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Supportive Supervision and Employee Performance in Rural Non-Governmental Organisations: Evidence from Kibaale District, Uganda

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Abstract: *Employee performance is essential for the effective implementation of programmes and the achievement of organisational objectives in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Supportive supervision provides an important approach to strengthening employees' work practices and accountability. However, empirical evidence on the relationship between supervisory practices and employee performance in rural NGOs remains limited. This study examined the relationship between supportive supervision and employee performance in two rural NGOs, Kibaale Rural Development Foundation (KIRUDEF) and Kibaale People's Rural Development Initiative (KIPERUDI), in Kibaale Town Council, Uganda. A quantitative cross-sectional correlational design was adopted. Data were collected from all 58 employees and supervisors using two role-specific structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation and multiple regression. The findings revealed positive and statistically significant relationships between coaching and employee performance ($r = .654$, $p < .001$), mentoring and employee performance ($r = .587$, $p < .001$), and performance monitoring and employee performance ($r = .741$, $p < .001$). When considered jointly, the three dimensions of supportive supervision explained 68.2% of the variation in employee performance ($R^2 = .682$, adjusted $R^2 = .664$). Performance monitoring made the strongest unique statistical contribution ($\beta = .446$, $p < .001$), followed by coaching ($\beta = .271$, $p = .011$) and mentoring ($\beta = .213$, $p = .024$). The study concludes that coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring are important supervisory practices associated with employee performance in the two NGOs. It recommends strengthening regular coaching, establishing more structured mentoring arrangements and conducting performance monitoring that emphasises constructive feedback and employee accountability.*

Keywords: *Supportive supervision, Coaching, Mentoring, Performance monitoring, Employee performance, Rural NGOs, Uganda*

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1. Introduction

Employee performance is an important consideration in the effectiveness of organisations because it reflects the extent to which employees execute assigned responsibilities and contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives. In non-governmental organisations (NGOs), employee performance is particularly important because programme implementation depends on staff members' ability to

coordinate activities, mobilise communities, deliver services, maintain records and account for resources. Employees are consequently expected to achieve planned outputs, complete assigned tasks within stipulated timelines, prepare accurate reports and comply with organisational procedures. These responsibilities require appropriate management practices that provide employees with the guidance, professional support and performance feedback necessary to execute their duties effectively.

Supportive supervision has become an important human resource management practice through which organisations seek to strengthen employee performance and professional development. Unlike traditional supervision that primarily emphasises inspection, control and identification of errors, supportive supervision combines performance oversight with constructive guidance, feedback, problem-solving and opportunities for learning. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2008) associates supportive supervision with constructive interaction, continuous learning and problem-solving aimed at improving staff performance. Katz, Moughan and Rudolph, (2023) and Marquez and Kean (2002) similarly emphasise facilitation, mentoring, feedback and supportive engagement as important elements of the approach. These perspectives suggest that supervision should not only establish whether employees meet organisational expectations but also provide the assistance required to address performance challenges.

Supportive supervision can be examined through several complementary practices, including coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring. Coaching involves task-related guidance, practical assistance and constructive feedback intended to strengthen employees' ability to perform assigned responsibilities. Mentoring provides longer-term professional guidance, experience-sharing and developmental support that can enhance employees' knowledge and work effectiveness. Performance monitoring involves reviewing employees' work against established expectations, identifying performance gaps and providing feedback and follow-up. Although these practices are related, they serve distinct purposes in the supervisory process. Together, they provide opportunities for employees to clarify work expectations, develop professional competencies and remain accountable for assigned duties. The relevance of these supervisory practices can be understood within the broader human resource management concern with employee performance. Campbell and Wiernik (2015) explain job performance in relation to employee behaviours that contribute to organisational objectives, while Aguinis (2019) emphasises the identification, measurement and development of individual and team performance in relation to organisational goals. In the present study, employee performance is considered through productivity and accountability. Productivity concerns the accomplishment of assigned tasks and expected work outputs, including the timely completion of responsibilities. Accountability relates to employees' responsible execution of duties, adherence to organisational procedures and appropriate documentation and reporting. These dimensions are particularly relevant to NGOs, whose employees are expected to deliver programme activities while maintaining accountability to organisational management, development partners and intended beneficiaries.

The importance of supportive supervision is evident in organisations implementing development programmes across Africa. NGOs frequently operate in environments where employees undertake multiple responsibilities involving community mobilisation, programme implementation, beneficiary engagement, monitoring and reporting. These responsibilities require coordination, professional competence and adherence to programme requirements. Supervisors therefore have an important role in providing employees with the guidance and feedback needed to address work-related challenges and meet organisational expectations. However, the consistency and quality of supportive supervision may differ according to supervisory capacity, organisational resources and the operational demands placed on managers and employees.

In Uganda, NGOs contribute to national development through programmes in areas such as health, education, agriculture, livelihoods, environmental protection and community empowerment. Their ability to deliver these interventions depends partly on the competence and performance of employees responsible for translating organisational plans into activities and measurable outputs. The Uganda National NGO Bureau (2023) recognises the importance of organisational capacity, governance and accountability within the NGO sector. These requirements make effective human resource management relevant to the implementation of NGO programmes. Supportive supervision provides one approach through which managers can guide employees, facilitate professional development, review work progress and address performance gaps. Nevertheless, the extent to which coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring are associated with employee performance requires examination within the specific organisational contexts in which NGOs operate.

