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Nondirective Supervision and Teacher Performance in Public Primary Schools in Ibanda Municipality, Uganda

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Abstract

Research shows that supervision enhances the performance of teachers in primary schools because it leads to effective teaching, which impacts the outcomes of students. However, there has been low performance among teachers in primary schools in Ibanda municipality despite recognising that nondirective supervision practices potentially influence the performance of teachers. Notwithstanding this problem, there has been limited research on nondirective supervision and teacher performance in the context of public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the connection between nondirective supervision and the job performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. The study was mixed methods and found theoretical underpinning from the path-goal theory. Consequently, a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from 133 teachers, while head teachers, a municipal inspector of schools, and a municipal education officer were interviewed for qualitative insights. The researchers analysed qualitative data thematically, while quantitative data were analysed statistically using SPSS. Results indicate a significant negative but weak correlation of -0.29 between nondirective supervision and teachers' performance, meaning that when the level of nondirective supervision increases, the level of teachers' performance reduces. The findings offer context-specific insights regarding public primary schools in Ibanda municipality, and similar contexts elsewhere, as they can be used as benchmark opportunities in transferable situations. Most importantly, these findings are relevant to policymakers and educational leaders as they may inform educational policy reviews and improvements regarding teacher supervision and performance. Future researchers may explore the relationship between integrated supervision on performance or extend focus on rural contexts and private primary schools.

Keywords: nondirective supervision, teachers' performance, public primary schools, Ibanda municipality, Uganda, educational leadership

Introduction

Effective supervision of teachers has been found essential in improving educational outcomes in public primary schools since the quality of teaching significantly impacts the performance of pupils in these schools (Mujuni et al., 2022). Historically, education supervision has evolved from administrative inspections of the 17th century to more collaborative approaches in the contemporary era (Gordon, 2019). For instance, as part of early education supervision in early colonial New England, local people were involved in inspecting the work of teachers, yet later in the 19th century in Britain, school inspectors were introduced to oversee teaching quality (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gordon, 2019; Marzano et al., 2011). This evolution implies that school administration practically prioritises teacher performance, accountability, and efficiency. Therefore, teacher performance remains a core area of focus for educational supervisors in public primary schools in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Uganda in particular (Abakunda et al., 2024; Ntege et al., 2023; Okia et al., 2021). However, research also shows that there is still space for creativity in supervision to address persistent challenges such as low teacher productivity. Lubwama et al. (2024) note that despite numerous supervisory interventions in public primary schools, challenges such as low teacher dedication and productivity have persisted.

In the context of Ibanda municipality, the performance of teachers in public primary schools remains low and below expectations despite the implementation of non-directive supervision practices that have been previously recognised by researchers as potentially supportive (Abakunda et al., 2024; Akanshemeza, 2018; Department of Education, 2024). For example, the 2024 Ibanda municipality inspection report indicates that only 60% of teachers prepared schemes of work, 40% made lesson plans, while only 20% made learning materials to use in their class. This situation is an example of poor performance of teachers, which is usually the reason behind the lower learning outcomes and poor results in primary leaving examinations.

Research suggests that supervision significantly influences the way teachers perform (Abakunda et al., 2024; Auma, 2015; Kule et al., 2023; Mushtaq et al., 2021; Namara & Kasaija, 2016; Okia et al., 2021; Valentine & Abraham, 2023). However, there are limited context-specific empirical studies on the relationship between nonsupervisory practices and the performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. Most of the relevant studies focus on other forms of supervision other than nondirective, while others are done outside the context of the current study. This leaves much desired, and supports the current

context-specific study to investigate the nexus between nondirective supervision and teachers' performance.

Therefore, the current study investigated the relationship between nondirective supervision and the performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. The study hypothesised that there is a significant relationship between nondirective supervision and performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. However, the study also sought to explore the perspectives of head teachers and municipal education leaders on how nondirective supervision influences the performance of teachers. Under teacher performance, the researchers studied four constructs that include teacher motivation, satisfaction, commitment and productivity. By doing this, the study contributes new scientific knowledge in the area of educational leadership and teacher performance by offering local insights from public schools in Ibanda municipality. This is necessary for informing policies that may enhance educational leadership practices and the performance of teachers in Ibanda municipality and similar contexts elsewhere, as findings from this study are benchmark opportunities in similar or transferable settings. Additionally, the study offers an extension to the path-goal theory by discussing its application to nondirective supervision and teacher performance in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality.

