Instructional Leadership and Teaching Quality of Academic Staff in Selected Public Universities in Uganda

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Abstract

Amid concerns over declining teaching quality in Ugandan public universities, this study examined how instructional leadership influences teaching quality within public universities in Uganda. The study examined how instructional supervision, curriculum implementation, professional development, and monitoring student progress affected teaching quality in Uganda. Based on the positivist research philosophy, the study employed a quantitative, correlational research design. Questionnaire data was obtained from a sample of 253 academic staff of public universities using simple random sampling. The partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) results revealed that professional development has a positive and significant influence on teaching quality. However, monitoring student progress had a positive, but insignificant, influence on teaching quality, while instructional supervision and curriculum implementation had a negative, but insignificant, influence on teaching quality. The study concluded that professional development was the most probable strategy for enhancing teaching quality in public universities. The study recommended that university leaders should prioritise the professional development of academic staff.

Keywords: *Instructional leadership; Supervision; Curriculum implementation; Professional development; Monitoring students' progress; Teaching quality.*

Introduction

In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, institutions must adapt while ensuring high teaching standards that cater to diverse student needs (Eslit, 2023). Teaching quality, defined as the effectiveness of instruction in achieving learning objectives, accommodating varied learning styles, and adhering to established educational standards (Sogunro, 2017), is a complex, multi-dimensional concept. According to Luoto (2020), it involves the thoughtful application of instructional methods to create meaningful and engaging learning experiences that directly influence student outcomes. Nilsen and Gustafsson (2016) note that quality teaching fosters both cognitive growth and students' emotional development, which are crucial for holistic learning. Doğan and Yurtseven (2017) emphasise the use of a variety of strategies and techniques that enhance student engagement, learning, and achievement. Jentsch and Schlesinger (2017) argue that effective teaching requires a skilful balance of classroom management, cognitive engagement, and individualised support. Therefore, teaching quality is best understood as an evolving practice, shaped by pedagogical decisions and students' needs.

Classroom management includes the administrative tasks that teachers undertake to enhance learning time and reduce distractions (Megawati et al., 2020), while also promoting inclusivity through diverse classroom practices (Kaweesi et al., 2023). Its goal is to reduce disruptions and maintain discipline, efficiently manage time, and establish clear classroom routines (Senden et al., 2022). Cognitive activation refers to instructional strategies that prompt students to engage in critical and reflective thinking (Li et al., 2021). These strategies utilise techniques such as activating prior knowledge and posing challenging questions to foster a deeper understanding (Teig et al., 2019). Student learning support is defined as the care, help, feedback, and advice provided by the teacher (Vidić et al., 2023), including personalised assistance, constructive

handling of errors, tailored pacing, and fostering meaningful interactions (Dorfner, 2019).

Teaching quality plays a vital role in promoting student engagement and success, as it motivates students to participate fully in their learning (Sogunro, 2017) and maintains their interest in the subject, thereby improving educational outcomes (Bellens et al., 2019). It allows learners to develop their full potential at their own pace and build a deeper understanding of content while practising goal-oriented skills (Nilsen & Gustafsson, 2016; Deunk et al., 2018). Described as "the backbone of all educational institutions" (Kurzweil, 2018), teaching quality is a central focus for universities in Uganda. Institutions have responded by promoting instructional leadership, rewarding teaching excellence, incorporating student feedback, managing classroom diversity, and enhancing communication between staff and students (Kaweesi et al., 2023; Nabaho et al., 2016). They also invest in staff development through scholarships and training, including workshops and seminars (Wakida et al., 2017), underscoring a commitment to continuous improvement in teaching quality.

Although public universities in Uganda have implemented various initiatives to improve instruction, the quality of teaching remains a longstanding concern. Issues such as lecturer absenteeism, high lecturer-student ratios, inadequate pedagogical training, and outdated teaching methods continue to hinder effective learning (Atwebembeire et al., 2018; Muganga & Senkusu, 2019; Mugizi et al., 2015; NCHE, 2021/2022). These problems have led to low work readiness among graduates, and raised ongoing questions about whether current instructional methods adequately prepare students for the demands of the labour market (MoES, 2019). According to Ludigo et al. (2024), about 63% of graduates from Ugandan universities are half-baked, unfit for employment, and lack job market skills. The graduates lack knowledge in their academic disciplines and are unaware of the latest developments in their fields of study. Most graduates experience difficulties with creativity, communication, and English language proficiency.

