




# Do provincial interventions resolve local governance failure? A citizen-centred analysis from uMkhanyakude District Municipality



## Authors:

Thokozani Khumalo<sup>1</sup>   
 Tyanai Masiya<sup>1</sup>   
 Stellah Lubinga<sup>1</sup> 

## Affiliations:

<sup>1</sup>School of Public Management and Administration, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

## Corresponding author:

Tyanai Masiya,  
 tyanai.masiya@up.ac.za

## Dates:

Received: 15 Nov. 2025  
 Accepted: 10 Mar. 2026  
 Published: 30 Apr. 2026

## How to cite this article:

Khumalo, T., Masiya, T. & Lubinga, S., 2026, 'Do provincial interventions resolve local governance failure? A citizen-centred analysis from uMkhanyakude District Municipality', *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation* 7(0), a335. <https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgr.v7i0.335>

## Copyright:

© 2026. The Authors.  
 Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## Read online:



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

**Background:** In April 2015, the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government invoked Section 139(1)(b) of the Constitution on uMkhanyakude District Municipality due to governance failures.

**Aim:** The study critically examined the effect of provincial intervention in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality.

**Methods:** This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine the institutional and governance effects of Section 139(1)(b) provincial interventions in uMkhanyakude District Municipality. The unit of analysis focused on stakeholder experiences of intervention outcomes, drawing on a purposive sample of 28 participants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

**Results:** The findings suggest that provincial intervention under Section 139(1)(b) was precipitated by deep-seated and interlocking governance failures, rather than discrete administrative breakdowns. Evidence from the uMkhanyakude case indicates that the intervention achieved short-term procedural stabilisation – particularly in relation to budget approval processes and compliance reporting but there is limited evidence of sustained institutional recovery.

**Conclusion:** Although Section 139(1)(b) interventions are intended to restore stability and improve governance, the study found that their effectiveness is often compromised by political interference, fragile coalitions and legal uncertainties.

**Contribution:** The study offers practical insights for policymakers to improve municipal interventions and recovery strategies across South Africa.

**Keywords:** district municipality; provincial intervention; service delivery; South Africa; uMkhanyakude District Municipality.

## Introduction

Across many developing democracies, local government is widely recognised as the sphere of the state closest to citizens and therefore central to democratic deepening, service delivery and socio-economic development. The state of local government in South Africa is a significant concern for scholars, policymakers and civil society, particularly given recurring governance failures and declining service delivery across many municipalities. Since the advent of democracy in 1994, the local government sphere has been seen as a cornerstone of development, responsible for delivering basic services and promoting socio-economic transformation. Constitutionally entrenched as a distinct sphere of government, municipalities are expected not only to deliver services efficiently but also to advance developmental local government and participatory governance. However, ongoing dysfunction in municipalities has made it necessary to utilise constitutional mechanisms to restore administrative and financial order (Khaile 2023).

Within this broader governance architecture, one of the most consequential corrective instruments is Section 139 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). This provision enables different levels of intervention, including taking over specific municipal functions, approving budgets or even dissolving municipal councils in extreme cases. Originally conceived as a safeguard to protect constitutional order and ensure service continuity, Section 139 interventions are intended to be exceptional and supportive rather than routine or punitive.

The use of Section 139 interventions has become a common practice in South African local governance, with provinces increasingly relying on this constitutional tool to address dysfunctional municipalities (Ngubane 2025). According to Jantjies et al. (2025), 39 municipalities were under Section 139 intervention between 2020/21, with 21 municipalities placed under intervention between 2020/21 and 2022/23. While this provision is intended as a last resort, to be used after support and capacity-building efforts have failed, it is often used as a reactive, punitive measure. Critics argue that such interventions may undermine the autonomy of local governments and erode public confidence in democratic governance, particularly when they do not lead to lasting improvements.

On the other hand, proponents maintain that interventions are vital for restoring constitutional order, especially when municipalities struggle to deliver basic services or manage public funds effectively. This tension between constitutional protection and local autonomy reflects a deeper debate within cooperative governance about accountability, oversight and decentralised authority.

These national debates become particularly salient when examined through specific municipal contexts. The situation in uMkhanyakude District Municipality presents a complex scenario that highlights both sides of this debate. Despite provincial efforts to stabilise the municipality, uMkhanyakude continues to face leadership instability, weak financial controls and low service delivery levels. For example, the municipality has consistently failed to approve its budget and Integrated Development Plan, incurred over R2.7 billion in unauthorised and irregular expenditure and achieved a revenue collection rate of only 41.64% (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Treasury 2021). This case, therefore, provides an opportunity to examine whether provincial intervention mechanisms translate into measurable governance improvements in practice.

Despite the constitutional and policy frameworks guiding provincial intervention in failing municipalities, significant research and knowledge gaps remain, particularly from the perspective of citizens directly affected by these interventions. Firstly, although Section 139 interventions are frequently used to address municipal dysfunctions, there is a lack of empirical studies that critically assess whether these interventions achieve their intended objectives, especially in rural contexts like uMkhanyakude. Secondly, the voices and lived experiences of ordinary citizens, who are the primary recipients of municipal services, are underrepresented in current scholarship. There is a need for research that foregrounds citizen perceptions of governance, accountability and service delivery during and after provincial interventions. Thirdly, available data and audit outcomes do not conclusively demonstrate a positive link between provincial interventions and sustainable improvements in governance or service delivery. Many municipalities continue to experience leadership instability, financial mismanagement and poor service outcomes even after intervention. Fourthly, there is limited analysis of how accountability and

information asymmetry between provincial authorities and municipalities affect the success or failure of interventions. The effectiveness of principal-agent relationships and incentive structures in driving compliance and performance remains poorly understood. Finally, there is a shortage of in-depth, context-specific case studies, such as that of uMkhanyakude District Municipality, that can illuminate the unique challenges and opportunities of provincial intervention in rural and under-resourced settings.

