

Two Modes of Blended Learning Strategy and Southwestern Nigeria Pre-Service Teachers Knowledge of Global Issues in Social Studies

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Abstract

Global issue concepts are taught in Social Studies to develop in learners, ability to address local and global challenges. A tracer study revealed that many pre-service Social Studies teachers in Southwestern Nigeria are deficient in Global Issues Content Knowledge (GICK) due to large class size and the use of conventional lecture method. Previous innovative strategies employed limit learners to the four walls of the classroom. This study therefore employed two modes (individual and group-based) of blended learning strategy with online feature to improve learners' GICK. The study was guided by three null hypotheses. Pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental research design was adopted. Two moderator variables (Mobile Phone Self-efficacy (MPS) and Computer Self-efficacy (CS)) were examined. The population of the study comprised of all pre-service Social Studies teachers in Southwestern Nigeria. Three states (Oyo, Ogun and Lagos) from Southwestern Nigeria were randomly selected. Three state-owned Colleges of Education (Emmanuel Alayande-Oyo, Adeniran Ogunsanya-Lagos and Tai Solarin-Ogun) offering Social Studies as a course were purposively selected from the selected states. Two hundred-level (200-level) pre-service teachers using android phones were purposively selected and assigned to Group-based Blended Learning (GBL)-95, Individual-based Blended Learning (IBL)-87, and control group of (120) intact class. Global Issues Knowledge Test ($r=0.72$), Computer Self-efficacy ($r=0.94$) and Mobile Phone Self-efficacy ($r=0.92$) scales were the study instrument for data collection. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, analysis of covariance and Bonferroni Post-hoc. The IBL, GBL and MPS had significant effect on GICK ($F_{(2,299)} = 32.65$; partial $\eta^2=0.19$), ($F_{(1,299)} = 4.60$; partial $\eta^2= 0.02$) respectively. Findings revealed that GBL and IBL strategies enhanced pre-service teachers' GICK in Social Studies in Colleges of Education. It was recommended that Social Studies lecturers should adopt the two modes of blended learning strategy for pre-service teachers to improve their global issues content knowledge.

Keywords: Colleges of Education; Group-based Blended Learning strategy; Individual-based Blended Learning strategy; Global Issues Content Knowledge; Pre-services teachers.

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Introduction

The global community is not at peace; it is pervaded with events and news of different global issues or challenges which threaten human existence and survival. The global community is characterized by negative and unpleasant news such as climate change, insecurity, terrorism, kidnapping, abuse of fundamental human rights, economic hardship, and unemployment, among others. Hence, countries of the world cannot afford to feel unconcerned about addressing the afore-mentioned challenges. Education is one of the effective mediums to address issues affecting human beings and could be employed to address challenges of global issues. In the same vein, Social Studies being a problem solving discipline is conceived across the world as a discipline capable of addressing challenges facing human beings at both the local and global levels when one considers its fundamental content and objectives which focuses on solving societal problems. This perhaps informed the position statement of National Council of Social Studies that, Social Studies being a problem solving discipline, must include in its curriculum, global and international education in order to cater for the day-to-day activities of average human beings (NCSS, 2016).

Ajiboye (2021) emphasized that Social Studies is a discipline that has the capacity to absorb new emerging trends in the society, which has placed the subject at an auspicious position in accommodating those emerging social, political, economic and other global challenges; to promote good standard of living. Also, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) minimum standard (2012) included in its curriculum, major global issue concepts that the United Nations had already identified in her global issue Chart of 2015. This is to promote good citizenship who will positively function at local and global communities in the 21st Century. Thus, Oladiti and Ajiboye (2019) averred that Social Studies stand tall among the comity of other school subjects in addressing emerging issues, and situates candidates in the pedestal of global knowledge.

Gilda (2009) cited in Holbert (2016) defined global issues as those issues that have or hold the potentials for far reaching impacts on larger numbers of people. They are issues that threaten the well-being of an individual and the entire human race. Scholars such as Alatis (2018) and Oladiti et al. (2018) have defined global issues as those issues that are trans-national and trans-boundary in that their effects are not limited to a nation, region, or continent but are beyond the capability of a single nation to resolve. No single nation or country has absolute power or authority to single handedly proffer solutions to the existing challenges bedeviling the

world. Hence, the need for collective and collaborative action to address it (Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015).