While the above contextual challenges are well-documented, less attention has been given to the leadership processes that could enhance teaching quality in higher education. Specifically, instructional

leadership encompassing supervision, curriculum implementation, professional development, and monitoring student progress, remains under-investigated in Ugandan universities. Most existing studies are not only from other contexts (Bahtilla & Hui, 2020; Gore et al., 2017; Karim et al., 2021; Maisyaroh et al., 2021; Nalzaro, 2022), but they also reveal mixed results regarding the impact of these leadership practices on teaching quality. For example, Nalzaro (2022) found no significant relationship between instructional leadership and teaching quality, whereas Maisyaroh et al. (2021) reported variations in instructional supervision strategies between Indonesia and the Philippines. These discrepancies suggest the absence of a unified position on the effectiveness of instructional leadership and highlight the need for context-specific investigations. Drawing on the Instructional Leadership Theory (ILT), this study examined the impact of instructional leadership aspects on the teaching quality of academic staff in selected public universities in Uganda, guided by the following hypotheses:

H1: Instructional supervision significantly impacts the teaching quality in public universities.

H2: Curriculum implementation has a significant influence on teaching quality in public universities.

H3: Professional development has a significant influence on teaching quality within public universities.

H4: Monitoring student progress significantly contributes to teaching quality in **Theoretical review**

The Instructional Leadership Theory (ILT) provided the conceptual framework for this study. Initially developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) from their instructional management model (Munna, 2021), ILT emphasises leadership that directly influences curriculum, teaching practices, and student learning outcomes. Instructional leaders are responsible for articulating the institution's mission and goals, supervising instruction, monitoring student performance, and overseeing the implementation of the curriculum. Furthermore, they create a supportive learning environment by safeguarding instructional time, recognising instructional excellence, promoting ongoing professional development, and maintaining active engagement with staff and students

(Kurnia et al., 2021). Through these roles, instructional leadership fosters teacher growth and enhances teaching quality (McBrayer et al., 2019). Despite its strengths, ILT exhibits certain limitations when applied to higher education contexts, particularly its traditionally hierarchical orientation that assumes centralised decision-making authority. This top-down approach may not fully capture the collegial and distributed leadership structures commonly found in universities, where academic autonomy and shared governance play significant roles (Mourão et al., 2022). Nevertheless, by emphasising facilitative leadership practices that support curriculum oversight, instructional supervision, student progress monitoring, and faculty professional development, ILT offers a robust lens for understanding the leadership processes that influence teaching quality in Ugandan higher education.

Literature Review

Instructional supervision and teaching quality

Instructional supervision, as outlined within ILT, is a vital leadership role that supports teachers in enhancing the teaching and learning environment through guidance, feedback, and professional development (Maisyaroh et al., 2021). Practices such as classroom observation, coaching, curriculum alignment, and goal setting (Sumapal & Haramain, 2023) reflect ILT's emphasis on sustained instructional engagement. Instructional supervision also promotes professionalism by enabling teachers to make sound pedagogical decisions and deliver quality instruction (Ampofo et al., 2019). Although several studies (Ashun & Acquah, 2021; Karim et al., 2021; Omaali et al., 2021; Setia & Nasrudin, 2020; Zikanga et al., 2021) indicate the existence of a relationship between instructional supervision and teaching quality, inconsistencies remain. Some report strong positive effects, while others reveal negligible and negative impacts (Karim et al., 2021), indicating contextual and methodological variations. In addition, except for the study by Omaali et al. (2021) and Zikanga et al. (2021), all the studies were done outside Uganda. These inconsistencies and contextual gaps called for this study, which situated instructional supervision within the ILT framework to examine its impact on teaching quality in Ugandan higher education.

