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From Experience to Concept: Nominalization and the Formation of Philosophical Meaning in Everyday Life

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ABSTRACT

Philosophical inquiry has traditionally approached abstract notions such as responsibility, resilience, and meaning as products of sophisticated theoretical reasoning, while paying comparatively limited attention to the ways in which these constructs arise from ordinary human experience. This paper seeks to address this imbalance by investigating nominalization—the linguistic process through which actions and processes are recast as conceptual entities—as a central mechanism in the emergence of philosophical meaning. The study examines how abstraction mediated by language enables individuals to reinterpret concrete experiences in conceptual terms. Employing conceptual mapping as its primary analytical framework, it traces the shift from the experiential sphere of human activity to the conceptual domain associated with human needs. Based on the analysis of six metacognitive conceptual maps, the findings demonstrate that recurrent actions can be systematically transformed into stable conceptual categories through processes of abstraction, conceptualization, and generalization. Moreover, the intentional structuring of linguistic domains, together with a focused emphasis on nominalization, contributes to the formation of a coherent and transferable conceptual system. The results indicate that nominalization should be understood not merely as a grammatical phenomenon, but also as a cognitive mechanism that

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supports the reflective interpretation of lived experience. One of the central contributions of the study is its integration of philosophical perspectives and linguistic theory with multimodal conceptual mapping.
Keywords: Nominalization; Philosophical Actualization; Conceptualization; Generalization; Metacognition; Conceptual Mapping; Multimodal Dimension

1. Introduction

Philosophical discourse has traditionally relied on highly abstract categories, often overlooking the ways in which these concepts originate within the texture of everyday experience. The present study addresses this gap by emphasizing the need to bridge lived activity and its subsequent conceptual stabilization. Central to this transition is nominalization, understood as a linguistic mechanism that converts dynamic processes expressed through verbs into relatively stable nominal entities.

From a philosophical standpoint, this article seeks to demonstrate that nominalization should be interpreted not merely as a grammatical operation, but as a fundamental act of "realist reflection." Proceeding from the assumption that philosophical meaning emerges through successive stages of abstraction, conceptualization, and generalization, language may be regarded as an operative medium that transforms fluid experience into structured semantic forms. In this context, conceptual mapping serves as an analytical tool that enables the visualization of this transformation, illustrating how elements of lived practice become crystallized into generalized conceptual categories.

Recent research in the philosophy of language and cognitive linguistics indicates that abstract philosophical thinking is not confined to formal academic contexts. Rather, it may arise from ordinary linguistic and cognitive practices through which individuals interpret, organize, and make sense of their lived experience.

Human experience is continuously mediated and structured through language. Actions, interactions, emotions, and events are not only perceived but also linguistically encoded, categorized, evaluated, and stabilized within discourse. Through iterative use, these elements of experience undergo processes of generalization, eventually forming conceptual categories that support reflection beyond immediate contexts. A key mechanism facilitating this transformation is nominalization, whereby processes (e.g., deciding, cooperating, struggling) are reconstituted as abstract entities (e.g., decision, cooperation, struggle).

Within the framework of systemic functional linguistics, nominalization has primarily been examined as a grammatical resource that contributes to lexical density and the development of academic discourse. However, its broader cognitive and philosophical significance remains insufficiently explored. Beyond its role in information condensation, nominalization enables the stabilization of transient processes into conceptual objects that can be analyzed, evaluated, and integrated into ethical, social, and existential interpretations of human experience.

This study advances the argument that nominalization functions as a cognitive mechanism mediating the transition from lived experience to the formation of philosophical meaning. By transforming processes into conceptual entities, individuals move from unmediated engagement with events toward more generalized and reflective understandings of human action, motivation, and value. In this sense, nominalization contributes not only to linguistic complexity but also to the emergence of higher-order abstraction.

To investigate this process, the paper adopts an interdisciplinary approach, integrating insights from philosophy—particularly philosophy of language and theories of concept formation—with systemic functional linguistics and reflective analysis of metacognitive conceptual mapping in bilingual educational contexts. The analysis focuses on how structured conceptual mapping facilitates progressive abstraction across central domains of human experience.

The findings demonstrate that recurring patterns of human activity can be systematically reinterpreted as conceptual categories through language-mediated reflection. In this way, the study argues that philosophical understanding can develop through structured processes of abstraction grounded in everyday experience.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Language as Action and World-Structuring Practice

Philosophical meaning does not emerge independently of language but is constituted through it. Within the philosophy of language, speech is understood not merely as representation but as action. Foundational work by Austin demonstrated that utterances perform social acts: they promise, declare, and institutionalize realities[1]. Language, therefore, operates as a world-structuring mechanism rather than a neutral medium of description.

From a socio-semiotic perspective, Halliday conceptualizes language as a resource for meaning-making embedded in social practices[2]. Meaning is not an abstract system detached from lived experience; it is shaped through interaction and stabilized within discourse. This view is further developed in discourse-analytic traditions, which demonstrate how linguistic forms reproduce and legitimize particular interpretations of reality[3].

Recent research has extended these perspectives by emphasizing the role of discourse in global and educational contexts. For example, Hyland and Jiang highlight how academic discourse constructs disciplinary knowledge through increasingly condensed and abstract linguistic forms[4]. Similarly, Schleppegrell argues that language itself constitutes a core component of knowledge construction in educational settings[5]. These developments reinforce the view that abstraction is not merely cognitive but socially and linguistically mediated.

2.2. Concept Formation and Grounded Cognition

The philosophical foundation of the study is built on a synthesis of classical epistemology, phenomenology, and process philosophy. First and foremost, it engages the transcendental and phenomenological levels[6–8]. The analysis is based on Kant's idea of the necessity of synthesizing the manifold of experience for the possibility of knowledge. In this study, generalization is understood as an act of transcendental synthesis, where nominalization performs the role of a "schema" that translates the chaos of empirical actions into rational categories of understanding.

The phenomenological approach of Edmund Husserl[8] makes it possible to interpret nominalization as a form of "linguistic epoché." By suspending judgments about the contingent circumstances of a particular act, the subject, through naming, performs an eidetic reduction, grasping the "pure meaning" or noema of experience (for example, the transition from "I help" to the essence of "responsibility"). The identification of the "noema" (pure meaning) in Husserl refers to the ideal content of an intentional act, "meaning as such."

The transformation from lived experience to abstract conceptual knowledge has been extensively examined in cognitive and developmental theory. Vygotsky argued that higher psychological functions emerge through language-mediated internalization, whereby naming reorganizes perception into conceptual thought[9]. This perspective positions language as a central mechanism in the transition from experience to abstraction

Tomasello further demonstrates that human cognition is grounded in shared intentionality and symbolic communication, enabling the construction of culturally stabilized meanings[10]. Concepts, in this view, are not isolated mental entities but socially distributed and collaboratively constructed representations.

From the standpoint of grounded cognition, Barsalou proposes that abstract concepts remain rooted in embodied simulations of experience[11]. Rather than detaching from experience, abstraction involves its reconfiguration through processes of symbolic compression and generalization.

Recent educational research reinforces these claims by showing that conceptual development is closely tied to language use in disciplinary contexts. Schleppegrell argues that the expansion of academic language supports the development of higher-order conceptual thinking[12]. Together, these frameworks suggest that concept formation depends on repetition, pattern recognition, and linguistic stabilization—processes central to the present study.

2.3. Nominalization and Grammatical Metaphor

Within systemic-functional linguistics, nominalization has been primarily examined as a resource for textual condensation and academic abstraction. Halliday and Matthiessen describe nominalization as a form of grammatical metaphor in which processes (e.g., to decide) are reconfigured as entities (decision), increasing lexical density and enabling the

construction of disciplinary knowledge[13].

However, recent research suggests that the role of nominalization extends beyond discourse organization. Biber and Gray demonstrate that nominalization is a key feature of academic language, enabling complex reasoning through dense informational packaging[14]. Similarly, Martin and Rose highlight its role in structuring meaning beyond the clause level, contributing to the organization of extended discourse[15].

