



INFLUENCE OF CONCEPT MAPPING ON STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHING IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of concept of mapping on students' attitude towards Social Studies teaching in higher institutions in Nigeria. Concept mapping, a dynamic tool for visual representation, is examined for its potential to bridge the gap between students' attitudes and the teaching of Social Studies. The study reveals that concept mapping serves as a profound bridge, linking students' attitudes with the subject matter. By strategically integrating concept mapping techniques, educators unlock a realm of dynamic possibilities that resonate with engagement and interactivity. This fosters positive attitudes, enhances comprehension, and nurtures critical thinking among students. In the ever-evolving educational landscape, the integration of innovative methodologies, notably mapping, emerges as imperative. These methodologies not only ignite a passion for learning but also facilitate enhanced subject appreciation, fostering a symbiotic educator-learner relationship that propels education into an era of transformational growth. This research highlights the significance of mapping as an effective educational tool that transcends traditional boundaries, enhancing the pedagogical landscape and enriching the students' learning experience.

Keywords: Attitude, Concept, Correlate, Mapping, Influence

Introduction

Social Studies have evolved as a global discipline that not only studies man in his immediate environment, but also studies his complementary relationship with his environment. Amosun, Ige and Choo in Anderson (2015) affirmed that Social Studies have emerged as the punctilious elixir that is potent to correct immoral behaviours and inculcate in students a sense of decent behaviour. Krutka and Carano (2016) remarked that the primary raison d'être of Social Studies is to assist students emerge as global citizens. It should be noted that these scholars pointed out that this mission is an uphill task for teachers as this demands that they use a variety of teaching and learning methods to help students understand the big ideas in Social Studies. At its core, Social Studies stands as a foundational discipline that serves as a beacon guiding individuals through the intricate labyrinth of human interactions, community dynamics, cultural nuances, and the complex interplay of societies on a global scale. Within the specific milieu of higher education in Nigeria, the efficacy of Social Studies instruction transcends its conventional boundaries, assuming a role of paramount importance in the holistic development of students into enlightened and conscientious citizens (Ige & Hlalele, 2017). In the academic landscape of Ogun State's higher education institutions, the art of imparting social studies takes on an elevated significance. This transcends the mere transmission of facts; it encapsulates the art of nurturing critical thinkers, empathetic individuals, and active participants in the socio-political tapestry of their nation and the world. By delving into the depths of historical contexts,

cultural variations, economic frameworks, and political systems, students are equipped with the intellectual tools to decipher the complexities that underpin our contemporary society (Chung & Park, 2015).

Central to this educational narrative is the compelling notion that the infusion of mapping techniques, both traditional and digital, can be an instrumental catalyst in elevating the pedagogical experience. Mapping, in its myriad forms, provides a transformative lens through which abstract theories and intricate relationships are rendered palpable. Traditional maps, bearing the rich heritage of cartography, offer an aesthetic bridge between the historical tapestry and the present reality. They encapsulate the ebbs and flows of civilizations, the ebullience of cultural exchange, and the geographical contours that have shaped the evolution of societies (Jang, 2011).

Simultaneously, the digital realm unveils a panorama of possibilities that magnify the impact of mapping techniques on social studies education. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) unravel intricate layers of information, facilitating a dynamic exploration of spatial patterns and correlations. Through interactive data visualizations and three-dimensional renderings, students can traverse temporal dimensions, discerning how historical events shaped urban landscapes and cultural practices (Anderson & Coleman, 2014).

The task of improving teaching and learning has preoccupied the minds of educators and facilitators of knowledge. An observation of classroom interaction in Social Studies in higher institution with the study areas indicate that all teachers seem to be faced with problems of how to effectively teach the curriculum content of the subject in order to achieve its stated instructional and programme objectives. Explaining further, Ikwumelu and Oyibe in Durden (2018) observed that “ineffective teaching does not encourage development of social awareness and understanding because students still either take it for granted what their teachers offer or reject it out of hand, probably as a result of application of inappropriate instructional strategies in teaching”.