Curriculum implementation and teaching quality

Within the framework of Instructional Leadership Theory (ILT), curriculum implementation represents a core leadership function that directly influences teaching quality. Instructional leaders play a pivotal role in ensuring that teachers effectively deliver instruction using prescribed resources, strategies, and assessment practices aligned with curriculum objectives (Nevenglosky et al., 2018). According to Palestina et al. (2020), curriculum implementation involves translating the curriculum blueprint into actual classroom practices, ensuring fidelity to its intended goals and methodologies. This process ensures that learners acquire the knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitudes essential for meaningful participation in society (Ochwo et al., 2023). ILT emphasises the instructional leader's responsibility to supervise and support teachers in enacting the curriculum as designed, ensuring consistent alignment between instructional delivery and institutional goals. Several studies (Cheserek et al., 2021; Chan et al., 2017; Bahtilla & Hui, 2020; Combs et al., 2022; Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2020; Haquea & David, 2022; Lytal, 2023; Süer & Kinay, 2022; Ochwo et al., 2023) have examined the relationship between curriculum implementation and teaching quality. However, except for Ochwo et al. (2023), who focused on vocational institutions in Uganda, there appears to be limited empirical evidence addressing this relationship within the Ugandan higher education context. Therefore, this study applied ILT to address this gap by examining how curriculum implementation influences teaching quality in Ugandan public universities.

Professional development and teaching quality

Professional development, as conceptualised within ILT, is a fundamental leadership responsibility that contributes directly to teaching quality. ILT emphasises the role of instructional leaders in promoting and facilitating continuous teacher learning to improve instructional effectiveness. Professional development enables teachers to acquire new knowledge and refine their skills through structured learning opportunities such as workshops, formal education, and collaborative training (Su & Wang, 2022; Meyer et al., 2023). Effective professional development programmes have been shown to influence how teachers engage with content and manage classrooms, ultimately benefitting learners and institutions

alike (Nguyen, 2019). Studies have explored the relationship between professional development and teaching quality (Lee & Lee, 2018; Gore et al., 2017; Liu & Liao, 2019; Meyer et al., 2023; Ogolo & Onukwu, 2019; Otaka et al., 2023; Postholm, 2018; Sancar et al., 2021; Su & Wang, 2022; Zaidi et al., 2018), consistently indicating positive impacts. However, none of these studies have specifically investigated this relationship within Ugandan universities. This contextual gap underscores the relevance of the current study, which utilises ILT to examine how professional development affects teaching quality in Ugandan higher education.

Monitoring students' progress and teaching quality

Monitoring student progress is a key element of instructional leadership, closely linked to the ILT. It reflects the leader's role in overseeing academic performance to ensure instructional effectiveness (Klapproth et al., 2022; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001). This process involves continuous assessment to track learners' achievement and inform instructional decisions, serving as a formative tool that offers ongoing feedback to both educators and students (Gebhardt et al., 2023). Teachers use it to determine students' current performance, set learning targets, and monitor progress towards those goals (Yaziz & Noordin, 2018). Effective progress monitoring enables timely instructional interventions, thereby enhancing both student outcomes and overall teaching quality. Although previous research (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001; Nunes et al., 2018; Vaccaro & Sabella, 2018) has examined its relevance, empirical evidence directly linking student progress monitoring to teaching quality is still limited. In the light of this gap, this study applied ILT to assess the influence of monitoring student progress on teaching quality in Ugandan universities.

Methodology

Research design and sample

This study employed a correlational research design, which is appropriate for exploring the nature and extent of influence among variables through quantitative data analysis techniques (Mohajan, 2020). The design facilitated the investigation of the association between instructional leadership and teaching quality among academic staff in Ugandan

public universities. The target population comprised 2,225 academic staff members across four public universities. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table, a representative sample of 327 participants was selected. To ensure that each institution was fairly represented in the population according to its size, proportionate sampling was used. This method ensured that larger universities contributed more respondents, while smaller institutions contributed fewer.

The distribution of the sample was as follows: Makerere University (219), Mbarara University of Science and Technology (50), Gulu University (22), and Busitema University (36). Within each institution, simple random sampling was employed to select individual participants. This method was chosen because it gave all eligible academic staff members an equal chance of selection, thereby minimising selection bias and enhancing the validity of the results (Eniego et al., 2025). After data cleaning, which involved handling missing data and removing outliers, 253 valid responses were retained for analysis, representing a usable response rate of 78.3%. This exceeds the 50% threshold suggested by Mellahi and Harris (2016) for survey studies, thus ensuring sufficient statistical power for the intended analyses.

