

Practices of Hidden Curriculum in Secondary Schools of District Darjeeling (West Bengal, India): An Exploratory Factor Analysis

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Abstract

The present study aimed to analyse hidden curriculum practices in secondary schools located in Darjeeling District, West Bengal. A descriptive research method was adopted, involving 400 students (200 male and 200 female) selected from 20 government secondary schools affiliated with the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education. Data were collected using a 42-item Hidden Curriculum Assessment Scale. The reported data were analysed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure, Bartlett’s test of sphericity, principal component analysis with Varimax rotation, and descriptive statistics. The KMO value was 0.874, while Bartlett’s test was statistically significant ($\chi^2(861) = 4685.32$, $p < .001$), indicating the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Five dimensions were identified: Social Values and Ethics, Behaviour and Communication Skills, Gender Roles and Diversity, Learning and Competition Environment, and Autonomy. Together, these factors explained 66.26% of the total variance. Social Values and Ethics recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.51$), followed by Learning and Competition Environment ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.54$). Autonomy received the lowest mean score ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.61$). The findings demonstrate the multidimensional nature of hidden curriculum practices and highlight the importance of examining school culture, social values, communication, inclusion, and student independence alongside the formal curriculum.

Keywords: hidden curriculum, secondary education, school practices, social values, gender roles, student autonomy, Darjeeling District.

1. Introduction

Education is not limited to the transmission of knowledge prescribed in textbooks or syllabi. Schools also contribute to students’ social, emotional, behavioural, and moral development through everyday interactions, institutional routines, classroom relationships, rules, and expectations. These less explicit educational experiences are commonly understood through the concept of the hidden curriculum.

The hidden curriculum refers to the implicit messages students receive through school culture, teacher behaviour, peer relationships, classroom management, institutional discipline, and the distribution of opportunities and responsibilities. Unlike the formal curriculum, which specifies intended learning objectives and subject content, the hidden curriculum operates through the ordinary functioning of the educational institution. Students may learn cooperation, punctuality, respect, competition, conformity, independence, and gender-related expectations without these outcomes being explicitly stated in the syllabus.

The practices of the hidden curriculum may support the formal educational process by encouraging responsibility, ethical conduct, mutual respect, and participation. However, they may also reproduce unequal social expectations when classroom interactions, school rules, or institutional practices favour particular groups or discourage independent expression. Therefore, examining the hidden curriculum is important for understanding the broader educational experiences of students.

Secondary education represents a significant stage in students’ development. During this period, learners increasingly engage with peer groups, develop personal and social identities, respond to academic expectations, and form attitudes towards authority, responsibility, fairness, and independence. School practices during this stage may therefore contribute to the development of values and behavioural patterns beyond academic achievement.

In the context of Darjeeling District, an analysis of hidden curriculum practices can provide a structured understanding of how school experiences are reflected in social values and ethics, behaviour and communication, gender roles and diversity, the learning and competition environment, and student

autonomy. The present study examines these dimensions using the reported data collected from students in selected government secondary schools.

2. Conceptual Background

2.1 Meaning of the Hidden Curriculum

The hidden curriculum encompasses the implicit learning that takes place through institutional culture and everyday educational experiences. Philip W. Jackson's work on classroom life helped establish the importance of understanding the social processes through which students learn expectations associated with school. Subsequent scholarship has examined how school practices can communicate values, social norms, power relationships, and assumptions about appropriate behaviour.

The hidden curriculum is not necessarily planned or deliberately introduced by teachers. It may emerge from classroom routines, reward and punishment systems, teacher–student interactions, peer relationships, school leadership, and the ways in which students are encouraged to participate in decision-making.

2.2 Major Dimensions of Hidden Curriculum Practices

For the present study, hidden curriculum practices are organised into five dimensions identified through the reported factor analysis.

Social Values and Ethics: This dimension concerns the implicit learning of social responsibility, respect, fairness, cooperation, and ethical conduct through everyday school experiences.

Behaviour and Communication Skills: This dimension concerns behavioural expectations and the development of communication through interactions among students, teachers, and other members of the school community.

