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EVALUATING THE ALIGNMENT OF CLASSROOM PRACTICES WITH STATED INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MOROGORO MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the alignment between classroom practices and stated instructional objectives in the selected secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. Specifically, the study assesses how teachers' state their instructional objectives in the lesson plan in relation to their classroom implementation. A purposive sample of History, English, Geography, and Biology teachers from 9 secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality was used in the study. Data were collected through document analysis, classroom observation, and interview. A total of 27 teachers' lesson plans were analysed. The findings indicate that most of the objectives designed in lesson plans miss some important aspects of the ABCD and SMART models, resulting in the objective statements missing some measurable criteria to cover the whole learning process and measure the achievement of the objectives. Furthermore, classroom practices deviate from the stated objectives; for instance, teachers frequently fail to use teaching materials like teaching aids and methods and engage students in doing some activities as planned. This was due to overcrowded classrooms, the nature of students understanding, a heavy teaching load, a shortage of time, and having many responsibilities, which led to partial preparation and deviation from the lesson plan, which affected practices and achievement of the stated instructional objectives. The study recommends in-service training should be provided to teachers to engage in professional activities, including lesson planning, and assist them in creating high-quality classroom instructional objectives so as to improve pedagogical practices.

KEYWORDS: Classroom practices, Instructional objective, Lesson plan, Morogoro Municipality, Secondary schools, Tanzania.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of instructional objectives and the use of lesson plans are often neglected in discussing school improvement (Boikhutso, 2010). Yet any discussion on improving classroom teaching,

pedagogical practices, learning outcomes, and assessment of teaching revolves around preparation and practices of instructional objectives as a vital part of lesson plans (Sari et al., 2020). Instructional objectives (specific objectives) are used to communicate the purpose of learning; they are written by a teacher to guide the design learning process, with consideration of delivery strategies and principles of learning (Orr et al., 2022). They are used to express student's behavioural performance, and they can be used in making judgements on the achievement of the lesson presented (Osueke et al., 2023). Clearly stated instructional objectives with consideration of delivery strategies and methods to be used in teaching and ways to assess the teaching and learning process led to the achievement of the learning objectives. The instructional objective was also important in providing important information that can help to measure learners success and make a conclusion (Orr et al., 2022). In this view, stated instructional objectives are holistic, as they need to be stated in a way that they cover almost the whole teaching process and reflect almost everything conducted in the classroom.

The statements of the instructional objectives act as the clear outlines that direct students to reach the intended learning outcome. To understand how people learn in a meaningful way, the creation of appropriate instructional objectives is important. They can assist in designing instructional plans in a form that specifies what task the student is expected to be able to perform, under what condition, and how such task will be evaluated to make a judgement on the achievement of the lesson presented (Salman et al., 2012). For this reason, teachers' competence means a lot in stating and implementing instructional objectives because, in essence, the instructional objectives should be holistic, meaning they should reflect almost everything to be done in the classroom, such as teaching and learning activities, teaching aids, teaching and learning materials, assessment, and evaluations (Marken & Morrison, 2013).

Since in practice, writing holistic statements is difficult, many teachers, educational practitioners and scholars suggest certain components to be crucial when stating objectives. For instance, Mager (1962), as cited by Latifa (2017), pointed out three features that teachers need to consider when writing statement of instructional objectives. They must contain measurable verbs, specify what to be given to students, and specify the criteria for competence standards. Prints (1993) expresses three features of behavioral objectives, that is conditions expected due to learning situations through given activities, observable behavior that involve what students have accomplished, and standard levels of achievements. Furthermore, two models, namely ABCD and SMART, have been proposed and are popular in designing instructional or specific objectives. Starting with the former, it emphasizes four components: "A" stands for "Audience," students whom you're going to teach; "B" stands for "Behavior" performance behaviour stated by action verb; "C" stands for "Condition," under which condition the change of behaviour of the learner is going to occur and "D" stands for "Degree," how well the student must be able to demonstrate the performance (Sari et al., 2020). The model provides a clear and structured way to define what learners should be able to do after a learning experience by clearly identifying the audience, behavior, condition, and degree of mastery. It also emphasizes observable behaviors and specific degrees of performance that learning objectives can easily assess.

Moreover, by stating the audience, the model ensures the objectives are centered on the learners' needs and abilities, which leads to an effective and efficient teaching and learning process.

The SMART model, as another model of designing learning objectives, emphasizes five components: "S" stands for specific, which specifies what you're going to do and for whom; "M" stands for measurable, which involves a measure of the progress; "A" stands for attainable, ensuring the objectives are attained over a proposed time frame with the available resources; "R" stands for realistic, making sure the objectives are relevant; and "T" stands for time bound, ensuring that the objectives can be accomplished in a given time (Ogbeiwi, 2017). The SMART model encourages teachers to set clear and specific objectives for a lesson so that learners have clear understanding on what is expected, which help to focus on achieving the defined learning outcome. Helps to track students' progress as the teacher can design assessments that directly measure whether students have met learning objectives or not. It also helps students to understand and value what they learn by managing their time well and aligning learning objectives with real-life applications.

There is a significant relationship between teachers' competence in creating and implementing instructional objectives to meet learning goals. When a teacher effectively uses instructional objectives to organizing the subject, it can enhance teaching and learning process (Ifamuyiwa, 2011). Clear and unambiguous instructional objectives encourage consistency across sections and enhance students to use of them in their study. Setting up clear lesson objectives is not an easy task; it requires a teacher to have clear objectives and connect with teaching strategies, assessment, and other activities conducted in the classroom (Umugiraneza et al., 2018). It also requires instructor freedom to be creative and flexible in planning for a lesson (Orr et al., 2022).