Teaching quality was measured in terms of cognitive activation, classroom management, and student support (Fauth et al., 2019). Meanwhile, instructional leadership was defined as instructional supervision, curriculum implementation, monitoring students' progress, and professional development (Mourão et al., 2022). The study employed a self-administered questionnaire based on tools used by earlier scholars, specifically measuring teaching quality through classroom management, personal learning support, and cognitive activation (Jentsch & Schlesinger, 2017), as well as instructional leadership, including instructional supervision (Liu et al., 2022), curriculum implementation (Akram et al., 2017), professional development (Mourão et al., 2022), and monitoring students' progress (Akram et al., 2017). The indicators were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. To establish the validity and reliability of the instrument, measurement models (Table 2 and 3) and a structure model (Figure 1) were developed.

Data analysis involved both descriptive statistics and partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. Descriptive analysis included calculating means to summarise respondents' ratings of instructional leadership and teaching quality in the universities. PLS-SEM was employed to examine the influence of instructional leadership on teaching quality and to assess the adequacy of the measurement and structural models. This study adopted PLS-SEM over covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) or traditional regression because it is well-suited for both predictive and exploratory research and can handle complex models with multiple indicators (Hair et al., 2021). Furthermore, unlike CB-SEM, PLS-SEM simultaneously assesses measurement and structural models, addressing measurement error more effectively than regression (Sarstedt et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2021).

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines, with particular attention to informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. Participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, with participants voluntarily completing a self-administered questionnaire after acknowledging their understanding and agreement. To ensure confidentiality, the questionnaire did not collect any personally identifiable information, such as names or staff identification numbers. This measure also preserved participants' anonymity. Additionally, both individual questionnaires and participating universities were assigned unique alphanumeric codes. These codes were used solely for data management and statistical analysis, ensuring that the collected data could not be traced back to any specific individual or institution.

Findings

Demographic profiles of the respondents

The demographic profiles of the academic staff who participated in the study were captured. The profiles covered included sex, age in years, qualifications, and the number of years of teaching experience in universities, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: *Demographic profiles of the academic staff*

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Per cent
Gender	Male	149	58.9
	Female	104	41.1
	Total	253	100.0
Marital status	Single, never married	22	8.7
	Single, ever married	10	4.0
	Married	221	87.4
	Total	253	100.0
Highest academic qualification	Bachelor's degree	9	3.6
	Master's degree	88	34.8
	PhD	156	61.7
	Total	253	100.0
Academic rank	Graduate Fellow	14	5.5
	Assistant Lecturer	72	28.5
	Lecturer	102	40.3
	Senior Lecturer	47	18.6
	Associate Lecturer	12	4.7
	Professor	6	2.4
	Total	253	100.0
Responsibility in the university	Administrator	34	13.4
	Non-Administrator	219	86.6
	Total	253	100.0
Duration of teaching in current university	1 – 2 years	12	4.7
	3 – 4 years	39	15.4
	5 years and above	202	79.8
	Total	253	100.0

Source: Survey data (2023)

The study revealed that the majority of academic staff were male (58.9%), married (87.4%), and primarily engaged in teaching, with 86.6% holding non-administrative roles. This demographic highlights the need for gender-responsive teaching strategies and support for work-life balance among married staff to improve teaching effectiveness. Additionally, 61.7% of respondents held PhDs, and 79.8% had over 5 years of experience,

indicating a well-qualified, experienced teaching workforce. These factors support a shift in professional development towards innovative pedagogy and mentorship. The predominantly male, highly qualified, and experienced non-administrative staff contributed to a diverse and representative sample, enhancing the study's generalisability within Ugandan public universities.

Measurement models

The measurement models indicate how academic staff rated teaching quality and instructional leadership in universities, as well as the appropriateness of the constructs for measuring these aspects. The appropriateness of the measures was tested using average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity, heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio correlations for discriminant validity, and Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. The results follow in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.