To address these gaps, this article explores whether provincial interventions in uMkhanyakude have met their intended objectives and identifies the structural and institutional factors that may be hindering progress. By applying principal-agent theory, this study conceptualises the provincial government as the principal and the municipality as the agent. This theoretical lens enables a systematic examination of accountability relationships, information asymmetry and incentive misalignment within South Africa's multi-level governance system. It provides a framework for understanding both municipal non-compliance and the limitations of provincial enforcement mechanisms.

The study contributes to the existing scholarship on cooperative governance, state intervention and local government performance in South Africa. It seeks to fill an empirical and conceptual gap in the literature by moving beyond legal justifications for intervention and critically evaluating the real-world outcomes of these constitutional provisions. It offers practical insights for policymakers, civil servants and governance practitioners by identifying the conditions under which interventions are likely to succeed or fail.

Ultimately, this research emphasises the need to re-evaluate the intervention model to ensure that it not only addresses immediate crises but also fosters long-term institutional resilience, accountability and developmental governance at the municipal level. The findings will appeal not only to government officials and researchers but also to community members, civil society actors and private sector stakeholders who rely on functional municipalities for service delivery, investment and development. In doing so, it reframes Section 139, not merely as a constitutional safeguard but as a contested governance instrument whose effectiveness depends on context, design and accountability dynamics.

## Literature review

The South African local government system, while constitutionally grounded in democratic governance and developmental imperatives, continues to face persistent challenges in institutional stability, service delivery performance and financial management (Beukes 2025). Despite an elaborate constitutional and legislative framework designed to institutionalise developmental local government, many municipalities remain structurally fragile and administratively constrained. These issues have prompted interventions from

provincial governments under Section 139 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). This study situates itself within this broader governance crisis by examining whether such interventions resolve local governance failure, with specific reference to the uMkhanyakude District Municipality and the application of Section 139(1)(b).

Section 139(1) of the Constitution outlines three intervention instruments: issuing directives to a municipal council, assuming responsibility for specific obligations and dissolving a municipal council. These measures are designed to restore functionality in municipalities experiencing executive failure. Section 139(1)(b), the focus of this study, empowers provinces to assume executive obligations when municipalities fail to perform essential functions, including maintaining national standards, preventing prejudice to other spheres and safeguarding economic unity. Although constitutionally framed as corrective and temporary, the increasing frequency of such interventions raises critical questions about their effectiveness and long-term impact.

The legal framework governing these interventions is complex and multi-layered. Hamza (2023) and Bronstein and Glaser (2023) identify four procedural bases for intervention: general executive failure, serious financial problems, budgetary failure and financial crisis. These constitutional provisions operate alongside statutory frameworks such as the *Municipal Systems Act (2000)*, the *Municipal Finance Management Act (2003)* and the *Municipal Property Rates Act (2004)*, which collectively regulate administrative accountability, fiscal discipline and revenue authority.

Procedurally, interventions must comply with strict constitutional safeguards. The Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) must notify the municipality, the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) within prescribed timeframes. Interventions under Section 139(1)(b) lapse automatically if not approved within 28 days. Yet empirical evidence suggests that procedural compliance is inconsistent, and oversight mechanisms are often weak or politicised (Thomann 2025). These procedural shortcomings undermine both the legality and legitimacy of provincial interventions.

Scholars have examined the necessity and implications of constitutional intervention (Gumede 2021; Hofisi & Lukamba 2024; Jantjies et al. 2025; Zwane 2025). Persistent governance deficiencies, including political instability, violations of supply chain regulations, ineffective internal controls and weak participatory planning processes, frequently precipitate intervention (Soga, Shoba & Mtombeni 2024). Auditor-General Tsakani Maluleke (2023) documents widespread financial mismanagement, infrastructure decay and administrative instability across municipalities. Collectively, this literature portrays a local government system under structural strain, where provincial intervention becomes a recurrent corrective mechanism rather than an exceptional remedy.

While the Constitution anticipates potential underperformance in local government (Khaile 2023), the implementation of Section 139 remains contested. On the one hand, interventions are justified as necessary to protect vulnerable communities from service collapse (Ramulifho et al. 2025). On the other hand, critics argue that interventions may function as instruments of political centralisation, eroding local autonomy and distorting cooperative governance (Karsten & Van der Bank 2024). This tension reflects a deeper structural dilemma within South Africa's quasi-federal system: how to balance decentralised authority with effective oversight.

Empirical case studies illustrate these complexities. Bole's (2022) analysis of Madibeng Municipality reveals repeated interventions addressing governance, administration, financial management and service delivery failures, yet with limited sustainable improvement. Similarly, Ramulifho et al. (2025) highlight that chronic dysfunction, characterised by protest, administrative paralysis and non-payment of service providers, often precedes intervention. Dondashe (2024) observes that interventions are typically reactive, occurring only when municipalities are on the verge of operational collapse. These findings suggest that intervention may stabilise immediate crises but rarely addresses underlying structural or institutional weaknesses.

Despite this growing body of scholarship, significant gaps remain. Firstly, most studies evaluate interventions from legal, administrative or provincial oversight perspectives, with limited attention to citizen experiences. Secondly, there is insufficient empirical analysis of whether interventions translate into measurable improvements in service delivery, accountability and governance legitimacy at the community level. Thirdly, rural municipalities such as uMkhanyakude remain underrepresented in intervention research, despite facing compounded developmental constraints.

By foregrounding citizen perceptions within a rural district municipality, this study extends existing scholarship beyond formal constitutional analysis towards an outcome-oriented and citizen-centred evaluation of provincial intervention. In doing so, it interrogates whether Section 139(1)(b) functions as an effective instrument of institutional recovery or merely as a temporary administrative reset within a structurally constrained local governance system.

## Theoretical framework

This study utilises principal-agent theory as its primary analytical framework to examine the impact of provincial interventions in local government, specifically focusing on the uMkhanyakude District Municipality. Originally developed by Stephen Ross and Barry Mitnick in the 1970s, principal-agent theory has been widely adopted across various disciplines, including economics, political science and public administration, to analyse the contractual and governance relationships between a principal and an agent (Bernhold & Wiesweg 2021). At its core, the theory explores

the challenges that arise when one party (the principal) delegates authority to another (the agent), particularly in contexts characterised by information asymmetry, conflicting interests and limited monitoring capacity.

