

Abstract

The thesis is focused on the changes caused by distance education (due to the Covid-19 pandemic). Specifically, how the pandemic influenced the position of school geographic atlases in relation to other tools in geography education and how was changed the use of the functions that this tool could provide. These changes were examined in three periods (pre-pandemic, pandemic and post-pandemic). The focus of the thesis also determines its individual objectives. First main objective of this thesis is to compare the position of printed school geography atlases in distance learning versus face-to-face learning in relation to other teaching tools used in geography education. Hence, the secondary objective, aimed at ranking the main teaching tools used in geography education in face-to-face learning and then capturing their possible transformation in the distance and post-distance learning. The functions and uses of these printed school geography atlases in the above periods are then examined. From this, the further objectives of the thesis are derived, namely to determine the functions that school geographic atlases might have performed and to characterize the possible transformation of the functions of the school geographic atlases and the ways of working with school geographic atlases in distance education as opposed to face-to-face education. The last objective is to identify the possible transformation of the functions and ways of working with school geographic atlases in face-to-face learning after returning from distance learning.

In order to fulfil the objectives, it was necessary to divide the thesis into a theoretical part and a practical part. In the theoretical part were analysed available school geographic atlases, both printed and digital. Based on the literature, other important tools that could be used in geography education were selected. Then the possible position of school geographic atlases in geography education was outlined, where the author concludes, based on the literature analysis, that they are a very dominant tool. The final chapter of the theoretical part is devoted to the possible functions that school geography atlases can fulfil. Here again, the analysis of the available literature was followed.

The practical part consists of a methodology chapter, where semi-structured interviews and the card sorting method were resorted to due to the exploratory nature of the research. Subsequently, the research questions were established from the objectives of the thesis, and the research instrument was developed to address them. Then, 14 geography teachers from Prague's lower-secondary schools were randomly selected and interviewed. Subsequent analysis of the results shows that printed school geography atlases are the dominant tool, but during distance learning, they have in some cases been replaced by more accessible online tools. Furthermore, it became clear that the main functions used by printed school geography atlases are spatial orientational, illustrative, informative and transformative. However, after the return from distance learning, the illustrative function has slightly declined, due to the use of other, mainly digital tools that also fulfil this function. The next chapter discusses the results with the available literature and the final chapter concludes with a summary of the whole thesis, an evaluation of the objectives, and suggestions for further research.

Keywords

School geography atlas, atlas functions, atlas position, atlas use, geography, teacher, lower-secondary education, Covid-19, distance learning