Within Kibaale Town Council in Kibaale District, NGOs undertake community development activities in areas including agriculture, livelihoods, education, health, water and sanitation, environmental conservation and community empowerment. Among the organisations operating in this setting are Kibaale Rural Development Foundation (KIRUDEF) and Kibaale People's Rural

Development Initiative (KIPERUDI). Their employees undertake responsibilities involving programme planning, community mobilisation, field implementation, beneficiary engagement, monitoring, documentation and reporting. The execution of these responsibilities requires employees to understand organisational expectations, meet implementation schedules and maintain appropriate standards of accountability. Supportive supervision is therefore relevant to the management of employees in these organisations, particularly through coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring. Previous studies have examined employee performance and supervisory practices in different organisational settings. The literature on supportive supervision recognises the importance of constructive guidance, mentoring, feedback and performance follow-up in supporting employees' work. However, evidence from public institutions, health organisations and private-sector establishments may not fully reflect the operational circumstances of rural NGOs, which often have distinct programme implementation arrangements, resource conditions and accountability requirements. This makes it necessary to examine the relationships between specific dimensions of supportive supervision and employee performance within rural NGO settings rather than assume that findings from other organisational contexts apply equally.

1.1 Problem Statement

Employee performance is essential to the ability of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to implement programmes, achieve planned targets, meet accountability requirements and deliver services to intended beneficiaries. Employees are expected to complete assigned activities within stipulated timelines, maintain accurate documentation, prepare timely reports, comply with organisational procedures and contribute to the achievement of programme outputs. Where these expectations are not met, organisations may experience delays in programme implementation, incomplete achievement of planned outputs, weaknesses in reporting and difficulties in maintaining accountability.

This problem was documented in Kibaale Rural Development Foundation (KIRUDEF) and Kibaale People's Rural Development Initiative (KIPERUDI), two NGOs operating in Kibaale Town Council, Kibaale District. According to their organisational performance records covering 2023–2025, approximately 35% of planned programme activities experienced delays of between two and eight weeks beyond their scheduled completion dates, while 28% of targeted programme outputs were only partially achieved within the planned implementation periods. The records further indicated that approximately 31% of assigned tasks were completed after stipulated deadlines, 27% of reports were submitted late, 24% of beneficiary follow-up activities were not completed within the required period, and 19% of recorded instances involved non-compliance with organisational procedures (KIRUDEF & KIPERUDI, 2025). These records point to practical performance concerns involving the achievement of programme outputs, timely execution of responsibilities, reporting and adherence to organisational requirements.

Supportive supervision provides a management approach through which some of these performance concerns may be addressed. Coaching enables supervisors to offer task-specific guidance and assistance to employees experiencing difficulties in executing assigned responsibilities. Mentoring facilitates professional development, knowledge-sharing and the transfer of experience, while performance monitoring enables supervisors to review work progress, identify performance gaps and provide constructive feedback. Although these practices are recognised as important elements of employee support and performance management, their existence does not automatically establish the extent to which they are associated with employee performance in a particular organisation.

The documented performance deficiencies in KIRUDEF and KIPERUDI therefore raise questions about the relationship between existing supportive supervision practices and employee performance. In particular, it is important to establish whether coaching is associated with employees' productivity and timely completion of assigned responsibilities, whether mentoring is associated with their effective execution of duties, and whether performance monitoring is associated with productivity and accountability. Without such evidence, organisational decisions about strengthening coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring may not be adequately informed by the specific relationships between these practices and employee performance.

Although previous studies have examined supportive supervision and employee performance in different organisational settings, much of the available empirical evidence relates to health institutions, public organisations and private-sector establishments. Findings from these settings may not fully explain the relationships within rural NGOs operating under different programme implementation arrangements, resource conditions and accountability requirements. Furthermore, limited context-specific quantitative evidence is available on the separate relationships between coaching, mentoring, performance monitoring and employee performance among NGOs operating in Kibaale Town Council. Consequently, the extent and relative contribution of these supervisory practices to employee performance in KIRUDEF and KIPERUDI remain insufficiently established. The present

study addressed this empirical and contextual gap by examining the relationship between supportive supervision and employee performance in the two selected organisations.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between supportive supervision and employee performance in selected non-governmental organisations in Kibaale Town Council, Kibaale District, Uganda.

1.3 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the relationship between coaching and employee performance in selected non-governmental organisations in Kibaale Town Council, Kibaale District.
2. To examine the relationship between mentoring and employee performance in selected non-governmental organisations in Kibaale Town Council, Kibaale District.
3. To establish the relationship between performance monitoring and employee performance in selected non-governmental organisations in Kibaale Town Council, Kibaale District.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framing

2.1.1 Social Exchange Theory

This study was guided by Social Exchange Theory, initially advanced by Homans (1958), further developed by Blau (1964), and subsequently elaborated by other scholars, including Gouldner (1960). The theory explains social relationships in terms of reciprocal exchanges in which individuals respond to benefits received from others. A central principle is reciprocity: when individuals receive favourable treatment, they develop an obligation to respond positively, although the nature and timing of that response may not be formally specified (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960).

