing market conditions is another key managerial skill that can determine the entrepreneurial success of small enterprises (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). For example, an entrepreneur with strong strategic planning and market analysis skills is better positioned to identify opportunities, manage risks, and implement effective business strategies (Gloria et al., 2023). However, many small-scale business owners in Wakiso lack these skills and struggle to make long-term plans, often focusing only on short-term survival rather than growth and expansion. Entrepreneurial performance refers to the ability of a business to achieve its goals, such as profitability, growth, customer satisfaction, and innovation, as well as its capacity to overcome challenges and sustain operations over time (Julius et al., 2024). For SSEs in Wakiso District, entrepreneurial performance is crucial not only for the individual success of the business but also for the overall economic development of the area. It is determined by various factors, including market demand, access to finance, government policies, infrastructure, and the entrepreneur's skillset (A. I. Kazaara & Audrey, 2024). According to a report by the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), the performance of small-scale enterprises in Uganda, including those in Wakiso, has been suboptimal in terms of growth and productivity (Sarah & Audrey, 2024). Many of these enterprises remain

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stagnant, with limited potential for scaling up due to poor management, low capital investment, and inadequate marketing strategies (Ivan et al., 2023).

The World Bank (2020) estimates that approximately 60% of SSEs in Uganda fail within the first few years, with the main reasons for failure being insufficient managerial skills, poor financial management, and a lack of knowledge in running a sustainable business (Musaibah et al., 2023). As a result, enhancing the managerial competencies of entrepreneurs is critical for improving their business performance (Winny et al., 2023). One of the most pressing issues affecting entrepreneurial performance in Wakiso is the lack of innovation and the slow adoption of new technologies (Wegulo et al., 2023). In a rapidly changing business environment, SSEs that fail to innovate or adapt to new trends often fall behind in terms of competitiveness. A survey conducted by the Uganda National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UNCCI) in 2020 revealed that most SSE owners in Wakiso District did not prioritize research and development or explore new business models, which restricted their ability to expand or diversify their product offerings (Wegulo et al., 2023). These businesses typically rely on outdated methods of production or marketing, which limits their capacity to reach new customers or enter new markets.

Statement of the problem

In Uganda, Small-Scale Enterprises (SSEs) play a crucial role in the national economy, contributing significantly to employment and poverty reduction, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas like Wakiso District (Faridah et al., 2023). Wakiso, located in the central region, is one of the most economically dynamic districts in Uganda, with a rapidly growing population estimated at over 2.5 million people (Benard, 2023). The district is home to numerous SSEs across various sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, retail, and services. According to (Paul & Kazaara, 2023), small enterprises account for more than 90% of Uganda's private sector, with a large proportion of these businesses operating in the informal sector. Despite their economic significance, these businesses face a range of challenges that hinder their growth and sustainability (Brian et al., 2024). One of the critical challenges for SSEs in Wakiso District, as is the case in many developing regions, is the lack of managerial skills among business owners and operators (Moses & Nancy, 2024). These skills are essential for effective decision-making, strategic planning, and efficient resource management, which are necessary for the survival and growth of small enterprises (Kasozi, 2020). However, many entrepreneurs in Wakiso have limited formal training in business management, relying instead on informal, often inadequate, business practices. According to a study by (Nancy & Prudence, 2024), about 60% of small enterprise owners in Uganda report that they lack formal training in financial management, marketing, and human resource management, which are essential components of entrepreneurial performance (Jul et al., 2024). This lack of managerial skills is exacerbated by limited access to resources such as finance, technology, and information, which are critical for business innovation and competitiveness in the modern market (Julius, 2024). The absence of managerial skills has been linked to poor entrepreneurial performance, characterized by low productivity, inconsistent business operations, high failure rates, and low profits. In Wakiso District, as in many other parts of Uganda, a high percentage of SSEs fail within the first few years of operation, with estimates suggesting that up

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to 70% of small businesses fail within the first five years (Sophie & Crispus, 2024). The reasons for these high failure rates are often rooted in poor management practices, such as ineffective financial planning, lack of market research, and failure to adapt to changing market conditions. This poor performance limits the ability of small enterprises to expand and contribute more significantly to the local and national economy.