Oyibe and Oketa in Chung (2015) noted that Social Studies as a subject if properly programmed and effectively taught should help to solve social problems that are facing developing countries like ours (Nigeria) where old norms are losing their grips without any effective substitute to replace them. Concept mapping seems to be one of the solutions to the seeming problem of inadequate teaching and learning (Boujaoude & Attieh in Jung, 2011). Concept mapping is an instructional tool that is currently gaining popularity in the field of Science and Education, (Bello & Abimbola in Manning,

2017). In other words, it is used as an instructional strategy to promote meaningful learning. Concept mapping is a graphic organizer technique used to show the hierarchical relationships between and among concepts through the creation of a visual map of connections, (Educators Guide in Scott, 2017). Concept mapping offers students opportunities to engage in hands-on and minds-on activities (Akpınar & Ergin in Oliha & Audu, 2015). It is an excellent critical thinking teaching strategy which requires reasoning skills, analysis of multiple relationship and consideration of multiple perspectives.

In the nexus between the abstract and the tangible, the concept of mapping stands as a bridge, elucidating complex concepts and nurturing a deeper comprehension of social studies. Through the seamless fusion of traditional and digital mapping techniques, the teaching and learning experience gains an innovative edge. Students are not passive recipients of information; they become active explorers, deciphering the symbiotic relationships between cultures, societies, and histories, fostering a profound engagement that transcends the classroom walls (Scott, 2017).

Therefore, the realm of social studies transcends being a mere discipline; it is an intellectual journey that unveils the intricacies of human existence. In the context of Ogun State's higher education, its potency in shaping well-rounded citizens cannot be overstated. The integration of mapping techniques, whether rooted in the heritage of cartography or driven by the digital evolution, forms a transformative conduit, enriching the educational landscape. It offers students a tangible compass to navigate the depths of societal dynamics, nurturing an understanding that transcends facts and encapsulates the essence of what it truly means to be a part of a globalized, interconnected world. Thus, the study explores effective utilization of concept of mapping as correlate of student's attitude towards social studies teaching in higher institution in Ogun State.

Concept Mapping and Education in Nigeria Higher Institutions

Within the context of higher education institutions in Nigeria, concept mapping emerges as a dynamic technique that encompasses the art of visually capturing spatial and relational information. In the intricate tapestry of education, maps metamorphose into potent instruments, wielding the capacity to distill intricate concepts into coherent visual narratives, thus fostering a nexus between diverse elements. The spectrum of mapping ranges from the venerable realm of traditional paper maps to the cutting-edge frontiers of contemporary digital mapping technologies, both of which offer an array of

avenues for presenting multifaceted information (O'Neil & Marsick, 2014).

In the realm of education, particularly within the Nigerian higher education landscape, the potential of mapping transcends the superficial. It embodies an impactful strategy that permeates the educational process, empowering learners to surmount the complexities of various subjects. At its core, the essence of mapping lies in its ability to unravel intricate relationships and unveil hidden patterns, thereby illuminating the intellectual terrain with clarity. Traditional paper maps, a reservoir of heritage and knowledge, symbolize the historical lineage of cartographic artistry. These tangible creations transcend time, unearthing historical events and geographical nuances with an air of authenticity. The tactile experience of navigating a paper map, tracing the contours of ancient civilizations, and deciphering the paths that historical figures once tread enhances the connection between learners and the past (O'Neil & Marsick, 2007).

In juxtaposition, the advent of modern digital mapping technologies heralds a new era of exploration. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) burgeon as innovative platforms that meld data and geography, enabling dynamic manipulation and visualization. Learners can embark on immersive journeys through multidimensional landscapes, unearthing historical epochs and unraveling the geographical signatures of bygone eras. Such technologies empower learners to transcend the confines of the classroom, embarking on virtual expeditions through time and space. In the realm of Social Studies, the integration of mapping emerges as a transformative catalyst. It serves as an adept tool for unravelling the intricacies of historical narratives, unveiling geographical distributions, deciphering demographic trends, and dissecting the underlying structures of societies. Through the medium of maps, learners are beckoned to explore the timelines of history, tracing the footsteps of civilizations and understanding how the ebb and flow of cultures shape the world (O'Neil & Marsick, 2014).