Literature shows that there are variations from one teacher to another in the preparation and implementation of lessons due to the number of students, time and availability of teaching materials, use of teaching aids, and assessment ways (Emiliasari et al., 2019). This variation creates differences in the teaching and learning process in the classroom which has an impact on the implementation of stated instructional objectives. Some teachers, when designing a lesson, consider planning of material, objectives, procedures, and difficulties that face students in the class (Alam et al., 2018). Others consider planning the lesson by including objectives, what is to be taught, and how to assess and achieve the objectives (Cevikbas et al., 2023). Other teachers also consider the preparation of teaching aids, independent practices, evaluation methods, application, and students understanding in preparing and implementing lesson plans (Rajapaksha & Chathurika, 2015). Furthermore, narrow understanding of competence-based curriculum among teachers causes difficulty in the implementation of stated instructional objectives to meet the intended competence-based curriculum requirements (Paulo & Tilya, 2014). Moreover, lack of understanding of the objectives of a competence-based curriculum leads teachers to design lesson plans that do not reflect the qualities of competence-based lesson plans (Komba & Mwandanji, 2015). Low involvement and readiness of

students in the teaching and learning activities and insufficient teaching and learning resources have an impact on the actual implementation of the objectives (Makunja, 2016).

Although different studies have established challenges in instructional practice and lesson plan preparation (Shukia & Mabagala,2019; Senjiro & Lupeja,2023; Halala & Seni, 2022), still there is inadequate information on how teachers formulate instructional objectives in relation to actual classroom practices. This gap limits the involvement of teachers in training programmes that would improve their knowledge and competence in the effective use of instructional objectives. Since the government of Tanzania insists on quality education of the existing curriculum that emphasises integrating theories into practice (MoEVT, 2014), school administrators and inspectorate bodies have the responsibility to ensure they make follow-up to improve teaching and learning to meet curriculum demands (Kopweh, 2014). This highlights the need to conduct this study, which, therefore, assesses the alignment of classroom practices with the stated instructional objectives in the selected secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality in Tanzania.

Multiple studies have addressed the question and analysis of instructional objectives and the use of lesson plans in order to know what is happening in the classroom, as lesson plans contain a scenario to be implemented and followed in the teaching and learning process (Usadiati, 2015). This review explores research on instructional objectives, focusing on their design and their implementation in the teaching and learning process in other countries.

A study conducted in Indonesia to look at the existence of ABCD aspects in the stated instructional objectives of English teachers found that in 24 objectives designed within 15 lesson plans, only 8 objectives represent behavioral objective aspects, while the other 16 objectives miss the conditioning aspects (Sesiorina, 2014). Latifa (2017) conducted a qualitative study where she analysed three English teachers' lesson plans through behavioural objectives theory in senior high schools. The findings show that the objective statements are similar to the goals of the 2013 curriculum. However, in looking for the existence of important components of instructional objectives, she found that there is a problem in involving all the aspects of ABCD in the stated instructional objectives. Teachers seem to neglect degree of mastery compared to other components. Another study in the analysis of learning objectives in English teacher's lesson plans based on the ABCD aspect found that the implementation of learning objectives quite well covered the aspects of ABCD; even so, teachers were still having difficulty in formulating the aspect C condition and D degree (Sari et al., 2020).

Boikhutso (2010) conducted research on lesson plan challenges facing Botswana student-teachers. The study employs qualitative methods in collecting data from English, moral education, Setswana, history, social studies, religious education and geography teachers in junior and senior schools. The findings show that behavioural objective statements relied more on the use of knowledge and comprehension types of behavioural verbs. Also, they seemed to face difficulties such as poor articulation of instructional objectives, heavy reliance on traditional teaching-learning approaches,

failure to specify 'Conditions' under which learning is finally evaluated, and the failure to determine the 'Degree of Mastery' expected of the learners as aspects of the ABCD model (Boikhutso, 2010). The study recommended teachers as practitioners be involved in preparation programmes in order to have more experience with the use of lesson plans and put more emphasis on behavioural objectives to reach educational goals.

Well-designed and applied SMART objectives may contribute to the achievement of objectives (Lawlor et al., 2012). In his study to measure 17 published statements of SMART objectives, Ogbeiwi (2017) revealed that objective statements were incomplete. This incompleteness of the objective statements was found to be the reason for the low achievement of the objectives. Another study conducted on teaching evolution from SMART objectives to have experience with the use of SMART objectives, the analysis found that the use of SMART objective guidelines to generate curriculum for teaching evolution allows one to craft a learning environment that is supportive to students (Wolf & Akkaraju, 2014). Another study was conducted on instructional design and assessment to introduce professional development into pharmacy curriculum using SMART learning objectives; the results showed students' improvement in writing SMART learning objectives after training (Tofade et al., 2012).

In Tanzania, various studies have been conducted; the study was conducted in Songea to evaluate primary school teachers in designing lesson plans that enhance reading and writing skills in learners. The results show a deficiency in teachers' skills in designing instructional objectives that are conducive to enhancing learners reading and writing competence (Nombo et al., 2024). Another study was done to look at the development of 21st-century skills in secondary school students in Tanzania. The study reveals that the majority of geography teachers lesson plans reviewed did not reflect 21st¬¬-century skills because teachers didn't state clearly intended learning outcomes using the SMART model (Senjiro & Lupeja, 2023). Another study conducted in Mwanza and Morogoro districts looked at pre-primary education in Tanzania, teachers' knowledge, and instructional practices in rural areas, where they found instructional practices were unsatisfactory, as 60% of teachers do not prepare lesson plans as well as teaching aids (Shukia & Mabagala, 2019). Many previous studies reviewed concentrated on planning, preparations, and the implementation of a competence-based curriculum (Paulo &Tillya, 2014; Komba & Mwandaji,2015; Makunja, 2016) and challenges in implementing a competence-based curriculum (Muneja, 2015). This study, therefore, focuses on assessing classroom practices of stated instructional objectives, that is, how teachers state instructional objectives in the lesson plans and the actual classroom practices of stated objectives in the selected secondary schools in the Morogoro municipality.