Theoretical Background

The study was based on the guidance of the path-goal theory to understand the impact of nondirective supervision on the performance of teachers. This theory, which was introduced by Robert House in 1971 and later enhanced by House and Mitchel (1974), explains how leaders guide their subordinates to achieve the aims and objectives of their organisations. This model also suggests that effective supervisors help remove obstacles, clarify objectives, and provide the necessary support to motivate their teams to achieve performance-related goals (Evans, 1970; House & Mitchell, 1974; Martin, 2009; Northouse, 2022). This theory is directly applicable in the study since it provides a framework for investigating how nondirective head teachers might influence the performance of teachers by empowering them to control their performance. Researchers have used the path-goal theory in investigating how approaches of leaders enhance the motivation and performance of their staff (Pacia & Guevarra, 2023) and the role of educational management and leadership (Olowoselu et al., 2019). These studies emphasise that the theory has

the ability to provide relevant insights to help explore the impact of nondirective supervision on the performance of teachers. The current study, therefore, offers an extension to the path-goal theory by discussing its applicability in moderating the impact of nondirective supervision on teachers' performance in the context of public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. The theory can be applied to remove obstacles and empower teachers to achieve their performance goals more freely. Teachers can participate in shaping their goals with more autonomy so that they can own these goals, as it is important in improving performance. However, it is important to note that the path-goal theory also emphasises other leadership approaches such as directive, supportive, and achievement-oriented supervision, which may imply that head teachers in Ibanda municipality should not over-rely on one approach if they want to maximize results. They may find it helpful to integrate different supervisory approaches for better results.

Literature Review

Research on the impact of nondirective supervision on the performance of teachers reports varying results. Some researchers report mixed outcomes regarding nondirective supervision and performance, emphasising that the effectiveness of nondirective supervision depends on context, much as others praise nondirective supervision, stating that it enhances teacher independence and professional growth. For instance, Okia et al. (2021) state that nondirective supervision moderately improves the performance of teachers, yet Owan et al. (2023) indicate that nondirective supervision strongly enhances teacher effectiveness. Other studies also strongly link nondirective supervision to open communication, support, and performance (Altinok, 2024; Pacia & Guevarra, 2023). Therefore, there is still a need to re-examine nondirective supervision and its influence on teachers' performance to iron out such controversies.

Additionally, many Ugandan studies on supervision and performance have identified the lack of relevant skills by head teachers to enable them to provide effective guidance (Okia, 2022; Wekutile, 2019; Zikanga et al., 2021). For this reason, some scholars such as Okia (2022) suggest that combining directive and nondirective methods could offer a more balanced approach and address persistent challenges in the performance of teachers.

Insights from the reviewed studies reveal limited empirical inquiry on nondirective supervision and performance of teachers in the context of public primary schools

in Ibanda municipality. Many studies reviewed were either done outside this geographical context, focused on secondary schools, or were so general that they lacked context-specific insights about Ibanda (Okia et al., 2021; Owan et al., 2023; Zikanga et al., 2021). Regarding the methodology, some studies are purely quantitative, while others are only qualitative. Therefore, we found a need for a mixed methods study in Ibanda municipality as it would offer a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the study's variables. Consequently, previous studies provide a strong foundation that enables the current study to narrow its focus but remain comprehensive.

Methodology

Research Paradigm

The study was based on pragmatism, which is a research philosophy that values practical applications of knowledge to solve problems. Therefore, pragmatism rejects the strictness of either quantitative research or qualitative research, and instead emphasises an approach that works best in practice. This made pragmatism the most appropriate paradigm to support our mixed methods study.

Research Approach

The researchers used a mixed methods approach since it facilitated the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Therefore, both interviews and a self-administered questionnaire were used to collect data. The methods of analysis were both qualitative (thematic) and quantitative (statistical analysis using SPSS). This made the study comprehensive enough to offer a balanced and thorough understanding of the nexus between the variables studied.

Research Design

The research design was cross-sectional as it enabled the collection of data at a single point in time to capture a snapshot of the variables. The design aligned well with pragmatism and mixed methods because it enabled the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide thoroughness within the same timeframe.