Table 2: *AVE and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) discriminant validity assessment*

Measures	AVE	TQ	CM	CA	PLS	
TQ						
CM	0.639	0.725				
CA	0.575	0.100	0.109			
PLS	0.532	0.847	0.854	0.516		
Measures	**AVE**	**ILD**	**CI**	**IS**	**MSP**	**PD**
ILD						
CI	0.588	0.499				
IS	0.581	0.798	0.737			
MSP	0.615	0.399	0.250	0.774		
PD	0.538	0.375	0.299	0.809	0.742	

Abbreviations: CA = Cognitive Activation, CI= Curriculum Implementation, CM = Classroom Management, IS= Instructional Supervision, ILD = Instructional Leadership, MSP = Monitoring Students' Progress, PD = Professional Development, PLS = Personal Learning Support, TQ = Teaching Quality.

The means (Table 2) show that for both teaching quality and instructional leadership and their measures, the means were close to code four, which on the five-point Likert scale indicated "agreed" or "high". This means that academic staff rated teaching quality and instructional leadership as high. Convergent validity results in terms of average variance extracted (AVE) showed that all the AVE values were above the minimum of 0.5 level, and heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations were all below the maximum coefficient of 0.90 (Hair Jr et al., 2021), indicating validity of the instrument.

Table 3: *Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha for the study constructs*

Measures	α	CR
Classroom Management	0.905	0.925
Cognitive Activation	0.876	0.904
Personal Learning Support	0.837	0.882
Curriculum Implementation	0.882	0.909
Instructional Supervision	0.853	0.892
Monitoring Student Progress	0.841	0.887
Professional Development	0.855	0.890

The reliability results in Table 3 indicate that the Cronbach's and composite reliability values were a minimum of 0.70 for both (Hair Jr et al., 2021). This means that the indicators of the different measures (constructs) measuring the variables were reliable. Therefore, the indicators of the different measures were interrelated or highly correlated, hence reliable data was collected.

Structural equation model

To evaluate how instructional leadership affects teaching quality, a structural equation model linking the two was created. The model considers instructional leadership in terms of instructional supervision, curriculum implementation, monitoring students' progress, and professional development. The model (Figure 1) illustrates the relationship between these variables.

