Effects of Cooperative Learning and Field Trip Strategies on Secondary School Students' Knowledge of and Attitudes to Multicultural Concepts in Social Studies

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Abstract

Multicultural concepts in Social Studies are themes which promote national unity through education. Emphasis is laid on the teaching of multicultural concepts as a result of the growing spate of ethno-religious crises that characterizes Nigerian polity. These have resulted in loss of lives and unquantifiable psychological and material damages. Hence, there is a need for teaching strategies which could promote student interaction and respect for other cultures. This study therefore examined the effects of cooperative learning and field trip strategies on secondary school students' knowledge of and attitude to multicultural concepts in Social Studies in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Two null hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a pretest- posttest, control group, quasi experimental design. Multicultural Concepts Knowledge Test ($r=0.82$) and Multicultural Concept Attitude Scale ($r= 0.86$) were used to elicit responses from 352 JS III students randomly selected from six secondary schools. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, analysis of covariance and Scheffé post hoc test. It was found out that there was significant main effect of treatment on students' knowledge of and attitude to multicultural concepts. The probable reasons for the findings and their implications on the need for social interaction and respect for other cultures in Nigeria are further discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, Field trip, Social Studies, Multicultural concepts, Multicultural education.

Introduction

The ability to reach unity in diversity is the beauty and test of civilization. However, the conflicting trends of disunity and peaceful co-existence as a result of world migration are challenges being experienced in Nigeria today. The growing spate of ethno-religious crises and insurgencies that characterizes Nigerian polity has been traced to inadequacies in the knowledge of intergroup relationships (Enuoka, 2005). With over 400 ethnic groups distributed among Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion, ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria since independence have resulted in loss of several lives and unquantifiable psychological and material damages (Ajiboye, 2010; Enuoka, 2005). Prejudice, discrimination and lack of equal opportunity to learn are the prevailing situations in the society. Effective management of such diversity in the society is a challenge because this constitutes a great threat to national integration, stability and development (Ajitoni, Salako and Oyedepo, 2012).In an attempt to manage the problems of ethno-religious crises and insurgencies in Nigeria, various policy frameworks towards attaining national unity have been put in place by the government.

One of such policy frameworks is Federal character by act no 34 of 1996 to implement and enforce the Federal Character Principle of fairness and equity in the distribution of public posts and socio-economic infrastructures among the various federating units of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Lemuel, 2007). In the interest of national unity, the National Youth Service Corps scheme was introduced in 1973 (Alapiki, 2005). The unity schools were established with an aim to achieve unity in the post-civil war era in keeping with the federal character. The first three were established in 1966. Also, it is compulsory that every Nigerian child should learn one of the three major Nigerian languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) in addition to his or her mother tongue (Kammelu, 2001; Koseemani, 2000; Makinde, 2005). To further promote the right attitudes among students, subjects such as civic education and religious education were introduced in schools' curriculum (FRN, 2004). Several policies put in place to check ethnicity failed to yield results (Imobighe, 2003).

One way of producing well informed citizens who could contribute to national unity and development is by equipping people with adequate knowledge of how to work and live together hamoniously in any society. Human beings are living in a world of conflicts with people continually encountering problems such as racism, sexism, prejudice, and discrimination in the society (Jekayinfa, 2005; Marri, 2008). These vices have pervaded all spheres of life, be it employment, education, religion and politics (Jekayinfa, 2005).Similarly, Eliagwu (2005) stated that despite the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex, religion, place of origin or ethnic

group by Section 42 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, people still face discrimination based on where they come from.

However, these situations could improve using effective educational strategies as tools for promoting national unity through Social Studies. The rationale for teaching Social Studies is premised on the ability of the curricular area to contribute to the solutions of problems resulting from human behaviour and to foster appropriate citizenship values (Ajitoni, 2005). Therefore, the effective teaching of multicultural concepts in Social Studies could promote peaceful co-existence because they include a variety of themes, perspectives, discussions on social contexts which could promote national unity through education.