In organisational settings, Social Exchange Theory provides a basis for understanding how employees respond to the treatment and support they receive from supervisors and management. Eisenberger et al. (1986) demonstrated that employees tend to reciprocate favourable organisational treatment through stronger commitment and work-related behaviour. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) similarly observed that social exchange relationships are important in explaining workplace attitudes and behaviour. Applied to supportive supervision, the theory suggests that employees who receive regular guidance, professional development support and constructive performance feedback may respond through greater effort, responsibility and commitment to organisational goals.

The theory is particularly relevant to the three supervisory practices examined in this study. Coaching represents an investment in employees' work-related knowledge and skills; mentoring provides professional guidance, knowledge-sharing and developmental support; while performance monitoring provides opportunities for performance feedback, correction and improvement. These practices may strengthen the supervisory relationship and encourage employees to reciprocate through improved productivity and accountability.

However, the theory does not imply that supportive supervision automatically produces improved performance. Employees' responses may also depend on the quality of supervisory relationships, organisational resources, workplace conditions and the fairness with which supervision is implemented. Furthermore, the supervisor–employee relationship involves differences in authority and power that may influence the nature of reciprocal exchanges. Social Exchange Theory therefore provides an interpretive basis for examining the relationships between supportive supervision and employee performance without assuming that these relationships are necessarily causal.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Coaching and Employee Performance

Coaching is a supervisory practice through which employees receive guidance, constructive feedback and practical assistance to improve their knowledge, skills and execution of assigned responsibilities. It is commonly associated with continuous learning, problem-solving and the development of employee competence. Aguinis (2019) emphasises the role of performance management in identifying and developing individual and team performance, while Armstrong (2022) discusses coaching as an important approach to employee development and performance improvement.

Empirical studies have generally associated coaching with positive employee outcomes, although the strength of the relationship may vary across organisational settings. Bozer and Jones (2018) reported that workplace coaching was associated with improvements in employees' self-efficacy, problem-solving abilities and job performance. Similarly, (Kim et al. 2021; Liu, Mao, Ni, Quan, & Zheng, 2026)

found that coaching practices involving feedback and skills development were positively associated with employee commitment and productivity. These findings suggest that coaching can support employees in addressing work-related challenges and improving their capacity to meet organisational expectations.

Nevertheless, coaching does not operate independently of the conditions in which employees work. Grant (2017) highlights the importance of employees' willingness to learn and the quality of the coaching relationship, while Ellinger and Kim (2018) draw attention to the possibility that poorly implemented coaching may limit employee initiative. Coaching that is irregular, overly directive or disconnected from employees' actual work requirements may therefore have limited value. Its contribution to performance is likely to depend on the relevance of the guidance provided, the quality of feedback and the extent to which employees can apply what they learn.

Evidence from African and Ugandan settings also points to the relevance of supervisory guidance in improving work performance. Gwaikolo et al. (2024), in their study of supportive supervision among health workers in Liberia, reported that coaching supported technical competence and accountability, although resource constraints and limited managerial support affected its implementation. Henry et al. (2017) similarly associated supportive supervision among community health workers in Uganda with improvements in work quality and productivity. While these studies provide useful evidence, their focus on health-sector employees leaves questions about the relationship between coaching and performance in other organisational settings, including rural development NGOs.

Taken together, the literature suggests that coaching can contribute to employee performance through guidance, feedback, skills development and assistance with work-related problems. However, the evidence is drawn from different institutional and geographical settings, and the conditions under which coaching is associated with employee productivity and accountability in rural NGOs remain insufficiently established. This study therefore examined the relationship between coaching and employee performance in the selected NGOs in Kibaale Town Council.

2.2.2 Mentoring and Employee Performance

Mentoring is a developmental relationship in which a more experienced person provides professional guidance, knowledge, advice and support to another employee. It enables employees to learn from the experience of others, understand organisational expectations and develop competencies relevant to their responsibilities. Allen et al. (2017) associate mentoring with career development, employee confidence and professional competence, while Ragins and Kram (2018) emphasise its role in knowledge acquisition, psychosocial support and workplace development.

The relationship between mentoring and employee performance has received considerable attention, although scholars recognise that its outcomes depend on the quality and nature of mentoring relationships. (Eby et al. 2018; Nguyen, Matošková, Pham & Nguyen, 2025) reported positive associations between mentoring and outcomes such as career satisfaction, organisational commitment and employee performance. Ismail et al. (2020), examining mentoring among public-sector employees in Malaysia, also found that mentoring was positively associated with job performance and employee commitment. These findings indicate that professional guidance and knowledge-sharing may help employees develop the confidence and competence required to perform their duties effectively.

Mentoring may, however, produce inconsistent outcomes where relationships are poorly established or mentors lack the commitment and skills required to provide meaningful support. Eby et al. (2018) note that mentoring outcomes vary according to the quality and context of the relationship. Clutterbuck (2020) also draws attention to limitations associated with informal mentoring arrangements, particularly where expectations and responsibilities are not clearly established. Consequently, the availability of experienced staff does not necessarily mean that effective mentoring is taking place. Organisational encouragement, accessibility of mentors and the relevance of the guidance provided are important considerations.