Sampling

A sample of 147 respondents was drawn from a population of 251. The participants included teachers, head teachers, a municipal inspector of schools, and a municipal

education officer. The sample size for teachers was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of sample size determination and recruited using stratified random sampling. Besides, the head teachers were selected through convenience sampling, but their sample size was determined by the saturation principle. Finally, the municipal education inspectors and officials were recruited through purposive sampling. Only 22 public primary schools were studied out of the 42 in Ibanga municipality. These made over 50% and were representative enough of the municipal cells that had public primary schools. This is illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Population Distribution and Sampling

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Head teachers	22	13	Convenience
Teachers	227	141	Stratified random
Municipal Education Officer	01	01	Purposive sampling
Municipal Inspector of Schools	01	01	Purposive sampling
Total	251	147	

Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected from teachers using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire had three sections. Section A gathered background information on age, gender, qualifications, and experience in school. Section B gathered data on nondirective supervision and had 8 items, while Section C had 13 items gathering data about job performance. On the other hand, qualitative data were collected from the municipal inspector of schools, head teachers, and municipal education officers through interviews.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews were analysed thematically. The thematic analysis process began with familiarisation with the data, followed by coding, generating and reviewing themes and finally naming themes and reporting. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analysed through SPSS using descriptive and

inferential statistics. Therefore, frequencies, percentages, means, and correlations were used to organise and interpret quantitative data.

Validity and Reliability

A validity test was performed to establish if the questionnaire items could measure the variables in the study. Researchers engaged experts to examine the questionnaire and identify relevant and irrelevant items, then suggest improvements. The content validity index (CVI) was then determined by dividing the number of relevant items by the number of all items. The calculated CVI was 0.80 which is above the recommended. Therefore, the questionnaire was regarded as valid for data collection.

On the other hand, reliability was tested through piloting the questionnaire among 10% of the teachers (14 teachers). The pilot results were analysed for reliability using SPSS version 27, and internal consistency was determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a statistical measure. The coefficient value was 0.80, which is adequate for the questionnaire to be considered credible for the study.

Finally, for qualitative data, the researchers ensured trustworthiness through transparency, consistent questioning, and member checking. Besides, credibility was enhanced through rich descriptions, while dependability was ensured through systematic documentation and transferability through providing a detailed context to support meaningful interpretation.

Results

The findings of the study are presented in line with the purpose, hypothesis, and question investigated in the study. Therefore, both qualitative and quantitative findings are presented below.

Response Rate

The questionnaire response rate was very good at 94% because out of the 141 questionnaires distributed, 133 were returned. For interviews, out of the 22 head teachers that were scheduled to be interviewed, data saturation was achieved at 13 because themes started recurring and additional interviews yielded no new information. In addition to the head teachers, one municipal inspector of schools and a municipal education officer were interviewed, bringing the total of interviews to 15 (63%). The response rate is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Response Rate

Instruments	Targeted	Actual	Response Rate
Interview	24	15	63%
Questionnaires	141	133	94%

The response rate was sufficient enough for the researchers to continue with data analysis, as advised by several researchers, such as Mellahi and Harris (2016), that a response rate of 50% and above is sufficient in humanities research.

Background Information

Background information on age, gender, highest level of qualification, and years spent in school was collected from teachers through a self-administered questionnaire. The results are summarised in Table 3 below:

Table 3

Background Information of Respondents

Item	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	78	59
	Female	55	41
	Total	133	100
Age group	Below 20 yrs	2	1.5
	20-30 yrs	63	47.4
	30-40yrs	31	23.4
	40-50yrs	19	14.2
	Above 50yrs	18	13.5
	Total	133	100
Highest level of education	Certificate	75	56.3
	Diploma	51	38.4
	Bachelors	5	4.0
	Masters	2	1.3
	Total	133	100

Years in school	1-5yrs	72	54.3
	6-10yrs	39	29.1
	11yrs+	22	16.6
	Total	133	100

Table 3 shows that respondents have diverse demographic characteristics and experiences. Therefore, the sample was diverse enough to offer credible, valuable, rich and generalisable insights about the study's purpose. All genders, age groups, official levels of qualification for primary school teachers, and various levels of experience were represented. For example, males were 78 (59%) while females were 55 (41%), showing fair representation of views from both genders. For the age group, as the majority (63 or 47.4%) were 20-30 years, all age groups were represented, connoting a mixture of maturity and youthfulness. These different age groups have different tastes and preferences when it comes to supervision and performance. Therefore, the representation of all groups ensured a balance of views. The respondents were also qualified enough to respond to the self-administered questionnaire. This could partly explain the high questionnaire response rate of 94%. Respondents had also spent sufficient time in their school to enable them to familiarize themselves with supervision, so they can give reliable information. However, there could also be gaps in advanced training or experience due to the predominance of young teachers and certificates. This could influence both supervisory practices and teacher performance.