Gender Roles and Diversity: This dimension concerns the implicit messages communicated through school practices about gender expectations, inclusion, diversity, and the treatment of different groups.

Learning and Competition Environment: This dimension concerns the norms communicated through classroom participation, academic expectations, competition, performance comparisons, and the organisation of learning experiences.

Autonomy: This dimension concerns the opportunities students experience to express opinions, exercise independent judgement, take responsibility, and participate in learning-related decisions.

These five dimensions provide the analytical framework for describing the hidden curriculum practices reported in the selected secondary schools.

3. National and International Studies on Hidden Curriculum

The review of related literature highlights the importance of curriculum practices, hidden curriculum, and null curriculum in shaping students' educational experiences. Alsubaie (2015) examined the positive and negative aspects of the hidden curriculum and emphasised that educators should use it constructively to reinforce the formal curriculum and promote positive beliefs and attitudes. Mohammad and Atallah (2017), in their study of sixth-grade students in the Tafila Directorate of Education, found that the positive effects of the hidden curriculum on ethical and aesthetic values were significantly greater than its negative effects. Similarly, Gardeshi et al. (2018), through interviews with 32 undergraduate medical students in Iran, highlighted the importance of recognising the hidden curriculum and promoting patient-centred education. Other studies have explored curriculum development and the implicit influences of educational practices. Yasmin (2005) identified inconsistencies and ambiguities in curriculum and textbook development in Bangladesh and recommended collaborative efforts to improve curriculum quality. Akhtar and Khalida (2006) examined the development of the Indian national curriculum, particularly in science, social studies, and information technology, and recommended making science and social studies curricula more attractive. Levander and Mikkola (2009) highlighted the usefulness of core curriculum analysis as a tool for educational design, while Vittika et al. (2012) discussed the structure and development of Finland's national core curriculum and the role of teachers in translating curriculum objectives into pedagogical practices. Patankar

and Jadhav (2013) and Bas and Senturk (2019) further emphasised the importance of teacher participation in curriculum development, particularly at the local level.

Research on null curriculum has also contributed to understanding what is omitted or insufficiently addressed in formal educational programmes. Gholami and Rahimi (2016) examined the types of null curriculum and the factors affecting curriculum design. Kazemi et al. (2020) investigated the development and validation of a null curriculum questionnaire focusing on twenty-first-century skills in the Iranian English Language Teaching context. Cahapay (2021), through a systematic review, explained that the null curriculum is a multidimensional phenomenon that can be understood at different hierarchical levels and through different analytical perspectives. Batra (2020) argued for reimagining the Indian curriculum to respond to the social and ecological challenges highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Burrill et al. (2015) also discussed the role of research, textbooks, teacher support, and technology in achieving curriculum goals across different educational contexts.

Overall, the reviewed studies demonstrate that curriculum is influenced not only by formally prescribed content but also by teachers' practices, school culture, educational values, and the inclusion or omission of particular learning experiences. Studies specifically addressing the hidden curriculum emphasise its potential role in shaping ethical values, aesthetic sensibilities, professional attitudes, and student experiences. Research on curriculum development and null curriculum provides a broader perspective on how educational priorities and institutional practices influence learning. However, the studies reviewed here provide limited direct evidence about the dimensions and prevalence of hidden curriculum practices in secondary schools in Darjeeling District, West Bengal. Therefore, the present study seeks to analyse hidden curriculum practices in selected secondary schools in the district, focusing on social values and ethics, behaviour and communication skills, gender roles and diversity, the learning and competition environment, and autonomy.

4. Statement of the Problem

The problem of the present study is stated as follows:

"Practices of Hidden Curriculum in Secondary Schools of district Darjeeling (West Bengal, India): An Exploratory Factor Analysis."

5. Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To analyse the practices of the hidden curriculum in secondary schools located in Darjeeling District.
2. To identify the major dimensions of hidden curriculum practices through factor analysis.
3. To examine the relative levels of the identified dimensions using descriptive statistics.
4. To determine which dimensions obtained comparatively higher and lower mean scores.
5. To suggest educational implications for improving school practices in relation to social values, communication, diversity, learning environments, and student autonomy.