Evidence from African organisations further illustrates the potential contribution of mentoring to employee development. Wambugu and Ombui (2021) associated mentoring with improvements in problem-solving, work efficiency and job satisfaction among employees in charitable organisations in Kenya. Nabukenya et al. (2022) also reported that mentoring supported knowledge-sharing and employee performance among local government workers in Uganda. Although these studies provide relevant evidence, their respective organisational settings differ from rural NGOs, where staffing arrangements, resource availability and opportunities for formal professional development may vary.

The literature therefore indicates that mentoring may support employee performance through professional guidance, role modelling, knowledge-sharing and developmental support. Nevertheless, the extent to which these practices are associated with employee productivity

and accountability in rural NGOs requires further contextual examination. This study addressed this concern by examining the relationship between mentoring and employee performance in KIRUDEF and KIPERUDI.

2.2.3 Performance Monitoring and Employee Performance

Performance monitoring involves the regular assessment and follow-up of employees' work to establish progress against assigned responsibilities, organisational expectations and established standards. It may involve work reviews, observation, performance records, reporting systems and feedback. Armstrong (2022) considers performance monitoring an important component of performance management, while (Dessler (2020; Warsame & Thoronjo, 2024) emphasises the role of performance assessment in identifying gaps and supporting the achievement of organisational objectives.

The relationship between monitoring and employee performance is not necessarily straightforward. On the one hand, regular monitoring can help supervisors identify performance gaps, clarify expectations and provide timely corrective feedback. On the other hand, monitoring that is excessive, punitive or excessively focused on compliance may undermine employee autonomy and motivation. The distinction between supportive monitoring and controlling surveillance is therefore important. Monitoring is more likely to support performance when it is accompanied by constructive feedback, fair assessment and opportunities for employees to address identified weaknesses.

Empirical findings provide evidence of the potential contribution of monitoring to employee performance. Musinguzi et al. (2019), in a study involving health workers in Uganda, reported that regular monitoring was associated with improved accountability, reporting and service quality. However, inadequate resources and weaknesses in feedback mechanisms constrained the effectiveness of monitoring. Abuga et al. (2021), examining monitoring practices in Kenyan county governments, similarly associated regular monitoring with improved reporting and adherence to work plans. Otoo and Mishra (2022) also reported positive associations between monitoring and employee efficiency, while acknowledging that excessive monitoring could generate stress and reduce employee autonomy.

These findings suggest that the contribution of performance monitoring depends not simply on how frequently employees are assessed, but also on how monitoring is conducted and how its findings are used. Monitoring that provides timely feedback and supports problem-solving may help employees understand performance expectations and improve the execution of their responsibilities. Conversely, monitoring that is mainly punitive may encourage compliance without necessarily strengthening employee commitment or work quality.

Although existing studies provide evidence on monitoring in health services, public institutions and other organisational settings, their findings cannot automatically be generalised to rural NGOs. Such organisations operate within particular resource, staffing and accountability arrangements, which may shape how monitoring is practised and how employees respond to it. This study therefore examined the relationship between performance monitoring and employee performance in the two selected NGOs in Kibaale Town Council.

2.3 Conceptual Framing and Research Focus

The literature reviewed identifies coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring as distinct but related dimensions of supportive supervision. Coaching focuses on work-related guidance, feedback and skills development; mentoring emphasises professional guidance, role modelling and knowledge-sharing; and performance monitoring involves the assessment and follow-up of employees' work, including the provision of feedback. Although the practices may overlap in implementation, each represents a different aspect of the supervisory relationship.

Employee performance in this study was examined through productivity and accountability. Productivity concerned employees' accomplishment of assigned tasks, achievement of work targets and efficient use of working time. Accountability concerned employees' responsibility in carrying out their duties, reporting, use of organisational resources, adherence to procedures and responsiveness to organisational and beneficiary expectations.

Social Exchange Theory provides the theoretical link between these dimensions. It suggests that employees may respond to supervisory support through greater effort, responsibility and commitment. However, the nature of this relationship is also shaped by organisational conditions and the manner in which supervisory practices are implemented. Accordingly, the study examined the individual relationships between coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring and employee performance, as well as their combined statistical contribution.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Setting

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional correlational design to examine the relationships between supportive supervision and employee performance. The cross-sectional design enabled data to be collected from respondents at one point in time, while the correlational approach facilitated the examination of the direction and strength of relationships between coaching, mentoring, performance monitoring and employee performance. The study was conducted in Kibaale Town Council, Kibaale District, mid-western Uganda, and focused on two rural non-governmental organisations: Kibaale Rural Development Foundation (KIRUDEF) and Kibaale People's Rural Development Initiative (KIPERUDI). The organisations provided an appropriate setting for examining supportive supervision because their operations involve community development activities and supervisory arrangements for staff.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

The study population comprised 58 staff members from the two organisations, including 48 employees and 10 supervisors. Employees were included because they directly experienced supervisory practices in their day-to-day work, while supervisors were included because they were responsible for providing or coordinating practices such as coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring. Given the relatively small and accessible population, the study adopted a census approach and included all 58 staff members. All 58 questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 100%. The participants therefore comprised the entire identified study population rather than a sample drawn from it.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Measurement