Nondirective Supervision

The questionnaire had eight items measuring nondirective supervision on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from SD=Strongly Disagree to SA=Strongly Agree. Table 4 below presents the descriptive results of the nondirective supervision.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Nondirective Supervision

Items measuring non-directive supervision		SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
My head teacher avoids deciding	F %	24 (18.0%)	38 (28.6%)	30 (22.6%)	25 (18.8%)	16 (12.0%)	2.78

My head teacher is unavailable when needed	F %	22 (16.5%)	35 (26.3%)	34 (25.6%)	27 (20.3%)	15 (11.3%)	2.83
My head teacher reacts to problems only if serious	F %	21 (15.8%)	31 (23.3%)	28 (21.1%)	35 (26.3%)	18 (13.5%)	2.98
My head teacher reacts to problems only if chronic	F %	26 (19.5%)	30 (22.6%)	29 (21.8%)	29 (21.8%)	19 (14.3%)	2.88
My head teacher reacts to failure	F %	19 (14.3%)	33 (24.8%)	27 (20.3%)	34 (25.6%)	20 (15.0%)	3.02
My head teacher delays responding to issues	F %	25 (18.8%)	32 (24.1%)	26 (19.5%)	30 (22.6%)	20 (15.0%)	2.91
My head teacher reacts only when the situation worsens	F %	23 (17.3%)	30 (22.6%)	31 (23.3%)	29 (21.8%)	20 (15.0%)	2.95
My head teacher avoids involvement	F %	27 (20.3%)	34 (25.6%)	28 (21.1%)	25 (18.8%)	19 (14.3%)	2.80

Results in Table 4 regarding the practice of nondirective supervision by head teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality generally indicate that the majority of the respondents either disagreed or remained neutral (not sure), as responses look fairly balanced. On average, responses with “Disagree” and “Not Sure” frequently record higher percentages as responses on “Strongly Agree” record relatively lower percentages. This suggests that, much as nondirective supervisory practices exist, they are not dominant.

Mean scores range between 2.78 and 3.02, which indicates a moderate level of agreement with the statements related to nondirective supervisory practices. The most commonly observed practice is associated with item “My head teacher reacts to failure,” which has the highest mean score (3.02). On the other hand, the lowest prevalent nondirective supervision behaviour is associated with item “My head teacher avoids deciding” which has the lowest mean score (2.78). However, most mean scores for most of the items are generally in the middle of the scale. This suggests that nondirective supervision is practiced but not dominantly. Therefore, nondirective supervision is moderately expressed in public primary schools in Ibanda Municipality.

Results were enhanced with findings from the interviews carried out, where thematic areas identified discouraged nondirective supervision. All the respondents interviewed agreed that they sparingly use nondirective supervision. Respondent B said, “I use nondirective supervision to motivate my staff. Many of them do not prefer direction all the time.” However, Respondent A noted, “Much as nondirective supervision is preferred by my teachers, it does not bring about performance. When you avoid direct involvement, your teachers end up being lazy.”

Respondent N said:

When teachers come in to work for the school, they are given a copy of school rules and regulations. They are also expected to sign a contract which contains their job description and specifications. One key duty of management is to make sure that teachers are supervised to find out if he is doing his job well as specified in the contract. I don't encourage nondirective supervision as it doesn't cause performance, yet directive supervision also discourages performance. I therefore prefer collaborative supervision.

These views support the descriptive results, which showed that nondirective supervision in the schools was moderately practiced, as it was not found dominant. Findings from interviews add an interesting element of performance, as most respondents interviewed were using nondirective supervision sparingly, citing that the approach does not encourage performance.