Social Studies and Multiculturalism in Nigeria

James Banks has been researching and advocating multicultural education for many years resulting in research-based principles for creating multicultural schools and learning environments. Increased diversity and increased recognition of diversity require a vigorous reexamination of the ends and means of multicultural education. Multicultural societies are faced with the challenge of creating nation-states that recognize and incorporate the diversity of their citizens *and* embrace an overarching set of shared values, ideals, and goals to which all citizens are committed. Only when a nation-state is unified around a set of democratic values such as human rights, justice, and equality can it secure the liberties of cultural, ethnic, language, and religious groups and enable them to experience freedom, justice, and peace. Citizens who understand this unity-diversity tension and act accordingly do not materialize from thin air; they are educated for it.

Balancing unity and diversity is an on-going challenge for multicultural nation-states. Multicultural education can help to accomplish this goal (Banks 2003; 07; Douglass & Roberts, 2000). Conceptions of multicultural education in many nation-states, however, have fallen short. Unity without diversity results in hegemony and oppression, and diversity without unity leads to Balkanization and the fracturing of the commonwealth that alone can secure human rights, equality and justice (Banks, 2004b; 08; Murphy-Shigematsu, 2004).An assimilationist conception of citizenship existed in most Western democratic nation-states prior to the rise of ethnic revitalization movements in the 1960s and 1970s (Banks, 2004a; Lie, 2001). A major goal of education in these societies was to create nation-states in which all groups shared one dominant mainstream culture. It was assumed that minority ethnic groups and immigrants would forsake their original cultures in order to become effective citizens of their nation-states (Luchtenberg, 2004).

Many curriculum guides and standards for Social Studies instruction call for more emphasis on multicultural concepts because there is a connection between multicultural education and Social Studies (Banks, 2004a; 2003).Multicultural concepts are themes which could promote national unity through education. According to Gay (2004), multiculturalism is an expanded and more detailed picture of the social, cultural and intellectual history of our country and world. So, disregard for multiculturalism in Social Studies shows not only a basic lack of understanding of multicultural education but of the social science discipline itself. However, Banks (2006) pointed out that a multicultural concepts approach to Social Studies has not gained universal acceptance. Educators in a highly globalised world in the twenty-first century need to be able to reflect on diversity in a variety of ways (Salako, 2010).

In light of this reality, a number of institutions, including government are focusing on building out the system of education to reduce societal inequities. Nigeria, a strikingly beautiful, multicultural country, is a constitutional republic comprised of 36 states and one Federal Capital Territory (Abuja). Colonised by the British in the late nineteenth century, Nigeria gained its independence in 1960 and since then has suffered a half-century of deadly internal conflict and political corruption and instability. From the late 1960s, Nigeria's well-being has been repeatedly threatened by interreligious and inter-tribal conflict with loss of several lives and properties (Falola & Heaton, 2008). The continued attacks and killings by a radical Islamic sect, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (Boko Haram) across the northern part of Nigeria calls for concern.

Consequently, within this environment where there are Muslims, Christians, other religious groups, students and teachers have to work and study side by side. There is need for effective teaching of multicultural concepts in order for schools to be able to raise future leaders for a democratic society through educational programmes for African youths. If these strategies are implemented effectively and vigorously, they may indeed contribute to the enhancement of peaceful co- existence between learners in multicultural schools and the society at large.

Cooperative Learning Instructional Strategy

Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy in which students work together in small, heterogeneous groups to complete a problem, project or other instructional goals while teachers act as guides or facilitators (Duplass, 2006; Lie, 2008; Williams, 2007). The co-operative learning strategy is an effective teaching strategy aimed at accommodating learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. In order to create an environment in which

cooperative learning can take place, three things are necessary. First, students need to feel safe, but also challenged. Second, groups need to be small enough that everyone can contribute. Third, the task students work together on must be clearly defined.