Data were collected using two structured, self-administered questionnaires: one designed for employees and another for supervisors. The use of separate questionnaires enabled the study to obtain responses appropriate to the respective roles of the participants in the supervisory relationship. Both instruments covered the study constructs and used closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The final measurement instrument comprised 26 Likert-scale items covering five constructs. Coaching was measured using four items, mentoring four items, performance monitoring three items, employee productivity six items and employee accountability nine items. Employee performance was assessed through the combined dimensions of productivity and accountability. Productivity covered the accomplishment of assigned tasks and work responsibilities, while accountability addressed employees' responsibility in executing duties and meeting organisational expectations. The composite scores for the study constructs were used in the subsequent statistical analyses.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The questionnaires were reviewed by academic supervisors and subject-matter experts to assess the relevance, clarity and adequacy of the items in relation to the study objectives and constructs. The reviewers' recommendations informed revisions to the wording and content of the instruments. The questionnaires were also pilot-tested among 30 respondents from an organisation with characteristics similar to those of the study organisations but which was not included in the main study. The pilot exercise helped assess the clarity and consistency of the items before the main data collection.

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The coefficients for the study constructs ranged from 0.808 to 0.889, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The instruments were consequently considered sufficiently reliable for the main study.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the management of KIRUDEF and KIPERUDI following the acquisition of an introductory letter from Team University. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to employees and supervisors in the two organisations. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the procedures for completing the questionnaires. They were given adequate time to respond independently, after which the completed questionnaires were collected. The returned instruments were checked for completeness and consistency before coding and entry into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, were used to summarise respondents' characteristics and describe the study constructs. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to establish the direction and strength of the relationships between each supportive supervision practice and employee performance. Multiple regression analysis was subsequently used to examine the combined statistical contribution of coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring to employee performance. Statistical significance was assessed at the 0.05 level. The findings

were presented in tables and interpreted in relation to the study objectives.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained through Team University's research ethics procedures, and administrative permission was secured from the management of the two participating organisations. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before they completed the questionnaires. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw without penalty. Confidentiality was maintained by protecting participants' identities and reporting findings in aggregate form. The collected information was used for academic purposes and handled in a manner intended to prevent unauthorised access.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate and Characteristics of Respondents

All the 58 questionnaires distributed to employees and supervisors in Kibaale Rural Development Foundation (KIRUDEF) and Kibaale People's Rural Development Initiative (KIPERUDI) were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 100%. The respondents comprised 48 employees (82.8%) and 10 supervisors (17.2%). Regarding gender, 34 (58.6%) were male and 24 (41.4%) were female. Most respondents were aged between 25 and 44 years (72.4%), while 37 (63.8%) had attained a bachelor's degree or postgraduate qualification. In terms of organisational experience, 36 (62.1%) had worked in their respective organisations for at least four years. The respondent profile indicates that the study obtained views from employees and supervisors with varied demographic characteristics, educational backgrounds and substantial organisational experience. Their involvement provided perspectives from different positions within the two organisations on supportive supervision and employee performance.

4.2 Descriptive Findings on Supportive Supervision and Employee Performance

The study assessed supportive supervision in terms of coaching, mentoring, and performance monitoring and feedback. Employee performance was examined in terms of productivity and accountability. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale, with higher mean scores indicating stronger agreement with the statements.

Coaching was generally rated highly, with an aggregate mean of 4.12 (SD = 0.71). The highest-rated item concerned the contribution of coaching to employees' competence in performing their duties (M = 4.17, SD = 0.68), followed by regular supervisory guidance on improving task performance (M = 4.16, SD = 0.72). Respondents also reported receiving assistance in addressing work-related performance challenges (M = 4.09, SD = 0.71) and support for developing job-related skills (M = 4.05, SD = 0.71). These findings suggest that coaching in the two organisations was commonly expressed through practical guidance, skills development and assistance in resolving work-related challenges. Such practices are relevant to employee development because they provide opportunities for staff to improve their competence and address difficulties encountered while executing assigned responsibilities. The findings are consistent with Jones et al. (2016), whose meta-analysis established positive outcomes of workplace coaching for employee learning and performance.

Mentoring was similarly rated highly, with an aggregate mean of 3.98 (SD = 0.74). Knowledge sharing among experienced colleagues recorded the highest mean (M = 4.08, SD = 0.66), followed by the role-modelling behaviour of senior staff (M = 4.02, SD = 0.71). Career guidance from experienced staff recorded a mean of 3.96 (SD = 0.77), while organisational encouragement of mentoring relationships had the lowest mean (M = 3.87, SD = 0.83). These findings indicate that mentoring was largely expressed through interpersonal relationships, particularly knowledge sharing, role modelling and career guidance. However, the comparatively lower rating for organisational encouragement suggests that formal institutional support for mentoring was less evident than informal mentoring practices. This distinction is important because informal mentoring can provide valuable professional support, but its availability and consistency may vary across employees. Eby et al. (2008), in their meta-analysis of mentoring research, similarly established that mentoring is associated with beneficial individual and work-related outcomes. Allen et al. (2017) also highlight the importance of mentoring in employee development and workplace socialisation.

