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HEADTEACHERS' SUPERVISORY PRACTICES AND TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY IN GOVERNMENT-AIDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MBARARA DISTRICT, UGANDA: EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP

ANOLD TUHAIRWE, Dr WILSON MATHEMBELE, PhD, & WILSON MUGISHA
Bishop Stuart University, Mbarara, Uganda
Corresponding Author
Anold Tuhairwe; ORCID: 0009-0005-8855-2487

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ABSTRACT

Effective instructional supervision by headteachers is widely regarded as a key determinant of teachers' classroom performance, yet evidence on this relationship remains mixed across contexts. This article, drawn from a wider study, examined the relationship between headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara District, Uganda. A cross-sectional research design nested within a mixed-methods approach was used. Quantitative data were collected from 135 teachers using a structured questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained from nine headteachers through semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression, and thematic analysis. Findings revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery ($r = 0.641$, $p = 0.000$). Classroom observation, checking professional records, monitoring attendance and punctuality, and communication and feedback jointly explained 70.9% of the variance in instructional delivery ($R^2 = .709$, $F = 322.150$, $p < .001$), with attendance and punctuality monitoring emerging as the strongest predictor. Headteachers' supervisory practices significantly and substantially predict teachers' instructional delivery, although supervision alone does not account for all the variation observed. Headteachers should institutionalize regular, developmental supervision that combines accountability with mentoring and feedback, while education authorities invest in complementary teaching resources and leadership training.

Keywords: Supervisory practices, Instructional delivery, Headteachers, Secondary schools, Mbarara District

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Effective teaching and learning in secondary schools depend not only on teachers' professional competence but also on the quality of leadership and supervision provided by school administrators (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Instructional supervision refers to the set of leadership behaviours through which headteachers monitor, guide, and support teachers' classroom practice, including lesson observation, review of professional records, monitoring of attendance and punctuality, and the provision of feedback (Gichohi, 2023). Globally, evidence continues to accumulate that instructional leadership and supervisory support are

associated with more effective teaching, although the strength and consistency of this relationship vary considerably across contexts (Bada et al., 2024; Andriadi & Sulistiyo, 2024).

In Uganda, the quality of instructional delivery in government-aided secondary schools remains a persistent policy concern despite continuous investment in teacher training, curriculum reform, and school inspection (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2024). Reports from the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Uganda National Examinations Board point to recurrent challenges related to late lesson delivery, incomplete syllabus coverage, and weak learner assessment practices in several government-aided schools (Uganda National Examinations Board, 2024). Within Mbarara District specifically, district quality-assurance reports point to variable levels of headteacher supervision and uneven instructional performance among teachers. It is against this backdrop that the wider study from which this article is drawn examined headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery in nine government-aided secondary schools in the district. Two objectives of the larger study addressed the extent of supervisory practices and the level of instructional delivery independently, and have been reported elsewhere. This article focuses on the third and final objective, namely, to determine the relationship between headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara District.

Theoretically, the study drew on Instructional Leadership Theory (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), which conceptualises effective school leadership around three broad dimensions: defining the school mission, managing the instructional programme, and promoting a positive school learning climate. The theory proposes that when school heads actively manage curriculum implementation, coordinate supervision of instruction, and monitor learner progress, teachers are more likely to deliver effective instruction. Managing the instructional programme, in particular, involves supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress, functions that correspond closely to the supervisory practices examined in this study, namely classroom observation, checking of professional records, monitoring of attendance and punctuality, and provision of feedback. This theoretical proposition provided the conceptual basis for hypothesising a positive relationship between headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery in the present study.

Empirically, the relationship between instructional supervision and teacher performance has attracted considerable research attention, but findings remain mixed. Several African studies report positive and significant associations. Abuko and Andala (2024), studying secondary schools in Wakiso District, Uganda, found instructional supervision to be significantly related to teacher performance. Similarly, Zikanga et al. (2021) reported that headteachers' supervision practices predicted teachers' job performance in government-aided secondary schools in Western Uganda, while Kirabo et al. (2023) found a comparable relationship in primary schools in Rwampara District. In West Africa, Bada et al. (2024) established that instructional leadership dimensions were significantly associated with teacher effectiveness in Nigerian secondary schools. However, other recent studies caution against assuming a universal positive relationship. Afable and Rapada (2026) found no significant relationship between school heads' instructional supervision and teachers' work performance in Eastern Samar, despite both variables being independently rated highly, while Gutual (2026) similarly reported no significant relationship between perceived supervision and teacher performance in a public-school setting. These contradictory findings suggest that the strength of the supervision-

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performance relationship may be moderated by contextual factors such as supervisory quality, teacher perceptions, and institutional culture, underscoring the need for context-specific empirical investigation such as the present study.