Job Performance of Teachers

Job performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality was studied using 13 items that were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA). The table below summarises the descriptive statistics drawn from the results on this variable.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Job Performance

Items measuring job performance of teachers		SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean
I am planning on working for another school within a period of three years	F %	28 20.6%	9 7.5%	53 40.2%	19 14.0%	24 17.7%	3.00
Within this school, my work gives me satisfaction	F %	10 7.5%	4 2.8%	61 45.8%	26 19.6%	32 24.3%	3.50

If I wanted to do another job, I would look first at the possibilities within this school	F %	5 3.7%	16 12.1%	45 33.6%	41 30.8%	24 18.7%	3.49
I maintain accurate records of my learners' progress and use them to improve my performance	F %	8 6.0%	16 12.0%	37 27.8%	41 30.8%	31 23.4%	3.55
I create an inclusive and conducive environment for effective teaching and learning	F %	10 7.5%	10 7.5%	35 26.4%	39 29.3%	39 29.3%	3.63
I see a future for myself within this school	F %	7 5.6%	12 9.3%	60 44.9%	32 24.3%	18 14.0%	3.32
It does not matter if I am working for this school or another, as long as I have work	F %	9 6.5%	17 13.1%	36 27.1%	40 29.9%	28 21.5%	3.48
I actively contribute to school improvement projects like extracurricular activities	F %	7 5.6%	17 13%	36 27.2%	41 30.8%	32 23.4%	3.55
If I could start over again, I would choose to work for another school	F %	3 1.9%	5 3.7%	54 41.2%	50 37.3%	21 15.9%	3.61
If I received an attractive job offer from another school, I would take the job	F %	5 3.7%	9 6.5%	57 43.0%	38 29.0%	24 17.8%	3.50
I love working for this school and I always prepare teaching/learning materials like lesson plans	F %	11 8.4%	9 6.5%	35 26.2%	40 29.9%	38 29.0%	3.63
I have checked out a job in another school previously	F %	19 14.0%	10 7.5%	32 24.3%	41 30.8%	31 23.4%	3.42
The work I am doing is very important to me so I always provide feedback to my students to improve their learning outcomes	F %	4 2.7%	6 4.7%	20 15.0%	15 11.2%	88 66.4%	3.34

Table 5 shows that most teachers expressed moderate to high levels of agreement on most items. Much as percentage distributions show that most respondents were satisfied and dedicated to their work, there is openness to change in the workplace. This is indicated by 24.3% respondents who strongly agree with the statement “Within this school, my work gives me satisfaction,” while 40.2% were unsure regarding the item “I am planning on working for another school within a period of three years,” and 30.8% had previously explored jobs in other schools. However, it is important to note that many respondents show strong involvement in professional responsibilities, which indicates good levels of job performance. For example, 66.4% strongly agree that they provide feedback to improve student outcomes, 58.9% generally agree that they always prepare teaching materials. Another area to note is the big number of respondents who are not sure about performance of their responsibilities. For example, 27.8 were not sure about maintaining records, while 26.4 were not sure about creating conducive and inclusive learning environments.

Regarding mean scores, this range is between 3.00 and 3.63, which suggests that there was moderate to high job performance. Highest means were seen in items like preparing lesson materials and creating a conducive teaching environment (3.63), while the lowest mean reflected uncertainty about remaining in the current school (3.00), which indicates mixed long-term commitment.

In relation to interviews with head teachers and municipal education officials, there was a general consensus that teacher performance was not so bad, save for some stubborn teachers who were not yielding to the demands of their responsibilities. They were asked to rate the job performance of instructors in their school over the years, and various associated replies were provided, indicating that teachers in their schools had a high degree of dedication, satisfaction, motivation, and performance.

For example, Respondent A said:

As school administrators, we ensure that teachers are encouraged to speak out about the issues they face in order to become more stable in the workplace. We occasionally consult with instructors to determine their contentment with the working environment under which they function. With the exception of a few teachers, most teachers report being satisfied with their working conditions. However, we are making an effort to communicate with them and ensure that their requirements are met. This will help us when it comes to their roles. When we reach out to them in our supervision schedules, they will do what we want them to do, or what the profession demands that they do. Nevertheless, there are a few teachers who insist and ignore their roles and duties and perform poorly, despite our efforts to motivate them to work and supervise them

well so that they meet their performance expectations. However, I see that whenever we step up supervision, they change and work.

However, this is inconsistent with studies and reports that have previously alluded to low levels of teacher performance in the municipality, such as Abakunda et al. (2024), Akanshemeza (2018), and some reports from the Department of Education of the municipality.