In the public sector, this theory is essential for understanding how political actors (principals) aim to ensure that bureaucratic agents act in accordance with broader public objectives (Gauld 2023). Mechanisms such as performance management systems, political appointments, cadre deployment and regulatory oversight serve as tools to mitigate the risks of agency loss, the phenomenon in which agents act in their own self-interest rather than in alignment with the principal's mandate (Ajaegbu & Mmayie 2025; Yan & Haymen 2024). As Boyce (2024) argues, public sector governance depends on elected officials' ability to enforce accountability and align public administration with societal needs. However, the theory also highlights an inherent tension: agents may possess 'hidden characteristics', engage in 'hidden actions' or operate with 'hidden intentions', all of which can undermine the principal's efforts to achieve effective governance (Bernhold & Wiesweg 2021; Sternberg, Mathauer & Hofmann 2023).

In the South African context, this theoretical lens is particularly valuable for examining the dynamics between the provincial government as the principal and the uMkhanyakude District Municipality as the agent. Through Section 139 of the Constitution, the province is constitutionally empowered to intervene in municipalities that fail to fulfil their executive obligations. While these interventions are intended as corrective measures, they often expose deeper institutional and political challenges. For instance, South Africa's cadre deployment policy has allowed political principals to appoint individuals to key positions based on loyalty rather than competence. Although this may enhance political control, it also risks bureaucratic politicisation, which can weaken institutional capacity and blur lines of accountability (Motswaledi & Marumo 2025).

Principal-agent theory thus offers a critical framework for assessing whether provincial interventions improve governance or inadvertently perpetuate dysfunction. As noted by Ambituuni (2025), the theory is particularly well suited for examining the impacts of institutional arrangements on public accountability and policy coherence. This is especially important in South Africa's cooperative governance framework, where constitutional provisions require clear delineation of roles and mutual support among the national, provincial and local spheres of government. These relationships are governed by Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution, which outline concurrent and exclusive competencies, respectively.

In applying this theory, the study analyses the effectiveness of provincial interventions in addressing municipal dysfunction and explores whether these interventions contribute to long-term governance improvements or merely

serve as temporary political solutions. Additionally, it examines how asymmetries in information, authority and incentives between principals and agents shape the outcomes of such interventions. By situating the uMkhanyakude case within this theoretical framework, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the institutional, political and operational dynamics that influence the success or failure of state-led municipal reform.

## Research methods and design

A qualitative case study design was adopted to generate an in-depth, context-sensitive understanding of whether provincial interventions resolve local governance failure. Contemporary qualitative scholarship emphasises the suitability of case study research for examining complex governance phenomena embedded in real institutional settings (Yin 2023). The design enabled a detailed exploration of intervention dynamics, accountability relationships and citizen-centred perceptions within a rural district municipality.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants with direct knowledge or experience of provincial intervention processes. This approach is appropriate where information-rich cases are required to illuminate governance processes (Creswell & Poth 2024). Sampling continued until thematic saturation was reached, consistent with recent qualitative methodological guidance (Hennink & Kaiser 2022).

The unit of analysis used in this study was the institutional and governance effects of Section 139(1)(b) provincial interventions within uMkhanyakude District Municipality, as experienced and interpreted by key local stakeholders. The study drew on a purposive sample of 28 participants, comprising municipal councillors ( $n = 7$ ), senior municipal managers ( $n = 7$ ), representatives of non-profit organisations ( $n = 7$ ) and members of the local business community ( $n = 7$ ). This composition ensured representation across political, administrative, civil society and economic actors directly affected by provincial intervention processes.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, allowing participants to articulate lived experiences of governance instability, financial oversight and service delivery disruptions. Interview guides were aligned with principal-agent theory constructs (accountability, information asymmetry, compliance and incentive misalignment). Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and anonymised to ensure confidentiality and ethical compliance.

Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, following the structured phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2023). Transcripts were coded inductively and deductively to identify patterns related to governance performance, intervention effectiveness, financial management and citizen trust. Coding reliability was strengthened through iterative review and theme refinement.

## Ethical considerations

Full ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Protocol number: EMS239/23; approval granted 21 October 2024). The research adhered strictly to established ethical standards for social science research throughout data collection and analysis. Prior to participation, all participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and written informed consent was obtained. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. To safeguard confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned, and all identifying information was removed from transcripts and reports. Digital recordings and transcripts were securely stored on password-protected devices accessible only to the researcher.

## Results

This section presents the study's empirical findings. Drawing on 28 semi-structured interviews across political, administrative, civil society and business stakeholders, the results are organised around six interrelated themes. Collectively, the findings demonstrate that while the Section 139(1)(b) intervention produced short-term administrative stabilisation, it did not fundamentally resolve entrenched governance failures.

### Systemic governance deficits

Participants overwhelmingly characterised the intervention as a response to longstanding and mutually reinforcing governance deficits rather than a sudden or episodic administrative breakdown. Across stakeholder groups, participants described a municipality marked by deteriorating financial controls, weakened oversight structures, political instability and declining service delivery performance prior to the provincial assumption of executive obligations. Thus, interview data suggest that the intervention emerged after years of audit regressions, supply chain irregularities, infrastructure backlogs and mounting community dissatisfaction. Several participants noted that the municipality had experienced repeated governance warnings before the formal invocation of Section 139(1)(b). This supports the interpretation that provincial intervention functioned as a reactive mechanism triggered at a late stage of institutional decline.

From a citizen-centred perspective, participants perceived the intervention as an emergency response rather than a preventative governance instrument. Business and civil society representatives particularly emphasised that the municipality had already 'lost credibility' among residents and service providers before provincial authorities intervened. The findings therefore reinforce the view that provincial interventions tend to occur when municipalities approach operational and financial collapse, rather than at earlier signs of governance vulnerability.