6. Methodology

6.1 Method of the Study

The study employed a descriptive research method to analyse hidden curriculum practices in secondary schools located in Darjeeling District, West Bengal. The descriptive approach was considered suitable for examining the reported characteristics and levels of hidden curriculum practices among students in the selected schools.

The study focused on the dimensions of hidden curriculum practices as reflected in students' assessment responses. The analysis was intended to describe the structure of the assessment scale and the relative levels of the dimensions rather than establish causal relationships.

6.2 Population of the Study

The population consisted of male and female students studying in Class IX in 63 government secondary schools affiliated with the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education and situated in Darjeeling District.

6.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Twenty secondary schools were selected from the population of 63 schools through simple random sampling. These schools represented approximately 31.75% of the identified schools.

From each selected school, 10 male students and 10 female students were selected using stratified random sampling. The total sample comprised 400 students, including 200 male and 200 female students.

The school population records supplied for the study indicated a combined student population of 2,930 across the 20 selected schools, comprising 1,552 male students and 1,378 female students. The sample of 400 students represented approximately 13.65% of this combined school population.

Table 1. Summary of the sample

Sampling characteristic	Number
Government secondary schools in the identified population	63
Schools selected for the study	20
Total student population in the selected schools	2,930
Male students in the reported population	1,552
Female students in the reported population	1,378
Male students selected	200
Female students selected	200
Total sample	400

6.4 Research Tool

The 42-item Hidden Curriculum Assessment Scale was developed through expert consultation, literature review, and content validation. Of the initial 50 items, eight were eliminated based on a content validity index (CVI) below 0.75. The scale used a five-point Likert rating system and demonstrated test-retest reliability of 0.849. Content and face validity were established.

6.5 Statistical Techniques

The data were analysed using the KMO measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity to assess suitability for factor analysis. Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was used to identify and interpret the underlying dimensions. Eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained were examined to determine factor contributions, while means and standard deviations were used to describe the five dimensions. Five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained.

7. Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

7.1 Suitability of the Data for Factor Analysis

The suitability of the data for factor analysis was examined using the KMO measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's test

Statistical measure	Reported result
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure	0.874
Bartlett's test chi-square	4685.32
Degrees of freedom	861
Significance	$p < .001$

The KMO value of 0.874 indicates that the reported pattern of correlations was suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test was statistically significant, $\chi^2(861) = 4685.32$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix.

Taken together, these results support the use of factor analysis to investigate the structure of the Hidden Curriculum Assessment Scale. However, these tests alone do not establish the reliability or complete validity of the instrument.

7.2 Identification of the Major Dimensions

Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation resulted in five retained factors, each with an eigenvalue greater than 1. The factors jointly explained 66.26% of the total variance.

Table 3. Eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained

Factor	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Cumulative variance (%)
I	Social Values and Ethics	9.86	23.47	23.47
II	Behaviour and Communication Skills	6.42	15.29	38.76
III	Gender Roles and Diversity	4.88	11.62	50.38
IV	Learning and Competition Environment	3.71	8.83	59.21
V	Autonomy	2.96	7.05	66.26
Total	Five factors	—	66.26	66.26

The first factor, Social Values and Ethics, had an eigenvalue of 9.86 and explained 23.47% of the total variance. It made the largest individual contribution to the reported factor structure.

The second factor, Behaviour and Communication Skills, explained 15.29% of the variance. The third factor, Gender Roles and Diversity, explained 11.62%. The fourth factor, Learning and Competition Environment, accounted for 8.83%, while the fifth factor, Autonomy, explained 7.05%.

The cumulative variance increased from 23.47% after the first factor to 66.26% after the fifth factor. Thus, the five-factor solution accounted for approximately two-thirds of the total variance in the reported assessment data.

These results suggest that the scale represents hidden curriculum practices through several related but distinguishable dimensions rather than through a single undifferentiated construct.

7.3 Factor Loadings and Item Grouping

The reported rotated factor solution grouped the 42 items into five dimensions. Each dimension contained a defined group of items, and the reported primary loadings ranged from 0.65 to 0.76 across the five factors.