**Fig. 1 Johnson, Johnson and Smith's Five Pillars of Cooperative Learning**

(Foundation Coalition, 2008)

Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991) define cooperative learning as the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Based on their research, they have proposed five essential elements that are necessary to construct effective cooperative learning experiences: positive interdependence, promotive face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, social skills, and group processing. A visual representation of this concept is presented in figure 1. As shown in the above graphic, this five pillars model provides the foundation for building successful cooperative learning in any multicultural classroom. The more learners care about each other, the harder they will work to achieve mutual learning goals (Machaisa, 2004).

Field Trip Instructional Strategy

Field trip like cooperative learning offers an opportunity for students to get exposed to people, events and the opportunity to make connections with others. Students on field trip visit people and places that they are not normally exposed to during the school day. According to Darling (2005) field trip is an away from school function. Field trip can be a valuable method of instruction, providing students with important cognitive and affective benefits (Johnson and Munakata, 2005; Knapp, 2000). Taking youth to parks, school camps, nature centers and other outdoor settings provides an important contribution to the learning process (Hodges, 2001; Noel, 2007; Sinatra, 2005).Therefore, teachers should learn how to incorporate them into their teaching in order to help them develop some skills and become more comfortable when teaching.

Fig. 2 Elements of Field Trip for Social Studies
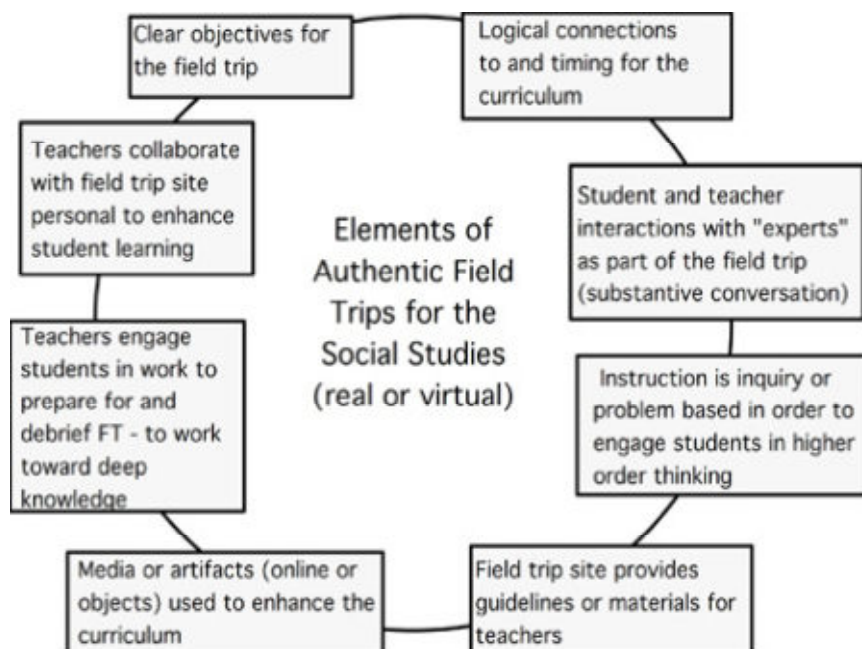
Colonial Williamsburg's Electronic Field Trip Programme
(http://www.history.org/history/teaching/pscufs/)

This model illustrated in fig.2 could be used for developing other types of curriculum that center around historical sites and events. However, when planning and organizing a successful field trip, steps should be taken by the field trip organiser to arrange the logistics of the field trip. Steps include securing permission from appropriate administration, organizing transportation to and from the field trip location, contacting the field trip location to verify the schedule and activities, and obtaining signed permission slips from parents or guardians of participants attending the field trip.

Students' and teacher interaction with experts is vital. The roles of the participants are accomplished by establishing a field trip agenda and sharing this agenda and field trip objectives with the participants. A suggested agenda for a field trip starts with a brief amount of free time for individuals to explore the field trip site on their own. This open exploration may not be appropriate in all locations. For example, individuals could not roam freely inside an equipment manufacturing plant. They could however, have free time to view items in the visitor area or lobby prior to the guided tour. This exploration time allows participants to get comfortable with their surroundings. Once the basic curiosity of the facility is satisfied, learners are better able to focus their attention on the content topics to be learned.