1.1 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by behavioural objective theory, which is well known in the preparation of instructional objectives written by Robert F. Mager in 1962. The theory holds three critical components of instructional objectives in daily lesson plans that were important in the 1960s to 1970s

but are still in use. Mager emphasises the importance of clear and measurable instructional objectives as a basis of effective teaching and learning. The theory suggests that instructional objectives must contain important features, including measurable verbs that demonstrate observable behaviour, conditions under which this action should occur, and the criteria for evaluating success (Latifa, 2017). In this study, the theory helps to evaluate whether teachers effectively state and implement instructional objectives in their lesson plans and classroom practices. This was done by analysing the extent to which these objectives included observable behaviours, specified conditions, and clear criteria for evaluating success by assessing the alignment between planning and execution in teaching.

The theory guides the study in several ways. First, it informs the evaluation of instructional objectives by providing a framework to determine if they are well stated and measurable, such as through the presence of important components like audience, behaviour, condition, and degree. Second, it helps in classroom observation by focusing on whether the teacher's practices align with the stated objectives and lead to desired learning outcomes. Lastly, the theory helps to identify the gap, such as the missing condition and degree in the objectives, and those from SMART hinder effective learning. Thus, the theory serves as a guide for assessing and improving both the formulation of instructional objectives and their practical implementation to enhance the achievement of learning goals.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in ordinary-level secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. The area has been purposively selected because it has many teachers from whom the findings of the study will represent other regions in Tanzania since teachers in the country go to the same colleges and universities; thus, they will have the same challenges and variations in stating instructional objectives, as they all practice the same curriculum. The study utilised a descriptive research design with the aim of describing and analysing how teachers formulate clear and measurable instructional objectives and the actual practices in the classroom. The target population was ordinary secondary school teachers found in Morogoro municipal. The study employs 27 history, English, geography and biology teachers, purposively selected from 9 public schools. The schools were obtained randomly from 26 public secondary schools (Morogoro Municipal Council, 2023).

Data were collected through document review, where teachers' lesson plans were analysed to obtain information on how teachers formulate instructional objectives. Classroom observation was conducted, as observation methods offer the opportunity to gather direct information in a natural setting by interacting (Cohen Lous, 2018). The method gives the opportunity to determine actual practices of the stated instructional objectives using an observation checklist to assess information related to practices of instructional objectives, such as activities and materials used to support instructional objectives, student engagement, and strategies and methods used by teachers to interact with students. A semi-structured interview was used to get teachers opinions and experiences, and explore real classroom practices of the instructional objectives.

Data were analysed through content analysis and descriptive analysis. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS software and presented in frequency and percentages whereas qualitative data were analysed through content analysis, which involves a coding scheme that reflects key concepts and themes identified in research questions. After that, content analysis was presented in narrative description to convey the results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents results and discussion of the study. The study intends to assess and evaluate the alignment of classroom practices with the stated instructional objectives, mainly on how teachers state instructional objectives in curriculum documents, the scheme of work, and lesson plans and to what extent the statement reflects ABCD or SMART model aspects and the actual classroom practices of stated instructional objectives. The study findings are presented based on specific objectives, which were to assess teachers' ability to formulate clear and measurable instructional objectives and examine the relationship between stated instructional objectives and classroom practices.

3.1 Teachers' statement of instructional objectives

Effective lesson planning is an essential step for teachers to ensure a well-organised and systematic learning process. It involves thoughtfully selecting and formulating instructional objectives, choosing content, material to be used in teaching, methodology, and design assessment. In this study, teachers' lesson plans were assessed against five criteria to evaluate their statement of instructional objectives. These criteria included whether the objectives were stated clearly and concisely by considering the ABCD or SMART model, if the instructional objectives reflect specific learning outcomes, if the instructional objectives were measurable and they can be assessed, if the instructional objectives focus on essential knowledge and skills, and if they align with curriculum requirement standards. 27 teachers' lesson plan objectives were reviewed from four subject's: history, English, geography, and biology. Among these, 23 objectives were evaluated using the ABCD model, and 4 were assessed using the SMART model. The findings from this review are presented in the following table.

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Table1. Teachers' statement of instructional objectives (n=27)

Variable	Measures			
	WD %	D %	PD %	ND %
The instructional objectives stated clearly and concisely (consider ABCD or SMART)	7.4	11.1	74.1	7.4
The instructional objectives reflect specific learning outcomes	22.2	29.6	40.7	7.4
The instructional objectives measurable and they can be assessed objectively	70.4	18.5	3.7	7.4
The instructional objectives focus on essential knowledge and skills	29.6	44.4	18.5	7.4
The instructional objectives align with the curriculum or learning standards	25.9	51.9	18.5	3.7

Source: Field Data (2024) WD=Well done, D=Done, PD= partially done, ND= Not done

3.1.1 Instructional objectives stated clearly and concisely.

Clarity and completeness of instructional objectives play a major role in guiding both teachers and students toward the accomplishment of learning outcomes. To assess whether the instructional objectives were clearly and concisely stated, this study analysed their alignment with the ABCD model and the SMART model. The study also shows the conformity of stated instructional objectives to the ABCD Model and the SMART model. Findings in Table 1 indicate the presence of instructional objectives that were partially stated, 74.1%. This means that there were unclear instructional objectives in relation to the ABCD or SMART model. The study associates unclear stated instructional objectives with the absence of enough skills for teachers, who face some difficulties in designing the specific objectives with the complete ABCD or SMART aspect. Their trial in designing ends up with incomplete statements of instructional objectives, which limit achievement of learning objectives. The findings were similar to Ogbeiwi (2017), who found incompleteness of the instructional objectives, which leads to low achievements across learners. The study revealed some incomplete instructional objectives under the ABCD model as follows:

(i) By the end of the period of 80 minutes form IIA students (“A”) should be able to analyse (“B”) goods exchange and impact of contact

(ii) By the end of this period of 80 minutes students (“A”) should be able to state tradition and (“B”)

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modern method of food storage

(iii)At the end of the lesson each student should be able to understand the meaning of
"A"
trade and kind of trade conducted in Africa before coming of colonialist.