Importantly, participants framed governance erosion as systemic: political factionalism weakened council oversight; administrative instability undermined continuity; and financial mismanagement reduced service capacity. These interconnected deficits created a cycle of institutional fragility that the intervention sought to arrest. However, as subsequent findings illustrate, addressing administrative symptoms did not necessarily dismantle underlying structural weaknesses.

### Political interference

A dominant theme across interviews was the role of political interference in shaping both the necessity and the effectiveness of the intervention. Participants repeatedly emphasised that partisan interests complicated provincial efforts to restore functionality. This interference was described as originating both within the municipality and externally from provincial political structures. According to the same participant, the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government encountered 'external political interference' during the intervention process. Participants explained that certain political actors sought to leverage the intervention to consolidate influence, protect patronage networks or weaken rival factions.

Municipal councillors reported that political contestation often undermined consensus-building during the intervention period. Instead of facilitating collective recovery, some actors interpreted the intervention through a partisan lens, viewing it as either a threat to local autonomy or an opportunity to restructure political control. Such dynamics created resistance to administrative directives issued under Section 139(1)(b).

These findings align with broader scholarship indicating that provincial interventions are inherently political processes. Because municipal councils remain constitutionally recognised structures during a Section 139(1)(b) intervention, administrators must operate alongside politically contested leadership. This dual authority structure may generate ambiguity, contestation and strategic compliance.

Furthermore, participants suggested that limited political will impeded reform. Echoing established literature, participants indicated that innovation and governance restructuring frequently encounter resistance where entrenched political interests are threatened. In this context, intervention was not insulated from factional dynamics; rather, it became embedded within them.

From a citizen-centred standpoint, participants observed that political interference diluted accountability. Residents often struggled to determine who was responsible for service delivery failures: municipal councillors, provincial administrators or political parties. This diffusion of responsibility weakened public trust and complicated perceptions of institutional recovery.

### Coalition instability and fragmented authority

Political instability within the municipal council, particularly through coalition governance, emerged as a major

impediment to the effectiveness of interventions. Twenty-three of the 28 participants explicitly identified coalition politics as a constraint on governance recovery.

One participant remarked:

'Political dynamics within the municipality often limit the effectiveness of implementing section 139(1)(b) of the Constitution.' (Participant 5, Male, Senior Municipal Manager)

Another participant elaborated:

'The challenge is the coalition. The municipality cannot fulfil its mandate even under intervention due to each party's competing interests. Consequently, some political leaders are reluctant to comply with section 139(1).' (Participant 7, Female, Non Profit Organisation)

Coalition arrangements were described as fragile and characterised by competing agendas, mistrust and shifting alliances. Even during the intervention period, council resolutions were reportedly delayed or contested because of partisan bargaining. Administrators faced difficulties securing stable political support for long-term reform initiatives.

Senior managers noted that fragmented authority complicated decision-making chains. Although provincial administrators assumed certain executive functions, council approval remained necessary for key policy and budgetary matters. In the absence of cohesive political leadership, administrative stabilisation did not translate into a unified strategic direction.

Business representatives further observed that coalition instability created uncertainty in procurement processes and infrastructure planning. Service providers expressed hesitation in entering long-term contracts amid concerns about shifting political mandates.

These findings underscore the structural tension between local democratic representation and provincial corrective oversight. While Section 139(1)(b) permits assumption of executive obligations, it does not dissolve the council. Consequently, intervention unfolds within a contested governance environment. The data suggest that where coalition fragmentation persists, intervention may stabilise administrative processes but cannot easily resolve political dysfunction.

### Legal and procedural complexities

Participants identified significant legal and procedural obstacles in implementing Section 139(1)(b). Participants emphasised ambiguity in defining the scope of 'executive obligations' assumed by the province.

One interviewee explained:

'Sometimes, section 139(1)(b) of the South African Constitution does not expedite the project implementation process.' (Participant 16, Male, Business Community)

Another participant noted:

'Legal and procedural complexities present significant obstacles in the intervention process in the case of uMkhanyakude District Municipality.' (Participant 19, Female, Municipal Councillor)

Several participants argued that procedural compliance requirements, such as notification to the Minister and the NCOP, introduced delays that undermined urgent service delivery interventions. Additionally, ambiguity regarding the division of authority between administrators and councillors created uncertainty in operational practice.

Senior officials highlighted challenges in aligning intervention directives with existing municipal bylaws, financial management systems and contractual obligations. In some cases, administrative corrective measures required renegotiating procurement contracts or restructuring internal reporting lines, processes that were time-intensive and legally sensitive.

Civil society actors expressed concern that the technical complexity of the intervention framework limited transparency. Residents often lacked clarity about the intervention's duration, objectives and measurable targets. This opacity contributed to scepticism regarding its effectiveness.

The findings, therefore, reveal that while Section 139(1)(b) provides a constitutional mechanism for corrective oversight, its implementation is administratively demanding. Without clear procedural guidelines and standardised practices, interventions risk becoming mired in technical disputes rather than expediting governance recovery.

### Administrative stabilisation versus structural reform

A central empirical question concerned whether the intervention produced measurable institutional recovery or merely temporary administrative stabilisation. Participants widely acknowledged improvements in short-term administrative coordination during the intervention period. These included strengthened reporting systems, improved compliance with financial regulations and more structured oversight of senior management.

However, participants distinguished between stabilisation and transformation. While immediate disruptions were addressed, such as delayed payments to service providers and irregular procurement processes, structural drivers of governance failure persisted. Municipal managers reported that administrative capacity remained uneven, with ongoing skills shortages and vacancy rates limiting institutional resilience. Some departments reportedly reverted to previous patterns once provincial oversight eased. Civil society representatives emphasised that community participation mechanisms, such as Integrated Development Plan consultations, remained weak. Although formal compliance improved, substantive engagement with residents did not

significantly deepen. Business stakeholders noted that infrastructure backlogs and water service interruptions continued beyond the intervention period. In their assessment, financial reporting compliance did not automatically translate into improved service outcomes.

