

## The hidden curriculum and its role in curriculum innovation implementation

Alois Matorevhu\*, Havatidi Madzamba

Mutare Teachers' College, Zimbabwe

**Abstract:** The hidden curriculum comprises unspoken or implicit values, behaviors, procedures, and norms in an educational setting. This can be an alternative to empowering attitudes, values, and non-cognitive skills, for example, politeness, honesty, hard work, cooperation, and tolerance in students during the implementation of curriculum innovations.. An alignment between the intended/official curriculum innovation implementation and the implemented curriculum innovation encourages the positive manifestation of the hidden curriculum. Negative manifestation of the hidden curriculum due to misalignment between intended/official curriculum innovation implementation and the implemented curriculum innovation makes the envisaged change through curriculum innovation implementation elusive, like a mirage that can never be caught. This paper critically discusses how the hidden curriculum may promote or hinder successful curriculum innovation implementation. Implications of the hidden curriculum to curriculum innovation implementation are also discussed.

**Keywords:** Curriculum innovation, hidden curriculum, intended curriculum

## Kurikulum tersembunyi dan perannya dalam implementasi inovasi kurikulum

**Abstrak:** Kurikulum tersembunyi terdiri dari nilai-nilai, perilaku, prosedur, dan norma yang tidak terucapkan atau tersirat dalam lingkungan pendidikan. Hal ini dapat menjadi sebuah alternatif untuk memberdayakan sikap, nilai-nilai dan keterampilan non kognitif, misalnya kesopanan, kejujuran, kerja keras, bekerja sama, dan toleransi pada peserta didik selama implementasi inovasi kurikulum. Keselarasan antara implementasi inovasi kurikulum yang dimaksud/resmi dengan inovasi kurikulum yang diimplementasikan mendorong terwujudnya hidden kurikulum secara positif. Manifestasi negatif dari kurikulum tersembunyi karena ketidakselarasan antara implementasi inovasi kurikulum yang dimaksudkan/resmi dan inovasi kurikulum yang diimplementasikan membuat perubahan yang diharapkan melalui implementasi inovasi kurikulum sulit dipahami, seperti fatamorgana yang tidak pernah bisa ditangkap. Makalah ini secara kritis membahas bagaimana kurikulum tersembunyi dapat mempromosikan atau menghambat implementasi inovasi kurikulum yang berhasil. Implikasi kurikulum tersembunyi terhadap implementasi inovasi kurikulum juga dibahas.

**Kata Kunci:** Inovasi kurikulum, kurikulum tersembunyi, kurikulum yang dimaksudkan

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\*Corresponding author: [amatorevhu@gmail.com](mailto:amatorevhu@gmail.com)

## INTRODUCTION

Education has always emphasized the transfer of knowledge, the learning of abilities, and the fostering of attitudes and values, constituting a trilogy. Curriculum designers have given information and experiences that appeal to these triadic aspects to enhance learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. (Abroampa, 2020; Aco et al., 2021; Vargas-Hernández & Vargas-González, 2022; Zekarias, 2022). Implementation of curricula using teaching strategies like experimentation, project method, quiz, drama, and lecture method have been able to develop cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains of learners (Beluan et al., 2018; Hendrix et al., 2012; Mbaubedari et al., 2022; Pambudi et al., 2022; Raissi Ahvan et al., 2022; Zainuddin et al., 2020; Zannah et al., 2018). However, the development of non-cognitive abilities like morality, hard effort, collaboration, honesty, and tolerance, has not proven effective. Apparently, the educational context or environment in which curriculum implementation occurs does not support implementers in terms of providing material and financial resources for the successful development of non-cognitive skills (Choi et al., 2022; Sulaimani & Gut, 2019). Teaching strategies being used and test scores as the mode of assessing learning objectives achievement are failing to develop learners' non-cognitive skills. This clearly indicates that the education system is not contributing holistically to the students socialization and personal development. These shortfalls permeating today's societies have evolved various debates regarding educational remedies for the holistic development of each learner. Attempts are being made in many countries worldwide to develop learners holistically (Tough, 2012). Teaching the history of the country to promote patriotism and teaching religious and moral education to equip learners with desired norms, values, and attitudes, are some of the strategies being used. Despite this effort being put, the desired outcome of developing non-cognitive skills has remained elusive.