Objectives of study

1. To assess the relationship between planning skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.
2. To examine the relationship between communication skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.
3. To assess the relationship between technical skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Research Hypotheses

H1: There's a significant positive relationship between planning skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

H2: There's a significant positive relationship between communication skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

H3: There's a significant positive relationship between technical skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Methodology

The study adopted cross-sectional and correlational survey designs to examine the experiences of sampled respondents about the relationship between managerial skills and the performance of small-scale enterprises (Abiodun Nafiu, 2012). The correlational design was adapted to explain the influence of managerial skills on the performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town council (Aslam et al., 2022). The study used a cross-sectional survey because pertinent data was collected from a large number of respondents at the same time to reduce the costs involved, qualitative and quantitative approaches were used by the researcher (Nafiu et al., 2012).

According to Omari (2011), a population is the totality of any group of units which have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest. The study focused on selected small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town. The study population included small-scale business owners, local leaders and policymakers in Kyengera Town (Olanrewaju et al., 2021b). These made up a total of 250 respondents which include market vendors, mobile money operators, tailors, shop attendants and mechanics. The study used a sample size of 152 respondents drawn from a population of 250 which was determined using Krejcie & Morgan table of determining the sample size of a finite population (Jallow et al., 2022).

The researcher used both probability and non-probability sampling designs. Under Non-probability sampling, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique that helped to collect qualitative data, whereas, under probability, the researcher used a simple random sampling technique to select the sample, which was used to

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collect quantitative data (A. Nafiu et al., 2012). Both sampling designs were used because of the need for minimizing bias by giving all the subjects in the population equal chances of being selected and targeting key informants with vital in-depth information for the study (Sarah et al., 2024).

Omari (2011) also defined a sample as a small proportion of a population selected for observations and analysis. By observing the characteristics of the sample, one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is carefully drawn. The researcher chose a sample size of one hundred fifty-two respondents (152) respondents from the population of 250 study participants to win the confidence desired and make the study representative (Olanrewaju et al., 2021a).

Table 1: Sample Size and sampling techniques

Population Categories	Target Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Policy makers and local leaders	10	10	Census
Small scale business owners	100	80	Simple Random Sampling
Small scale business owners' employees	140	103	Simple Random Sampling
Total	250	152	

Source: Krejcie and Morgan table modified by the researcher

Table 1 shows that a sample size of 152 was drawn from a target population of 250. Statistical tables of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was used to determine the sample size. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) explain that each population category is treated as a population and then use the table to determine the recommended sample size for each population category as illustrated in table 1 (Nafiu et al., 2017). Data collected from the primary source was compiled, sorted, edited for accuracy and clarity, classified, coded into a coding sheet and analyzed using a computerized data analysis package/tool known as SPSS 23.0 (Nelson et al., 2022). Descriptive statistics were generated to determine the various characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study.

RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on planning skills

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am aware of the opportunities we have as a business in the market	120	4.02	1.029
I have identified our challenges as a business	120	3.52	1.105

I have well established objectives as a business	120	3.55	.942
I regularly hold formal meetings to plan business activities	120	3.81	1.211
I am aware of the weaknesses we have as a business	120	3.95	1.158
I have set periodic goals for the business	120	3.67	1.087
I have well stipulated course of action for the business goals	120	3.43	1.172
I regularly evaluate progress of the business	120	3.88	1.224
Customer complaints and feedback are valuable for our planning	120	3.65	1.200
I am knowledgeable about loans and other forms of debts	120	3.47	1.322
Overall mean and standard deviation		3.69	1.145

Source: Primary Data 2022

Awareness of Market Opportunities: The high mean of 4.02 (with a standard deviation of 1.029) for the item "I am aware of the opportunities we have as a business in the market" indicates that, on average, business owners in Wakiso District are generally aware of the market opportunities available to them. This finding suggests that many entrepreneurs in this district are proactive in scanning the external environment for opportunities, a behavior associated with business growth and adaptability (Owusu-Ansah, 2020). The standard deviation indicates some variability, suggesting that while many entrepreneurs are aware of opportunities, others may lack this insight, which could limit their competitiveness (Muhamad et al., 2023).