Thus, while the intervention achieved certain compliance-based milestones, its transformative impact was limited. The evidence suggests that Section 139(1)(b) may restore procedural order but does not inherently address deeper governance cultures, political incentives or capacity deficits.

### **Citizen-centred assessments of governance recovery**

A distinctive contribution of this study lies in its citizen-centred analytical lens. Rather than evaluating intervention solely through administrative metrics, the research foregrounded stakeholder perceptions of institutional legitimacy and service improvement. Across interviews, perceptions of improvement were mixed. Councillors and some senior managers highlighted the need for enhanced oversight, stronger discipline and clearer reporting lines. However, civil society organisations and business actors were more sceptical.

Many participants indicated that residents experienced limited tangible change in everyday service delivery. Water supply interruptions, road maintenance backlogs and billing inaccuracies persisted in several localities. As one business representative explained, improved documentation did not necessarily mean improved delivery.

Importantly, trust in local governance structures remained fragile. Participants reported that community protests and grievances did not decline significantly during the intervention period. Some residents interpreted the intervention as evidence of municipal failure rather than as a sign of corrective progress.

The data further reveal a perception gap between administrative indicators and lived experiences. While provincial authorities emphasised compliance restoration, citizens evaluated governance recovery primarily through service reliability and accountability responsiveness. This divergence suggests that intervention effectiveness cannot be assessed solely on procedural compliance metrics.

### **Interventions as reactive and temporally bounded mechanisms**

Synthesising the findings, provincial intervention in uMkhanyakude District Municipality appears primarily reactive and temporally bounded. Participants consistently described the intervention as occurring after prolonged deterioration in governance. Preventative or early-warning mechanisms were reportedly weak. Moreover, the intervention's duration limited its capacity for sustained institutional restructuring. Once administrative control was

gradually returned, underlying political and structural tensions resurfaced. Several participants suggested that without sustained capacity-building and political reform, intervention risks cyclical repetition.

The findings, therefore, question whether Section 139(1)(b) functions as a sustainable reform instrument. While it may avert immediate collapse, its structural impact appears constrained by political interference, coalition instability, legal complexity and limited citizen trust.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study offer a compelling account of the systemic governance failures that necessitated the invocation of Section 139(1)(b) of the Constitution in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality. Building on the results, the discussion demonstrates that the intervention was not precipitated by an isolated administrative lapse but by cumulative, mutually reinforcing governance erosion that progressively weakened institutional resilience. Viewed through a citizen-centric lens, the results expose a complex interplay of political, administrative and financial dysfunctions that culminated in provincial intervention. Importantly, the findings complicate the assumption that constitutional oversight mechanisms inherently generate sustainable recovery, revealing instead a pattern of short-term stabilisation without deep structural reform. This discussion interprets these themes, with a focus on three intersecting dimensions: institutional collapse, accountability deficits and the politics of intervention.

The study confirms that political instability, characterised by factionalism and infighting within and between municipal structures, was a central driver of intervention. Unlike accounts that frame instability as episodic, the evidence from uMkhanyakude indicates a sustained pattern of political paralysis that undermined council functionality and eroded oversight capacity. This mirrors previous findings by Beukes (2025), who argues that political interference, often rooted in intra-party conflict, erodes municipal cohesion and weakens decision-making processes. In uMkhanyakude, the failure of council sittings and non-functional ward committees reflects deeper institutional paralysis. The intervention, therefore, operated within an already fractured political ecosystem, limiting its transformative reach. The inability of elected bodies to discharge basic governance responsibilities aligns with Bole's (2022) assessment of political instability as a catalyst for administrative breakdowns in local government.

This paralysis undermines the intent of South Africa's decentralised governance model, which entrusts local municipalities with developmental mandates under the Constitution. Where coalition fragmentation persists, administrative reforms introduced through provincial oversight are filtered through contested political authority, thereby constraining implementation fidelity. As demonstrated in the results, administrators were required to operate alongside politically divided councils, creating dual

centres of authority and ambiguous accountability lines. Such structural tensions suggest that Section 139(1)(b) may stabilise administrative compliance but cannot, on its own, repair the political foundations necessary for developmental local governance.

The widespread dissatisfaction with service delivery, in water, sanitation and infrastructure, emerged as a prominent justification for the intervention. Participants cited critical vacancies, resource mismanagement and unmet development mandates. These citizen accounts reinforce earlier work by Khaile (2023) and Ngubane (2025), which show that sustained service delivery failures, coupled with poor audit outcomes, often trigger constitutional interventions. However, the present study advances this literature by demonstrating that improvements in compliance indicators during intervention did not consistently translate into perceptible service improvements at the community level. This divergence between procedural compliance and lived experience is analytically significant.

From a legitimacy standpoint, the findings suggest that most citizens viewed the intervention as necessary to restore minimum functionality. Yet this pragmatic acceptance coexisted with scepticism regarding its long-term impact. While financial reporting and administrative coordination improved, persistent service delivery backlogs and infrastructure challenges tempered perceptions of recovery. This indicates that citizens evaluate governance performance not through formal compliance metrics but through tangible improvements in everyday service reliability. As Modisha (2024) cautions, technocratic interventions risk perpetuating cycles of top-down governance if they do not substantively engage communities or strengthen local accountability ecosystems.

Non-compliance with the *Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA)*, poor audit practices and misappropriation of funds were repeatedly identified as symptomatic of a broader accountability vacuum. This aligns with the Auditor-General's reports cited by Shuping and Uwizeyimana (2023), which show a chronic pattern of financial mismanagement across most municipalities. The results of this study further reveal that financial mismanagement was embedded within political and administrative instability, suggesting that fiscal dysfunction cannot be isolated from governance culture.

Furthermore, the lack of transparency in budgeting processes exacerbated public distrust. Institutional opacity, as reflected in participants' accounts, reduced citizens' ability to exercise oversight and weakened feedback loops between governance performance and electoral accountability. As Jeje (2023) and Bole (2022) argue, strengthening accountability requires both structural mechanisms (e.g. credible audit systems and independent oversight) and normative transformation (e.g. ethical leadership and enforcement culture).