(iv)By the end of the period every student should be able to understand the past perfect
"A"
tense and its uses

(v) By the end of period the students should be able to explain population problems
"A" "B"
Effectively
" D"

(vi)By the end of 80 minutes every student should be able to write a telephone message
"A" "B"
Using appropriate language discussed during the session

From the above statements, the instructional objective (i), (ii), (iv), and (vi) were revealed to miss Condition "C" and Degree "D" from the ABCD model. The missing condition on how planned activities should be performed resulted in the failure in clarifying the exact requirements of the task. Also, the missing degree in instructional objectives leads to unclear judgements/explanations on the extent to which students manage to perform the given task(s). Therefore, students could have poor performance due to unclear instructional objectives. In some instructional objectives (iv) above, there was a missing behaviour "B", which means that the instructional objective failed to state the verb that shows the learning behaviour to be shown by students during the lesson. (Sesiorina, 2014) emphasised the presence of complete instructional objectives for better performance among students during the lesson. Examples of objectives with complete ABCD aspects revealed by the current study were:

(i) "By the end of 80 minutes the students should be able to write invitation cards for all
"A" "B"
occasions based on the notes and examples provided in the manila sheet correctly"
"C" "D"

(ii) At the end of this lesson student should be able to read the descriptive text loudly
" "A" "B"

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based on what has shown on power point by using correct stressing and intonation

"C" "D"

Conformity of stated instructional objectives to ABCD Model

The analysis focuses on the conformity of stated objectives to the "ABCD Model. The "ABCD Model" includes the following components: "A" stands for "Audience", students whom you're going to teach; "B" stands for "Behaviour", performance behaviour stated by an action verb; "C" stands for "Condition", that is, under which condition the demonstration of the student is; and "D" stands for "Degree", how well the student must be able to demonstrate the performance (Sesiorina, 2014). A total of 23 lesson plan objectives were reviewed to look at the presence of the ABCD components, and these objectives were evaluated, and Table 2 provides a summary of the findings.

Table 2: Conformity of stated objectives to ABCD Model Across four Subjects (n = 23)

Components of ABCD Model	Found in objectives		Missing in objectives	
	Frequency	*Percentage (%)*	*Frequency*	*Percentage (%)*
A (Audience)	23	100.0	0	0.0
B (Behavior)	21	91.3	2	8.7
C (Condition)	6	26.1	17	73.9
D (Degree)	3	13.0	20	87.0

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 2 reveals that the "Audience" component is consistently included in all objectives, indicating that teachers clearly identify learners who they are going to teach. This helps to meet specific needs and characteristics of the learners to make the learning process effective. Most teachers (21 out of 23) include the "Behaviour" component, which assists in describing what learners will be able to do after instruction by using measurable verbs to ensure the expected change of behaviour of the learner is achieved. However, the "Condition" component is frequently missing, with only 6 out of 17 objectives including it, indicating that teachers often do not specify the conditions under which the behaviour should be performed by including tools, materials, and circumstances. Missing the condition aspect affects creativity among students, and eventually the learners won't be able to demonstrate new skills in real-life situations.

Moreover, the "Degree" component is the most neglected, with only 3 objectives out of 20 including it, suggesting that teachers rarely define the level of performance that is acceptable. This component helps teachers during assessment so as to make improvements among students. By neglecting this criterion, it is difficult for a teacher to know if the objective has been achieved. From the findings above, it implies that teachers lack the ability to create objectives that consist of complete ABCD aspects. Missing condition and degree aspects lead to difficulty in assessing students as the criteria are missing.

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Subject-Wise Analysis

Table 3 Components of ABCD Model, Subject-Wise (n = 23)

	Audience		Behaviour		Condition		Degree	
	Available	*Missing*	*Available*	*Missing*	*Available*	*Missing*	*Available*	*Missing*
History	9	0	8	1	1	8	0	9
English	7	0	6	1	3	4	2	5
Geography	3	0	3	0	0	3	1	2
Biology	4	0	4	0	2	2	0	4
Total	23		23		23		23	

Source: Field Data (2024)

As Table 3 indicates, teachers in history are consistent in identifying the audience and behaviour components of instructional objectives, but they do not specify conditions or degrees; only one objective includes conditions, and none include degrees. In English, teachers are relatively better at including conditions compared to other subjects, but there is still a notable gap in including the degree aspect. Geography teachers consistently identify the audience and behaviour but fail to include conditions; only one objective includes the degree aspect. Similarly, biology teachers consistently identify the audience and behaviour, with minimal inclusion of conditions and no inclusion of the degree component.

Findings are similar to the findings in the study by (Sari et al.(2020), who found that teachers were having difficulty in formulating instructional objectives with aspects “C” condition and “D” degree where the teachers only write the two aspects for all learning objectives, that is, aspects “A” and “B”. A similar result was also found in Botswana by Boikhutso (2010), where student teachers fail to specify condition aspects and determine the degree of mastery, which hinders the achievement of learning objectives. Therefore, there is a need to develop job training to equip teachers with knowledge and skills for preparing quality instructional objectives.

Conformity of stated instructional objectives to SMART Model

In analysing the objectives based on the SMART model, 4 lesson plan objectives were reviewed to look at the presence of SMART model components: “S” stands for specific, which specifies what you are going to do and for whom; “M” stands for measurable, which involves a measure of the progress; “A” stands for attainable, ensuring the objectives are attained over a proposed time frame with the available resources; “R” stands for realistic, making sure the objectives are relevant; and “T” stands for time bound, ensuring that the objectives can be accomplished.

An example of objectives using the SMART model revealed by the current study were,

(ix) At the end of the period, students will be able to start intervening and have a close conversation.

(x) Ability of students to describe the types of earth movements.

From the above statements, instructional objectives (ix) and (x) the analysis based on the SMART model were as follows:

Specific "**S**": the two objectives were clear about what students should be able to do (start, intervene, and have a conversation, and for the second objective, it was clear the objective identifies the content focus and the action the students are expected to perform, that is, to describe the types of earth movement.

Measurability "**M**" both objectives use action verbs "start intervene, and have close conversations", and for the second objective, "describe the types of earth movement", but the objectives do not include measurable criteria to evaluate the success of the actions, which makes it hard to assess the progress.

Attainable "**A**": Both objectives were attainable within the classroom environment and with the available resources.