Educational studies further indicate that nominalization supports conceptual development. Tokareva and Tsehelska, as well as Tokareva et al., argue that when learners transform actions into conceptual nouns, experience becomes stabilized, discussable, and evaluable within pedagogical contexts[16–18].

Despite these advances, most studies remain focused on textual or educational functions. The broader cognitive and philosophical implications of nominalization—as a mechanism that transforms lived experience into conceptual and evaluative categories—remain underexplored. The present study addresses this gap by interpreting nominalization as a form of ontological stabilization that enables philosophical reflection.

2.4. Multimodality and Conceptual Mapping

Meaning-making increasingly extends beyond verbal language to include multimodal forms of representation. Kress and van Leeuwen demonstrate that meaning is constructed through the interaction of linguistic, visual, and spatial modes[19]. This perspective is further developed in multimodal discourse studies, which emphasize the role of visual and schematic representations in organizing knowledge[20].

Recent work has highlighted the growing importance of multimodality in contemporary communication. Kress and van Leeuwen argue that meaning-making in modern contexts relies on the integration of multiple semiotic resources, requiring new forms of representation and interpretation[19].

In educational contexts, conceptual mapping has emerged as a powerful tool for supporting abstraction. Metacognitive mapping techniques enable learners to externalize cognitive processes and visualize relationships between concepts, facilitating the transition from procedural to conceptual knowledge[16]. Such approaches align with broader research emphasizing the role of language and representation in knowledge construction[21].

This multimodal dimension is central to the present study, which analyzes conceptual maps as integrated linguistic and visual artifacts. Conceptual maps provide observable evidence of how nominalization operates as a mechanism of conceptual stabilization, linking concrete experience with abstract and philosophically interpretable meaning.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative conceptual–analytic research design aimed at examining how nominalization functions as a linguistic and cognitive mechanism in the transformation of lived experience into conceptual meaning. The analysis is situated at the intersection of systemic-functional linguistics, cognitive theories of concept formation, and philosophical approaches to meaning-making built on a synthesis of classical epistemology, phenomenology, and process philosophy.

In the phenomenological approach by Edmund Husserl, nominalization is interpreted as a form of "linguistic epoché." Nominalization effectively performs the function of isolating the noema. From the flow of fluid, ever-changing experience, a stable meaning is "grasped" through naming. Thus, the noun in language becomes the correlate of the intentional object. It allows meaning to be held before the "gaze" of consciousness even when the action itself has already been completed. Husserl's eidetic reduction—the "grasping of essence," the process of moving from empirical activity to conceptual maps—is precisely the path from facts to essences (eide). Nominalization here serves as a tool of universalization: we move from "this particular case" to the "essence of a type of action"[8].

Nominalization functions as an operator of phenomenological reduction, enabling a shift in focus from processuality (what is happening in the physical world) to meaning-constitution (what it signifies for consciousness). A conceptual map can be understood as a space of the "phenomenological field," since the visualization of concepts on a map objectifies the results of reduction, where each nominalization fixes a specific eidos (essence) of human experience[8], which lays out the foundations of the doctrine

of noema and reduction. In another book [7], the researcher directly analyzes how logical structures and judgments arise from pre-predicative (sensory) experience—most closely related to the theme of the transition "from experience to concept."

Rather than focusing on the quantitative frequency of linguistic forms, the study investigates the functional role of nominalization in stabilizing experiential processes into conceptual categories that enable reflective interpretation. The research explores how repeated human actions, when linguistically transformed into nominalized forms, become conceptual entities that develop through argumentation, conceptualization and generalization processes.

Drawing on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, the process of abstraction is analyzed through the fixation of difference within repetition. Repeated actions do not simply replicate one another; rather, they generate patterns that, through nominalization, become fixed as event-concepts while retaining a connection to their dynamic nature. For Deleuze, abstraction is not merely the elimination of the superfluous, but a creative act [22].

In analyzing the "cycle of activity," repeated actions are not copies of each other. Each act is unique, yet its repetition produces an intensity from which "pure difference" emerges. For Deleuze, a concept does not describe a state of affairs—it "grasps" an event. Nominalization (for example, transforming an action into "responsibility") is precisely this Deleuzian becoming. What is fixed here is not a static thing, but a dynamic pattern that has become recognizable.

Abstraction in Deleuze is the fixation of singularities of experience. This makes it possible to argue that conceptual maps are not dead schemas, but recording of living experience [22].

In addition, the processual-dynamic approach to nominalization analysis is thought to be productive for the study. The processual-dynamic level is represented by the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead [23]. To avoid the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (in Whitehead's terms), reality in this study is understood as a totality of processes rather than things.

In process-ontological approach of the "philosophy of process" by Alfred North Whitehead [23], concepts are interpreted as the results of prehension—the "grasping" of elements within the flow of events. This approach provides a metaphysical foundation that enables a transition from linguistics to ontology. For Whitehead, the world is composed not of static "things" or "substances," but of "actual entities" or "events" [23]. In nominalization this corresponds to the shift from verbs (actions) to nouns (concepts), since the fundamental reality is precisely the "process of becoming." A thing is merely a temporary "slice" of a process; everyday experience is primary in relation to abstraction—the idea is completely consistent with Whitehead's philosophy.

The term "captured events" almost literally reproduces Whitehead's central concept of "prehension"—grasping or apprehending. Prehension is the act in which a process "solidifies" and becomes an object for consciousness. When we nominalize experience (transforming "we cooperate" into "cooperation"), we perform an act of positive prehension.

Whitehead refers to abstract forms (colors, geometric figures, moral values) as "eternal objects." Nominalization is the moment when a fluid process "grasps" such an eternal object, and the event acquires determination and meaning. Thus, according to Whitehead, the world is a flow of events [23]. Action (the verb) is the most adequate description of reality, and knowledge occurs through the "grasping" (prehension) of elements within this flow. It is obvious that nominalization is the linguistic expression of prehension—it is the way in which the human mind "stops" a process in order to turn it into a "concept" (a stable unit of meaning). Conceptual maps fix these "captured events" in space, creating structure out of what was originally only fluid experience.

3.2. Materials

The primary analytical tool of the research is multimodal conceptual mapping, which serves as a mediator—that is, as a schema—between the empirical domain of activity and the theoretical domain of meaning-making. For example, when describing the "cycle of activity" map, one might invoke Deleuze: "Here, the repetition of acts of activity (in Deleuze's sense) generates an intensity that, through nominalization, becomes fixed as a stable category" [22].

When describing the structure of the conceptual map, one may note that it serves as a "visual representation of Kantian schematism" [6], linking sensory experience with categories. It can also be emphasized that this method is aimed at the "deconstruction of potential simulacra" (in Baudrillard's

sense)[24] by returning to the origins of nominalization.

To make abstraction, conceptualization and generalization methodologically distinguishable, they can be presented as three stages of ascent from lived experience to pure thought. In the study, this appears as a logical vertical, where each subsequent stage builds upon the previous one.

The primary materials analyzed in the study consist of six metacognitive conceptual maps designed to model the gradual transition from concrete human actions to abstract conceptual categories. These maps function as analytical artifacts that combine linguistic elements with schematic visual representation of conceptual relations.

Each map represents a distinct experiential domain of human life in which individuals repeatedly transform lived experiences into conceptual meanings. Each domain contributes to the refinement of conceptual understanding, with nominalization serving as a bridge between linguistic form and conceptual abstraction. The deliberate sequencing of language domains, combined with explicit attention to nominalization, supports the development of a coherent and transferable conceptual system. Together, the six maps illustrate how everyday activities become sources of argumentation, conceptualization and generalization processes.

The six conceptual maps examined in the study include:

1. Human Activity: modeling how repeated actions and interactions generate basic patterns of human activity and agency.
2. Interpersonal Proximity: illustrating how experiences of action and interaction become interpreted through the framework of purpose.
3. Knowledge Acquisition: demonstrating how repeated social practices lead to the conceptualization of standards, norms and obligations.
4. Skills for Life and Mindsets: representing how experience becomes stabilized into conceptual understanding and reflective knowledge.
5. Risks and Resilience: demonstrating how interaction transforms as the result of introducing variability and complexity in social situations.
6. Life Balance: depicting how accumulated conceptual structures support broader interpretations of human purpose and attitude.