Table 4. Summary of the reported factor structure

Factor	Dimension	Items	Reported loading range
I	Social Values and Ethics	1–8	0.65–0.76
II	Behaviour and Communication Skills	9–15	0.65–0.74
III	Gender Roles and Diversity	16–24	0.67–0.76
IV	Learning and Competition Environment	25–33	0.68–0.76
V	Autonomy	34–42	0.68–0.76

The first factor comprised eight items relating to Social Values and Ethics. The second factor comprised seven items relating to Behaviour and Communication Skills. The third and fourth factors each comprised nine items, while the fifth factor comprised nine items relating to Autonomy.

The reported loading ranges indicate that the items had substantial primary associations with their assigned factors. Nevertheless, a complete assessment of the factor structure would require the full rotated loading matrix, including any cross-loadings, as well as information about communalities and the item-retention criteria.

7.4 Descriptive Analysis of Hidden Curriculum Practices

The mean and standard deviation scores were examined to understand the relative levels of the five dimensions.

Table 5. Mean and standard deviation of the dimensions of hidden curriculum

Dimension	N	Mean	SD	Reported interpretation
Social Values and Ethics	400	4.12	0.51	High
Behaviour and Communication Skills	400	3.98	0.56	Moderate–High
Gender Roles and Diversity	400	3.85	0.59	Moderate
Learning and Competition Environment	400	4.05	0.54	High
Autonomy	400	3.76	0.61	Moderate

The findings show variation in the mean scores across the five dimensions. Social Values and Ethics recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.51$), followed by Learning and Competition Environment ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.54$). Behaviour and Communication Skills obtained a mean of 3.98 ($SD = 0.56$). Gender Roles and Diversity recorded a mean of 3.85 ($SD = 0.59$), while Autonomy received the lowest mean score ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.61$).

The reported descriptive interpretations classified Social Values and Ethics and Learning and Competition Environment as high, Behaviour and Communication Skills as moderate–high, and Gender Roles and Diversity and Autonomy as moderate.

These interpretations should be considered provisional until the response scale and the criteria used to define the descriptive categories are documented.

7.5 Interpretation of Social Values and Ethics

Social Values and Ethics obtained the highest mean score among the five dimensions. This result indicates that, according to the supplied descriptive findings, this dimension received comparatively stronger ratings from the participating students.

School routines, expectations concerning respectful conduct, and everyday interactions may provide opportunities for students to encounter social and ethical norms. The result makes Social Values and Ethics an important dimension for understanding hidden curriculum practices in the selected schools.

However, the mean score alone does not establish which specific practices were most influential. Item-level results would be needed to identify the particular behaviours or school experiences associated with this dimension.

7.6 Interpretation of Learning and Competition Environment

Learning and Competition Environment recorded the second-highest mean score and was classified as high in the supplied results. This finding suggests that the dimension was comparatively prominent in students' reported assessments of school practices.

The learning environment may communicate implicit expectations through classroom participation, academic routines, recognition of achievement, and the ways in which competition is organised. Such practices can shape students' understanding of performance, cooperation, and success.

The available statistics do not, however, distinguish between supportive academic competition and practices that may create excessive pressure. Further analysis of individual items and students' experiences would be required to clarify the meaning of this dimension.

7.7 Interpretation of Behaviour and Communication Skills

Behaviour and Communication Skills obtained a mean score of 3.98 and was classified as moderate–high. This indicates a relatively favourable reported level compared with the dimensions of Gender Roles and Diversity and Autonomy.

Communication patterns and behavioural expectations are expressed through teacher–student interactions, peer relationships, classroom discussions, and school rules. These everyday experiences may convey implicit expectations about how students should communicate, respond to authority, cooperate, and behave in shared settings.

Although the dimension received a comparatively high mean, the supplied data do not establish which communication or behavioural practices were most common. Such conclusions would require item-level analysis or qualitative evidence.

7.8 Interpretation of Gender Roles and Diversity

Gender Roles and Diversity recorded a mean score of 3.85 and was classified as moderate. Its position below Social Values and Ethics, Learning and Competition Environment, and Behaviour and Communication Skills suggests that this dimension received comparatively lower ratings in the supplied data.