Performance monitoring and feedback received the highest aggregate rating among the three dimensions of supportive supervision (M = 4.25, SD = 0.63). Regular monitoring of employees' work recorded a mean of 4.31 (SD = 0.59), while timely feedback based on monitoring had a mean of 4.26 (SD = 0.63). The use of structured tools to assess employees' work recorded a mean of 4.17 (SD = 0.67). These findings suggest that regular monitoring and feedback were prominent supervisory practices in the two organisations. The comparatively lower rating for the use

of structured assessment tools, however, points to an opportunity to strengthen the systematic documentation and assessment of employee performance. Kusek and Rist (2004) emphasise the importance of systematic performance information in supporting management decisions and tracking progress towards intended results. Similarly, Armstrong (2022) presents performance management as an ongoing process involving performance review, feedback and improvement. These perspectives reinforce the relevance of monitoring and feedback as supportive supervisory practices rather than merely administrative controls.

Employee performance was also rated highly, with an aggregate mean of 4.20. The findings showed strong agreement with statements relating to regular attendance (M = 4.36), compliance with organisational rules and regulations (M = 4.33), commitment to organisational goals (M = 4.32), and adherence to organisational policies and procedures (M = 4.29). Accountability in the use of organisational resources also received a high rating (M = 4.24). The comparatively lower-rated items were beneficiary involvement in decision-making (M = 4.05) and timely submission of work reports (M = 4.08). Overall, the findings indicate high reported levels of productivity-related conduct and accountability among employees in the selected organisations. Nevertheless, the relatively lower ratings for beneficiary involvement and timely reporting suggest areas where employee performance could be strengthened. The findings also provide a descriptive basis for examining whether the three dimensions of supportive supervision were statistically associated with employee performance.

4.3 Coaching and Employee Performance

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis established a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between coaching and employee performance ($r = .654$, $p < .001$), as presented in Table 1. The finding indicates that higher reported levels of coaching were associated with higher reported employee performance in the two organisations. This relationship is consistent with the descriptive finding that coaching was highly rated (M = 4.12), particularly in relation to improving employees' competence, providing regular supervisory guidance and assisting staff in addressing work-related performance challenges. Together, the findings suggest that coaching was an important supervisory practice through which employees received practical guidance and support to strengthen their capacity to execute assigned responsibilities.

Table 1: Pearson Correlations between Supportive Supervision and Employee Performance

Supportive supervision dimension	Employee performance (r)	p-value	Interpretation
Coaching	.654	< .001	Strong positive relationship
Mentoring	.587	< .001	Moderate positive relationship
Performance monitoring and feedback	.741	< .001	Strong positive relationship

Note. N = 58. All correlations were statistically significant at the .001 level (two-tailed).

The findings are consistent with Jones et al. (2016), whose meta-analysis of workplace coaching research established positive outcomes for employee learning and performance. They also correspond with Henry et al. (2017), who examined supportive supervision among public-sector medicines management supervisors in Uganda and highlighted the importance of supervisory competencies in supporting effective work performance. Although these studies were conducted in different organisational settings, they reinforce the relevance of regular guidance, constructive feedback and professional support in strengthening employees' capacity to perform their responsibilities.

The multiple regression results further demonstrated that coaching made a positive and statistically significant contribution to employee performance when considered alongside mentoring and performance monitoring ($\beta = .271$, $p = .011$). This indicates that coaching retained a significant unique statistical contribution even after accounting for the other dimensions of supportive supervision. However, its contribution was smaller than that of performance monitoring and feedback. This suggests that although guidance and skills development are important, their contribution to employee performance may be strengthened when accompanied by systematic follow-up on employees' work and feedback on their progress.

Social Exchange Theory provides an explanation for the observed relationship. When supervisors invest time and effort in guiding employees, developing their skills and helping them resolve work-related challenges, employees may perceive these actions as valuable organisational

support. Through the norm of reciprocity, employees may respond by demonstrating greater commitment, care in performing assigned responsibilities and willingness to contribute to organisational objectives (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). The positive association between coaching and employee performance is therefore consistent with the theory's proposition that supportive exchanges within workplace relationships are associated with constructive employee behaviour.

The findings imply that coaching should remain an integral part of supervisory practice in NGOs. However, its implementation should extend beyond occasional instructions to include regular performance discussions, individual guidance, constructive feedback and practical assistance in resolving work-related difficulties. Such arrangements can help employees strengthen their competence while maintaining supportive relationships with their supervisors.

4.4 Mentoring and Employee Performance

The correlation analysis established a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between mentoring and employee performance ($r = .587$, $p < .001$), as shown in Table 1. This indicates that higher reported levels of mentoring were associated with higher reported employee performance in the two organisations.

The descriptive findings showed that mentoring was generally rated highly ($M = 3.98$), with knowledge sharing among experienced colleagues receiving the highest rating ($M = 4.08$). Role modelling ($M = 4.02$) and career guidance ($M = 3.96$) were also positively rated. However, organisational encouragement of mentoring relationships recorded the lowest mean ($M = 3.87$) among the mentoring items. These findings suggest that mentoring in the selected organisations was expressed largely through interpersonal relationships, particularly the sharing of professional knowledge, guidance from experienced staff and role modelling. However, the comparatively lower rating for organisational encouragement suggests that mentoring may depend more on the initiative of experienced employees and informal workplace relationships than on deliberately organised institutional arrangements.