Within the conceptual maps, three types of linguistic elements are analyzed:

- Verbal process forms, represented by concrete actions (e.g., to help, to choose, to cooperate);
- Nominalized forms, represented by linguistically stabilized entities derived from these processes (e.g., help, choice, cooperation);
- Abstract conceptual categories, represented by generalized evaluative meanings (e.g., responsibility, value, need, knowledge).

These elements allow the process of conceptual abstraction—from action to concept—to be observed within a structured representation.

3.3. Analytical Framework

The analysis proceeds in three stages.

Stage 1: Functional-Linguistic Analysis

Using principles of systemic-functional linguistics[13], instances of nominalization are identified and interpreted as grammatical metaphors. Particular attention is given to the shift from process to entity and to the resulting increase in conceptual abstraction.

Stage 2: Cognitive-Developmental Interpretation

According to Kant[6], nominalization views experience as transferable and thinkable, turning it into an object that can be governed by the laws of logic. Kant introduces a crucial concept for understanding the phenomena, the schematism of the understanding.

Drawing on sociocultural theory[9] and grounded cognition[11], the study interprets nominalization as a mechanism of conceptual stabilization through naming. Recurrent experiential patterns represented in the maps are examined to demonstrate how repetition and categorization contribute to concept formation.

Stage 3: Discursive-Philosophical Interpretation

Using discourse-analytic approaches[25], the stabilized nominal forms are analyzed as carriers of evaluative and normative meaning. At this stage, abstract categories such as responsibility, knowledge, or meaning are interpreted as philosophically relevant constructs emerging from everyday linguistic practices.

3.4. Validity and Theoretical Coherence

The study ensures theoretical triangulation by integrating perspectives from several complementary frameworks:

- synthesis of philosophical approaches: epistemology, phenomenology, and process philosophy [6–8, 22, 23].
- Speech act theory [1, 26].
- Socio-semiotic linguistics [2].
- Cognitive-developmental theory [9, 10].
- Grounded cognition [11].
- Multimodal discourse analysis [19].

By combining these approaches, the methodology positions nominalization at the intersection of language, philosophy, cognition, and social practice.

3.5. Methodological Claim

The central methodological claim of this study is that nominalization can be observed as a transitional mechanism between three interconnected stages of meaning formation:

- Procedural repetition (experience),
- Linguistic stabilization (concept formation),
- Philosophical interpretability (abstraction, conceptualization, generalization).

By analyzing six conceptual maps that model this transition across different domains of human experience, the study demonstrates that conceptualization does not originate in formal theoretical discourse. Instead, it develops through everyday processes of language-mediated abstraction that transform lived experience into conceptual and reflective understanding.

3.6. Synthesis: Nominalization and Conceptualization Process

The six experiential domains collectively demonstrate how lived experience becomes conceptualized through nominalization. Across Maps 1–6, we observe a structured progression:

3.6.1. Map 1—Human Activity

The map functions as the foundational empirical model of this study. It visualizes how nominalization transforms kinetic activity into stabilized existential categories. The map models the transition from situational engagement to abstract philosophical orientation through a recursive reflective structure.

Map 1 (**Figure 1**) demonstrates that philosophical categories do not originate as detached theoretical constructs. They emerge through repeated cycles of action and reflective naming. Nominalization functions as the cognitive mechanism that stabilizes lived experience into existential orientation.

Turning to Immanuel Kant [6] allows to construct the most fundamental level of the methodology. While Wittgenstein [27] speaks of social practice and Husserl [7, 8] of the contemplation of essences, Kant [6] explains the very architectonics of how experience is possible. For Kant, cognition begins with the ordering of the "manifold" (the chaos of sensations) by the understanding. This corresponds to everyday experience (verbs, actions), that very "manifold." The process of generalization appears as an act of synthesis: we unite disparate actions under the single "roof" of a concept. Without such generalization, experience would remain a blind collection of episodes.

The very process of transforming an action into a noun becomes a mechanism for converting the empirical "flow" into Kant's [6] transcendental "object." Nominalization renders experience communicable and thinkable, turning it into an object that can be governed by the laws of logic. Kant introduces a crucial concept—the schematism of the understanding. A schema is a mediator between a pure category and sensory intuition; conceptual maps can be understood as "Kantian schemata." They visually connect the living process (sensibility) with the abstract concept (understanding). A map is thus a way of "schematizing" experience so that it becomes a concept. The Kantian approach convincingly explains the use of maps as a necessary bridge (schema) between the chaos of actions and the order of concepts.

At this stage, nominalization begins to operate by converting dynamic processes into identifiable categories (e.g., to act → action), allowing learners to "freeze" experience into conceptual units. This first domain therefore establishes the foundational movement of the study: from activity to abstraction, from doing to being.

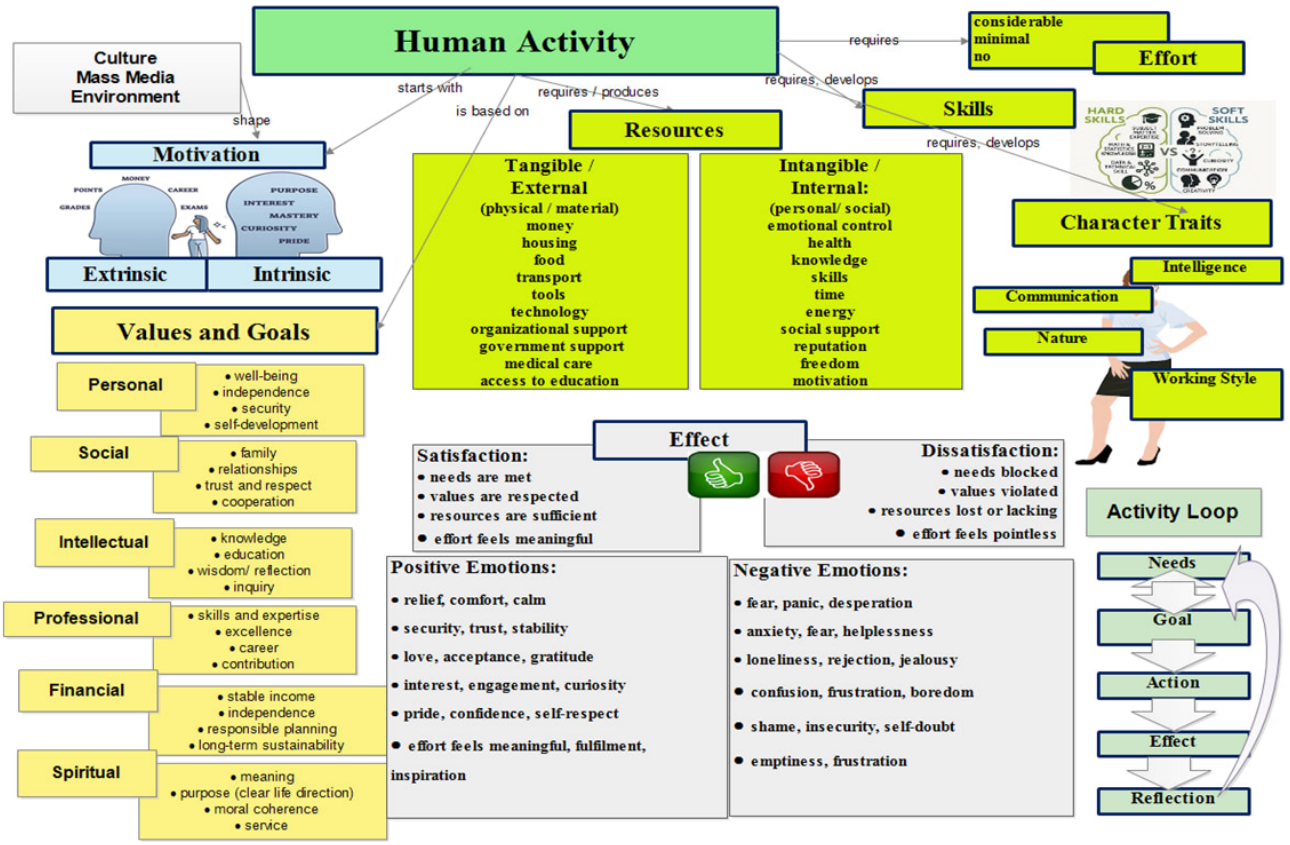


Figure 1. Human Activity.