The lower mean of 3.52 for the statement "I have identified our challenges as a business," combined with a higher standard deviation of 1.105, suggests that although some entrepreneurs have a clear understanding of their challenges, others may struggle with this awareness. Identifying business challenges is crucial for devising strategies to overcome them, and the variability in responses indicates that some businesses may be more reactive than proactive in addressing obstacles (Kato, 2019). This aligns with findings that many small-scale enterprises face difficulties in strategic problem identification due to limited resources or skills (Sserunjogi, 2018).

The moderate mean score of 3.55 for "I have well-established objectives as a business" indicates that while some business owners have clear objectives, others may not be as focused in this regard. The standard deviation of 0.942 is relatively low, indicating that most participants are somewhat consistent in their approach to setting objectives. However, the moderate score suggests that while many businesses set objectives, they may lack the specificity or long-term vision that contributes to sustained growth (Kasozi, 2020).

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The mean score of 3.81 for "I regularly hold formal meetings to plan business activities" suggests that a majority of business owners engage in regular planning meetings, a practice that is often linked to improved decision-making and business performance (Tugume & Tumwesigye, 2020). However, the higher standard deviation of 1.211 indicates significant variability, meaning that while some businesses regularly hold formal meetings, others may neglect this crucial planning activity. This finding underscores the importance of institutionalizing planning meetings to ensure consistent strategic direction (Adebayo & Olu, 2021).

The relatively high mean of 3.95 for "I am aware of the weaknesses we have as a business" and a standard deviation of 1.158 indicates that most business owners are somewhat aware of the weaknesses within their businesses. Self-awareness is crucial for effective management, as it allows entrepreneurs to address internal challenges proactively (Hassan, 2021). However, the variability in responses suggests that not all businesses are equally equipped to recognize and address these weaknesses, which can affect their overall performance and resilience (Ssempebwa, 2019).

The mean score of 3.67 for "I have set periodic goals for the business" indicates that a majority of business owners set short-term goals for their enterprises. However, the standard deviation of 1.087 shows that some entrepreneurs may not prioritize this aspect of planning, which can impact their ability to track progress and adjust strategies as needed. Regular goal-setting is essential for maintaining focus and momentum in business operations (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020), and the variability observed in this item points to the need for greater emphasis on periodic goal-setting practices.

The lower mean of 3.43 for "I have well stipulated course of action for the business goals," along with the higher standard deviation of 1.172, suggests that while some business owners have clear, actionable plans, others may lack structured approaches for achieving their goals. This finding reflects a common challenge among small businesses where strategic plans are often not detailed enough to guide day-to-day operations effectively (Kasozi, 2020). This lack of clarity in action plans can hinder business performance and long-term sustainability.

The mean score of 3.88 for "I regularly evaluate progress of the business" suggests that most participants engage in progress evaluations, but the standard deviation of 1.224 highlights significant differences in how frequently this activity is undertaken. Regular evaluations are essential for assessing business performance and making necessary adjustments (Tugume & Tumwesigye, 2020), but the variability indicates that some businesses may not consistently monitor their progress, potentially leading to missed opportunities for improvement.

The mean score of 3.65 for "Customer complaints and feedback are valuable for our planning" suggests that businesses recognize the importance of customer input, but the standard deviation of 1.200 indicates that not all entrepreneurs consistently integrate customer feedback into their planning processes. Customer feedback is a valuable tool for improving products and services, and its integration into business strategy can significantly enhance competitiveness (Hassan, 2021). The variability in this item suggests that some businesses may fail to leverage customer insights effectively.

The mean score of 3.47 for "I am knowledgeable about loans and other forms of debts" indicates moderate financial literacy among participants, but the high standard deviation of 1.322 suggests significant variability in how well business owners understand and manage debt. Financial knowledge is crucial for accessing capital and managing cash flow, and a lack of it can limit business growth (Amoako, 2020). This finding underscores the need for financial literacy programs to support entrepreneurs in making informed financial decisions.