Moreover, the power of mapping within social studies education extends to its ability to nurture substantive discussions. The contours of a map can spark dialogues on cultural diversity, the ripple effects of globalization, and the ramifications of environmental issues. By visualizing the interplay between regions, cultures, and ecosystems, learners are poised to engage in reflective conversations that transcend theoretical boundaries and delve into the heart of global dynamics.

Concept Mapping as an Educational Tool in Nigeria

In the vibrant landscape of education in Nigeria, a transformative tool emerges, one that transcends conventional boundaries and redefines the very nature of learning. Mapping, hitherto an emblem of geographical exploration, unfurls its wings to encompass a novel realm the realm of education. Within this metamorphosis, mapping emerges as an educational harbinger, breathing life into abstract concepts, and ushering learners into the realm of deeper comprehension. At its essence, mapping in an educational context involves the enchanting art of visual representation. The intricate fabric of concepts, ideas, and information is meticulously woven into a spatial format, bestowing learners with a unique lens through which to view the vast expanse of knowledge. This transformation from the intangible to the tangible offers a veritable gateway to understanding, a pathway paved with clarity amidst the often-intricate labyrinth of ideas (Coughlan & Coughlan, 2014).

The power of concept mapping as an educational tool becomes evident when confronted with the daunting task of simplifying complexity. In the hands of educators and learners alike, maps serve as alchemic instruments, transmuting intricate information into accessible representations. These representations, whether manifested as geographic maps, mind maps, or concept maps, become palatable capsules of knowledge, brimming with insights waiting to be unraveled. When applied within the realm of social studies, mapping unfurls its wings as a harbinger of transformation. The annals of history, once confined to the pages of textbooks, are brought to life upon the canvas of maps. Students traverse epochs and continents, witnessing the intricate tapestry of historical events unfurl before their eyes. The narratives of cultural interactions, vibrant and vibrant, are imprinted upon these cartographic renditions, offering a window into the intricate dance of civilizations across time and space (O'Neil & Marsick, 2007).

In the digital age, the possibilities burgeon even further. Interactive digital maps invite learners to partake in an immersive exploration. They can trace the contours of empires, delve into the crossroads of cultures, and witness the gradual evolution of societal structures. Mind maps and concept maps, akin to neural pathways of knowledge, illuminate the interconnectedness of ideas, fostering a holistic understanding that transcends the confines of isolated fragments. As educators embrace these dynamic tools, they beckon students into a realm where learning transcends the mundane and becomes an adventure. Learners cease to be passive recipients;

they metamorphose into active explorers, embarking on journeys of discovery and forging connections across the tapestry of information (Miller et al., 2009).

Students' Attitudes towards Social Studies Teaching in Nigeria

Undoubtedly, the attitudes students harbor towards any academic subject wield profound influence over their learning journey, serving as compasses that steer the course of engagement and educational triumph. This profound interplay between attitudes and scholastic achievement resonates profoundly within the realm of social studies education in Nigeria, where the tapestry of students' cognitive, emotional, and motivational responses weaves a narrative of profound significance. The ebb and flow of positive attitudes serve as the cornerstone of a transformative educational experience. When students embrace a subject with enthusiasm and optimism, a symphony of motivation, interest, and active participation ensues. The classroom becomes an arena where curiosity thrives, where every lesson becomes a tantalizing exploration, and where the pursuit of knowledge becomes an exhilarating adventure. The canvas of positive attitudes paints a portrait of learners who willingly traverse the intricate landscapes of social studies, ardently absorbing its intricacies and reveling in the transformative power it bestows (Nesbit and Adesope, 2006).