3.6.2. Map 2—Interpersonal Proximity

Social experience is transformed into structured relational concepts.

Map 2 (**Figure 2**) ultimately demonstrates that social life is cognitively constructed rather than merely instinctive. By naming emotional states—optimism, resentment, suspicion, gratitude—individuals acquire the linguistic instruments necessary to regulate interpersonal dynamics within the broader activity loop.

Conceptualization here gains directionality—actions are no longer events but are interpreted within frameworks of purpose. Nominalization supports this by enabling learners to name abstract drivers (to need → necessity, to motivate → motivation), thus, deepening cognitive representation and enabling transfer across contexts.

The map demonstrates that harmony is not accidental but constructed through deliberate acts of reflective naming. Nominalization transforms fluctuating social encounters into structured layers of proximity and responsibility.

Through this domain, the study extends its central claim: philosophical meaning does not originate solely in theoretical abstraction but in the stabilization of lived relational experience. Naming becomes an act of social agency.

The movement from concrete social friction to abstract relational harmony is therefore neither automatic nor purely intuitional. It is a structured process of linguistic and philosophical abstraction.

3.6.3. Map 3—Knowledge Acquisition

The third experiential domain shifts from interpersonal organization toward the institutional and cognitive structures that shape human development. Map 3 conceptualizes education as a structured process of existential transformation, in which learning is progressively nominalized into stable competencies and identity traits.

Where Map 1 modeled existential motivation and Map 2 relational proximity, Map 3 (**Figure 3**) situates philosophical development within organized systems of knowledge acquisition. Learning is presented not as accidental accumulation, but as a dialectical process involving structure, effort, and retention.

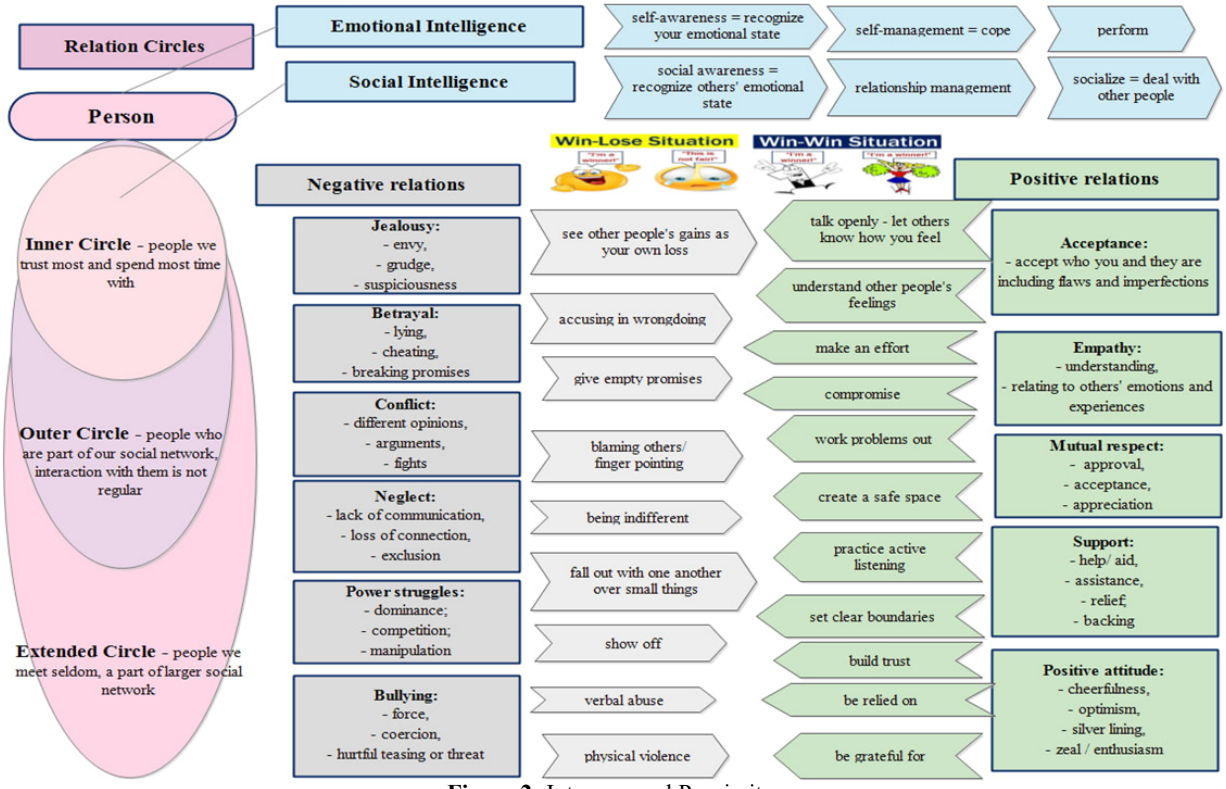


Figure 2. Interpersonal Proximity.

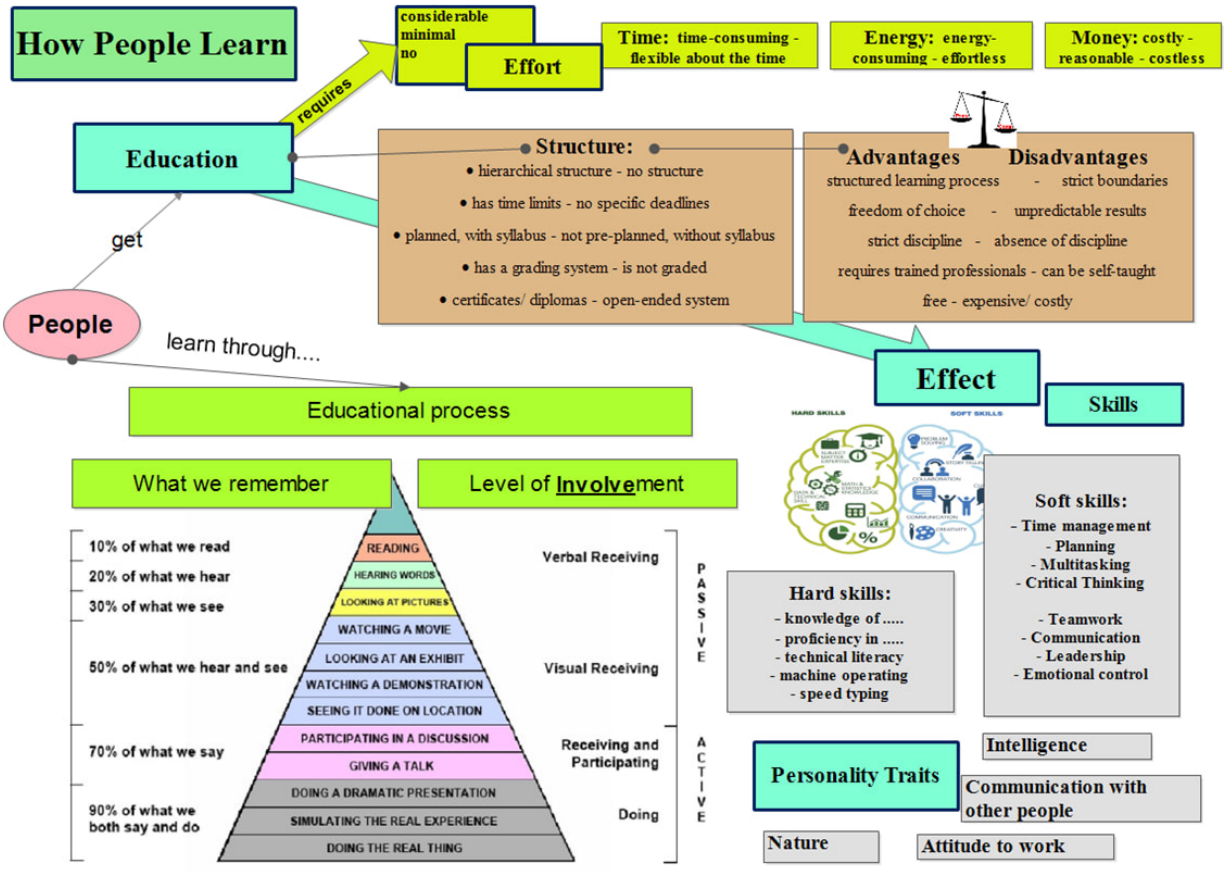


Figure 3. Knowledge Acquisition.