Using a hidden curriculum is an alternative to correcting curriculum failures in achieving desired results such as developing attitudes, empowering values and increasing students' non-cognitive skills (Abroampa, 2020; Ahvan et al., 2021; Gunio & Fajardo, 2018; Ludwig et al., 2018; Rajput et al., 2017; Roder & May, 2017). Activities that can optimize the hidden curriculum in developing non-cognitive skills include giving learners leadership responsibilities, allowing them to establish ground rules during debate sessions or workshops, distributing workshop material, and giving them opportunities to set targets to achieve as individuals or groups (Choi et al., 2022). However, the hidden curriculum should be used, taking cognizance of its potential to produce negative outcomes regarding knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes (Garcia, 2014).

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

The study sought to show how the latent skills are unintentionally or intentionally developed through the hidden curriculum (Basyiruddin et al., 2020). The subsequent positive or negative influence of latent skills on curriculum innovation implementation is discussed. A review of related literature and an analysis of opinions by experts were used as the methodology of the study.

## **THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM, LATENT SKILLS, AND CURRICULUM INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION LINKS**

Philip Jackson invented the phrase "hidden curriculum" in 1968 to describe aspects of classroom life that emerge through social ties and interactions in schools (Cotton et al., 2013; Ebadi, 2013). Social and behavioral standards include social connections and interactions, such as learning to be patient, exhibiting self-control, finishing work, attempting, collaborating, demonstrating loyalty to both educators and peers, being clean and on time, and behaving courteously (Snyder, 1971). The hidden curriculum is an amorphous collection of implicit social, academic, and cultural messages based on unwritten norms and unsaid expectations and positioned within the prevailing culture. Consequently, the concealed curriculum supports certain behavioral patterns, professional norms, and societal attitudes inside the learning environment (Alsubaie, 2015). Although non-academic, the hidden curriculum is important in implementing curriculum innovation. Curriculum implementers acquire student knowledge, abilities, values, and attitudes, which may be positive or negative, following how the innovation implementation is designed or organized.

The structure or organization of curriculum innovation implementation has a major impact on interaction and mutual relations among stakeholders or implementers such as educators, administrators, students, and teachers who are part of the educational community. From this, the culture of curriculum innovation implementation emerges, from which implementers accidentally and subconsciously adopt a pattern of attitudes, norms, and values (Basyiruddin et al., 2020). Though in varying hues, the hidden curriculum is present in every teaching scenario (Ruff, 2013). Depending on the structure and execution, it is pronounced at varying degrees in different learning contexts. Notwithstanding, Abroampa (2020) emphasizes that ninety percent (90%) of all learning occurring in educational institutions is accidentally and unknowingly impacted by the hidden curriculum, in varying proportions of positive and negative components. Educational institutions and policymakers focus on implementing what is in the intended curriculum / official curriculum, while the hidden curriculum causes learning to happen on the blind side of the educational institution.

The hidden curriculum is implemented unconsciously through socialization experiences learners/curriculum innovation implementers are involved with peers, teachers, educators (lecturers), administrators, and recreational activities like clubs, excursions, discharge of institutional chores and designated roles. Some authors refer to learner involvement in the hidden curriculum implementation to the formal school setup (Abroampa, 2020; Ebadi, 2013; Orón Semper & Blasco, 2018; Tough, 2012). The current authors are of the view that whenever anybody becomes a learner at whatever level, that is beyond the school level like college, university, in-service courses, and workshops, the hidden curriculum becomes part of the learning process, or the innovation implementation process. This view is the basis of analysis in this paper.

## **THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM AND CURRICULUM INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION ENVIRONMENTS**

The nature of curriculum innovation implementation environments is crucial because it determines the context in which the intended / official curriculum innovation

implementation occurs. Three curriculum innovation implementation environments from which the hidden curriculum evolves are micro (classroom) – meso (institutional) –, and macro (ministerial / government) – environments (Ruff, 2013). Each environment contributes positively or negatively to the effect of the hidden curriculum on curriculum innovation implementation. Although the culture related to the implementation of curriculum innovation is characteristic of the dynamics of the entire curriculum innovation implementation, the three curriculum innovation environments are contrived due nature of interactions taking place at classroom, institutional and ministerial / government levels, among various curriculum innovation implementers and policymakers. Curriculum innovation implementation being a new way of teaching and learning, implies anybody involved in the implementation in each of the three implementation environments is a learner. Therefore depending on the level (classroom, institutional or ministerial) the term learner refers to students, teachers, educators/lecturers, etc. For instance, teachers and educators can be facilitators at micro – level (classroom), but in an in-service workshop at meso / institutional – level the same teachers and educators will be learners.