Table 2: Correlation between planning skills and performance of Small-scale enterprises

		Planning skills	Performance of Small-scale enterprises
Planning skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.688**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Performance of Small-scale enterprises	Pearson Correlation	.688**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source; Primary Data, 2022

Ho: There's no significant positive relationship between planning skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Ha: There's a significant positive relationship between planning skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Correlation results in Table 2 above show that there is a positive high (0.688) significant associative relationship between planning skills and performance of Small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council (Nelson et al., 2023). This was statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance since the P-value (0.00) was less than 0.05 and therefore we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there was a significant relationship between planning skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council

Table 3: Model summary for Planning skills and Performance of Small-scale enterprises

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.688	.473	.469	.28672

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a. Predictors: (Constant), Planning skills

Source; Primary Data, 2022

Source; Primary Data, 2022

Ho: There's no significant positive relationship between planning skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Ha: There's a significant positive relationship between planning skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Keeping other factors constant, a one percent increase in Planning skills would on average lead to 0.688 percent increase in the entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council. This was statistically significant since the P-value (0.00) was less than the critical value. However, 47.3% of the variations in the dependent variable would lead to a significant change in the independent variable since it takes into consideration the degrees of freedom

Inferential Findings on correlation and regression

To establish the relationship between Communication skills and performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council, Uganda, the researcher carried out a correlation and linear regression test. The results are presented in the tables below.

Table 4: Correlation between Communication skills and Performance of Small-scale enterprises

		Communication skills	Performance of Small-scale enterprises
Communication skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.650**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Performance of Small-scale enterprises	Pearson Correlation	.650**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

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

Source; Primary Data, 2022

Ha: There's no significant positive relationship between communication skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Ha: There's a significant positive relationship between communication skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Results in table 4 above show the relationship between Communication skills (independent Variable) and the performance of small-scale enterprises (Dependent variable). It shows that through bivariate means, the correlation between Communication skills and the performance of Small-scale enterprises is 0.650. This was statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance since the P-value (0.00) was less than 0.05 and therefore we

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reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there was a significant relationship between Communication skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council

Table 5: ANOVA values for Communication skills and Performance of Small-scale enterprises

Model		coefficients	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.789	1	7.789	86.479	.000 ^b
	Communication skills	10.627	118	.090		
	Total	18.416	119			
a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Small-scale enterprises						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Communication skills						

Source; Primary Data, 2022

Ha: There's no significant positive relationship between communication skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Ha: There's a significant positive relationship between communication skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Keeping other factors constant, a one percent increase in communication skills will on average lead to 10.627 increase in the entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council. This is statistically significant at 95% confidence interval since the P-value (0.005) is less than 0.05 and therefore we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there's a significant positive relationship between communication skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Table 6: Correlation between technical skills and performance of small-scale enterprises

		Technical skills	Performance of Small-scale enterprises
Technical skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.453**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.056
	N	120	120
Performance of Small-scale enterprises	Pearson Correlation	.453**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.056	
	N	120	120
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source; Primary Data, 2022

Ho: There's no significant positive relationship between technical skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Ha: There's a significant positive relationship between technical skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

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Findings of the study in table 6 above show the relationship between technical skills (independent variable) and the performance of Small-scale enterprises (dependent variable). It shows that through bivariate means, the correlation between financial and business performance (0.453) implies that there is a weak positive relationship between the two variables. This is statistically insignificant at 95% confidence interval since the P-value (0.056) is greater than 0.05 and therefore we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant relationship between technical skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council

Table 7: Model summary for technical skills and Performance of Small-scale enterprises

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.453	.205	.198	.35227
a. Predictors: (Constant), Technical skills				

Source; Primary data, 2022

Ho: There's no significant positive relationship between technical skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Ha: There's a significant positive relationship between technical skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Keeping other factors constant, a one percent increase in technical skills would on average lead to 0.453 percent increase in the dependent variable. This is statistically insignificant since the P-value 0.056 is greater than 0.05 and therefore we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there was no relationship between technical skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council.

Conclusions

The first research objective was stated as, "To assess the relationship between planning skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council" and the first research question was stated as, "What is the relationship between planning skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council?" The study concludes based on the adjusted R Square, that 46.9% of finance performance in Kyengera Town Council is influenced by planning skills, the remaining 53.1% of performance of Small-scale enterprises being explained by other factors such as lending terms and liquidity and planning skills positive affects the performance of Small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council considering Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of $r = 0.688$.

Recommendations

The study recommends that SMEs in all sectors in Uganda should enhance managerial planning skills as a tool and a concept to be used in improving organizational performance. This is because once the level of problem analysis is improved, accuracy in forecasting and goal setting is enhanced among SMEs then profitability is achieved, as well as product quality and hence sales growth.

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