The present findings suggest that while the intervention improved certain reporting procedures, it did not fundamentally reconfigure incentive structures or political behaviour patterns. Despite the rationale for intervention, the study also highlights implementation challenges, particularly those stemming from coalition dynamics, political interference and legal ambiguity. Similar to findings by Mamokhere (2022) and Beukes (2025), Participants described how coalition politics complicated the execution of Section 139(1)(b), with party competition impeding coherent governance. The persistence of factional contestation during the intervention period underscores the limits of administrative authority in politically fragmented environments. Legal and procedural uncertainties, especially regarding administrators' powers vis-à-vis elected councils, further constrained the effectiveness of interventions.

These findings raise critical questions about the design and operationalisation of provincial oversight. Where legal mandates lack procedural clarity and standardised administrative protocols, interventions risk becoming reactive and contested rather than strategic and preventative. The absence of clearly delineated roles and performance benchmarks complicates the evaluation of intervention outcomes. In uMkhanyakude, improvements in procedural compliance were not matched by durable institutional transformation, suggesting that the current oversight framework may prioritise short-term stability over long-term resilience.

The results suggest that while Section 139(1)(b) is a necessary constitutional mechanism, it is insufficient on its own to address the underlying structural weaknesses in local governance. Intervention functioned primarily as a crisis-containment mechanism rather than as a comprehensive institutional reform instrument. Building long-term resilience in municipalities like uMkhanyakude requires a dual strategy: (1) strengthening institutional capacity and ethical leadership at the local level; and (2) ensuring that interventions are accompanied by transparency, stakeholder inclusion and robust monitoring frameworks.

In this regard, the Department of CoGTA, together with provincial treasuries and civil society actors, must develop context-sensitive models of support that move beyond crisis management towards developmental governance. Such models should integrate early-warning systems, coalition mediation mechanisms, capacity-building programmes and citizen oversight platforms to prevent cyclical institutional collapse. Embedding accountability loops and strengthening municipal administrative professionalism would reduce reliance on reactive constitutional interventions.

The case of provincial intervention in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality offers significant implications for policy, governance and practice in South Africa's local government sector. The findings highlight both the necessity and limitations of Section 139 interventions, offering lessons

for future oversight, legislative reform and municipal capacity-building.

The persistent governance failures, political instability and financial mismanagement identified in uMkhanyakude underscore the urgent need for a more robust and clearly regulated framework for provincial interventions. The study echoes broader concerns raised in the literature and by the courts regarding the lack of standardised regulations and procedural clarity in the implementation of Section 139 of the Constitution (Dondashe 2024). The absence of such regulations has led to frequent litigation and tensions between provincial and municipal governments, often undermining the effectiveness of interventions.

The study also reaffirms the constitutional principle that municipalities are autonomous spheres of government, yet also subject to provincial oversight when they fail in their executive obligations. However, the findings demonstrate that oversight must be calibrated to restore functionality without eroding local democratic legitimacy. Interventions should be time-bound, performance-monitored and explicitly oriented towards institutional learning rather than indefinite administrative substitution. A 'one-size-fits-all' model is unlikely to succeed in politically diverse contexts.

The findings also reveal that political instability, factionalism and coalition conflicts are central obstacles to municipal performance and to the success of interventions. These political dynamics often persist even after intervention, limiting the effectiveness of administrative reforms and service delivery improvements (Bole 2022). Addressing these dynamics requires complementary political governance reforms, such as coalition management training, leadership mediation and institutional safeguards insulating key administrative functions from partisan interference (SALGA 2020). Without addressing these underlying political issues, technical or administrative interventions are unlikely to yield sustained improvements.

Furthermore, recurring financial mismanagement highlights the need for continuous investment in municipal financial capability. Municipalities that achieve clean audits typically demonstrate coherent planning, strong internal controls and responsive leadership. Interventions should therefore integrate structured mentorship, skills transfer and sustained post-intervention monitoring to prevent regression once provincial oversight is withdrawn (Khaile 2023; SALGA 2020).

Finally, the study's findings demonstrate that provincial interventions are often driven by community dissatisfaction with service delivery and governance failures. However, interventions that do not meaningfully engage local stakeholders risk being perceived as punitive or externally imposed, thereby eroding trust and cooperation. Future interventions should incorporate mechanisms for community participation, transparency and feedback. Engaging civil

society, business and community organisations in the recovery process can help align interventions with local priorities, enhance legitimacy and improve the prospects for sustainable development (SALGA 2020).

From a principal-agent theoretical perspective, the findings illustrate how weak monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms distort delegated governance relationships. In uMkhanyakude, agents (municipal officials and councillors) operated with limited consequence management, misaligned incentives and fragmented oversight. The invocation of Section 139(1)(b) represented a corrective assertion by a higher-level principal (the province). However, the study demonstrates that reactive principal intervention, absent systemic redesign of incentive and monitoring structures, produces only a temporary equilibrium. Sustainable governance reform requires recalibrating accountability chains, strengthening consequence management and reinforcing transparency across institutional layers.

## Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that provincial interventions under Section 139(1)(b) should be reconceptualised from reactive crisis management instruments into structured institutional recovery frameworks embedded within a preventative, transparent and citizen-centred governance model. The Department of CoGTA should develop binding national guidelines that clearly define the scope of assumed executive obligations, standardise procedural steps, establish measurable recovery benchmarks and specify time-bound exit criteria linked to institutional performance rather than political discretion. Complementing this, an early-warning and graduated support system should be institutionalised to trigger targeted technical assistance before governance deterioration necessitates full intervention. Given the demonstrated impact of coalition instability and political interference, reforms must also insulate administrative systems from partisan volatility through merit-based senior appointments, strengthened separation of political and administrative functions and structured mechanisms for coalition mediation to stabilise council governance. To address persistent accountability deficits, interventions should embed real-time financial transparency platforms, enforce consequence management for maladministration and align fiscal incentives with governance performance outcomes. Critically, intervention design must incorporate formal citizen oversight mechanisms, such as participatory monitoring forums and public performance dashboards, to ensure that recovery is measured not only through compliance indicators but also through tangible service delivery improvements and restored public trust. Finally, sustainability requires structured post-intervention monitoring, embedded skills transfer programmes and independent evaluation of intervention outcomes to prevent cyclical relapse into institutional failure. Collectively, these reforms would reposition Section 139 oversight within a developmental intergovernmental framework capable of

strengthening municipal resilience, recalibrating principal-agent accountability relationships and advancing durable local governance reform.