However, the flip side reveals the shadows cast by negative attitudes, an undercurrent that can cast a pall over the educational voyage. When students' perspectives towards social studies are tinged with disinterest or apathy, a cascade of ramifications unfolds. The vibrancy of learning dims, effort wanes, and the once-promising realm of educational growth stagnates. Sub optimal learning outcomes become an unfortunate byproduct, underscoring the pivotal role that attitudes play in shaping the trajectory of scholastic accomplishment (Burkhardt, 2006). According to Burkhardt (2006), a panoramic exploration into the intricacies of students' attitudes towards social studies teaching unveils a multifaceted tapestry woven from myriad threads. Cultural influences, personal relevance, instructional methodologies, and the allure of practical application converge to mold these attitudes. Investigating the intricate dance of these factors assumes paramount importance, akin to deciphering the labyrinthine codes that unlock the gateway to effective instructional strategies (Durden, 2018).

At the heart of this inquiry lies the impetus to comprehend the nuanced dance between pedagogical approaches and attitudes. By dissecting the factors that stoke enthusiasm and curbing disillusionment,

educators can craft a tapestry of instructional methodologies that resonates harmoniously with learners. Tailoring teaching strategies to align with students' predispositions cultivates an environment where engagement flourishes and learning transforms into an endeavor of shared exploration (Fraser, 2007).

Correlating Concept Mapping Techniques and Attitudes of Higher Institution Students

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, a novel and captivating endeavor emerges—an exploration that delves into the symbiotic relationship between mapping techniques and the attitudes harbored by students within the hallowed halls of higher institutions. This research endeavor sets its sights on unearthing the hidden connections that link the use of mapping techniques in the realm of social studies teaching to the attitudes students bear towards the subject matter (Kullberg et al., 2017). The hypothesis that guides this intellectual odyssey is a beacon illuminating the transformative potential of integrating mapping techniques into the curriculum. It posits that the introduction of cartographic artistry into the pedagogical tapestry possesses the power to weave a narrative of positivity, transforming students' attitudes from mere bystanders to active participants. By rendering the subject matter more relatable and embracing the visual allure of maps, this hypothesis envisions an educational landscape where attitudes bloom with enthusiasm (Ausubel, 2000).

The methodology driving this research is a symphony of rigor and depth. Surveys, the intricate tapestries of insight, will be woven, soliciting the perspectives and perceptions of students as they navigate the immersive realm of social studies education. Classroom observations, akin to lenses capturing fleeting moments, will chronicle the reactions and interactions that dance across the canvas of learning. Comparative analyses, underpinned by statistical rigor, will take center stage, scrutinizing the attitudes of students who tread the path of mapping techniques against those who traverse the terrain of traditional pedagogical methods (Hsu & Wang, 2014). The crux of this exploration rests upon a multi-dimensional canvas. Students exposed to mapping techniques embark on a journey where the abstractions of social studies manifest into tangible landscapes, where historical events assume geographical footprints, and where cultural intricacies become vivid landmarks. The hypothesis suggests that the infusion of maps ignites an inherent curiosity, tapping into the visual cortex and igniting an intellectual spark that transcends the realm of conventional learning (Cheng in Scott, 2017).

As the research unfolds, it seeks to decipher the

tapestry of correlations that interlace mapping techniques with the attitudes of learners. Does the immersive voyage through maps cultivate a disposition of engagement? Do students traversing the cartographic landscapes demonstrate attitudes of intrigue, motivation, and appreciation for the subject matter? These questions pulse at the heart of this study, as it endeavors to illuminate the hidden conduits through which teaching methodologies mold the very fabric of educational attitudes (Goetz, 2014).

Benefits of Utilizing Concepts Mapping in Social Studies in Nigeria

Within the dynamic realm of Social Studies education in Nigeria, the strategic integration of mapping techniques emerges as a transformative pedagogical catalyst, unveiling a tapestry of benefits that resonates with learners of diverse inclinations. From the hallowed halls of traditional learning to the digital landscapes of the modern classroom, the advantages of mapping are both profound and multifarious.