Map 3 demonstrates that education is not merely preparatory but formative. It is a structured environment in which lived effort is stabilized into durable capacities.

The transition to this stage marks the beginning of sustainable conceptual development. Here, individual experiences are embedded within social practices, aligning with Michael Halliday's view of language[2] as a social semiotic system. Repeated participation in social interactions leads to the formation of concepts such as norms, rules, and obligations. Nominalization is crucial because it transforms socially regulated actions into abstract, generalizable entities (to oblige → obligation), which can be systematized and taught.

3.6.4. Map 4—Skills for Life and Mindsets

Competence is operationalized at this stage. Skills and mindsets, such as critical thinking, adaptability, and emotional control, are nominalized as enduring capacities for self-governance. The growth mindset frames experience as potential rather than limitation.

If Map 3 conceptualized education as structured formation, Map 4 (**Figure 4**) marks a decisive epistemological shift: the movement from knowledge acquisition to functional competence. The question is no longer how learning is organized, but how learning becomes operational.

Across the previous maps, experience moved from need and reflection (Map 1), to relational organization (Map 2), to institutional formation (Map 3). Map 4 synthesizes these domains by showing how repeated action, structured education, and social interaction stabilize into skills for life. Here, nominalization transforms knowledge into instruments of self-governance.

The progression from conceptual stabilization to operational performance reflects a movement toward metacognition. Nominalization enables this by providing stable reference points for reflection (to perform → performance, to regulate → regulation), allowing individuals to analyze and adjust their own behavior.

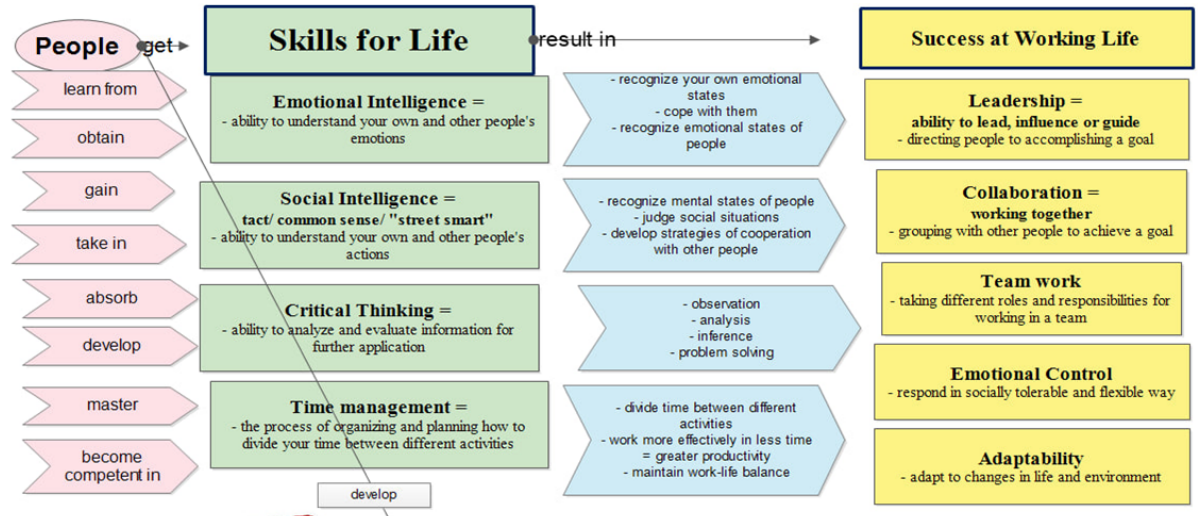


Figure 4. Skills for Life and Mindsets.

At this stage, for the analysis of the process of abstraction and conceptualization the philosophical approach of Gilles Deleuze can be applied. Drawing on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze[22], the process of abstraction is analyzed

through the fixation of difference within repetition. Repeated actions do not simply replicate one another; rather, they generate patterns that, through nominalization, become fixed as event-concepts while retaining a connection to their dynamic nature. For Deleuze, abstraction is not merely the elimination of the superfluous, but a creative act.

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Abstraction in Deleuze is the fixation of singularities of experience. This makes it possible to argue that conceptual maps are not dead schemas, but recording of living experience[22].

The synthesis of Map 4 identifies the growth mindset as a precondition for ongoing development without interpreting experience as expandable, stabilization halts. With it, the activity loop reactivates at a higher level: reflection shapes mindset, and mindset shapes future action.

3.6.5. Map 5—Risks and Resilience

Exposure to uncertainty and challenge is nominalized as discovery, determination, and resilience. The activity loop operates under extreme conditions, transforming physiological and emotional responses into reflective wisdom.

If Map 4 demonstrated how competence stabilizes within structured environments, Map 5 (**Figure 5**) examines what happens when structure is deliberately suspended. This domain moves to the boundary conditions of experience—situations of risk, instability, and uncertainty—and asks how exposure to the unknown becomes a mechanism of existential formation.

