

## **Philosophical Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions on Instructional Media for Students' Academic Performance in Civics in Morogoro, Tanzania**



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**ABSTRACT:** The use of instructional media, a combination of text, graphics, audio, and animations, has been shown to positively impact students' learning and retention of memory. This study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of using instructional media to enhance the academic performance of secondary school students in Civics in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. Using a survey research design of twenty respondents using questionnaires and eight structured interviews with heads of schools, data were analysed thematically for qualitative data and descriptive statistics was used for quantitative data. The findings revealed that teachers perceived instructional media as essential tools that deepened students' understanding of content, improved recall, motivated students, provoked curiosity, reduced truancy, and increased creativity and innovation. The study concluded that instructional media are essential for students' academic performance, and recommended the establishment of a conducive environment for schools to use instructional media in the teaching and learning process. Philosophically, this study underscores the importance of incorporating different learning modalities to facilitate students' learning and the need for educators to be aware of the benefits and limitations of various instructional tools to maximize students' academic potential.

**KEYWORDS:** Philosophical analysis, Teachers' perceptions, Instructional media, Academic performance.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the phenomenon of globalization has led many nations to place a high value on academic achievement (Altbach et al., 2019). The use of instructional media, which combines text, graphics, audio, and animations to engage students and enhance their learning and retention of information, has been recognized as a valuable tool in education (Makewa et al., 2012). As science and technology continue to advance, there is a growing interest in incorporating instructional media in teaching and learning to achieve academic success and effectively implement curricula (Mupa and Chinooneka, 2015). When used appropriately, the proliferation and development of science and technology can be a boon to education, positively impacting students' academic achievement. Thus, a philosophical analysis of the use of instructional media in education is warranted to explore its potential impact on teaching and learning in the current era of globalization.

In Tanzania, the use of instructional media and teaching aids is emphasized by secondary school quality assurance officers across the country (Tanzania Education Authority, 2014). This emphasis can be traced to the argument by Hakielimu that effective use of instructional media enhances the active participation of students in the whole process of teaching and learning, which is in line with the philosophy of education that emphasizes student-centred learning and active engagement (Freire, 1970). Moreover, the use of teaching media in Tanzania schools has also been emphasized in the reforms and policies that address academic performance (Naaman, 2014; Mtebe et al., 2016). For instance, the introduction of a professional development program for secondary school teachers on instructional media aimed at stimulating teachers' creativity and diversifying their instructional strategies in the classroom (Naaman, 2014). This emphasis on teacher creativity and innovation aligns with the philosophical approach that views teachers as facilitators who create environments that foster learning (Dewey, 1938).

However, Tanzania, like many developing countries, faces challenges in affording instructional media due to poor learning infrastructure and lack of equipment, particularly in schools located in rural areas (Makewa et al., 2012). Additionally, there are differences between private and public schools, with the former having more improved learning infrastructure than the latter, despite both using the same curriculum and teachers trained from similar colleges. This inequality in access to instructional media and

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resources highlights the need for educational policies that promote equal opportunities for all students, in line with the philosophy of education that advocates for social justice (Rawls, 1971). This paper focuses on the perceptions of teachers towards using instructional media for academic achievement, examining how teachers' views align with the philosophical principles of student-centred learning, teacher facilitation, and social justice.

The inclusion of Civics as a compulsory subject in the Tanzanian secondary curriculum demonstrates the importance of education in promoting good citizenship and moral growth (Rawls, 1971). However, the empirical studies conducted within the country suggest that Civics, along with other art subjects, have been neglected in favour of science subjects, indicating a possible bias towards technical education over liberal arts education (Nussbaum, 2010). This neglect of art subjects is problematic as it contradicts the philosophy of education that emphasizes the importance of a well-rounded education that encompasses both technical and liberal arts education for the development of student's intellectual, moral, and civic capacities (Dewey, 1938).

The use of instructional media in teaching and learning has been recognized as a means to expand students' understanding and improve academic performance, and Civics as a compulsory subject should receive the same attention as science and humanities subjects (Freire, 1970). However, previous studies have shown inconsistent findings, with some showing weak or moderate correlations between the use of instructional media and academic performance (Kafululio et al., 2015; Ngussa & Singolyo, 2018). These discrepancies between findings highlight the need for further research that specifically targets the relationship between instructional media and academic performance in art subjects like Civics. Therefore, this study aims to address the gap in the literature and explore teachers' perceptions of using instructional media to enhance academic performance in Civics. The study aligns with the philosophy of education that values empirical research to inform educational practices and policies that support students' intellectual, moral, and civic growth (Dewey, 1938).