In a micro (classroom) – environment curriculum innovation implementation occurs through interactions between the learning facilitator (teacher, educator/lecturer), learners and instructional resources like textbooks, workbooks, apparatus, among other teaching and learning aids. Curriculum innovation implementation in micro (classroom) – and meso (institutional) – environments are imbued with macro (ministerial/national) – environment structural considerations made by policymakers. The structural considerations are enacted through micro – and meso – level interactions (Baykut et al., 2022). In the macro-curriculum innovation implementation environment, policymakers (ministerial or government level) are the ones who influence curriculum innovation development as a precursor of curriculum innovation implementation. Subsequently, all that has been done during curriculum development will influence the curriculum innovation implementation.

### **INTERACTIONS OF THE MICRO-, MESO-, AND MACRO-LEVELS OF CURRICULUM INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION**

Existing structures in education systems at the micro –, meso –, and macro – levels are inconsistent with the attitude, values, and non-cognitive skills generated by the hidden curriculum, which may hinder the adoption of curriculum innovation (Garcia, 2014). For instance, in curriculum policy documents learners may be expected to develop democratic ideals as an outcome of curriculum innovation implementation. In practice, however, learners may not acquire and value democratic ideas just by reading about them, since the structures and cultures of learning institutions are not conducive to such ideals (Ito et al., 2022). Affective and non-cognitive elements of curriculum innovation implementation are functions of interactions and socialization processes that occur at micro–, meso–, and macro–levels of the education system, as a result of interactions of plans and organization at the classroom, institutional, and ministerial / government level, respectively (Alsubaie, 2015).

The abilities, attitude, and values that students acquire via the hidden curriculum may be positive, negative, beneficial, or detrimental to the implementation of curricular innovation. For instance, learners/curriculum innovation implementers may develop skills

and values like contributing to decision-making, receptivity, toleration, collaboration, negotiating abilities, time consciousness, meeting deadlines, seeking permission, taking responsibility, just to mention a few. These skills and values are crucial in promoting success of curriculum innovation implementation (Garcia, 2014). However, achieving the converse of such skills and values is possible through the negative effects of the hidden curriculum, which unfortunately, will contribute to curriculum innovation implementation failure.

Modelling and imitation according to social learning theory play significant learning and behaviour development (Abroampa, 2020). For this reason, the teacher's and educator's (learning facilitator's) appearance, demeanor or disposition in and out of the classroom is important in contributing to the negative or positive effects of the hidden curriculum to curriculum innovation implementation. It is important to note that the demeanor and strategies the learning facilitator (teacher or educator) employs during curriculum innovation implementation should be totally shaped by the institution's official curriculum in the context of the institution's structure and organization. However, through the social learning theory lens, learning is considered to occur by observing and imitating the behavior of others. Therefore, at the micro (class) level, instructors' interactions with students leave enduring good or bad impressions (Ito et al., 2022). In the context of the social learning theory, curriculum innovation implementation inputs (structural, material and financial resources) and conditions of service (salaries and workload), should speak consistent with exploiting the positive aspects of the hidden curriculum at micro (classroom), meso (institutional) and macro (ministerial) levels (Kamasak & Özbilgin, 2021). This means resources and conditions of service should send through the hidden curriculum's unstated messages that there is a genuine focus on indeed implementing the curriculum innovation by making resources available as well as making conditions of service good consistent with labor laws. If resources for implementation are not available and conditions of service are not as they should be, then this gap may cause curriculum innovation implementation, through the hidden curriculum to fail or suffer a still birth. Ultimately, the envisaged change through curriculum innovation implementation remain elusive, hence a mirage which can never be caught.

At micro (classroom) level one of the ways to mitigate the hidden curriculum adverse effects is reduction in amount of summative assessment, as well as time pressure, so that the students do not feel forced into strategic or surface approaches to learning because of lack of time to prepare for assessment. The way students are assessed reflects the hidden curriculum, because students who focus on deep learning are actually less successful, than students who learn to play the game of assessment. Alternative approaches to learning called strategic approaches are those in which learners adjust, so that they meet requirements of the learning activity or assessment, without bothering whether learning is deep or surface (Richardson et al., 2012). Similarly in curriculum innovation implementation, the implementers as learners in their own right, become shrewd as they play the game of copying with unpleasant situations like poor conditions of service, and inequitable distribution of resources by pretending to be implementing the curriculum innovation as expected when indeed they will not. This is a clear indication that policymakers should deal with conditions of service and distribution of resources among other factors in ways which ensure that the hidden curriculum promotes curriculum innovation implementation rather than inhibiting it.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM TO CURRICULUM INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION

Once an innovation is being implemented all stakeholders in the implementation process become learners, who should be exposed to a conducive environment for successful implementation of the curriculum innovation. Also relevant and adequate information should be provided to implementers (learners) to develop competences for effective implementation of the curriculum innovation. Questions arise about the nature of information and how it should be afforded to curriculum innovation implementers. There is no agreed response to these questions as revealed by the foregoing analysis that what curriculum innovation implementers put into practice during the implementation is much more of what they get from the hidden curriculum, than what is said by authorities, and curriculum policy documents (Ito et al., 2022). It is therefore important for educational policymakers to take note of this influence of the hidden curriculum on curriculum innovation implementation, and make deliberate contextualised effort to enhance an implementation environment which promotes the achievement of the goals of the innovation (Brücknerová & Novotný, 2019). If the environment is not conducive for genuine curriculum innovation implementation it is noteworthy that the hidden curriculum manifests itself negatively as implementers exhibit shrewdness in coping with unpleasant situations like delays, lack of provisions, poor salaries, lack of material resources, among others. The survival skills adopted by implementers are deceptive such that they are usually misconstrued for successful implementation of the curriculum innovation.

Hidden curriculum is a multidimensional concept including the interaction between educational material and its reception by people, the political goals of authorities, and the institutions that develop and deliver the curriculum. Also included in the implementation of curricular innovation are the conventional approaches to age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, social class, income, and positions held, among others (Kamasak et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019). In the case of curriculum innovation implementation, authorities in charge of implementation or policymakers advocate for take all that it needs to ensure successful implementation of the curriculum, while keeping silent on matters (resources for implementing the innovation) that affect those directly involved. The assumption that implementers will implement as expected, even if the implementation environment is not conducive, negates considerations that should be taken to ensure that the hidden curriculum positively influences curriculum innovation implementation. In reality curriculum innovation implementers put into practice what they acquire from the hidden curriculum like learning to cope with unpleasant curriculum innovation implementation conditions (Ito et al., 2022).

The skills, knowledge and social process associated with the hidden curriculum, may promote or hinder student achievement and belief system. Micro -, meso -, and macro - levels of the hidden curriculum play different, but complimentary functions in curriculum innovation implementation. For instance, teachers and educators / lecturers when in the classroom which is the micro-level of the hidden curriculum, facilitate the teaching and learning process as a function of the available resources for teaching and learning, and conditions of service (like workload, salaries, medical aid). Whilst the teacher or educator / lecturer may be positive about implementing the curriculum, but issues of dress, food, transport to and from work and shelter, may through the hidden curriculum impact

positively or negatively on how the teacher / educator implements curriculum innovation. This view is supported by Maslow (1954)'s hierarchical needs which states food, shelter, and clothing as crucial basic conditions for human survival. At meso (institutional) – level of the hidden curriculum, the same factors shape and impact curriculum innovation implementation positively or negatively depending on the educational context and processes involved. Taking cognisance that the hidden curriculum plays a positive or a negative role in the education system, curriculum developers and policy makers need to put in place mechanisms to mitigate the negative influence of the hidden curriculum on curriculum innovation implementation (Baykut et al., 2022).

According to Snyder (1971) curriculum innovation implementation process is what actually happens at micro (classroom) –, meso (institutional) –, and macro (ministerial) – levels, rather than what policymakers say they want to happen. Philosophically the hidden curriculum is ontologically debated as multiple realities, consistent with the interpretivism paradigm where each individual creates own meaning. There is need that meanings created by individual curriculum innovation implementers are closer or the same with policy – makers' intentions. Therefore authorities should ensure that as hidden curriculum elements micro –, meso –, and macro–environments reflect positive, inclusive intentions about the curriculum innovation implementation (Ressa et al., 2021). Skewedness in distribution of resources may adversely influence commitment to curriculum innovation process as some implementers may feel less important or relevant.

In higher education, deep and surface learning approaches are used. University students in Marton and Säljö, (1976)'s view adopt either a deep approach to learning, in which they learn concepts in detail and understand them, or they use a surface learning approach, in which they memorise facts. However, curriculum and policy documents like syllabuses express the need to use deep learning approaches, yet research Marton and Säljö (1976) shows that student assessment, particularly examinations encourage surface learning approaches. Therefore the message of the hidden curriculum through examinations as assessment tools is that surface learning is an enabler for passing, hence encouraging learners to implement it. Similarly, in curriculum innovation implementation, what is revealed as important by the hidden curriculum is what is implemented. Therefore policymakers should ensure that they create an environment in which the hidden curriculum positively impacts on curriculum innovation process.