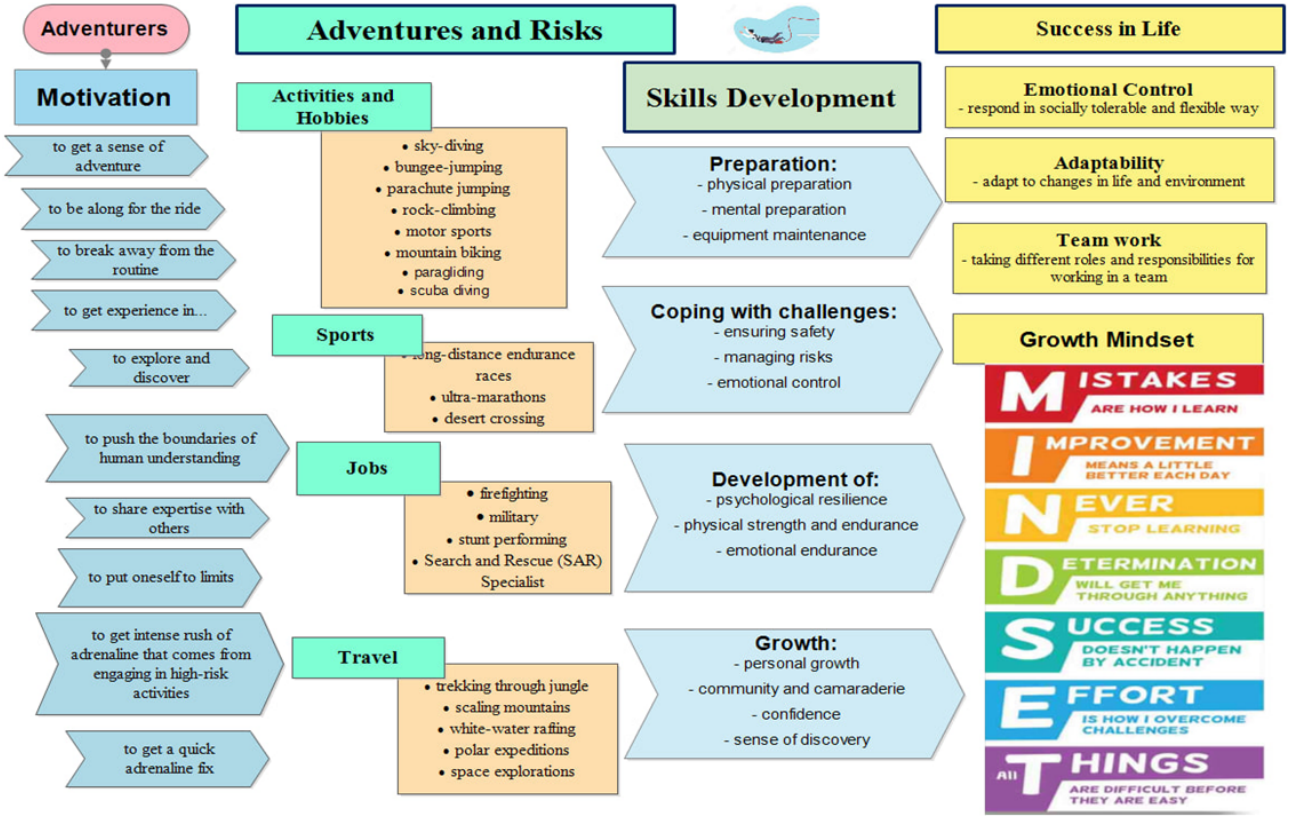


Figure 5. Risks and Resilience.

Map 5 tests these stabilized human capacities under pressure. It shows how uncertainty itself can be transformed—through nominalization—into resilience.

Map 5 radicalizes the social situations and growth mindset introduced in Map 4. At this stage, concepts crystallize and undergo philosophical distillation in relation to different

situations of application. This stage intensifies and refines this process of conceptualization by introducing variability and complexity in social situations. Here, concepts are tested, compared, and philosophically reinterpreted. This aligns with higher-order thinking, where abstraction is no longer merely functional but critical and reflective. Nominalization reaches a higher level of sophistication, supporting the manipulation of complex, context-independent ideas. Concepts become more precise and interconnected, enabling learners to operate across diverse domains which leads to the stage of generalization.

3.6.6. Map 6—Life Balance

The multiplicity of human engagement is integrated into a coherent geometry of the self. Spheres of life—family, health, career, social, and spiritual—are stabilized into structured categories, enabling deliberate, reflective management of responsibilities and priorities.

The sixth and final domain addresses the question that emerges from all previous maps: how can the multiplicity of human engagements be integrated into a coherent whole?

If Map 5 tested competence under conditions of uncertainty, Map 6 (**Figure 6**) turns toward integration. It conceptualizes Life Balance as the geometry of the self—a structured configuration of interrelated existential spheres. Life balance is therefore not a withdrawal from activity but a reflective participation in it. Harmony is achieved not by eliminating complexity, but by naming, organizing, and proportioning it.

For the analysis of the concept generalization levels, the application of the philosophical works by Ludwig Wittgenstein and Jean Baudrillard. seems productive [24, 27]. The methodology draws on Wittgenstein's theory of "language games," according to which concepts arise from the context of social and professional practices. Nominalization here is understood as the crystallization of the rules of a game within a community (for example, an academic one).

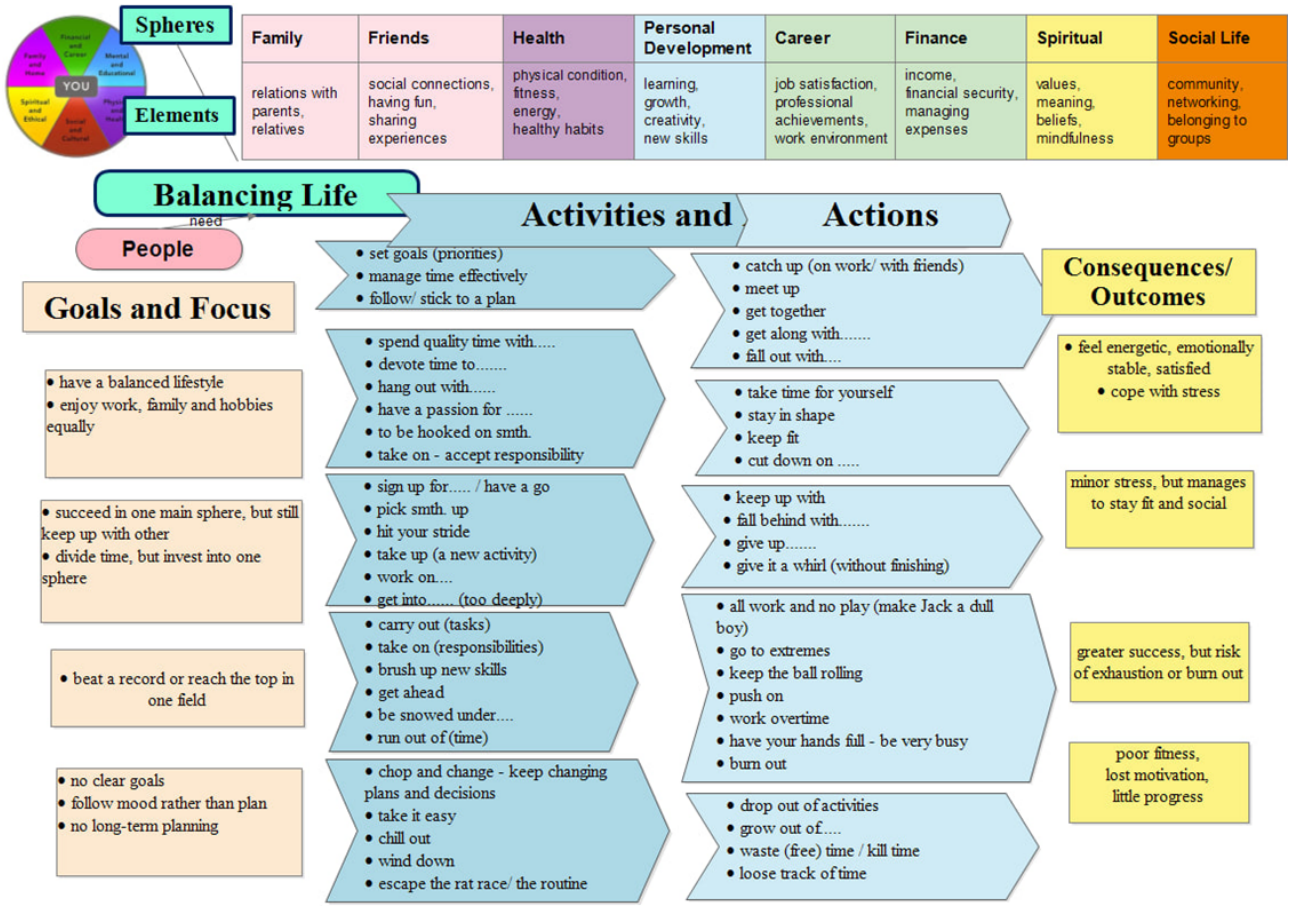


Figure 6. Life Balance.

For Wittgenstein[27], the meaning of a word is its use within a "language game." Nominalization (the transition from "I act" to "activity") does not occur in a vacuum, but within a specific practice. For instance, in the professional environment of scholars, the use of nouns instead of verbs constitutes a rule of a particular "language game" that enables the coordination of complex meanings. Wittgenstein rejects the idea of a single, fixed essence of a concept (in contrast to Husserl)[8], introducing instead the notion of family resemblance. When, through abstraction, we form a concept from repeated actions, we are not fixing a single "truth," but a network of overlapping similarities. In this sense, a conceptual map becomes a visualization of these "family resemblances" among different empirical acts. Wittgenstein also treats concepts as rules that guide our behavior. Nominalization of experience is the moment of rule-formation: when we name a sequence of actions a "cycle of activity," we create a conceptual framework that subsequently shapes how we interpret and evaluate future experience.

However, the critical vector of the study is inspired by the ideas of Jean Baudrillard[24]. This makes it possible to analyze the risk of abstractions turning into "simulacra"—empty concepts that have lost their connection to the territory of experience. The model of "realist reflection" proposed in the paper functions as a protective mechanism, preventing the alienation of concepts by continuously relating them back to the conceptual map of activity.