Foremost among these advantages is the profound resonance with varied learning styles. As the kaleidoscope of learners' preferences unfurls, mapping stands as an inclusive medium that extends an accommodating hand to visual learners. For those whose understanding thrives amidst graphical representations, maps emerge as a beacon of comprehension, translating complex ideas and intricate narratives into vivid visual forms. This synchronization between teaching and learning styles nurtures a fertile ground where understanding burgeons and intellectual sparks ignite (Oliha & Audu, 2015).

Beyond mere comprehension, the benefits of mapping ripple into the collaborative dimensions of education. The act of map creation itself becomes a collaborative endeavor, where students converge to breathe life into graphical narratives. The process of crafting maps instills a sense of shared exploration, igniting discussions that traverse the spectrum of historical epochs, cultural crossroads, and societal dynamics. In this synergistic environment, learners are not solitary navigators; they become part of a collective endeavor, where insights are shared, perspectives are challenged, and knowledge flourishes (Kane & Trochim in Manning, 2017).

The interactive nature of mapping ushers in yet another facet of its allure a dimension where engagement blossoms with renewed vigor. The interactive maps beckon students to traverse historical landscapes, deciphering the echoes of the past that reverberate into the present. The act of interacting with the maps, of unveiling layers of information with the gentle touch of a finger or the

click of a mouse, ushers in an experiential journey (Oliha & Audu, 2015). Learning transcends the confines of static pages, culminating in an adventure that ignites the mind and nurtures the heart (Ige & Hlalele, 2017). This interactive engagement is the crux of an educational experience that dances on the precipice of enjoyment and memorability. The intricate narratives mapped on these canvases become etched in the memory, transforming the landscape of education from a mundane endeavor to a memorable expedition. Through mapping, learning becomes not an arduous ascent but a journey that unfolds with every step, rendering the acquisition of knowledge an endeavor that resonates with joy and fulfillment (Manning, 2017).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it becomes evident that the concept of mapping stands as a profound bridge, linking students' attitudes towards social studies teaching in higher institutions across Ogun State. Through the strategic embrace of mapping techniques, educators unfurl a realm of dynamic possibilities, crafting educational experiences that resonate with engagement and interactivity, thereby fostering positive attitudes, facilitating deeper comprehension, and nurturing the seeds of critical thinking among students. In an ever-evolving educational landscape, the integration of innovative teaching methodologies, epitomized by the art of mapping, emerges as an imperative. These methodologies not only ignite a passion for learning but also serve as conduits for enhancing subject appreciation, fostering a symbiotic relationship between educators and learners, and propelling education into an era of transformational growth.

Recommendations

Based on the insights garnered from the exploration of mapping techniques in fostering positive attitudes towards social studies teaching in higher institutions across Ogun State, several recommendations emerge to enrich educational practices:

- i. Higher institutions should prioritize the provision of professional development opportunities for educators, focusing on equipping them with the skills to effectively integrate mapping techniques into their teaching methodologies.
- ii. Collaborative efforts should be made to integrate mapping techniques seamlessly into the curriculum of social studies courses.
- iii. Institutions should invest in technology infrastructure to support the implementation of digital mapping tools and platforms. Access to computers, interactive displays, and software for



- creating and interacting with digital maps can enhance the effectiveness of mapping techniques and provide students with a contemporary learning experience.
- iv. Educators should encourage collaborative map-making activities that foster teamwork and dialogue among students.
 - v. Assignments and assessments that require students to create and analyze maps will serve as effective tools for evaluating their grasp of concepts and their ability to critically interpret spatial relationships.
 - vi. Institutions should consider conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of mapping techniques on students' attitudes, performance, and critical thinking skills.
 - vii. Educators should collaborate to develop a repository of mapping resources, including templates, examples, and best practices, that can be shared among colleagues.
 - viii. Collaborative efforts between educators, students, administrators, and relevant stakeholders should be fostered to ensure a comprehensive integration of mapping techniques.
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