It is expedient to look into some global issues as they affect and threaten human existence and survival. An example was the outbreak of a contagious disease called corona virus christened by World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) as COVID-19 which killed thousands of people and disrupted every human endeavour, which led to loss of billions of dollars in the economic sectors across the world before it was put under drastic control, through vaccine. Lockdown measures were employed by many countries to contain the spread of the disease. This has culminated in violation of fundamental human rights, hunger, racial discrimination, harassment, discrimination and xenophobia across the globe. Terrorism is another issue that poses a threat to humanity; it is universal in nature. Gertude (2017) submitted that lack of job and poor standard of living are major indices that encourage young people to indulge in terrorist acts in order to survive and make ends meet. An African Development Bank study also concludes that unemployment plays a significant role in a nation's political instability and insecure environment which result into terrorism (Gertude, 2017). This perhaps serves as the basis for the activities of miscreants such as militant youths in the Niger Delta, and the present deadly Boko Haram ravaging Northeastern Nigeria and upsetting the seemingly peaceful, stable political situation, with loss of lives and properties (Emmanuel, 2019). Consequent upon the foregoing, there is a need to find drastic solutions to those challenges through the teaching of Social Studies. A cursory look at the general objectives of Social Studies education in Nigeria, makes the subject a relevant one that could train the youth to understand the world around them and become global competent citizen.

However, international news is replete with youth's active involvement in heinous acts that constitute some global challenges (Gertude, 2017). Consequent upon the foregoing, Ganiyu (2019) conducted a tracer study among eight Social Studies Lecturers in Emmanuel Alayande College of Education and Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, to examine the effectiveness of the teaching of global issues concepts vis a vis the students' global issues content knowledge. The tracer study revealed among others, that large class size in Social Studies classrooms do not allow for active involvement of students in the learning activities, while the conventional lecture method used makes learners quickly forget what they were taught. This findings is in consonance with the earlier study of Cashin (1990) cited in Okobia (2012) that though lecture method was the most widely used

instructional strategy in colleges, one of its disadvantages is that, it often disengages students from the learning process causing information to be forgotten. The study further revealed that global issue concepts are taught with little or no reference to global perspectives; they lay emphasis much on Nigerian context. This, perhaps does not encourage development of sound knowledge of global issues on the part of pre-service teachers.

Global Issues Content Knowledge (GICK) connotes an in-depth understanding of minor and major events and happenings at local and international levels which threaten the existence and survival of human beings; with the ability to proffer solutions to such challenges. This could be referred to as the “state-of-the-planet awareness”. The state-of-the-planet awareness refers to the knowledge and understanding of prevailing events around the world, which reflect on some emerging issues that affect human existence and survival. Examples of such issues are: population growth, migration, refugees, poverty, unemployment, terrorism, insecurity, climate change, erosion, among others (Kirkwood, 2001). One can conclude that if learners have sound knowledge of global issues, they will be able to function effectively in their local and global communities.

Consequent upon the foregoing, the need for an innovative method of teaching global issue concepts becomes imperative such that learners will be actively engaged in the learning process and find the teaching of global issue concepts simple, real, concrete, meaningful, and address them positively. Attempts to address the inadequacies associated with the teaching of global issue concepts, have employed many participatory instructional strategies in Social Studies. Such strategies are; Appreciative Enquiries by Olubela (2014), Cooperative Learning by Amosun (2002), Problem Solving by Holt and Willard Holt (2002), among others. Though these strategies, to some extent, are effective and promote good interpersonal relationships among students, still, youth remains a force that aids the occurrence of most global issues, hence, the need to reform teaching and learning strategies at College of Education levels. This study, therefore, considered a child-centred method that is a technology mediated instructional strategy (Blended learning) to teach global issues concepts such that learners will see and act beyond their immediate environment by collaborating with one another to proffer solutions to challenges of global issues. Bonks and Graham (2006) cited in Hon and Staker (2014) defined Blended learning as a teaching strategy that combine face-to-face and online delivery modes of instruction. Akingbemisilu and Sule (2017) defined Blended learning as a teaching and learning approach that combines online

learning with face-to-face instruction by promoting an effective way for optimal learning outcomes. The strategy with its online features is capable of solving the problem inherent in large class size; it allows individual learner or groups to revisit learning material from time to time outside the classroom, and it encourages collaborative and cooperative learning among learners. Blended learning strategy allows for video instruction lecture to complement classrooms discussions. It also promotes connections between teachers, students, parents, and even extends relationship across boundaries and times (Hon et al. 2014).