Finally, at this point an integrative synthesis is represented. All previously developed concepts are organized into coherent conceptual spheres. This stage is most effective because it mirrors how expert knowledge is structured—not as isolated elements but as interconnected systems of generalized concepts. Nominalization performs its most advanced role by enabling large-scale conceptual organization, where abstract entities interact within a unified cognitive framework. The result is an operational and evolving conceptual base that supports lifelong skills and adaptation.

To demonstrate that generalization is not a departure from reality, but rather a form of "realist reflection," it is necessary to show that universal meaning is extracted from repeated practice through linguistic compression (nominalization) and visual structuring (mapping).

3.7. Nominalization as Cognitive and Philosophical Engine

Across all six maps, nominalization emerges as the core mechanism of conceptualization:

- From verbs to nouns: Actions become stable concepts: to act, to explore, to cooperate, to learn → action, exploration, cooperation, competence.
- From experience to reflection: Repeated cycles of action and evaluation produce conceptual categories that structure perception, decision-making, and moral reasoning.
- From individual to holistic selfhood: Early stabilization of personal and interpersonal needs and goals (Maps 1–2) evolves into professional competence and resilience (Maps 3–5) and culminates in integrated life balance (Map 6).

In this framework, concepts are not imposed from theoretical abstraction but emerge organically as individuals reflect on and nominalize their experiences. Language mediates this transformation, enabling learners to construct meaning, evaluate consequences, and organize experience into intelligible structures.

Implications:

The maps demonstrate that the process of concept making is deeply embedded in everyday cognition:

- Reflection transforms immediate action into conceptual understanding.
- Social and educational experiences scaffold moral and existential reasoning.
- Challenges, risk, and uncertainty test and refine the conceptual categories.
- Integration across life domains enables developing a coherent system of concept making.

Ultimately, nominalization bridges experience and concept, allowing to move from concrete actions to comcept understanding, from transient emotion to structured insight, and from fragmented activity to coherent process of the system of concept formation.

Conceptualization, therefore, is a cultivated capacity to name, organize, and reflect upon the self and the world,

achieved incrementally across the structured experiential domains represented in Maps 1–6.

4. Results

4.1. Philosophical Justification for the Process of Conceptualization Using Conceptual Maps

In the study, the authors argue that the complete process of the system of concepts formation includes three successive stages: abstraction, conceptualization and generalization.

To make this approach methodologically distinguishable, the transformations can be presented as three stages of ascent from lived experience to pure thought. In the paper, this appears as a logical vertical, where each subsequent stage builds upon the previous one and is presented in **Table 1**.

Abstraction is the "extraction of a figure from the background." At this stage, we perform a primary break with the fluidity of life. It is an act of cutting away the accidental, the singular, and the situational. We cease to see "this specific act of helping this particular person at 10 a.m." and begin to perceive a type of action. Here lies the connection with nominalization, as the verb, representing a process, is transformed into a deverbal noun. This is the initial fixation. At this point, we draw on Husserl's philosophy [8], particularly his theory of epoché: we "bracket" the real world and retain only the phenomenon of the action within consciousness. On the map, this corresponds to isolating individual nodes (points) from the general chaos of activity.

Table 1. The system of concept formation.

Stage	Process	Cognitive Operation	Philosophical Marker	Role of Nominalization
1	Abstraction	Elimination of the superfluous	Epoché (Husserl)	Separation from the verb (process)
2	Conceptualization	Construction of relations	Language game (Wittgenstein)	Creation of a terminological network
3	Generalization	Search for the universal	Categorical synthesis (Kant)	Formation of a philosophical category

An abstract concept does not exist in isolation; it acquires meaning only within a system of other concepts—this is conceptualization, the "creation of a structure of relations." It is the act of giving structure and context to the "grasped" meaning. We do not merely isolate "help"; we connect it with "resource," "goal," and "result."

The transition from simple naming to the construction of semantic fields reflects the link with nominalization. The philosophies of Whitehead and Wittgenstein allow us to grasp events within a particular "language game." We define the rules by which a concept interacts with others: on maps, this is represented by drawing lines and connections between nodes. Conceptualization is the stage at which points are transformed into a network (a graph) [23, 27].

The highest point of reflection is generalization, where a particular concept becomes a universal category. It is the transition from a "structure of activity" to a "principle of being." At this level, we understand that our conceptualized "help" becomes part of the universal categories of "Ethics" or "Social Capital."

This is a state of maximal compression of meaning, where a word no longer designates a category of actions, but a philosophical principle. It is the moment of Kant's transcendental synthesis, in which we subsume structured experience under a priori categories of the understanding [6]. The experience thus becomes a universal law applicable to any person in any situation.

On the conceptual map, this is realized through the grouping of entire segments under shared meta-headings.

Thus, conceptual mapping and nominalization are not merely a linguistic exercise, but an ascent along the ladder of abstraction. The analysis, moving from abstraction as a phenomenological gesture, through conceptualization as a network structure of meanings, to generalization as a universal Kantian synthesis [6], transforms the linguistic analysis of nominalization into an ontology of human experience.

The analysis examined six metacognitive conceptual maps designed to model how everyday experiences transform into abstract conceptual understanding. The maps represent recurring domains of human experience and illustrate how linguistic abstraction—particularly nominalization—supports the development of reflective and philosophical thinking. The sequencing of these domains is crucial: it reflects an epistemological progression from concrete, perceptually grounded elements of language toward more abstract, relational, and context-dependent forms. For instance,

early focus on lexical acquisition provides the basic material for later nominalization processes, while grammatical competence enables the syntactic manipulation required for complex conceptual expression.

Across all maps, the same structural progression can be observed. The learners begin with procedural experience expressed through actions, typically represented by verbs (e.g., to help, to decide, to cooperate). Through repeated use and reflection, these processes become nominalized conceptual entities (e.g., help, decision, cooperation). These conceptual forms then serve as the basis for higher-level interpretation in terms of values, principles, and existential meanings.

This progression allows to move from describing actions to interpreting patterns of human behavior, which constitutes an important step in the development of actualization, conceptualization and generalization.

To illustrate this process, **Table 2** summarizes the six conceptual maps analyzed in the study and their role in supporting conceptual and philosophical development.

Table 2. Conceptual maps and the development of philosophical thinking.

Conceptual Map	Experiential Domain	Procedural Actions (Verbal Processes)	Nominalized Concepts	Philosophical Skills Developed
Human Activity	Human activity and needs	to act, to help, to choose, to cooperate	action, help, choice, cooperation	recognizing patterns of human behavior; understanding human needs and motivations
Interpersonal Proximity	Interpersonal relations	To communicate, to cooperate, to support	communication, cooperation, support	understanding social structures and shared responsibilities
Knowledge Acquisition	Cognitive activity	to explore, to observe, to practice, to understand	exploration, observation, practice, understanding	conceptualizing learning processes; reflecting on knowledge formation
Skills for Life and Mindsets	Emotional and social experience	to adapt, to respect, to recognize, to cope	adaptability, respect, recognition, emotional control	evaluating actions in ethical terms and social norms; forming moral judgments
Risks, and Resilience	Personal development	to choose, to decide, to overcome, to discover, to perform	choice, decision, discovery, overcoming, performance	personal responsibility and self-development
Life Balance	Meaning and interpretation	to search, to question, to reflect, to develop balance	search, questioning, reflection, balance	interpreting life experience in terms of developing life balance, life goals and attitudes

4.2. From Action to Conceptual Reflection

The analysis shows that conceptual maps function as scaffolding tools that support the transition from procedural knowledge to conceptual understanding. When students begin working with the maps, their thinking is typically focused on concrete actions and situational descriptions. However, as actions are transformed into nominalized forms, students begin to recognize stable conceptual categories that organize their experiences.

This shift enables learners to move beyond describing isolated events toward identifying general patterns of human activity. Such patterns become the basis for reflective discussion about motivations, values, and consequences of actions.