Realistic "R": Both objectives were relevant to the lesson content and appropriate to student level.

Time-bound "T" On the first objective, the phrase "at the end of the period "gives a clear time frame for the accomplishment of the objectives, but on the second objective, it lacks a time frame to accomplish the objectives, which creates a challenge to know when students are expected to achieve the objectives.

From the above statement of instructional objectives (ix) and (x), the missing measurable criteria of the objectives. The missing of measurable criteria makes it difficult for teachers to assess students learning effectively. For instance, the missing measurable criteria in (x) make it difficult to know the level of detail needed or understanding expected when the students describe types of earth movement; what exactly do they have to include when describing earth movements- is it types or effects or the causes of earth movements? This led to inconsistent assessment and made a teacher rely on subjective judgement in evaluating the lesson.

Also, the absence of time in the objective (x) above creates challenges in managing and aligning learning outcomes with the classroom schedule. Likewise, it affects progress monitoring of the lesson, which led to struggling to structure the lessons effectively. It reduces students focus and prioritises

their work appropriately because they were unaware of its urgency, which led to difficulty achieving objectives, hence a delay in overall progress.

Therefore, the instructional objectives above, designed by teachers, do not adhere to all aspects of the SMART model. The missing of "M" measurability and the "T" time aspect in the second objective led to difficulty in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, there is a need to insist teachers make objectives that align fully with the SMART model to make classroom instruction become more effective.

3.1.2 Instructional objectives reflect specific learning outcomes.

According to Mahajan and Singh (2017), a learning outcome is an indicator of the success of a lesson, and it shows what a learner is finally expected to be able to achieve. For this reason they need to be specific, measurable, and written based on Bloom's taxonomy (Mahajan & Singh, 2017). Findings in the table indicate that 40.7% of the instructional objectives partially specify learning outcomes, as they lack clear assessment methods and often use immeasurable verbs. These limitations hinder evaluation of a student's behaviour and progress change. Similar findings were reported in the study by Sesiorina (2014), who revealed that immeasurable verbs used in teachers lesson plans cause difficulty in assessing students' behaviour on a given activity. The findings propose professional development for teachers to improve writing of instructional objectives that specify learning outcomes to improve the teaching and learning process.

3.1.3 The Instructional objectives were measurable and they can be assessed.

The findings highlight the use of measurable instructional objectives to assess students learning outcomes. Mager (1962) pointed out that one of the characteristics of behavioural objectives is to describe behavior to be performed by showing action (observable behaviour)**.** Measurability of learning objectives includes the use of action verbs, including quantifiable elements whenever possible, and considering Bloom's taxonomy and assessment. Recommended verbs to be used in stating instructional objectives are those from Bloom's taxonomy arranged in different levels from knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation, and creating. These verbs can help teachers to observe and evaluate student behaviour during lessons. On the other side, vague words such as believe, realise, appreciate, understand, enjoy, know, and familiarise are discouraged as they hinder measurement of learning outcomes. Findings show that 70.4% of the instructional objectives use measurable verbs to ensure assessment and promotion of behaviour change among students.

However, 7.4% of the objectives used immeasurable verbs like "understand" and "know" that appeared in some objectives, leading to difficulty in measuring students' behaviour hence undermining evaluation efforts. Additionally, some designed objectives miss quantifiable outcomes, causing it to be difficult to evaluate a student's success accurately. The findings concur with a study done in Indonesia that revealed the operational verbs used in 15 lesson plans; six of them were measurable, and the immeasurable verb was "Visualise," which hindered evaluation of the lesson (Sesiorina, 2014).

The finding underscores the necessity of training teachers in writing measurable instructional objectives that use clear, quantifiable verbs and include criteria for evaluating students' achievement.

3.1.4 The instructional objectives focus on essential knowledge and skills

Findings indicate that 44.4% of the instructional objectives focus on essential knowledge and skills by identifying core competencies as outlined in the syllabus. In reviewing teachers' lesson plans and schemes of work, they revealed that teachers identify core competencies by looking at the syllabuses. This implies that teachers' state their instructional objectives by prioritising the learning goals as stipulated in the syllabuses. Usadiati (2015) emphasises the importance of considering core competencies to be achieved by students as stated in the syllabus. By focusing on the knowledge and competencies, it will help to show whether the teaching and learning process has achieved the determined goal that is stated in the curriculum. However, the challenges in practices of instructional objectives show the need for additional support, provide resources, and encourage teachers to continue referencing the syllabus to ensure core competencies are effectively taught and assessed to improve student learning outcomes.

3.1.5 Align with the curriculum or learning standards

Finding in Table 1 indicates that 51.9% of instructional objectives align with the curriculum. This means the majority of teachers understand the curriculum standards of their respective subjects and use them to provide knowledge and skills needed by students. They apply those standards in the scheme of work and integrate them into lesson plan objectives, ensuring the instructional objectives are relevant to their subject. By doing so, it led to the achievement of learning goals. The findings are similar to the study by Latifa in Indonesia (2017), who emphasises the objective statement to match with the goal of the 2013 curriculum so as to meet learning goals. This highlights the importance of teachers designing objectives that align with curriculum standards to improve teaching quality and ensure learning outcomes meet essential standards.

Generally, the findings suggest that while teachers attempt to formulate instructional objectives, a significant gap exists in preparing the clear and measurable instructional objectives. Missing some components in designing learning objectives causes the objectives to miss their measurable criteria in assessing the student. It also creates doubt whether students' performance is judged correctly or not. This lack of completeness in the formulation of instructional objectives could impede the effectiveness of instructions, which would eventually affect the achievement of learning objectives. Efforts should be made to provide targeted professional development to improve teachers' skills in formulating comprehensive and measurable instructional objectives by considering the ABCD or SMART Model.