This study employed two modes of blended learning strategy vis-a-vis individual based and group-based blended learning. Isiaka and Moses (2015) were of the view that individualized instruction enables the teacher to cater for students with various capabilities in the classroom as well as learners with one challenge or the other to acquire basic knowledge expected of them. Individual-based blended learning strategy recognizes the fact that not only the engagement of learners in learning process is important but how to assist such a learner based on his/her needs, and interest in order to be successful students academically. Johnson and Johnson (1999) also posited that Group-based blended learning contribute to the mastery of learning content goals, by developing appropriate collaborative and interpersonal skills to teach and encourage collaborative efforts, to provide solutions to specific challenges in the human society. Group-based blended learning instruction is of immense value to learners who could collectively brainstorm to define each issue, look into the causes and attempt to collectively decide on the appropriate solution.

The use of Blended learning strategy requires free flow of information between learners and teachers, learners and resource person, especially in an online interaction or social media. Clement et al. (2017) also defined social media as an online platform for social interaction that promotes collaboration as well as helping in sharing different types of digital content. However, Aremu et al. (2016) highlighted different social media platforms that can be employed in advancing knowledge among students; such platforms are blogs, skype, virtual words, Edmodo, facebook, whatsapp, among others, which support active and social learning. This study purposively adopted whatsapp platform because of its availability on nearly all simple technology tools like tablets, ipad and smart phones. Literature have also shown the use of whatsapp by scholars such as Akinola et al. (2012), and Paulinoas et al. (2016). They both revealed that whatsapp application is very effective in promoting learning among youth in the

recent but much of such studies are yet to be seen in the teaching of global issues concepts in Social Studies in Southwestern Nigeria.

Studies have shown that there are various variables that can influence pre-service Social Studies teachers' knowledge of global issues. Such variables include gender, age, home factor, self-efficacy belief, computer self-efficacy, mobile phone self-efficacy, among others. This study therefore employed mobile phone self-efficacy and computer self-efficacy as moderator variables because of their significance to technology mediated instructional strategy is employed. Mobile phone self-efficacy is defined as the judgment of one's capability to use mobile devices and its associated services, applications and features by manipulating those services and applications to advance knowledge in academic settings (Lee et al. 2009). However, effective use of the whatsapp platform to impart knowledge requires confidence in operating the device for learning sake by teachers and learners.

Computer self-efficacy is conceptualized as a judgment of one's ability to succeed in computer-related tasks (Compeau et al. 1999; Howard, 2014). Computer self-efficacy is imperative here in that, the online feature of Blended learning strategy requires the use of computers and related devices in imparting knowledge, hence the need to be confident in operating the computer to advance knowledge. In essence, this study is aimed at examining the effects of two modes of blended learning strategy on pre-service Social Studies teachers' knowledge of global issues.

Statement of the Problem

The global community, Nigeria inclusive, is facing challenges from global issues such as: terrorism, climate change, unemployment, kidnapping, among others, majorly perpetrated by youths. The use of conventional methods of teaching global issue concepts with little or no reference to the global perspective, and the inability to use online means of imparting knowledge, which could have assisted in solving the problem of large class size, has been identified as challenges that do not encourage sound knowledge of global issues on the part of pre-service teachers. Previous studies aimed at improving teaching in Social Studies such as experimental learning, problem solving, among others, do not possess the feature of online and multimedia means of knowledge delivery which Blended learning is known for. The two modes of blended learning have positively influenced learning outcomes in subjects such as English Language, Technology, Medicine and Science courses, but it has been given little

emphasis in the teaching of global issue concepts in Social Studies, which is the crux of the present study.

Hypotheses

To guide the study, it is hereby hypothesized thus:

H0₁: There will be no significant main effect of individual and group-based blended learning on pre-service Social Studies teachers' global issues content knowledge;

H0₂: There will be no significant main effect of mobile phone self-efficacy on pre-service Social Studies teachers' global issues content knowledge;

H0₃: There will be no significant main effect of computer self-efficacy on pre-service Social Studies teachers' global issues content knowledge.