Correlation Analysis

The research hypothesis stating that there is a significant relationship between nondirective supervision and the performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality was tested through correlation analysis. The results of the correlation test are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Correlation Analysis

	Job performance of teachers	Non-directive supervisory practices
Job performance of teachers	1	- 0.29**
Non-directive supervisory practices	- 0.29**	1

Table 6 reveals that there is a negative relationship between nondirective supervision and job performance. However, it is also indicated that, although it is a statistically significant relationship, it is weak as indicated by a correlation coefficient of -0.29**. This means that an increase in nondirective supervisory practices will reduce the job performance of teachers. The double asterisks (**) indicating the significance of the correlation imply that the relationship is not due to random chance. Therefore, this reinforces the importance of supervision in influencing educational outcomes, much as the negative correlation indicates that nondirective supervisory practices may not be conducive to improving the performance of teachers. This is in agreement with findings from interviews where all respondents were in agreement that, although nondirective supervision is sometimes practiced, it does little to improve the performance of teachers.

Discussion

The main purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between nondirective supervision and the performance of teachers in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. In order to be thorough and comprehensive, the researchers also gathered perspectives of head teachers and municipal educational officials about how nondirective supervision influences the performance of teachers. Results indicate that there is a significant but weak negative relationship of -0.29^{**} between nondirective supervision and teacher performance in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality hence accepting the research hypothesis. This means that when head teachers practice more nondirective supervision, the performance of teachers reduces because the two variables move in different directions. The correlation results are consistent with the descriptive results for both nondirective supervision and teacher performance. For instance, the nondirective supervision mean scores that range from 2.78 to 3.02 generally indicate that there was neutral to moderate disagreement with the statements about nondirective supervision. This shows that nondirective supervision is not dominant much as it is practiced. This weak agreement aligns with the negative correlation because it shows that nondirective supervision is not sufficient enough to enhance teacher performance. On the other hand, the mean scores for teacher performance ranging from 3.00 to 3.63 suggest that there are moderate to high performance levels.

The quantitative results are further strengthened by qualitative findings from interviews, as many interviewees generally agreed that nondirective supervision is not a major style they rely on most of the time, as it may encourage laziness and poor performance. Much as interviewees said they use the nondirective approach to empower teachers and make them more involved in their own affairs, it is done sparingly, as many teachers take advantage of this approach to dodge work. This elaborates on the negative relationship between nondirective supervision and teacher performance, which the correlation results produced.

Much as these results are in agreement with some earlier studies, they diverge from others. For example, they diverge from Okia et al. (2021), who posit that nondirective supervision enhances the effectiveness of teachers. On the other hand, the findings align with studies by Hoque et al. (2022) and McGhee and Stark (2021), who suggest that nondirective supervision is negatively associated with the performance of teachers. Therefore, the current study adds to the discussions of earlier studies by providing context-specific evidence from public primary schools in Ibanda municipality.

The results also streamline the application of the path-goal theory in enhancing teacher performance in the context of Ibanda municipality public primary schools. Since the path-goal theory emphasises other approaches such as directive, supportive, and achievement-oriented supervision, this may imply that there should be a balanced application of supervisory approaches for better results. This is because the current study reveals that nondirective supervision alone is negatively associated with performance. Therefore, other supervisory approaches may be needed to enhance teacher performance.

However, the researchers recognise that there are some limitations regarding the current study, especially relating to context. The study was limited to public primary schools in Ibanda municipality. The study also did not extend to other supervision styles as it focused on only nondirective supervision. Therefore, future studies may explore areas outside the context of this study such as private schools or other geographical areas within Uganda. Besides, other studies can compare private and public schools or combine both directive and nondirective supervisory practices.

Conclusion

This study reveals that there is a statistically significant but weak relationship between nondirective supervision and the performance of teachers. These findings imply that nondirective supervision is not sufficient to solve the poor teacher performance in public primary schools in Ibanda municipality, hence calling for an integrated approach in supervision. Therefore, supervisors such as education officials and head teachers need to employ a variety of supervisory practices to create balance and maximise teacher performance. The study is unique as it provides context-specific mixed methods insights on nondirective supervision and performance of teachers in Ibanda municipality. This presents a strong foundation necessary for refining educational policies and supervisory practices both in Ibanda municipality and similar contexts elsewhere because the findings offer a good benchmark opportunity for improvement in educational leadership and teacher performance. Results for this study are a wake-up call for policymakers and other stakeholders in education, such as school leaders and administrators, to reconsider supervision approaches so as to take a more collaborative and integrated framework in supervision for better results. This will ensure alignment of supervision with the current demands of the modern education system. We reiterate that future studies should focus on integrated supervision or open contexts in other areas.

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