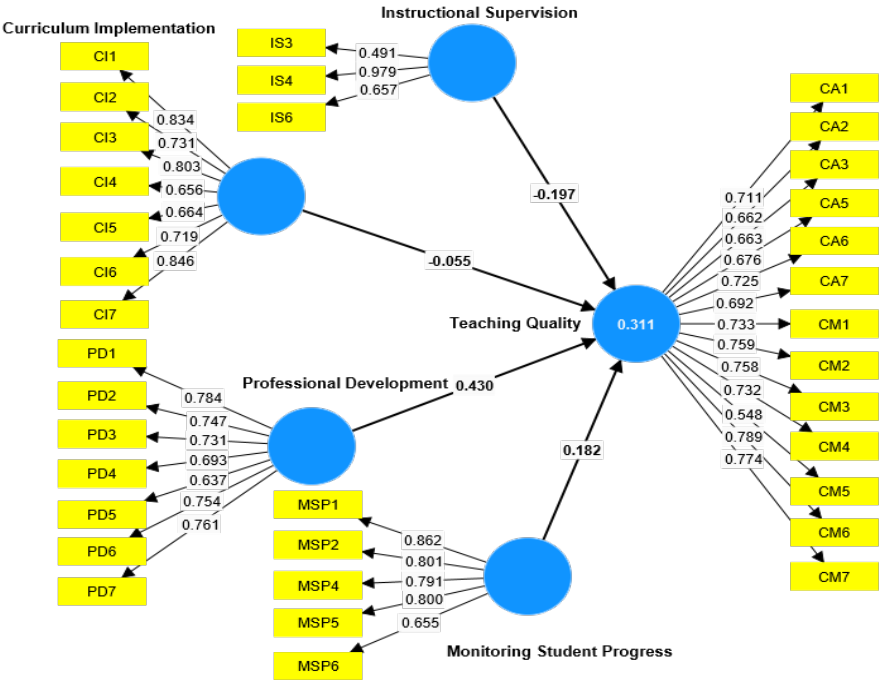

Figure 1: **Instructional leadership and teaching quality structural model**

The structural equation model (Figure 1) for instructional leadership and teaching quality reveals that teaching quality comprises two measures: cognitive activation and classroom management. The measure of personal learning support was dropped due to low loading. Instructional leadership comprised instructional supervision, curriculum implementation, professional development and monitoring students' progress. The model results (Table 4) include beta coefficients (βs), coefficients of determination (R^2 and adjusted R^2), t-statistics, and p-values. The coefficients of determination indicate the predictive power of instructional leadership on teaching quality. Four sub-hypotheses – examining the effects of instructional supervision, curriculum implementation, professional development, and monitoring students' progress – were found to have a significant influence on teaching quality. Table 4 presents structural equation estimates.

Table 4: *Instructional leadership and teaching quality path estimates*

		β	P
Instructional Supervision	Teaching Quality	-0.197	0.112
Curriculum Implementation	Teaching Quality	-0.055	0.599
Professional Development	Teaching Quality	0.430	0.000
Monitoring Student Progress	Teaching Quality	0.182	0.140
$R^2 = 0.311$			
R^2 adjusted = 0.300			

The structural equation estimates (Table 4) indicate that of the four instructional leadership aspects, only professional development ($\beta = 0.430$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) had a positive and statistically significant influence on teaching quality. While monitoring student progress ($\beta = 0.182$, $p = 0.140 < 0.05$) had a positive but insignificant influence on teaching quality, instructional supervision ($\beta = -0.197$, $p = 0.112 > 0.05$) and curriculum implementation ($\beta = --0.055$, $p = 0.599 > 0.05$) had a negative and insignificant influence on teaching quality. R^2 suggested that the four instructional leadership elements explained 31.1% of the variation in academic staff's teaching quality ($R^2 = 0.311$). Adjusted R^2 indicated that the only significant instructional leadership element of professional development accounted for 30.0% of the variance (adjusted $R^2 = 0.300$). Only professional development significantly contributed to teaching quality. Therefore, by prioritising investment in professional development programmes and opportunities, educational institutions can improve teaching quality.

Discussion

The study's findings highlight a complex relationship between instructional leadership components and teaching quality, partially aligning with the Instructional Leadership Theory (ILT), which asserts that supervision, curriculum oversight, professional development, and student progress monitoring shape teaching practices and outcomes (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Notably, regarding the first hypothesis (H1) that instructional supervision significantly impacts teaching quality in

public universities, the results revealed that instructional supervision had a negative, insignificant impact on teaching quality, contradicting ILT's core assumption. This outcome is consistent with findings by Karim et al. (2021) and Nalzaro Jr. (2022), who also observed minimal influence, suggesting that in contexts like Ugandan public universities, supervision may lack the effectiveness needed to improve instruction. In contrast, much of the existing literature reports positive, significant impacts of supervision (Ampofo et al., 2019; Ashun & Acquah, 2021; Maisyaroh et al., 2021). This disparity could stem from context-specific issues, such as weak supervision systems and insufficient integration of student feedback (Kaweesi et al., 2023; Nabaho et al., 2016). The results indicate that while ILT views supervision as essential, its effectiveness depends on the quality of implementation rather than its mere presence.

Contrary to the findings of previous studies, the findings of the second hypothesis (H2), which states that curriculum implementation has a significant influence on teaching quality in public universities, revealed that curriculum implementation had a negative and insignificant impact on teaching quality. They challenged ILT assumption that faithful curriculum delivery enhances instructional outcomes. This contrasted extensive evidence supporting the positive effects of curriculum fidelity on teaching quality (Dube & Jita, 2018; Chan et al., 2017; Ochwo et al., 2023). A possible explanation lies in the widespread use of teacher-centred approaches by academic staff in Uganda, which hinder cognitive engagement and stray from intended curriculum goals (Muganga & Ssenkusu, 2019). Thus, while ILT highlights the importance of curriculum oversight, this study suggests that effective implementation also depends on aligning teaching methods with curricular aims.