## Limitations

This study is limited by its single-case design focusing exclusively on uMkhanyakude District Municipality, which constrains the generalisability of findings to other municipalities operating under different political, fiscal and socio-economic conditions. The reliance on qualitative, self-reported data introduces the possibility of participant bias, strategic framing or retrospective interpretation of intervention outcomes. Although the sample included diverse stakeholder groups, it did not incorporate direct household-level survey data, which may have provided a broader measurement of citizen perceptions. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the study limits the ability to assess the long-term sustainability of governance improvements following the withdrawal of provincial oversight.

## Conclusion

This study examined how provincial interventions affect South African municipalities, focusing specifically on the uMkhanyakude District Municipality. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research gathered insights from municipal councillors, senior managers, business stakeholders and representatives of non-profit organisations to explore the causes, processes and outcomes of the Section 139(1)(b) intervention in this rural district. By adopting a citizen-centred and principal-agent analytical lens, the study moved beyond procedural assessments of intervention to interrogate whether constitutional oversight translates into meaningful institutional recovery and restored public trust.

The findings indicate that the intervention was driven by a combination of longstanding and mutually reinforcing governance failures, including political instability, coalition fragility, persistent service delivery breakdowns, repeated violations of the MFMA, maladministration, institutional opacity and the functional paralysis of council structures. Rather than reflecting an isolated administrative lapse, the intervention emerged as a reactive response to cumulative governance erosion that had progressively undermined institutional resilience. Together, these structural weaknesses impaired the municipality's ability to fulfil its constitutional mandate, necessitating provincial assumption of executive obligations.

Although Section 139(1)(b) interventions are constitutionally designed to restore stability and governance functionality, the study found that their effectiveness is constrained by political interference, factional contestation, fragile coalition arrangements and legal ambiguity regarding the distribution of authority between administrators and elected councils. The absence of standardised operational protocols, clearly articulated performance benchmarks and time-bound exit

strategies further reduces the sustainability and evaluability of intervention outcomes. These limitations reveal that oversight mechanisms, while necessary, are not self-executing instruments of reform.

While short-term improvements were observed, such as the resumption of council operations, improved administrative coordination and enhanced compliance reporting, the findings demonstrate that provincial intervention primarily achieved procedural stabilisation rather than deep structural transformation. Citizen perceptions suggest that compliance gains did not consistently translate into tangible service delivery improvements or restored institutional legitimacy. Sustainable recovery, therefore, requires confronting the foundational drivers of dysfunction, including entrenched political divisions, weak accountability systems, distorted incentive structures and limited administrative capacity. The study recommends the establishment of a transparent, standardised and performance-oriented legislative and operational framework for Section 139 interventions, complemented by preventative early-warning mechanisms, strengthened consequence management, coalition governance support and embedded citizen participation structures. Interventions should be repositioned as structured institutional recovery programmes that prioritise long-term resilience, capacity transfer and democratic accountability rather than short-term administrative substitution.

## Acknowledgements

This article is based on research originally conducted as part of Thokozani Khumalo dissertation titled 'Influence of Provincial Intervention on the Administration of the uMkhanyakude District Municipality', towards the master's in Public Administration submitted to the School of Public Management and Administration, University of Pretoria, South Africa, 2025. The dissertation was supervised by Tyanai Masiya. The thesis was reworked, revised, and adapted into a journal article for publication. The original dissertation is available at: <https://repository.up.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/20aba156-0c40-49e9-849b-35ac23be53c9/content>.

## Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

## CRedit authorship contribution

Thokozani Khumalo: Conceptualisation, Investigation, Writing – original draft. Tyanai Masiya: Methodology, Supervision, Writing – original draft. Stellah Lubinga: Formal analysis, Methodology, Writing – review and editing. All authors reviewed the article, contributed to the discussion of results, approved the final version for submission and publication, and take responsibility for the integrity of its findings.

## Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency, or that of the publisher. The authors are responsible for this article's findings, and content.