Finally, during the debriefing session, participants should be encouraged to share and discuss their experiences during the field trip. This could include sharing and discussing data or results of assigned small group activities as well as sharing feelings about specific aspects of the trip or overall impressions. Participants should also be given an opportunity to identify and discuss problems encountered during the field trip. This is the final stage of a successful field trip

Hypotheses
The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance;
HO1: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' knowledge of multicultural education concepts.
HO2: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' attitudes to multicultural education concepts.
Methodology
Research Design
The study adopted a pretest- posttest, control group, quasi-experimental design.
Sample and Sampling Technique
The study involved three hundred and fifty two JS III secondary school students purposively selected across Abeokuta, the capital city of Ogun State. The state capital was purposively selected because of its multicultural nature in terms of getting students from various ethnic backgrounds. Six public secondary schools were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups for the purpose of this study. The simple random

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sampling technique was adopted in the selection of one intact classroom each in the schools used for this study.

Instrumentation

Two instruments used were: Multicultural Concepts Knowledge Test (r=0.82) and Multicultural Concept Attitude Scale (r= 0.86). To ensure that the instrument maintain its status, face and content validity were re-examined using experts review and the internal consistency reliability measure was calculated using Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR20) which yielded a reliability value of 0.86.

Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, means, percentages, and standard deviation. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) aspect of ANCOVA was used to determine the magnitude of the performance of the various groups. Also, the Scheffe Post hoc test was used to determine the source of significant main effect where observed.

Result

Ho1: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' knowledge of multicultural concepts.

Table 1a: ANCOVA Summary of Posttest Knowledge of Multicultural Concepts by Treatment

Source of Variance	Hierarchical method				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Covariates SCORES	1307.933	1	1307.933	112.318	.000
Main Effects Combined	1613.222	4	403.306	34.634	.000
Treatment	135.892	2	67.946	5.835	.003*

* Significant at p<.05

From table 1a, there is significant effect of treatment on students' posttest knowledge scores in multicultural concepts (F $_{(2,340)}$ = 5.835; p<.05). This means that there is significant difference in the adjusted posttest scores of students exposed to the cooperative learning, field trips and conventional instructional strategies. Hence, hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Table 1b: Scheffe Posthoc Tests of Knowledge by Treatment

Treatment	N	$\overline{X}$	Treatment		
			(1) Coop	(2) Field Trip	(3) control
1. Coop	101	10.14		*	*
2. Field Trips	126	7.95	*		*
3. Control	125	10.09		*	

* Significant at p<.05

Table 1b shows that the cooperative instructional group (x =10.44) differs significantly from the field trips group (x =7.95). The control group (x =10.09) also differs significantly from the field trips group. Hence, it is the field trips instructional group's difference from each of the cooperative and control groups that was responsible for the observed significant main effect of treatment on knowledge of multicultural concepts.

Ho 2: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' attitudes to multicultural concepts.

Table 2a: MCA of Posttest Attitude Scores by Treatment

Variable + category	N	Predicted Mean		Deviation		Eta	Beta
		Unadjusted	Adjusted for factors and covariates	Unadjusted	Adjusted for factors and covariates		
Treatment Coop	101	79.19	79.05	4.144	3.99		
Field Trip	126	64.67	64.71	-10.38	-10.35	.399	.399
Control	125	82.26	82.26	7.11	7.20		

R = .40

R squared = .16

From Table 2a, the control group had higher adjusted posttest attitude score ($\bar{x}$= 82.26; Dev. =7.20) than the cooperative leaving group ($\bar{x}$ =79.05; Dev. = 3.99) and the field trips group ($\bar{x}$ =64.67; Dev = -10.35).