The findings are consistent with the broader mentoring literature, which recognises career support and knowledge transfer as important aspects of mentoring relationships. For example, Eby et al. (2008), in their meta-analysis of mentoring research, found that mentoring was associated with beneficial outcomes for individuals, including career-related and work-related outcomes. Allen et al. (2017) also discuss mentoring as an important relational aspect of organisational life, particularly in relation to employee development and workplace socialisation. The findings of the present study therefore reinforce the relevance of mentoring as a means of facilitating professional learning and supporting employees in their responsibilities.

The multiple regression analysis further demonstrated that mentoring made a positive and statistically significant contribution to employee performance ($\beta = .213$, $p = .024$), even when coaching and performance monitoring were considered in the same model. However, its standardised regression coefficient was comparatively smaller than those of coaching and performance monitoring. This does not imply that mentoring was unimportant. Rather, it suggests that mentoring made a less substantial unique statistical contribution within the combined model. Its contribution to employee performance may also be less immediate because knowledge sharing, career guidance and role modelling can strengthen employees' professional capacity over time, while coaching and monitoring may address more immediate work-related needs.

Social Exchange Theory helps explain why mentoring may be associated with employee performance. Experienced employees who share knowledge, provide career guidance and support colleagues' professional development offer resources that may not be formally required by their positions. Employees who receive such support may reciprocate through stronger commitment, cooperation and greater responsibility in carrying out their duties. The positive relationship observed in this study is therefore consistent with the reciprocal nature of workplace relationships described by Blau (1964) and Gouldner (1960).

The findings suggest that NGOs should complement informal mentoring relationships with deliberate organisational support. This may include encouraging experienced employees to guide less experienced colleagues, creating opportunities for knowledge sharing and recognising mentoring as part of staff development. Such arrangements could make mentoring more consistent and accessible across the workforce.

4.5 Performance Monitoring and Feedback and Employee Performance

Performance monitoring and feedback demonstrated the strongest positive and statistically significant relationship with employee performance ($r = .741$, $p < .001$), as presented in Table 1. This indicates that employees reporting more consistent monitoring and feedback also

tended to report higher levels of productivity and accountability.

The descriptive findings reinforce this relationship, as performance monitoring and feedback received the highest aggregate rating among the three dimensions of supportive supervision (M = 4.25). Regular monitoring of employees' work recorded the highest item mean (M = 4.31), followed by timely feedback based on monitoring (M = 4.26). The use of structured tools to assess employees' work also received a relatively high rating (M = 4.17). These findings suggest that regular follow-up, systematic assessment and timely feedback were prominent supervisory practices in the selected organisations.

The findings are particularly relevant to NGO settings, where employees are responsible for implementing programme activities, maintaining records, reporting progress and accounting for organisational resources. Monitoring provides a means through which supervisors can review progress, identify performance gaps, clarify expectations and follow up on agreed responsibilities. The findings are consistent with the principles of results-based monitoring discussed by Kusek and Rist (2004), who emphasise systematic information collection and the use of performance evidence to support management decisions and track progress towards intended results. They also align with Armstrong's (2022) discussion of performance management as an ongoing process involving the review of performance, feedback and improvement. In this study, the positive relationship between monitoring and employee performance suggests that these supervisory processes were relevant not only for tracking work but also for supporting employees' productivity and accountability.

The multiple regression results further established that performance monitoring made the largest unique statistical contribution to employee performance among the three dimensions of supportive supervision ($\beta = .446$, $p < .001$). This suggests that monitoring retained the strongest contribution to employee performance when coaching and mentoring were statistically controlled. The finding is important because it demonstrates that monitoring and feedback were not only highly rated descriptive practices but also had the strongest statistical association with employee performance within the combined regression model.

Nevertheless, the findings should not be interpreted to mean that more monitoring will always produce better performance. The quality and purpose of monitoring remain important. Monitoring that is perceived as fault-finding or punitive may undermine trust and employee initiative. In contrast, monitoring accompanied by constructive feedback and practical guidance can help employees understand performance expectations and address identified weaknesses. The high ratings for regular monitoring and timely feedback in this study suggest that respondents generally viewed these practices positively. However, the comparatively lower rating for the use of structured assessment tools indicates an area in which the organisations could strengthen the consistency of their monitoring arrangements.

Social Exchange Theory provides a further explanation for the observed relationship. When supervisors monitor employees' work while providing timely and constructive feedback, they demonstrate attention to employees' responsibilities and provide information that can help them perform more effectively. Employees may reciprocate this supervisory attention by taking greater responsibility for their work, meeting organisational expectations and exercising care in the use of organisational resources. The strong positive relationship observed in this study is therefore consistent with the theory's emphasis on reciprocity and the exchange of valued resources within workplace relationships.

The findings identify performance monitoring and feedback as a particularly important dimension of supportive supervision in the two NGOs. Management should therefore strengthen monitoring through regular performance reviews, appropriate assessment tools, constructive feedback and follow-up on agreed actions. These processes should remain developmental and supportive, ensuring that monitoring helps employees improve their work rather than merely identifying shortcomings.