Methodology

This study adopted the pretest – posttest control group quasi-experimental design which involved two experimental groups and one control group. The population of the study comprised all pre-service Social Studies teachers in public Colleges of Education in Southwestern Nigeria. Three states were randomly selected from Southwestern Nigeria (Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States). Balloting system was used to select one College of Education in each of the selected States—Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education in Lagos State, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education in Oyo State, and Tai Solarin College of Education in Ogun State. 200-level pre-service Social Studies teachers from Social Studies Department of each college were used for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 182 (65 male + 117 female) pre-service teachers that had web-supported phones that accommodate the use of whatsapp application in the two experimental groups, while intact class of 120 (43 males + 77 females) pre-service teachers were used for the control group. The instrument used for the study comprised: Knowledge of Global Issue Test (KGIT) ($r = 0.70$); Computer Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (CSEQ: 0.92); and Mobile Phone Self-Efficacy Rating Scale (MPSRS; $r=0.92$). The instrument was subjected to revalidation by trial-testing it on 50 pre-service teachers from Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) tested at 0.05 level of significance. Estimated Marginal Means

(EMM) aspect of ANCOVA was used to determine the magnitude of the mean scores of the different groups. Finally, the Bonferoni post-hoc analysis was used to determine the source of observed significant differences.

Result and Discussion

Testing of Null Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant main effect of (Individual and Group-based) Blended learning on pre-service Social Studies teachers' global issues content knowledge.

Table 1: ANCOVA showing Post-Knowledge by (Individual and Group-based) Blended Learning, Computer and Mobile Self-efficacy

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	893.893 ^a	13	68.761	23.954	0.000	.520
Intercept	6742.913	1	6742.913	2349.003	0.000	.891
Pre-Knowledge	28.200	1	28.200	9.824	0.002	.033
Treatment	187.452	2	93.726	32.651	0.000*	.185
Computer self-efficacy	3.828	2	1.914	0.667	0.514	.005
Mobile self-efficacy	13.213	1	13.213	4.603	0.033*	.016
Treatment x Computer self-Efficacy	2.349	4	0.587	0.273	0.845	.003
Treatment x Mobile self-efficacy	16.507	2	8.254	2.875	0.058	.020

There is a significant main effect of treatment on students' global issues content knowledge ($F_{(2,288)} = 32.65$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.19$) (table 1). Treatment contributed about 19.0%. This indicated that 19.0% variation in students' global issues content post-knowledge is accounted for by the treatment. Thus, hypothesis 1(HO₁) was rejected. In order to determine the magnitude of the significant main effects across treatment groups, the estimated marginal means (EMM) of the treatment group was carried out and result presented in table 2.

Table 2: Estimated Marginal Means for Post-Knowledge by (Individual and Group-based) Blended Learning and Control Group

Treatment	Mean	Std. Error
Group-Based Blended Learning (GBBL)	23.34	0.34
Individual-Based Blended Learning (IBBL)	22.78	0.46
Control Group (CG)	20.05	0.33

The Group-Based Blended Learning (GBBL) performed better in post-treatment score in global issues content knowledge (23.34) than their counterparts in Individual-Based Blended Learning (IBBL) treatment group 2 (22.78), and the Control group (20.05). This order is represented as GBBL > IBBL > CG.

Table 3: Bonferroni Post-hoc Analysis of Post-Knowledge by (Individual and Group-based) Blended Learning

Groups	Mean	GBBL	IBBL	CG
Group-Based Blended Learning (GBBL)	23.34			*
Individual-Based Blended Learning (IBBL)	22.78			*
Control Group (CG)	20.05	*	*	

In table 3, the post-knowledge of students exposed to Group-Based Blended Learning (GBBL) was not significantly different from their counterparts exposed to Individual-Based Blended Learning (IBBL) but significantly different from those taught using the Conventional learning method in their mean scores in global issues content knowledge. Furthermore, the post-knowledge of students exposed to individual-based blended learning was better than the control. This indicates that the significant difference as revealed was as a result of difference between the treatment groups (group and individual-based blended learning) and the control group (conventional learning) but not between the two treatment groups with regards to students' post-knowledge in global issues content knowledge.

Findings from this study revealed a significant main effect of treatment on students' global issues content knowledge. The result showed that students in Group-Based Blended Learning scored higher than those in the individual-based blended learning. Thus, GBBL was most effective in improving and enhancing students' global issues content knowledge. This was followed by Individual-Based Blended learning strategy while the Conventional Strategy (control) was the least effective. The effectiveness of Group-Based Blended learning over individualized-based blended learning and conventional strategy could be attributed to the fact that group-based blended learning allowed for collaboration and teamwork among members which promoted learners' critical thinking skills and propelled deep learning within the group. Group-based blended learning assisted learners to simplify concepts even better than how the teacher presents instruction.