The dimension is relevant because hidden curriculum practices may communicate expectations about gender, participation, responsibilities, inclusion, and differences among students. Examining these practices can help schools reflect on whether opportunities and expectations are applied fairly.

The moderate mean should not be interpreted as proof that discrimination or gender inequality occurred in the participating schools. The supplied results do not provide item-level evidence or direct observations sufficient to support such a conclusion. A more detailed investigation would be necessary to identify specific areas requiring improvement.

7.9 Interpretation of Autonomy

Autonomy obtained the lowest mean score among the five dimensions ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.61$) and was classified as moderate. This result identifies autonomy as a comparatively lower-rated dimension in the reported findings.

Autonomy concerns students' opportunities to express opinions, make choices, assume responsibility, and participate in learning-related decisions. The result suggests that this dimension may deserve further attention when reviewing school practices.

Nevertheless, a lower relative mean does not establish that students were denied autonomy. It indicates only that Autonomy received a lower average score than the other dimensions under the reported scoring procedure. Item-level results and further evidence would be needed to identify particular practices that could be strengthened.

7.10 Comparative Interpretation of the Five Dimensions

The five dimensions can be arranged in descending order of their reported mean scores:

1. Social Values and Ethics — 4.12
2. Learning and Competition Environment — 4.05
3. Behaviour and Communication Skills — 3.98
4. Gender Roles and Diversity — 3.85
5. Autonomy — 3.76

The difference between the highest and lowest reported means was 0.36 points. This comparison indicates variation in the relative ratings of the dimensions, with Social Values and Ethics receiving the highest average score and Autonomy the lowest.

The ordering is descriptive. Since no inferential comparison among the five means was supplied, it cannot be concluded that the differences are statistically significant. Moreover, interpretation of the absolute mean levels depends on the response scale and scoring thresholds used in the original instrument.

8. Major Findings of the Study

The major findings emerging from the supplied results are summarised below.

1. **Suitability for factor analysis:** The KMO value was 0.874, and Bartlett's test was statistically significant, $\chi^2(861) = 4685.32$, $p < .001$. These results supported proceeding with factor analysis.
2. **Five-dimensional structure:** The reported analysis identified five dimensions of hidden curriculum practices: Social Values and Ethics, Behaviour and Communication Skills, Gender Roles and Diversity, Learning and Competition Environment, and Autonomy.
3. **Variance explained:** The five factors collectively explained 66.26% of the total variance.
4. **Contribution of the first factor:** Social Values and Ethics explained the largest proportion of variance, at 23.47%.
5. **Reported factor loadings:** The supplied primary factor loadings ranged from 0.65 to 0.76 across the five dimensions.
6. **Highest mean score:** Social Values and Ethics obtained the highest reported mean ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.51$).
7. **Second-highest mean score:** Learning and Competition Environment recorded a mean of 4.05 ($SD = 0.54$).

8. **Intermediate mean score:** Behaviour and Communication Skills recorded a mean of 3.98 (SD = 0.56).
9. **Lower relative mean scores:** Gender Roles and Diversity recorded a mean of 3.85 (SD = 0.59), while Autonomy recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.76, SD = 0.61).
10. **Areas for further examination:** Based on the relative mean scores, Autonomy and Gender Roles and Diversity warrant closer examination. This is a descriptive priority for further investigation, not proof of deficiencies or statistically significant differences.

9. Discussion

The findings present hidden curriculum practices as a multidimensional feature of secondary school life. The reported factor structure distinguishes social values and ethics, behaviour and communication skills, gender roles and diversity, learning and competition environment, and autonomy. This structure is consistent with the general understanding that students encounter implicit educational messages through multiple aspects of school culture rather than through a single process.

Social Values and Ethics had the highest mean score and explained the largest proportion of variance in the factor analysis. This makes it a prominent dimension in the supplied results. The finding suggests that social and ethical aspects of school experience are important components of students' assessments of hidden curriculum practices. However, the variance explained by a factor and its mean score represent different statistical properties: the former concerns the structure of item responses, while the latter represents the average score on a dimension.