## References

- Ajaegbu, E.E. & Mmayie, S., 2025, 'Resolving principal agent conflicts: Revisiting agency theory through the lens of internal audit', *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology* 10, 1050–1059. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25oct380>
- Ambituani, A., 2025, 'Infrastructure transparency initiative and anticorruption in public infrastructure projects: A principal-agent perspective to the antecedents that enable (or hinder) the effectiveness of transparency', *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ECAM-02-2025-0273>
- Karsten, A.S.J. & Van der Bank, M., 2024, 'Why effective intergovernmental governance mechanisms are important beyond 2024', *Journal of Public Administration, Finance & Law* 31, 192–208. <https://doi.org/10.47743/jopaf-2024-31-15>
- Auditor-General South Africa, 2023, *Consolidated general report on the audit outcomes of local government 2021–22*, MFMA 2021–2022, viewed 08 April 2024, from <https://www.agsa.co.za/Portals/0/Reports/MFMA/2021-22/MFMA%20Report%202021-22%20FINAL%20-%2031%20May%202023.pdf?ver=2023-05-31-072950-280>.
- Bernhold, T. & Wiesweg, M., 2021, 'Principal-agent theory perspectives and practices for effective workplace solutions', in R. Appel-Meulenbroek & V. Danivska (eds.), *A handbook of management theories and models for office environments and services*, pp. 117–128, Routledge, London.
- Beukes, J., 2025, 'Coalition governance in South Africa's local government: Law and practice', Doctoral thesis (Unpublished), Faculty of Law, University of the Western Cape.
- Bole, M.S., 2022, 'Sustaining Section 139 (1) interventions in local government: The case of selected municipalities in North West Province', Doctoral dissertation, North-West University, Mafikeng
- Boyce, N.N., 2024, 'The role of oversight in bringing administration stability at Mpofoana Local Municipality', Master's dissertation (Unpublished), University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V., 2023, 'Thematic analysis', in H. Cooper, M.N. Coutanche, L.M. McMullen, A.T. Panter, D. Rindskopf & K.J. Sher (eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological*, 2nd edn., pp. 65–81, American Psychological Association, Washington.
- Bronstein, V. & Glaser, D., 2023, 'Intervention in South African municipalities: Dangers and remedies', *South African Law Journal* 140, 95–125. <https://doi.org/10.47348/SALJ/v140/i1a5>
- Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N., 2024, *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*, 5th edn., Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Hennink, M. & Kaiser, B.N., 2022, 'Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests', *Social Science & Medicine* 292, 114523. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523>
- Dondashe, N., 2024, 'How successful are S139(5) municipal financial interventions in South Africa? A case study of Makana local municipality', Masters dissertation (Unpublished), University of Stellenbosch, Cape Town.
- Gauld, R., 2023, 'Principal-agent theory of organizations', in A. Farazmand (ed.), *Global encyclopedia of public administration, public policy, and governance*, pp. 10081–10085, Springer International Publishing, Cham.
- Gumede, W., 2021, 'Delivering democratic developmental state cities in South Africa', *African Journal of Public Affairs* 12(1), 1–27.
- Hamza, L., 2023, 'Local government vertical upward accountability, oversight, and the intervention mechanism in South Africa', *Lex Localis* 21(3), 567–589. [https://doi.org/10.4335/21.3.567-589\(2023\)](https://doi.org/10.4335/21.3.567-589(2023))
- Hofisi, M. & Lukamba, M.T., 2024, 'State interventionism: Section 139 interventions in local government', in P. Kariuki & G. Van der Wadt (eds.), *Municipal oversight and support – Towards institutional readiness*, pp. 101–124, Johannesburg, UJ Press.
- Jantjies, D., Maphangwa, M., Ntinzi, L. & Sibeko, S., 2025, *Section 139 and 154 municipal interventions*, viewed 20 February 2026, from [https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/PBO/Occasional\\_Papers/2025/06-05-2025/PBO\\_Brief\\_Section\\_139\\_and\\_154\\_Municipal\\_Interventions\\_May\\_2025\\_1.pdf](https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/PBO/Occasional_Papers/2025/06-05-2025/PBO_Brief_Section_139_and_154_Municipal_Interventions_May_2025_1.pdf).
- Jele, S., 2023, 'The role of accountability and transparency in promoting effective governance for service delivery in a South African Municipality', Masters dissertation (Unpublished), University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg.
- KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Treasury, 2021, *Report on municipal financial performance and provincial oversight measures: The case of uMkhanyakude District Municipality*, KZN Provincial Government, Durban.
- Khaile, T., 2023, 'The effectiveness of Section 139 interventions in strengthening the municipal accountability architecture in South Africa', *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation* 4, a146. <https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgr.v4i0.146>
- Mamokhere, J., 2022, 'Leaving no one behind in a participative integrated development planning process in South Africa', *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* 11(10), 277–291. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i10.2238>
- Modisha, M.G., 2024, *Accountability and oversight over municipal finances: Council oversight as a missing link in service delivery*, Inclusive Society Institute, viewed 22 February 2026, from <https://www.inclusivesociety.org.za/post/accountability-and-oversight-over-municipal-finances-council-oversight-as-a-missing-link-in-service>.
- Motswaledi, T.R. & Marumo, P.O., 2025, 'Analysing cadre deployment as a catalyst for constitutional or political democracy in Africa: Insights from South Africa', *e-BANGI Journal* 22(3), 104–123. <https://doi.org/10.17576/ebangi.2025.2203.09>
- Ngbane, M., 2025, 'An investigation into the effectiveness of Section 139 of the constitution in municipalities under administration: A case of KwaZulu-Natal municipalities', *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review* 8(1), 241–251. <https://doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v8i1.2600>
- Ramulifho, C.K., Gae, N.D., Rangwato, T.E. & Shopola, A.M., 2025, 'A critical review of intergovernmental support and intervention practices in South African provincial and local contexts', *International Journal of Research in Business & Social Science* 14(5), 4069. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v14i5.4069>
- Republic of South Africa, 1996, *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, Government Printers, Pretoria.
- SALGA, 2020, *Municipal support and intervention framework*, viewed 16 April 2024, from <https://www.salga.org.za/event/nma20/documents/LG%20Publications/SALGA%20%20Framework%20for%20Municipal%20Support%20and%20Intervention.pdf>.
- Shuping, B. & Uwizeyimana, D.E., 2023, 'A reflection on municipal managers' non-compliance with the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) in South Africa', *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology* 14(3–4), 1–14.
- Soga, S., Shoba, M. & Mtombeni, B., 2024, 'Provincial government interventions in local government: An investigative case study from a selected Municipality in the Eastern Cape, South Africa', *Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences* 12(3/4), 144–158.
- Sternberg, H., Mathauer, M. & Hofmann, E., 2023, 'Technology management in multi-tier chains: A case study of agency in logistics service outsourcing', *Journal of Operations Management* 69(4), 536–557.
- Thomann, E., 2025, 'Explaining regulatory intermediaries' compliance through the accountability regimes framework', *Policy and Society* 44(4), 474–492. <https://doi.org/10.1093/polsoc/puaf029>
- Yan, T. & Hymen, M.R., 2024, 'The principal-agent problem and its mitigation: A critical historical analysis', *Journal of Management History* 30(4), 615–636. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMH-07-2023-0068>
- Yin, R.K., 2023, *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*, 7th edn., Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Zwane, E., 2025, 'Evaluating interventions of municipality performance: The case of Emfuleni local municipality in Sedibeng District municipality, Gauteng Province, South Africa', *IAHRW International Journal of Social Sciences Review* 13(6), 1325–1328.