This means that the control group was the most effective at improving students' attitude to multicultural concept. This could be due to the age-long tradition of the deployment of the conventional lecture method by teachers of Social Studies. However, authors agreed that the conventional lecture is not the best (DuBrin, 2004; Lai, 2002) because it ignores experiential form of learning and relies on intellectual development mostly.

The actual source of this significant effect of treatment on students' attitude to multicultural concepts could

be found on Table 2b.

Table 2b: Scheffe Posthoc Tests of Attitude Scores by Treatment

Treatment	N	X̄	Treatment		
			(1) Coop	(2) Field Trip	(3) Control
1. Coop	101	79.05		*	
2. Field Trips	126	64.71	*		*
3. Control	125	82.26		*	

* Pairs of groups significantly different at p<.05

Table 2b shows that the field trips instructional group ($\bar{x}$ =79.05) significantly differs from the cooperation learning group (x =64.71). The group is also different significantly from the control group (x =82.26). This implies that the difference between the field trips instructional group and the other two groups were responsible for the observed significant effect of treatment on students' attitude to multicultural concepts.

Discussion
Effect of Treatment on Knowledge of Multicultural Concepts

It was found in this study that the effect of treatment on students' knowledge of multicultural concepts is significant. This is to the effect that the cooperative learning strategy was more effective than the conventional lecture method and the field trip strategy. The superiority of the cooperative learning mode of instruction over the two other strategies is founded upon the nature of interaction among the students in the learning situation. For instance, students worked together in small heterogeneous groups, sharing ideas, experiences and were more or less in charge of the activities as teachers only acted as facilitators. Indeed, the cooperative instruction fostered greater student attention and stimulated interest through the exploration of the different cultures presented to them.

Further, the findings showed that on attitude to multicultural concepts, students in the control group had higher attitude mean score compared with the two experimental groups. This could be due to the age-long tradition of the deployment of the conventional lecture method by teachers of Social Studies. In addition, students had come to develop positive interest and attitude towards the strategy since that is the strategy they had always known and were always taught with (Chang, 2000; Strom and Strom, 2003). Authors agreed that the conventional lecture, however, is not the best (DuBrin, 2004; Lai, 2002) because it ignores experiential form of learning and relies on intellectual development only.

Students in the field trip group consistently lagged behind in knowledge of and attitude to multicultural concepts. Planning and execution of field trips are difficult for some teachers to do and they therefore would rather not employ it for normal classroom teaching strategy. This agrees with the position of Noel (2007) and Darling (2005) that field trip is an away from school activities. These could have limited the dispositions of the teachers and subsequently students' reception of the strategy as another effective strategy for school work. Hence, students' knowledge as well as their attitudes remained at the base in this study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that the use of cooperative learning strategy has the potentials of helping to foster cooperation, mutual trust, and understanding. More effective communication, sharing of other peoples' world views can ultimately lead to improved knowledge of students in multicultural concepts. Also, in employing the strategy in the Social Studies classroom, students' ethnic origin is relevant.

Field trip strategy should be encouraged because real-world experiences which could create rich learning opportunities that complement and enhance classroom learning could be realized. Hence, the future of the Nigerian state will become surer and among the citizens, peaceful co-existence will tend to hold sway in different parts of the country if multicultural education is given a pride of place through the cooperative learning and field trip strategies in Schools.

Recommendations

It is hereby recommended that:

Teachers should adopt the cooperative learning strategy in the teaching of multicultural concepts in Social Studies and indeed across other subject areas in order to better prepare the students for future communal living, understanding of other peoples' culture and development of abilities to live peacefully with others especially outside of their own culture or ethnic origins.

Students should be assisted to appreciate the need for unity, peace, love and harmony and the need to contribute to its entrenchment in the society. This would go a long way to make them more sociable and tolerant of others' ways of life.

Curriculum developers in Social Studies should incorporate more multicultural concepts into the Social

Studies curriculum and make them to be in equal proportion in terms of elements of the different cultures, religions and ethnic identification.

Teachers too should learn to be multicultural in nature because there are also challenges for schools and classrooms to become even more multicultural and multilingual than before.

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