Learning and Competition Environment obtained the second-highest mean score. This indicates that the reported learning environment dimension was also prominent in students' assessments. The result underlines the relevance of considering classroom routines, academic expectations, and school practices when examining the broader educational experience.

Behaviour and Communication Skills occupied the third position in the mean-score ordering. The finding suggests that this dimension was rated relatively favourably compared with Gender Roles and Diversity and Autonomy. A detailed understanding of the dimension would require examination of the specific items and the behaviours they represent.

Gender Roles and Diversity received a moderate reported mean. This result makes it appropriate to examine whether school routines and classroom interactions provide equitable opportunities for students. Nevertheless, the descriptive score does not directly measure the prevalence of discriminatory behaviour, nor does it demonstrate a particular pattern of gender inequality.

Autonomy recorded the lowest mean among the five dimensions. This identifies student independence and participation as an area for further investigation. Schools may consider examining opportunities for student voice, responsible decision-making, and participation in classroom activities. Such implications should be understood as possible directions for educational reflection rather than conclusions that the study has directly tested.

Overall, the findings provide a descriptive picture of hidden curriculum practices across five dimensions. They support the importance of considering school culture and implicit learning alongside formal educational objectives. At the same time, the findings should be interpreted within the limits of the available descriptive statistics and factor-analysis results.

10. Conclusion

The present study analysed hidden curriculum practices in selected secondary schools of Darjeeling District, West Bengal, using the reported results of a 42-item Hidden Curriculum Assessment Scale. The factor analysis identified five dimensions: Social Values and Ethics, Behaviour and Communication Skills, Gender Roles and Diversity, Learning and Competition Environment, and Autonomy. The five-factor solution explained 66.26% of the total variance, while the KMO value of 0.874 and the statistically significant Bartlett's test supported the suitability of the reported data for factor analysis.

Among the five dimensions, Social Values and Ethics recorded the highest mean score, followed by Learning and Competition Environment and Behaviour and Communication Skills. Gender Roles and Diversity and

Autonomy received comparatively lower mean scores, with Autonomy ranking lowest. These results provide a descriptive basis for understanding the different dimensions through which hidden curriculum practices are represented in students' assessments.

The study highlights the value of examining school culture and everyday educational experiences alongside the formal curriculum. The findings also suggest that further attention to student autonomy, inclusion, and communication may be useful when reviewing school practices. However, the conclusions remain limited to the supplied descriptive and factor-analysis results. Further reliability testing, item-level analysis, and appropriate inferential research would strengthen the evidence concerning hidden curriculum practices in secondary schools.

11. Educational Implications

The findings highlight the importance of addressing hidden curriculum practices alongside the formal curriculum in secondary schools. Schools should promote social values, ethics, cooperation, fairness, and responsibility through everyday classroom interactions. Teachers should create supportive learning environments that balance academic competition with collaboration and inclusion. Effective communication can be encouraged by providing opportunities for students to express their ideas, listen to others, and participate in discussions. Schools should also ensure fairness in classroom responsibilities and opportunities, irrespective of gender. Since Autonomy recorded the lowest mean score, greater attention may be given to student participation, independent thinking, decision-making, and responsibility. School leaders should regularly review institutional rules, disciplinary practices, and classroom interactions to ensure consistency with educational values.

12. Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to 400 students from 20 selected government secondary schools in Darjeeling District; therefore, the findings may not be generalisable to all schools. The analysis was based on the supplied factor-analysis and descriptive-statistics results, without access to the raw dataset for independent verification. The complete scale items, response options, scoring criteria, reliability coefficients, and additional validity evidence were unavailable. Furthermore, no inferential comparisons were provided to determine whether differences between dimensions or between male and female students were statistically significant. The findings also do not establish causal relationships between hidden curriculum practices and student outcomes.

13. Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies should examine individual scale items, establish the reliability and validity of the assessment tool, and verify the five-factor structure through confirmatory factor analysis. Researchers may compare male and female students and investigate differences across schools using appropriate statistical techniques. Qualitative methods, including interviews, classroom observations, and focus-group discussions, could provide deeper insights into students' experiences. Further research may also explore relationships between hidden curriculum practices and social maturity, altruistic behaviour, and moral judgement using suitable research designs and measurement tools.

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