HO₂: There is no significant main effect of Mobile phone self-efficacy on pre-service Social Studies teachers' global issues content knowledge.

As shown in table 1, mobile phone self-efficacy did not significantly affect global issues content knowledge ($F_{(1,288)} = 4.60$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$). The effect was 2.0%. This indicates that 2.0% difference in students' global issues content knowledge was due to the main effect of mobile phone self-efficacy. Thus, hypothesis 2(HO₂) was not rejected. To determine the extent of the significant main effect across mobile phone self-efficacy groups, the estimated marginal means of the groups was carried out and the result is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Estimated Marginal Means for Post-Knowledge by Mobile Phone Self-efficacy

Mobile phone self-efficacy	Mean	Std. Error
Low	21.48	0.35
High	22.58	0.28

As shown in table 4, high mobile phone self-efficacy students had the higher adjusted post-knowledge mean score in global issues content (22.58), while their low counterparts had the least adjusted post-knowledge mean scores in global issues content (21.48). The results obtained in this study revealed that mobile phone self-efficacy affected global issue content knowledge. The finding indicated that students with high mobile phone self-efficacy had the higher adjusted post knowledge mean score in global issue content while students' with low-level self-efficacy had the least adjusted post-knowledge mean score in global issue content knowledge. This result could be traced to the fact that the use of mobile phones among youths, particularly students, was on the increase in different parts of the world. Corroborating this, Seppala and Alamaki (2013) submitted that instruction via mobile devices played a significant role in the educational industry.

Experts are consistently advocating the need for educational stakeholders to leverage on the capabilities of mobile devices to engage learners in learning activities. This strengthens their confidence and capabilities to effectively use social media platforms such as facebook, and whatsapp to exchange learning content in form of images, pictures and videos. Media content presents to learners, global issues with precision and accuracy that make learning connected with real life situations.

HO₃: There is no significant main effect of Computer self-efficacy on pre-service Social Studies teachers' global issues content knowledge.

It was shown in table 1 that computer self-efficacy did not affect global issues content knowledge ($F_{(2,288)} = 0.68$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$). Thus, hypothesis 3(HO₃) was accepted. This means that computer self-efficacy had no significant main effect on students' global issues content knowledge.

The result obtained in this study indicated that computer self-efficacy did not affect global issues content knowledge. This implied that computer self-efficacy had no effect on students' global issue content knowledge. This could be attributed to the prevalent computer age which makes it practically impossible for individuals to function effectively within the society without some level of competence in the use of technology. In most instances, students rely on computers and other technologies to access information on global issues as the world continually shrinks to become a global village. Hence, a factor like computer self-efficacy might not be considered as a significant variable that could affect students' global issue content knowledge because competency to operate computers and other computer-related technologies seems to be an integral component of 21st Century society.

Conclusion

A panoramic view of this study revealed that group-based blended learning and individual-based blended learning were found to be more effective in improving pre-service Social Studies students' global issue content knowledge than conventional strategy. However, group-based blended learning was found to be more effective than the individualized blended learning in the sense that it employs cooperative learning and discussion method which enabled learners to discover deeper meaning in content and critical thinking skill. Basically, the two modes of blended learning had significant effects on the pre-service teachers and thus enhance learning outcomes in global issue concepts in the social studies curriculum. It was observed that the online feature of blended learning strategy makes learning real and practical. It could, therefore, be concluded that both Group-based blended learning and Individual-based blended learning are capable of promoting effective teaching and learning of global issue concepts and other concepts in social studies curriculum.

Recommendations

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

1. Social Studies teachers should make concerted efforts to facilitate the use of the two modes of blended learning strategy in tertiary institutions to enhance students' ability to construct knowledge and learning global issue concepts on their own, without the barrier of time and space.
2. Pre-service Social Studies teachers should be trained on how to integrate different technology devices into their learning process such that they will not be restricted to the four walls of the classroom and textbooks.
3. Training and retraining programmes such as seminars, workshops and symposia should be organized for Social Studies teachers at all levels of education on the use of the two modes of blended learning, particularly group-based blended learning, to teach not only global issue concepts, but concepts in the entire topics and courses in Social Studies Education.
4. There should be concerted efforts at all levels of teacher preparation and in-service professional development to enhance teachers' ability and efforts to expose learners to issues and events in the globe through a technology-mediated instructional strategy that combines both offline and online media of learning.

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