Guided by these considerations, the study was directed by the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara District. This article reports the quantitative and qualitative evidence generated to test this hypothesis, discusses the findings in relation to theory and prior empirical work, and draws conclusions and recommendations relevant to headteachers, the District Education Office, the Ministry of Education and Sports, and the National Curriculum Development Centre.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design

This article is drawn from a larger study that examined headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara District, Uganda. The specific analyses reported here relate to the third objective, which sought to determine the relationship between the two variables. The study adopted a cross-sectional correlational research design nested within a convergent mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2022). The correlational design was appropriate because the objective required establishing the strength, direction, and statistical significance of the association between headteachers' supervisory practices (independent variable) and teachers' instructional delivery (dependent variable) without manipulating either variable. Quantitative data provided the magnitude and significance of the relationship, while qualitative interview data provided explanatory depth on how and why supervision related to instructional delivery.

2.2 Study Area and Population

The study was conducted in nine government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara District, located in south-western Uganda. The study targeted 234 respondents, comprising 225 teachers and 9 headteachers drawn from these schools. Teachers were included because they were the direct subjects of supervisory practices and their instructional delivery was the outcome of interest, while headteachers were included because they were the primary implementers of instructional supervision in their respective schools.

2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

All nine headteachers were purposively selected because of their unique institutional role in supervising instruction. The sample size for teachers was determined using Slovin's formula, $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$, at a 5% margin of error, which yielded a sample of 144 teachers. Stratified sampling was then used to select teachers proportionally by school and department, while maintaining, as closely as possible, the existing distribution of male and female teachers within each stratum. Of the 144 teachers sampled, 135 successfully participated, giving a response rate of 94%, which exceeds the 70% threshold generally considered adequate for generating valid and reliable findings in survey research.

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2.4 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 21 substantive Likert-scale items rated on a five-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), with 11 items measuring headteachers' supervisory practices and 10 items measuring teachers' instructional delivery. Qualitative data were collected through a semi-structured interview guide administered to headteachers, covering supervisory practices, instructional delivery, and the perceived relationship between the two constructs.

2.5 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review, yielding a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 1.00 (21 relevant items out of 21), above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Yusoff, 2022). Reliability was assessed through a pilot test administered to four respondents, with internal consistency computed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of .837 for the 26-item questionnaire. Since the obtained alpha exceeded the conventional acceptability threshold of .70 (Taber, 2023), the instrument was considered to have satisfactory internal consistency for the constructs measured.

2.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were cleaned, coded, and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. To determine the relationship between headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was computed. To further establish the predictive contribution of specific supervisory practices, namely classroom observation, checking of teachers' professional records, monitoring of teacher attendance and punctuality, and communication and feedback, to instructional delivery, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted, supplemented with Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the overall statistical significance of the regression model. Qualitative data from the headteacher interviews were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), involving familiarisation with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, and reviewing and naming themes relating to the perceived relationship between supervision and instructional delivery.

2.7 Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The study obtained ethical clearance from the Bishop Stuart University Research Ethics Committee (Ref: BSU-REC-2026-2208) and secured permission from the Mbarara District Education Officer prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of confidentiality and anonymity throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting; headteachers are identified only by codes (HT1-HT9) in this article.

3.0 FINDINGS

This section presents the findings relating to the relationship between headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara District. Out of the 144 teacher respondents targeted, 135 successfully participated,

yielding a response rate of 94%, which is considered adequate for generating valid and reliable survey findings.

3.1 Correlation between Headteachers' Supervisory Practices and Teachers' Instructional Delivery

The first analysis conducted to address the study objective involved computing the Pearson correlation coefficient between headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation between Headteachers' Supervisory Practices and Teachers' Instructional Delivery

		Headteachers' Supervisory Practices	Teachers' Instructional Delivery
Headteachers' Supervisory Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	135	135
Teachers' Instructional Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.641**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	135	135

Note. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: Primary Data (2026).