Envisaged individual benefits versus benefits the education system/program gets should be a win-win, based on a symbiotic relationship. This suggests that curriculum innovation implementers as individuals win, while the curriculum innovation implementation system also wins, as evidenced by meeting of set targets. If one part (either the individual or education system) wins at the expense of the other in the short, medium or long term then negative factors of the hidden curriculum will manifest or predominate. Curriculum innovation implementation should be executed symbiotically so that the implementation process will be in harmony. In this context the hidden curriculum is most likely to have a positive impact on innovation implementation (Cotton et al., 2013) due to support by both implementers and innovation owners, premised on perceived benefits. By so doing negative effects of the hidden curriculum like pretending to participate and complete withdrawal from the implementation process, will be avoided hence successful curriculum innovation implementation will be achieved (Ressa et al., 2021).

Alignment between the intended / official curriculum innovation implementation and the implemented curriculum innovation encourages manifestation of the positive effects of the hidden curriculum (Basyiruddin et al., 2020; Rabah, 2012). If there is a misalignment between intended / official curriculum innovation implementation and the implemented curriculum innovation, the hidden curriculum will manifest negatively, such that attempts to achieve goals remain a dream. To increase alignment between intended / official curriculum innovation implementation and the implemented curriculum innovation, information on curriculum innovation implementation should be about what the curriculum innovation entails, and why the innovation is important and relevant. This can be achieved through continuous strategic workshops, rather a snapshot / single workshop, making policy documents available to participants and ensuring that participants understand the policy documents. Ultimately, increasing the alignment between the intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum will ensure that the achieved curriculum innovation implementation is aligned with the intended curriculum innovation, enhancing successful curriculum innovation implementation.

Through the lens of the interpretivism paradigm, there are multiple realities that individuals can construct and practise. Similarly learners at any level interpret in various ways knowledge they are presented with in any learning situation, to come up with multiple realities or perceptions. Therefore in the context of curriculum innovation implementation (Raissi Ahvan et al., 2022), factors which give rise to implementers' diverse interpretations, in the context of the hidden curriculum should be taken into account, if successful curriculum innovation implementation is to be achieved. This autonomy an individual has to construct reality needs to be taken into consideration, if curriculum innovation implementation is to succeed.

Policymakers should secure buy-in by the curriculum innovation implementers, using strategies like advocacy for acceptance of the curriculum innovation, provision of enough resources and equitably distributed inputs for the curriculum innovation implementation. It is important to note that the manner in which resources are distributed is a potential source of challenges which may adversely affect curriculum innovation implementation (Li, 2019). Even when the purpose of curriculum innovation implementation is clearly disseminated, the allocation of resources for implementation is a type of the hidden curriculum in which the curriculum implementers experience their position and importance in the process of the implementation process (Garcia, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial to create curriculum innovation implementation environments that promote development of worthwhile ability, attitudes and values, through the hidden curriculum, as opposed to creating curriculum environments that promote negative effects of the hidden curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

By virtue of an innovation being new, all participants in curriculum innovation implementation are learners, who should be exposed to a conducive environment for successful implementation of the curriculum innovation. What curriculum innovation implementers put into practice during implementation is much more of what they get from the hidden curriculum, than what authorities and curriculum policy documents say should happen. It is therefore important for educational policy makers to take note of the influence



of the hidden curriculum on curriculum innovation implementation, and make deliberate contextualised effort to enhance implementation environments which promote achievement of innovation goals.

Take all that it needs approach to curriculum innovation implementation while keeping silent on unpleasant conditions, (workload, salaries, and resources for implementing the innovation) that affect those directly involved, negates necessary considerations that should be taken to ensure that the hidden curriculum positively influences curriculum innovation implementation. This encourages curriculum innovation implementers to become shrewd and use unorthodox strategies to cope with unpleasant conditions. In many cases, the unorthodox strategies give false impressions that everything is going on as planned, implying they are deceptive.

Ontologically the hidden curriculum is debated as multiple realities, consistent with the interpretivism paradigm which gives an individual autonomy to create her/his own meaning. The autonomy an individual has to construct reality needs to be taken into consideration, if curriculum innovation implementation is to succeed. It is therefore crucial to create curriculum innovation implementation environments that promote development of worthwhile skills, values and attitudes, through the hidden curriculum, as opposed to creating curriculum implementation environments that promote the hidden curriculum's negative effects. Lastly, this paper stresses that the hidden curriculum is a reality in educational institutions that should always be considered for successful curriculum innovation implementation. Shying away from this reality usually results in failure of the envisaged curriculum innovation implementation.

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