3.2 Implementation of the stated instructional objectives in the classroom

Also, the study assesses the implementation of stated lesson instructional objectives with the alignment to classroom practices. In this part, the assessment focused on if the teacher communicates instructional objectives at the beginning of each lesson, references and reinforces instructional objectives

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throughout the lesson, if classroom materials and activities support the instructional objectives, engagement of the students directly to address instructional objectives, if the strategies and methods were consistent, classroom practices provided opportunities for students to meet intended learning outcomes, and if the instructional objectives were realistic and achievable within the given time frame as planned in the lesson plan. To gather this data, 27 observations were conducted in classroom teaching and learning practices using an observation checklist followed by an interview after the lesson. The aim was to find out how teachers use the stated instructional objectives as planned before to achieve the learning objectives. Table 4 provides a summary of the findings.

Table 4 Implementation of the stated instructional objectives in the classroom (n = 27)

Variable	*Measures*			
	WD	*D*	*PD*	*ND*
Statements concerning instructional objectives	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
The instructional objectives clearly communicated to the students.	*55.6*	*25.9*	*7.4*	*11.1*
The instructional objectives referenced and reinforced throughout the lesson.	*40.7*	*22.2*	*33.3*	*3.7*
The classroom activities and materials support the instructional objectives.	*18.5*	*22.2*	*11.1*	*48.1*
Students engaged in activities that directly address the stated instructional objectives.	*18.5*	*25.9*	*33.3*	*22.2*
The instructional strategies and methods consistent with the stated objectives.	*14.8*	*18.5*	*7.4*	*59.3*
The classroom practices provide opportunities for Students to meet the intended learning outcomes.	*11.1*	*25.9*	*22.2*	*40.7*
The instructional objectives realistic and achievable within the given time frame.	*7.4*	*37*	*7.4*	*48.1*

Source: Field Data (2024) WD=Well done, D=Done, PD=partially done, ND= Not done

It was observed that 55.6% of the stated instructional objectives were communicated at the beginning of the lesson to make students have prior knowledge of the lesson. The communication helps the students to understand and know what is expected to be learnt and achieved at the end of the lesson. Findings reveal that most teachers start the lesson verbally by explaining what they are going to teach and what to achieve at the end of the lesson. They ask questions on previous study and relate with the objectives of the present lesson. Communicating instructional objectives is important for a student to engage in the teaching and learning process effectively. The result concurs with the study done in Nigeria where they found that students with prior knowledge of behavioural objectives perform better than those who did not have prior knowledge of the behavioural objectives (Abigail, 2016). Therefore, it is important to incorporate explicit instructional objectives at the start of the lessons, which serves as a critical strategy for student understanding and achievement.

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Table 4 indicates that 40.7% of the instructional objectives were referenced and reinforced throughout the lesson, which positively impacts students' comprehension and retention of the subject matter. Most of the teachers not only present the objectives at the beginning of the lesson but also connect them with previous lessons to make a relation with the current lesson; they do repetition of important points and summarise key points to make the student understand. Teachers also refer the objectives to the syllabus needs. This is important, as it makes the student focus on the lesson and understand the usefulness of the objectives. This implies that teachers are the key factor in achieving the instructional objective by emphasizing it to learners in order to self-direct their learning. Findings are similar to the study conducted on how undergraduate science students use learning objectives to study. The students found learning objectives to be useful as they helped them to narrow focus and organise their study (Osueke et al., 2023). Thus, consistent reference to instructional objectives during teaching is a vital way to ensure clarity and focuses and improve performance among learners.

Lesson plan preparation involves preparing activities and teaching materials to enhance the teaching and learning process. By preparing activities, students can be directly engaged and participate effectively in a lesson. Teaching material, such as teaching aids, notes, and books that relate to the learning objectives, enables students to have a clear purpose and be connected to what needs to be learnt. Findings in Table 4 indicate that 48.1% of the stated instructional objectives do not include activities and teaching materials that can raise students' awareness and engagement to reach learning outcomes. Even for those that involve activities, some of the activities were not consistently implemented during the teaching. For instance, some teachers' state in their lesson plan that they will provide activities for group discussion, but they end up using the question-and-answer method, which makes it difficult for each student to participate instead of designing activities that can make each student participate. When asked, they described that lack of resources, having more classes per day, students' low level of understanding, and a large number of students were obstacles for them to design and provide activities. During an interview a geography teacher from school C said:

> *"A large number of students in a class is a challenge in designing activities that will cover each student, and a lot of time will be consumed in performing the activities, so sometimes it is better to present the lesson without activities so as to save time."*

This implies that some teachers don't take time to prepare activities to arouse students thinking, which affects students in attaining the intended learning outcome. These findings are related to the finding of the study in Bangladesh on the hindrances to using and preparing the lesson plan of secondary school. Teachers who found reasons for not preparing and implementing a well-structured lesson plan included having more classes per day, making it hard to collect teaching aids; having no skills to prepare a lesson plan; having a short time allocated (if they use a lesson plan, they will not complete the syllabus in time); and having spending more time in administration work limit time for preparation (Alam et al., 2018). It is, therefore, important for school administration to encourage teachers in designing teaching and learning activities that can support the implementation of instructional objectives.

Moreover, it was observed that most of the teachers indicated in their lesson plan that they would use teaching aids in the implementation of the lesson. Findings show that 48.1% of the stated instructional objectives in the lesson plan do not use teaching aids during the implementation of the lesson. Some of them pointed out that they don't have enough time to prepare them because they have a lot of responsibilities at school apart from teaching and have many classes per day. In this view, the majority of teachers do not prepare and use learning activities and teaching aids, which will hinder the success of the instructional objectives. For instance, in the geography scenario in (Appendix)1, the teacher planned to use a globe in the teaching process, but at no phase in lesson development was the globe used or brought to the classroom, which limited the student's ability to grasp and retain the content taught effectively. Findings of this study relate to the study conducted in Sri Lanka, which revealed that teachers face problems such as lack of time to make teaching aids, lack of knowledge in connecting teaching aids to the lesson, and lack of training to use electronic teaching aids, causing difficulty in using teaching aids to facilitate achievement of the instructional objectives (Rajapaksha & Chathurika, 2015). There is a need to support teachers in preparing and using teaching aids in teaching to make learning permanent for students.