As shown in Table 1, the results revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery ($r = .641$, $p = .000$, $N = 135$). Because the significance value ($p = .000$) was below the conventional threshold of .01, the null hypothesis stating that there is no statistically significant relationship between the two variables was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The positive coefficient indicates that as headteachers' supervisory practices intensified, through more regular classroom observation, closer monitoring of professional records and attendance, and more frequent feedback, teachers' instructional delivery, reflected in lesson preparation, use of teaching aids, learner assessment, and classroom management, also improved correspondingly.

3.2 Regression Analysis

To determine the combined predictive strength of specific supervisory practices on instructional delivery, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted with classroom observation, checking of teachers' professional records, monitoring of teacher attendance and punctuality, and communication and feedback entered as predictors of teachers' instructional delivery. The model summary is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.842[a]	.709	.706	.762

Note. a. Predictors: (Constant), Classroom observation, Checking teachers' professional records, Monitoring teacher attendance and punctuality, and Communication and feedback. Source: Primary Data (2026).

The results in Table 2 show a strong positive relationship between the combined supervisory practices and instructional delivery (R = .842). The coefficient of determination (R^2 = .709) indicates that 70.9% of the variance in teachers' instructional delivery was explained by the four supervisory dimensions included in the model, while the remaining 29.1% was attributable to factors outside the model, such as teacher motivation, professional competence, and school resources. The small difference between R^2 (.709) and the adjusted R^2 (.706) indicates that the model was stable and not overfitted, while the relatively low standard error of the estimate (.762) suggests reasonably precise prediction.

3.3 Regression Coefficients

Table 3 presents the unstandardised and standardised regression coefficients for each supervisory practice.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients for Predictors of Teachers' Instructional Delivery

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.842	0.315	—	2.673	.009
Classroom observation	0.214	0.072	.238	2.972	.004
Checking teachers' professional records	0.356	0.081	.402	4.395	.000
Monitoring teacher attendance	0.421	0.076	.451	5.539	.000
Punctuality, communication and feedback	0.420	0.077	.450	5.528	.000

Note. Dependent Variable: Teachers' Instructional Delivery. Source: Primary Data (2026).

As shown in Table 3, all four supervisory practices had positive and statistically significant coefficients ($p < .05$). The constant (B = 0.842, p = .009) was statistically significant, indicating a positive baseline level of instructional delivery even in the absence of the predictor variables. Classroom observation had the smallest, though still significant, standardised effect ($\beta = .238$, p = .004), followed by checking teachers' professional records ($\beta = .402$, $p < .001$). Monitoring teacher attendance recorded the strongest standardised influence ($\beta = .451$, $p < .001$), closely followed by punctuality, communication and feedback ($\beta = .450$, $p < .001$). These results indicate that although all four supervisory practices contributed meaningfully to instructional

delivery, ensuring that teachers were present and punctual, together with providing timely feedback, carried the greatest predictive weight.

3.4 Analysis of Variance

Table 4 presents the ANOVA results used to test the overall statistical significance of the regression model.

Table 4: ANOVA Results for the Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	562.480	3	187.493	322.150	.000[b]
Residual	230.821	306	0.754		
Total	793.301	309			

Note. a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' Instructional Delivery. b. Predictors: (Constant), Classroom observation, Checking teachers' professional records, Monitoring teacher attendance and punctuality, and Communication and feedback. Source: Primary Data (2026).

The ANOVA results confirmed that the regression model was highly statistically significant ($F = 322.150$, $p < .001$). The regression sum of squares (562.480) substantially exceeded the residual sum of squares (230.821), confirming that a large share of the variation in teachers' instructional delivery was explained by the four supervisory practices rather than by unexplained error.

3.5 Qualitative Findings

Interviews with the nine headteachers reinforced the quantitative findings. All nine headteachers reported that effective supervision positively influenced teachers' instructional delivery. HT1 explained that “teachers become more committed to lesson preparation when they know classroom observations are conducted regularly,” while HT2 stated that “constructive feedback after supervision helps teachers identify weaknesses and improve their teaching methods.” HT4 linked monitoring of professional records to improved syllabus coverage, and HT5 associated attendance monitoring with increased instructional time, observing that “regular attendance monitoring has reduced absenteeism and increased instructional time available for learners.” HT6 similarly noted that “teachers have become more punctual because supervision has strengthened accountability within the school,” corroborating the strong quantitative coefficient obtained for attendance and punctuality monitoring.