With respect to the third hypothesis (H3) that professional development has a significant influence on teaching quality within public universities, the study confirmed the hypothesis and ILT's emphasis on professional development having a positive and significant effect on teaching quality. This aligns with earlier research identifying professional development as a key factor in enhancing instructional practices (Bafadal et al., 2018; Liu & Hallinger, 2018; Sanchez & Watson, 2021). The use of scholarships, workshops, and training initiatives in Ugandan universities (Wakida et al., 2017) illustrates how well-structured

professional development can mitigate contextual challenges and improve teaching quality, reinforcing ILT's call for sustained educator support. Last but not least, concerning the fourth hypothesis (H4) that monitoring student progress significantly contributes to teaching quality in public universities, the study found that monitoring student progress had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on teaching quality, contrasting with much of the existing literature that links progress monitoring to improved instructional outcomes (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001; Nunes et al., 2018). This suggests that, in the Ugandan higher education context, monitoring practices may be inadequately integrated or poorly implemented, thereby limiting their effectiveness. Although ILT identifies monitoring as a key leadership function, the study shows that its impact is heavily reliant on the quality and depth of its implementation.

Overall, the findings indicate that while ILT offers a valuable framework for examining instructional leadership, its components must be adapted to local contexts. The study demonstrates that the mere presence of leadership practices, such as supervision and curriculum monitoring, does not automatically translate into improved teaching quality. Instead, the success of these practices depends on their contextual relevance and effectiveness. Among all the components examined, professional development proved to be the most influential, reinforcing the value of targeted investment in teacher growth. This contributes to refining ILT by underscoring the need for context-specific, high-quality leadership strategies to drive teaching excellence in Ugandan universities.

Conclusions

The discussion above affirms that professional development, as emphasised by ILT, is crucial for improving teaching quality in public universities. Well-structured initiatives, such as workshops, training programmes, and scholarships, effectively enhance teachers' instructional practices and address contextual challenges. In contrast, instructional supervision, curriculum implementation, and student progress monitoring, though key ILT components, do not automatically improve teaching quality. Supervision is ineffective when it focuses on administrative compliance rather than mentorship, curriculum

implementation fails when teaching methods are misaligned with intended goals, and student progress monitoring is insufficient when applied inconsistently and superficially. Therefore, the presence of ILT components alone is not enough; their effectiveness depends on quality, depth, and context-sensitive implementation. The findings add valuable insights to the body of literature on higher education leadership by showing that professional development continues to serve as the most powerful and reliable instructional leadership approach for improving the quality of teaching within universities in developing contexts. This finding underscores the crucial role that ongoing learning, training, and skill enhancement play in empowering academic leaders and faculty to elevate educational standards and foster sustainable institutional growth.

Recommendations

The study recommends that university managers strengthen instructional supervision by shifting from administrative compliance to mentorship-based, participatory approaches that promote professional dialogue, classroom reflection, and constructive feedback. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) should develop supervision frameworks that encourage continuous improvement among academic staff. In terms of curriculum implementation, universities should support academic staff through targeted training that promotes creative, student-centred, and context-responsive teaching practices. Institutions should establish monitoring and evaluation systems that ensure the curriculum is implemented flexibly and effectively, aligning instructional methods with learning goals and institutional objectives. Furthermore, professional development should be prioritised as the cornerstone of improving teaching quality. Universities should invest in structured, continuous, and needs-based programmes, such as mentorships, workshops, and peer-learning initiatives, that foster reflective practice and pedagogical innovation. Policymakers should create frameworks that set clear standards for professional development, offer incentives for teaching excellence, and fund capacity-building programmes for academic staff.

Finally, university managers should ensure that student progress is monitored through data-driven, feedback-oriented strategies that enable personalised instruction and continuous learning. Lecturers should be equipped to collect, analyse, and interpret assessment data to identify learners' needs and improve instructional decisions.

Limitations

The study highlighted the important role of instructional leadership in improving teaching quality. However, hypothesis testing showed that instructional supervision, curriculum implementation, and student progress monitoring did not significantly predict teaching quality, challenging initial assumptions. This outcome points to the need for further research using larger, more diverse samples that include private universities. Future studies should also investigate additional factors that may influence teaching quality. To gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding, researchers are encouraged to adopt mixed-methods approaches that incorporate qualitative insights alongside quantitative analysis.

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