4.3. Development of Philosophical Literacy

The results suggest that the conceptual mapping system supports the development of several key philosophical skills:

- Concept formation: recognizing recurring patterns of experience and naming them through conceptual categories.
- Abstraction: moving from concrete actions toward generalized interpretations.
- Evaluation: interpreting actions in relation to moral and social values.
- Reflective interpretation: connecting personal experiences with broader existential questions.

Through these processes, learners of language gradu-

ally develop the capacity to interpret everyday experiences within broader conceptual and philosophical frameworks.

4.4. Nominalization as a Mechanism of Conceptual Stabilization

Across all six maps, nominalization functions as the central linguistic mechanism that enables conceptual stabilization. By converting actions into conceptual entities, nominalization makes it possible to treat experiences as objects of reflection rather than transient events.

This transformation allows learners to compare experiences, formulate generalizations, and construct conceptual explanations of human behavior. As a result, linguistic abstraction becomes a key step in the development and stabilization of concepts.

5. Discussion

The present study set out to examine nominalization as a mechanism through which lived experience is transformed into conceptual and philosophical meaning. The findings suggest that nominalization functions not only as a linguistic resource for textual condensation but as a cognitive and semiotic process that enables the development of actualization, conceptualization and generalization in concept making.

5.1. Nominalization as a Mechanism of Concept Formation

The results support and extend existing theories of language-mediated cognition. In line with Vygotsky's claim that higher mental functions develop through linguistic mediation[9], the analysis demonstrates how repeated actions become conceptual categories through nominalization. Similarly, the findings resonate with grounded cognition theory, which views abstraction as a reconfiguration of embodied experience rather than its detachment[11].

However, the present study goes further by showing how this transformation can be systematically modeled through conceptual mapping. While previous research has emphasized the role of language in concept formation, the integration of nominalization with metacognitive mapping provides a more explicit representation of how procedural knowledge is converted into conceptual knowledge.

5.2. Beyond Textual Condensation: Nominalization as Ontological Stabilization

Traditional systemic-functional accounts describe nominalization primarily as a grammatical metaphor that increases lexical density and supports academic discourse[13]. Recent studies confirm its importance in structuring disciplinary knowledge and enabling complex reasoning[14, 28, 29].

The findings of this study extend this perspective by demonstrating that nominalization also performs a deeper function: it stabilizes transient experiences into conceptual entities that can be reflected upon, evaluated, and integrated into broader systems of meaning. In this sense, nominalization can be understood as a form of ontological stabilization, transforming processes into objects of thought.

This interpretation aligns with discourse-analytic perspectives, which emphasize the role of language in constructing social reality[25], but shifts the focus toward the emergence of philosophical meaning from everyday experience.

5.3. Multimodality and the Externalization of Thought

The analysis of conceptual maps highlights the importance of multimodal representation in the conceptualization process. Consistent with multimodal theory[19, 30], the findings show that conceptual abstraction is not limited to verbal language but is supported by visual and schematic structures.

Conceptual maps function as externalizations of cognitive processes, making visible the transition from action to concept. This supports recent educational research emphasizing the role of representation in knowledge construction[12, 21]. The integration of linguistic and visual modes allows for a more transparent and structured form of conceptualization, particularly in learning contexts.

5.4. Implications for Philosophical Literacy and Education

One of the central contributions of this study is the reconceptualization of philosophical literacy. Rather than being limited to engagement with formal philosophical texts, philosophical thinking is understood as the capacity to transform experience into conceptual meaning through language.

This perspective has important implications for education. It suggests that the development of philosophical

thinking can be supported through pedagogical practices that emphasize linguistic abstraction, conceptual mapping, and reflective interpretation. The use of nominalization within structured learning environments may facilitate the transition from everyday experience to higher-order conceptual and evaluative thinking.

5.5. Limitations and Future Research

The present study is conceptual and interpretive in nature. Its aim is to develop a theoretical framework explaining how nominalization functions as a mechanism linking experience with conceptual and philosophical meaning. While the six conceptual maps provide structured representations of this process, the study does not include empirical validation.

Future research may apply the proposed framework in educational and discourse-analytic contexts to examine how nominalization supports conceptual development and reflective thinking in practice. Empirical studies involving learners, classroom interaction, or corpus analysis would provide valuable evidence for the applicability and generalizability of the model.

In addition, further research may explore cross-cultural and linguistic variations in nominalization and their role in shaping different modes of philosophical interpretation.

6. Conclusions

This study has examined nominalization as a linguistic and cognitive mechanism that enables the transformation of lived experience into conceptual and philosophical meaning. By analyzing six metacognitive conceptual maps, the study has demonstrated that repeated actions can be systematically reconfigured into stable conceptual categories through processes of abstraction, conceptualization and generalization.

Summing up the analysis of the philosophical basis of the study, it can be noted that Kant [6] provides the form (how experience can be thought at all) and grounds the very possibility of synthesizing experience into categories. Husserl [8] explains how people "grasp" the pure essence of this experience. Wittgenstein [27] supplies the context (professional language games). Whitehead [23] and Deleuze [22] provide the dynamics (processes and becoming). Baudrillard [24] offers a warning—not to turn map into an empty simulacrum—reminding researchers of the importance of maintaining the connection between the "map" and the "territory" of lived experience.

Therefore, Baudrillard's approach introduces a critical dimension of nominalization. While Deleuze [22] emphasizes creation, Baudrillard [24] warns against "substitution," that is, the transition toward simulacra. He describes the phases of the image, from reflecting reality to completely replacing it (the simulacrum). According to Baudrillard [24], nominalization becomes a dangerous moment: when we transform a living action into a noun (an abstraction), we risk becoming detached from reality. A concept may turn into a simulacrum that no longer refers to experience but instead lives its own life within language, where abstractions begin to govern reality. The map (the conceptual schema) begins to precede the "territory" (lived experience).

The findings show that nominalization does not function solely as a grammatical resource for textual condensation, as traditionally described in systemic-functional linguistics. Rather, it operates as a mechanism of conceptual and ontological stabilization, allowing transient experiences to become objects of abstraction, conceptualization and generalization. In this way, nominalization provides a bridge between procedural engagement with the world and the formation of abstract, philosophically interpretable knowledge.

A key contribution of the study lies in integrating philosophical approaches and linguistic theory with multimodal conceptual mapping. The maps make visible the progression from action to concept making, demonstrating how philosophical meaning can emerge from everyday practices through structured processes of abstraction and generalization. This supports a broader understanding of philosophical literacy as the ability to transform experience into conceptual meaning, rather than as the mastery of formal philosophical discourse alone.

At the same time, the study is conceptual in nature and does not aim to provide empirical validation. Future research may apply the proposed framework in educational and discourse-analytic contexts to examine how nominalization supports conceptual development and reflective thinking in practice.

Overall, the study contributes to ongoing discussions in philosophy, cognitive linguistics, and systemic-functional linguistics by reconceptualizing nominalization as a central mechanism in human meaning-making, linking everyday ex-

perience with conceptualization and philosophical reflection.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, M.T. and O.I.; methodology, M.T.; formal analysis, M.T.; investigation, M.T.; writing—original draft preparation, M.T.; writing—review and editing, M.T. and O.I.; visualization, M.T.; supervision, O.I. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Ethical review and approval were waived for this study because the research does not involve human participants, personal data, or experimental procedures. The study is based on conceptual and linguistic analysis of educational materials and theoretical models; therefore, no ethical approval was required.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable. The study does not involve human participants or personal data.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article. The conceptual maps analyzed in the study are presented in the manuscript and constitute the primary materials used for the analysis. No external datasets were generated or analyzed.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AI Use Statement

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted tools, including ChatGPT and Grammarly, to support language refinement, structural organization, and editorial clarity. These tools were utilized to improve readability, coherence, and linguistic accuracy, as well as to assist in refining conceptual phrasing. All intellectual content, theoretical arguments, conceptual models, and analytical interpretations were developed by the authors. After using AI tools, the manuscript was carefully reviewed, revised, and edited to ensure accuracy, originality, and scholarly integrity. The authors take full responsibility for the content, accuracy, and originality of the final submitted and published version of the article.

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