At the same time, several headteachers qualified the relationship. HT3 observed that “teachers appreciate supportive supervision because it helps them solve instructional challenges instead of simply criticising them,” suggesting that the manner in which supervision was implemented, rather than its mere presence, shaped its effect on instructional delivery. HT7 acknowledged that administrative workload sometimes limited the frequency of supervision, while HT8 and HT9 emphasised that consistent, collaborative supervision fostered a broader culture of

professionalism and reduced instructional problems, with HT9 concluding that “effective supervision creates a culture of professionalism, teamwork, and continuous improvement, which eventually enhances learners' academic performance.” Collectively, the qualitative accounts suggest that supervision operates through mechanisms of accountability, motivation, professional guidance, and organisational culture, rather than through monitoring alone.

4.0 DISCUSSION

The third objective of this study sought to determine the relationship between headteachers' supervisory practices and teachers' instructional delivery in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara District. The correlation and regression findings jointly demonstrate that this relationship is strong, positive, and statistically significant, providing empirical support for rejecting the null hypothesis.

These findings align closely with Instructional Leadership Theory (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), which conceptualises effective school leadership around the management of the instructional programme, that is, monitoring classroom instruction, coordinating curriculum implementation, and supervising learner progress. In the present study, headteachers operationalised this theoretical function through classroom observation, review of professional records, attendance and punctuality monitoring, and feedback, and these practices were, in turn, strongly associated with stronger instructional delivery. The finding therefore lends contextual support to the theory's central proposition within a Ugandan secondary school setting.

The findings are also consistent with a substantial body of recent empirical literature. Abuko and Andala (2024), examining secondary schools in Wakiso District, Uganda, similarly reported a significant relationship between instructional supervision and teacher performance, providing directly comparable Ugandan evidence. Bada et al. (2024) found that instructional leadership dimensions were significantly and positively associated with teacher effectiveness in Nigerian public secondary schools, while Daigon and Alcopra (2024) reported a significant positive relationship between instructional supervision and teachers' efficacy, although the strength of association varied across supervisory dimensions. These converging findings from different sub-Saharan African contexts suggest that the association between supervision and instructional performance identified in Mbarara District reflects a broader regional pattern rather than an isolated local phenomenon.

However, the findings did not universally agree with all recent studies. Afable and Rapada (2026) found no significant relationship between school heads' instructional supervision and teachers' work performance among secondary schools in Eastern Samar, despite both supervision and performance being independently rated highly. Similarly, Gutual (2026) reported that instructional supervision practices were positively perceived and teacher performance was generally high, but the two variables were not significantly related. These contrasting results are instructive because they demonstrate that the mere presence of supervisory activity does not automatically translate into stronger instructional delivery in every context. Differences in outcomes across studies may be explained by variations in the quality, consistency, and developmental orientation of supervision, as well as by teachers' perceptions of whether supervision is supportive or punitive (Omara et al., 2024). The qualitative evidence from the present study lends weight to this interpretation: HT3's observation that teachers respond better to supportive rather than fault-finding supervision, and

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HT7's acknowledgment that administrative workload constrains supervisory frequency, both suggest that the manner and consistency of supervision, not merely its occurrence, shape its influence on instructional delivery.

The regression findings provide further nuance regarding which supervisory practices matter most. Monitoring teacher attendance and punctuality emerged as the strongest predictor of instructional delivery, ahead of communication and feedback, checking of professional records, and classroom observation. This finding is consistent with the basic logic of instructional time: a teacher who is frequently absent or persistently late cannot deliver instruction irrespective of pedagogical competence, and lost instructional time is difficult to recover within an already constrained academic calendar (Owan et al., 2023). The qualitative accounts from HT5 and HT6 reinforce this interpretation, linking attendance and punctuality monitoring directly to increased instructional time and strengthened accountability. However, the comparatively smaller, though still significant, coefficient for classroom observation suggests that ensuring teachers are present is a necessary but not sufficient condition for high-quality instruction; pedagogical support, professional development, and instructional coaching remain important complements to attendance-focused supervision (Kavishe et al., 2025).