4.6 Combined Contribution of Supportive Supervision to Employee Performance

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the combined contribution of coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring to employee performance. The model summary showed a multiple correlation coefficient of .826, with an R^2 of .682 and an adjusted R^2 of .664. This indicates that the three dimensions jointly accounted for 68.2% of the observed variation in employee performance, while 31.8% remained unexplained by the model.

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 54) = 38.61$, $p < .001$. This confirms that coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring, when considered together, significantly predicted employee performance in the selected organisations.

The individual regression coefficients are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Coefficients for Supportive Supervision and Employee Performance

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p-value
Constant	.821	.318	—	2.58	.013
Coaching	.284	.108	.271	2.63	.011
Mentoring	.213	.091	.213	2.34	.024
Performance monitoring	.452	.094	.446	4.81	< .001

The regression results indicate that all three dimensions made positive and statistically significant contributions to employee performance when considered simultaneously. Coaching had a positive coefficient ($\beta = .271$, $p = .011$), while mentoring also demonstrated a positive and significant contribution ($\beta = .213$, $p = .024$). Performance monitoring had the largest standardised coefficient ($\beta = .446$, $p < .001$), indicating that it made the strongest unique statistical contribution among the three dimensions. The findings therefore identify performance monitoring and feedback as the strongest statistical predictor of employee performance in the regression model, followed by coaching and mentoring.

The combined findings demonstrate that supportive supervision is associated with employee performance through complementary supervisory practices. Coaching provides practical guidance and opportunities for skills development, mentoring facilitates knowledge sharing and professional growth, while performance monitoring and feedback support accountability and the continuous review of work. Although each dimension made a significant contribution, their relative statistical contributions differed. Performance monitoring emerged as the strongest contributor, suggesting that systematic follow-up and constructive feedback were particularly important in explaining variations in employee performance in the two organisations.

From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, these findings reinforce the importance of supportive relationships between supervisors and employees. Coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring represent different forms of support and organisational resources that employees may reciprocate through commitment, responsible conduct and greater attention to their assigned duties (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). The combined contribution of the three dimensions therefore supports the relevance of reciprocal workplace relationships in understanding employee performance.

The findings have practical implications for the management of NGOs. Rather than relying on a single supervisory practice, organisations should adopt an integrated approach that combines regular coaching, structured mentoring opportunities and systematic performance monitoring. Particular attention should be given to strengthening performance monitoring through constructive feedback and appropriate assessment tools, while ensuring that coaching and mentoring remain integral components of employee development. Such an approach would enable the organisations to address immediate performance challenges while supporting employees' longer-term professional growth and accountability

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between supportive supervision and employee performance in two rural non-governmental organisations, Kibaale Rural Development Foundation (KIRUDEF) and Kibaale People's Rural Development Initiative (KIPERUDI), in Kibaale Town Council, Uganda. The findings established positive and statistically significant relationships between each of the three dimensions of supportive supervision coaching, mentoring, and performance monitoring and employee performance. When considered jointly, the three dimensions explained 68.2% of the variation in employee performance. Performance monitoring had the strongest unique statistical contribution, followed by coaching and mentoring.

The findings suggest that supportive supervision is an important organisational practice associated with employee productivity and accountability in the selected NGOs. In particular, regular monitoring accompanied by constructive feedback appears to be an important aspect of supervisory support. Coaching also provides employees with work-related guidance and opportunities to address performance challenges, while mentoring supports knowledge sharing, professional development, and employee confidence. The findings therefore point to the value of treating supervision not merely as an

administrative control function but also as a process through which employees receive guidance, feedback, and professional support.

The study contributes context-specific quantitative evidence to the literature on supportive supervision and employee performance by examining these relationships in two rural NGOs in Kibaale Town Council. It also provides evidence on the separate and combined statistical contributions of coaching, mentoring, and performance monitoring to employee performance, measured in terms of productivity and accountability. Although the findings are consistent with the argument that supportive supervisory relationships are important in organisational settings, the study does not establish that the supervision practices caused improvements in employee performance.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. NGO management should strengthen supportive supervision through complementary arrangements for coaching, mentoring, and performance monitoring.
2. Supervisors should conduct regular coaching sessions, provide constructive feedback, and offer individual guidance to employees experiencing work-related difficulties.
3. Organisations should also establish more deliberate mentoring arrangements that facilitate knowledge transfer, professional guidance, and learning between experienced and less experienced employees.
4. In addition, management should strengthen performance monitoring through periodic performance reviews, appropriate assessment tools, regular supervisory follow-up, and timely feedback. Such monitoring should be developmental rather than punitive, with the purpose of identifying performance gaps and supporting improvement.

5.3 Future Research

1. Further studies could examine how changes in coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring are associated with employee performance over time. Such studies would help establish whether the relationships observed in the present cross-sectional study remain consistent and how they develop as supervisory arrangements change.

2. Further studies could compare supportive supervision and employee performance among NGOs operating in rural and urban settings, different districts and different programme sectors. Such research would help establish whether the relationships identified in KIRUDEF and KIPERUDI are similar in organisations operating under different institutional, resource and programme conditions.

3. Further research could use qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to explore how employees and supervisors experience coaching, mentoring and performance monitoring in NGO settings. Such studies could examine the practical processes through which supportive supervision is implemented, the challenges faced by supervisors and employees, and the conditions that make supervisory support constructive or ineffective.

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