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The Component Display Theory used to guide this study is deeply rooted in the philosophy of education, as it seeks to enhance the process of teaching and learning by providing a clear and structured presentation of concepts through the use of instructional media. The findings of previous studies, such as Ngussa and Chiza (2017), Mtebe et al. (2016), Taiwo (2009), Sukmahidayanti (2015), Osman (2014), and Nikian et al. (2013) all highlight the importance of instructional media in facilitating the teaching and learning process. These studies demonstrate that the use of instructional media has a positive impact on student performance, promotes active participation and enhances the ability to recall and remember key concepts.

Furthermore, the studies highlight the importance of teachers training in the effective use of instructional media. As Taiwo (2009) notes, teachers' training plays a significant role in shaping teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of instructional media. On the other hand, Tonggoro (2015) emphasizes training of teachers on instructional media for the purposes of instilling professional values. Therefore, it is essential to provide adequate training to teachers on the use of instructional media to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills to enhance their students' learning experiences.

### **METHODOLOGY**

In the field of philosophy of education, the use of survey research design can be seen as a valuable tool for gathering information about a population in a quick and efficient manner. As noted by Smith (2010), surveys allow researchers to use both open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires and interviews for data collection and can provide a means of generalization from a sample of a population. This mixed approach, which involves collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data, is consistent with the view that education is a complex phenomenon that cannot be fully captured by a single method (Biesta, 2010).

In the present study, data were collected from twenty Civics teachers using questionnaires and eight heads of schools using interviews, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the attitudes and beliefs held by teachers in relation to Civics education. The use of descriptive statistics for quantitative data analysis and the transcription and organization of qualitative data into themes for ease of narration further exemplifies the value of mixed methods research in education (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The reliability of the survey instrument was also tested using the Cronbach correlation coefficient, which yielded a Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.707, indicating a high level of internal consistency. This finding is consistent with the view that educational research must be based on reliable and valid data in order to make meaningful contributions to the field (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The current study aimed to explore the potential of instructional media in enhancing the academic performance of secondary school students in the subject of civics. Through a survey research design, the study gathered the perceptions of teachers regarding the effectiveness of using instructional media in teaching and learning civics. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed and presented in Table 1, which summarizes the distribution of the teachers' views on the use of instructional media for improving the academic performance of civics.

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**Table 1: Perception of Teachers on Using Social Media on the Academic Performance of Civics (n=20)**

Statement	Effective	Not Effective
Using instructional media increases students' interactions in a classroom situation	12(60%)	8(40%)
Using instructional media motivates students' learning process	17(85%)	3(15%)
Using instructional media deepens the understanding of the content matter	18(90%)	2(10%)
Using instructional media increases students' creativity and innovatively	15(75%)	5(25%)
Using instructional media makes students recall the topic very easily and thus perform well in examinations	17(85%)	3(15%)
Using instructional media requires a lot of facilities which are expensive to install	18(90%)	2(10%)
Using instructional media provokes curiosity in students to learn and thus reduce truancy	16(80%)	4(20%)
Using instructional media requires special training and thus it is labour demanding	8(40%)	12(60%)
Using instructional media is a waste of learning time	8(40%)	12(60%)
Using instructional media increases both verbal and sign language communication skills among students	9(45%)	11(55%)

The table presents the percentages of teachers who considered the use of instructional media as effective or not effective for various aspects of teaching and learning Civics, including increasing student interaction, motivation, understanding of content, creativity, recall of information, curiosity, communication skills, and reduction of truancy. Interestingly, the majority of teachers perceived the use of instructional media as effective in increasing students' interaction (60%), motivation (85%), deepening the understanding of the content matter (90%), increasing creativity (75%), making students recall the topic easily (85%), requiring a lot of facilities (90%), and provoking curiosity in students (80%). However, some teachers also perceived the use of instructional media as not effective, particularly in requiring special training and being a waste of learning time (both 60%). These findings suggest that while the use of instructional media can be an effective tool for enhancing the academic performance of Civics, it requires careful consideration and planning to maximize its benefits.

The findings of this study highlight the complex nature of integrating instructional media into the classroom. On one hand, the majority of teachers recognize the potential benefits of using media to enhance teaching and learning in Civics. These benefits include increasing student engagement, motivation, creativity, and understanding of the content matter. These findings align with the philosophical perspective of constructivism, which emphasizes the active involvement of students in their learning process, and the use of multiple modalities to enhance understanding and retention of information (Piaget, 1973).