It was observed that 33.3% of the students were partially engaged in activities that directly address the stated instructional objectives, which hinders effective learning. This is because teachers don't prepare adequate activities, failing to encourage students to ask questions, provide clarification, provide feedback, and promote collaborative learning. As a result, learning becomes passive and limits the ability of students to apply the knowledge in practical situations. This study has similar observations to that of Tillya & Paulo (2014), who found that no emphasis is put on students in the development of competence and application of knowledge, and it appears that no opportunities are put in place for secondary school students in Tanzania to apply what they have learnt in solving real-life problems. There is a need for teachers to design interactive learning activities that actively involve students participating in the learning process to enhance attainment of intended learning objectives and raise understanding of practical knowledge.

The implementation of instructional objectives also depends on the clear strategies and methodologies that can support learning objectives. It is important for a good teacher to be familiar with best practices for writing instructional objectives because informed and consistent practice of instructional objectives will result in students having a much better understanding and improved learning outcomes (Schoenfeld-tacher & Sims, 2013). It was observed that 59.3% of the planned instructional strategies and methodology were not consistently used or implemented as planned earlier. Most of the teachers planned to use group discussion, but during implementation they switched to the lecture method and question and answer, which hindered the implementation of the instructional objectives and development of critical thinking among students on the subject matter as the competence-based curriculum demands. A number of reasons have been given as to why they prefer the lecture method. The reasons include too many students in the class, which is also associated with poor seating arrangements; they just want to cover the content on time to catch up with the curriculum and lack enough resources to support the lesson.

The findings are similar to other studies (Tillya & Mafumiko,2018), which found that some teachers still use traditional ways in teaching because they think modern methods of teaching take much more time; hence, it is inefficient and expensive. Furthermore, most teachers don't like to use other methods because of overcrowded classrooms (Senjiro & Lupeja, 2023). It is therefore important for teachers to use participatory methods and be consistent with what they plan to create and increase the activeness of students in the lesson.

Table 4 indicates that 40.7% of the stated lesson classroom objectives did not provide opportunities for students to meet the intended learning outcome. This shows that most of the teachers did not design learning activities for students to actively participate in the learning process; instead, they used teacher-centered method, such as lectures, which limit opportunities for student engagement and the provision of constructive feedback and reflection on the learning experience, which affects the achievement of objectives. The main reasons for this are overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of teaching and learning resources, and the English language problem among students associated with a bad foundation of the English language. The findings are similar to the findings of Qambaday & Mwila (2022) in Hanang district, who reported that teachers struggle to implement learner-centred methods and design activities that will engage students directly due to challenges such as lack of knowledge in the implementation of learner-centred, overcrowded classrooms, teacher morale, teacher resistance to change, and poor teaching and learning material. This implies that teachers are the significant factor to enhance or hinder achievement of learning objectives among learners. To overcome these obstacles, there is a need to improve strategies and activities to ensure effective learning and better achievement of instructional objectives.

Realistic and achievable instructional objectives involve setting clear and measurable goals that align with learners' needs and desired outcomes. Failure to assess, to have resources to be used in teaching, and poorly stated instructional objectives led to the failure of the stated objectives. Findings reveal that 48.1% of the stated instructional objectives have limited criteria to be realistic and achievable within a given time frame. The main reason for this is that they were not related to real-life situations in the reflection section; some of them were not accomplished within the allocated timeframe due to poor management of time allocated in each section of lesson development, and some lesson plans didn't show how the learners will be assessed at the end of the lesson. Others indicated that they would use oral questions, but at the end of the lesson, the teacher gave them as homework due to a lack of enough time; hence, it is difficult to evaluate if the stated objectives were successfully achieved. Example in the Geography scenario (Appendix 1): Poor management of time in the presentation stage affects time allocated for the next steps. Hence, it was difficult for a teacher to mark students work so as to make an evaluation of the lesson, although he added ten more minutes, which also made some students become bored with the lesson. Also, this can be supported by an interview with a history teacher from in school E, who commented that

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"Most of the teachers don't have techniques of assessing the lesson at the end of the lesson by referring to the stated objectives. Others face difficulty in writing the assessment stage in the lesson plan. And sometimes we may know them but still don't use them due to time".

Findings align with the findings in the study of reflections of the implementation of a competence-based curriculum in Tanzanian Secondary schools, which revealed that most of the prepared lessons didn't prepare realistic learning tasks, and the practice of formative student assessment was less than 50% of the observed classroom sessions, which affects the learning process (Komba & Mwandanji, 2015). This means that most of the teachers don't take time to prepare assessments that can help them in making evaluations at the end of the lesson and find out if the objectives have been achieved or not. Therefore, there is a need for administrators to make sure that teachers adhere to the rules of lesson planning and implementation by setting realistic and achievable objectives in a given time.

In general, findings show teachers have limitations in the implementation of their stated instructional objectives, such as insufficient teaching and learning material, language problems among students, and a large number of students in the classroom, which were also found in other studies (Komba & Mwandanji, 2015; Tilya & Mafumiko,2018). These hinder the implementations of instructional objectives and affect the consistency of the planned lesson. Therefore, there is a need for stakeholders to improve the teaching and learning environment by supplying adequate resources and investing in teachers professional develoment.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that instructional objectives designed in lesson plans were incomplete to influence the achievement of the learning objectives. The statement of instructional objectives designed in the lesson plans misses some important aspects from the ABCD and SMART models. The instructions were designed to facilitate coverage of subject content rather than referring to important elements that aim to ensure achievement of the learning objectives. This causes objective statements to lack some measurable criteria and brings missconceptions, especially when evaluating students academic achievement. It creates doubt whether the students performance is judged appropriately or not. The study shows teachers have limited skills in using some aspects of the two models in facilitating the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, most of the teachers use the ABCD model in designing their objectives. Some claim the SMART model to be new to them, and they find it difficult to use. Others claim that they encountered it when they were at university and college studies, but it is difficult to use it every time due to overcrowded classes and not enough time for preparation. Moreover, in the implementation of stated instructional objectives, some teachers deviate from implementing instructional objectives as stated in their lesson plan, such as the use of teaching materials like teaching aids and methods, and engaging students in doing some activities. This is a result of overcrowded classrooms, the nature of students understanding, high teaching loads, inadequate teachng and learning resources, shortage of time, and having many other responsibilities apart from classroom teaching. These affect practices of the stated instructional objectives. The findings call upon education