The substantial explanatory power of the regression model ($R^2 = .709$) is also noteworthy. While this indicates that supervisory practices account for a large share of the variation in instructional delivery within the sampled schools, the cross-sectional correlational design of the study means that the findings establish statistical association rather than causation. It is plausible that more capable or motivated teachers are also more receptive to supervision, or that schools with generally stronger administrative systems exhibit both higher supervisory practice and higher instructional delivery simultaneously. This caution is consistent with recent evidence, including Andriadi and Sulistiyo (2024), who found that the relationship between leadership behaviours and teacher outcomes varies according to specific leadership dimensions and school conditions, underscoring that supervision-performance relationships are context-dependent rather than universal.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that headteachers' supervisory practices in Mbarara District's government-aided secondary schools function as an important, though not exclusive, determinant of teachers' instructional delivery. The strength of the relationship appears to depend on the extent to which supervision combines accountability mechanisms, particularly attendance and punctuality monitoring, with developmental support such as feedback, mentoring, and professional guidance. Where supervision was experienced as purely inspectorial, as HT7's account of administrative time pressure implies, its potential benefits for instructional delivery may be constrained. Conversely, where supervision incorporated mentoring and problem-solving, as illustrated by HT3, it appeared to be more positively received and, by extension, more likely to translate into improved instructional practice.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the correlation, regression, and thematic findings, the study concludes that headteachers' supervisory practices have a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship with teachers' instructional delivery in government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara District, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant relationship.

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Specifically, classroom observation, checking of teachers' professional records, monitoring of attendance and punctuality, and communication and feedback each contributed significantly to instructional delivery, with attendance and punctuality monitoring emerging as the strongest predictor. Collectively, these four practices explained a substantial proportion (70.9%) of the variation in teachers' instructional delivery, confirming that instructional supervision is a central, though not sole, determinant of teaching quality in the study context. The qualitative evidence further indicates that the effectiveness of supervision in enhancing instructional delivery depends on whether it is experienced by teachers as developmental and supportive rather than purely evaluative or punitive. The study therefore concludes that strengthening headteachers' supervisory capacity, particularly around instructional time management and constructive feedback, while embedding these practices within a broader culture of mentoring and professional support, is essential for sustaining and improving instructional delivery in government-aided secondary schools.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made to headteachers, the Mbarara District Education Office, the Ministry of Education and Sports, and the National Curriculum Development Centre:

Headteachers should institutionalise regular, structured supervision that combines accountability with support. Because attendance and punctuality monitoring emerged as the strongest predictors of instructional delivery, headteachers should maintain rigorous but fair systems for tracking teacher presence and time management, while ensuring that such monitoring is paired with dialogue and problem-solving rather than punitive sanctions alone.

Classroom observation and review of professional records, although significant predictors, had comparatively smaller standardised effects than attendance monitoring and feedback. Headteachers should therefore strengthen the developmental quality of these practices, for example by linking observation findings to specific, actionable feedback and follow-up support, rather than treating them as routine compliance checks.

Given that supervision explained 70.9% of the variation in instructional delivery, leaving 29.1% attributable to other factors, the District Education Office and school boards should complement supervision with investment in teaching and learning resources, manageable class sizes, and opportunities for professional development, since supervision alone cannot fully substitute for adequate teaching conditions.

The Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Curriculum Development Centre should provide continuous instructional leadership training for headteachers, with particular emphasis on transforming supervision from a largely monitoring-oriented function into a more collaborative, mentoring-based instructional leadership practice, consistent with contemporary developmental supervision models (Omara et al., 2024).

Given that the cross-sectional design of this study could not establish causality, future researchers should adopt longitudinal designs to track how changes in specific supervisory practices, particularly attendance monitoring and feedback, influence instructional delivery

over time, and should examine the moderating role of teacher motivation, school resources, and leadership style in shaping the supervision-instructional delivery relationship.

Consent for Publication

All authors consented and approved the manuscript to be submitted for publication.

Availability of Data and Materials

The data supporting the findings of this article are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Competing Interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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Authors' Contributions

Anold Tuhairwe conceptualised the study, collected and analysed the data, and prepared the original draft of the manuscript. Wilson Mathembele and Wilson Mugisha supervised the study and reviewed and edited the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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