On the other hand, some teachers expressed concerns about the practical implementation of instructional media, particularly in terms of the need for special training and the potential for it to be a waste of learning time. These concerns highlight the importance of providing adequate support and training to teachers to effectively integrate instructional media into their teaching practices. Additionally, it is important to carefully consider the context in which media is used and to ensure that it aligns with the learning goals and objectives of the curriculum. This study contributes to the ongoing discussion in the philosophy of education about the role of technology and media in improving the quality of education. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) argue, the use of technology in education has the potential to transform the traditional classroom into a more interactive and engaging learning environment, which can lead to better academic outcomes for students.

**Table 2: Thematic Analysis Codes**

Verbatim quotes	Theme	Code
<i>Students' academic performance in the school has been moderately good with some little challenges (HT1).</i>	Moderately Good Performance of Students	MGPS
<i>We use instructional media but only when it is convenient in terms of facilities and trained teachers (HT3)</i>	Use of Instructional media regularly	UIMR
<i>Instructional Media impacts on the students' performance if used effectively (HT4)</i>	Instructional media impacts Learning Process	IMILP
<i>Teachers have high positive perception on the use of Instructional media (HT5)</i>	Teachers' Positive Perception on Instructional Media	
<i>Students like to be taught by use of instructional media. Unfortunately, teachers are not trained in instructional media (HT6)</i>	Students interest in instructional media	TPPIM
<i>Lack of instructional facilities and essential equipment impede effective learning by use of instructional media. The challenges of large classrooms, lack of electricity, training and availability of instructional media (HT7)</i>	Lack of Facilities and Equipment	SIIM LFE

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These findings show that students' academic performance in the school has been moderately good with some little challenges (HT1). Additionally, the study found that a lack of instructional facilities and essential equipment impedes effective learning through the use of instructional media (HT7). However, teachers had a highly positive perception of the use of instructional media (HT5), and students liked to be taught by using instructional media (HT6).

From a philosophical perspective, these findings can be interpreted in light of the role of education in society. Education is meant to facilitate the growth and development of individuals, as well as contribute to the development of society as a whole. The finding that students' academic performance in the school has been moderately good with some little challenges (HT1) suggests that there is room for improvement in the education system. In this context, the use of instructional media can be seen as a means to enhance the effectiveness of the learning process, and therefore improve the academic performance of students. Furthermore, the challenges faced in using instructional media also emphasize the need to ensure that educational institutions are adequately equipped and funded to provide a conducive learning environment for students. This aligns with the philosophy of essentialism, which emphasizes the need for a strong and structured curriculum and well-equipped learning environments to ensure effective learning.

However, the finding that lack of instructional facilities and essential equipment impede effective learning by use of instructional media (HT7) highlights the importance of investing in educational resources to ensure that students have access to the necessary tools and facilities to enhance their learning experience. This aligns with the philosophy of education that emphasizes the importance of providing access to quality education for all individuals, regardless of their social background or status. This finding suggests that schools may not be adequately equipped to provide the necessary resources for effective teaching and learning. This can be seen as a failure of the education system to meet the needs of its students and the wider community.

Moreover, the highly positive perception of teachers towards instructional media (HT5) and the interest of students in using it (HT6) suggest that there is potential for instructional media to be an effective tool in education. This highlights the importance of investing in the training of teachers to effectively utilize instructional media and in the provision of essential equipment and facilities in schools to enhance the effectiveness of the learning process. These findings highlight the importance of providing teachers with the necessary training and resources to effectively incorporate instructional media into their teaching practices. This aligns with the philosophy of progressivism, which emphasizes the importance of using innovative and effective teaching methods to promote student learning.

The findings from this study suggest that the use of instructional media has the potential to impact student performance positively if used effectively. Teachers have a positive perception of instructional media, and students are interested in being taught with it, but unfortunately, teachers are not adequately trained in instructional media. This lack of training, along with other challenges such as the absence of essential equipment, large classrooms, and lack of electricity, impedes effective learning by using instructional media.

### **CONCLUSION**

The philosophical conclusion that can be drawn from these findings is that education is a dynamic and evolving process that requires constant adaptation and improvement. The philosophy of education emphasizes the importance of providing a quality education that meets the needs of all students, regardless of their social background or status. The findings suggest that instructional media has the potential to enhance student engagement and academic performance, but it requires careful planning and adequate resources. This aligns with the philosophy of progressivism, which emphasizes the importance of using innovative and effective teaching methods to promote student learning. Furthermore, the findings highlight the importance of investing in educational resources to provide a conducive learning environment for students, which aligns with the philosophy of essentialism. In conclusion, the study adds to the ongoing discourse on the role of technology and media in education and how it can contribute to improving student outcomes and the development of society as a whole.

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