administrators and other stakeholders to provide continuous in-service training to improve teachers pedagogical practices on lesson designing and assist them in creating high-quality classroom instructional objectives and improving the alignment of instructional objectives and assessment.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance instructional practices and student learning outcomes. Teachers should engage in various professional activities, including lesson planning, which will help them in developing high-quality instructional objectives. Moreover, they should improve their assessment strategies during teaching and learning to ensure achievement of specific objectives and provide information that teachers can use to adjust teaching methods to meet students needs. Furthermore, designing learning activities to make the learning process more interactive and cause active participation of students. This will provide practical experience and help develop critical thinking and other essential skills among students.

School administration should facilitate a collaborative environment where teachers can share best practices in objective setting and classroom implementation of instructional objectives by having workshops or peer mentor programmes. Additionally, curriculum developers and policy makers should promote continuous policy improvement that encourages schools to implement a continuous improvement cycle in instructional practices that include modification of teaching methods and strategies, assessment ways, and materials for them to align with the educational goals.

Recommendation for further study

Based on the recommendations of this study, it is recommended that further studies be conducted on teachers' competence in verb selection when stating instructional objectives. Understanding how effectively teachers choose appropriate action verbs is essential for creating clear, measurable objectives that guide instruction and assessment. Such a study would provide valuable insights into areas where teachers may need additional support or professional development to enhance instructional planning and effectiveness.

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Appendix 1: Observational scenario

Practices of classroom instructional objectives.

SUBJECT: Geography

CLASS: Form one

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 54 Students

TOPIC: Solar system

SUBTOPIC: Earth movement

COMPETENCE: Ability of the students to describe types of earth movement

GENERAL OBJECTIVES: The students should be able to describe types of earth movements.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: Ability of students to describe types of earth movements

TEACHING AIDS: Globe

TIME ALLOCATED: 80 minutes

Observation Details

1. **Introduction 5 minutes**

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Teacher: "*Good morning, students! How are you?"*

Students*: Good morning, teacher. We are fine.*

Teacher activity: "*Who can tell us what the solar system is made up of?"*

Student activity: "*The solar system has the sun, planets, and moons."*

Teacher activity*: "Last time we talked about planets- can any of you mention at least four planets*?"

Student activity: *"Planets we have: Earth, Mars, Jupiter, and Uranus.*"

Teacher activity: "*Today we will learn about different types of earth movement."*

"By the end of this lesson, each of you should be able to explain the two main types of earth movements."

Student activities:

"Listening attentively as the teacher explained the lesson objectives"

Observation

The teacher adhered to the planned 5 minutes, ensuring a smooth move to the main lesson.

2. **Presentation: 20 Minutes**

Teacher activity: "*In your groups, discuss what you understand about earth movements and their effects."*

Student activity: "*The earth moves in two ways: revolution and rotation."*

"Rotation is the movement of the earth on its axis.

Rotation causes day and night.

"Revolution is the movement of one thing round another.

Revolution is when the earth revolves in its orbit around the sun".

Student: (present a few effects that need more explanation from the teacher**)** "*Teacher we need more explanation and effects of earth movements."*

Teacher activity: (present and explain more on the effect of earth movements)

Observation:

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The teacher maintained steady pacing but spent an additional 10 minutes lecturing and explaining the effect of Earth's movement, which reduced the time for reinforcement of the lesson presented on the next phase of the lesson plan.

3. Reinforcement 20 minutes

Teacher activity: "*I want you to explain types of earth movement* and *their effects on our daily life."*

"What happens if the earth stopped rotating?"

Student activity: *"rotation and revolution"*

*-There would be no day and night***.**

Observation:

Students participated in answering the recap questions, but it was difficult for a teacher to assess each student due to the earlier time adjustment, and the number of students in the class was too big; here he spent 10 minutes. Also, the teacher used more than 10 minutes in making corrections to those who had difficulty in explaining.

4. Reflection: 15 minutes

Teacher activity: *So, by summarizing what we have seen, the earth's rotation causes day and night, while revolution creates seasons; both movements are essential for our life***.**

Student activity: "*Take note of what was summarized by the teacher."*

Observation:

The teacher spent 15 minutes summarizing two types of earth movement and their importance. Due to limited time, no reflection was made about the lesson in relation to real- life situations.

5. Conclusion 10 minutes

Teacher activity: "*Now, by concluding, I hope you understand today's concepts. Solve this exercise in your exercise book.*

"What are Earth's rotation and its effects?"

"What is Earth's revolution, and how does Earth's revolution affect agriculture?"

"What would happen if the earth didn't move on its axis?"

Student activity:

"*Start doing the exercise in their exercise book.*"

Observation:

- The conclusion was designed to review the lesson objectives and provide an opportunity for formative assessment, although the allocated time was not enough for a teacher to mark students work, as the teacher added 10 more minutes while passing to look at how they attempted the questions.

Discussion

Strength

-Implementation was well based on flexibility to address some misconceptions that arose in the class.

Weakness

-The additional time spent on the presentation part reduced time for the other phase of lesson plan development, example in the reinforcement part of the instructional objectives, which impacted students' engagement in the discussion and led to missed opportunities to assess whether the students have achieved the instructional objectives.

-The Lecture used by the teacher in presentation time was not included in the lesson plan before this limit on student engagement and discourages critical thinking in the lesson as students listen more rather than participate in the lesson.

- The teacher allocated using a globe as a teaching aid, but the teaching aid was not brought into the classroom.

- The reflection part can be used to provide an activity that can help students to make a reflection of the lesson rather than discuss again the types of earth movement.

- Time allocated on the conclusion was not enough to assess the achievement of the instructional objective, as the exercise designed for the formative assessment was not completed by students on time. This made it difficult to know if the instructional objective was achieved.