The functions of hidden curriculum in the development for the student-teachers in Akatsi College of Education, Ghana

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ABSTRACT: This study examined "the functions of the hidden curriculum in the development of student teachers". The purpose of this study was to find out how hidden curricula complement the official curriculum in the development of student teachers at Akatsi College of Education to educate them holistically. A case study research design was used. The teaching staff population was 52 while that of the students was 1,540. A purposive sampling technique was used to select eight (8) tutors and ten (10) student teachers for the study. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used for the study. The findings of the study revealed that the hidden curriculum manifests itself in areas such as the vision and mission of the college, the culture of the college, the behaviour of the teaching staff, teaching strategies, co-curricular activities and school rules, which are embedded in the social relations and practices of the college and help to complement the official curriculum enhance the development of student teachers. Various roles that the hidden curriculum plays in the development of student teachers at Akatsi College of Education were uncovered, namely character training, social development, time awareness and leadership role development. The findings of this study may be useful to curriculum planners, policy makers and implementers, teachers and researchers in the field of education in their efforts to promote hidden curricula in tertiary institutions. Understanding the hidden curriculum helps teachers become aware of the unintended messages and values that may be conveyed in their classrooms. This awareness enables them to make more informed decisions about their teaching methods and classroom management strategies. Teachers can use their knowledge of the hidden curriculum to create a more inclusive and equitable classroom environment. It is therefore recommended that teachers should use hidden curricula as an additional means of teaching students implicitly. Moreover, teachers and administrators should serve as role models for students.

Keywords: Hidden curriculum, holistic development, implicit educational practices, values.

INTRODUCTION

According to Sudhakar (2018) the term "education" means introducing young people to what is treasured. Education is a process that makes experiences that are educationally valuable accessible to all young people. According to Sudhakar's definition, education means transforming learners into a generous community that is sustained by morality or thrives on morality and ignores immoral actions. In this sense, an activity is education if it imparts something of value to those who engage in it. Education must also include knowledge and

understanding and a kind of cognitive perspective that is not inert. Education also excludes some transmission methods because they lack the willingness and voluntariness of the learner.

According to Opare et al. (2017), children learn how to take on social roles in school, such as leadership skills, how to deal with the opposite sex, how to make shared decisions, etc. All these are learned in school activities, but they may not be directly planned by the school. They are therefore referred to as the 'hidden curriculum'. This is in

contrast to the formal curriculum, i.e. the courses and activities in which students participate. Educators believe that teachers must take responsibility for what their children learn in this way, even if the values taught through the hidden curriculum are not directly intended by the teachers. Therefore, the hidden curriculum should be included in the overall curriculum.

A student's development within the formal curriculum should be balanced with the social and cultural aspects of a school, which in this case is the hidden curriculum, to ensure holistic student development (Cook *et al.*, 2022). However, according to Buckley (2021), student development is currently seen as a formalised, standardised intellectual activity. This places too much emphasis on educational content such as the subjects taught in school, to the detriment of other components that are taught unconsciously in school. These unconscious components, referred to in this case as the hidden curriculum, consist of behaviours, attitudes and knowledge that are imparted without conscious intention and they are also represented by the construction of values that are indirectly conveyed through actions and words that are part of daily life in a school (Bordia, 2022)

Statement of the problem

Student teachers need to be trained holistically so that they can successfully play their roles well both in school and in society. Student teachers need to understand the values of society so that they can lead a morally sound life. These values are mostly taught through the hidden curriculum in school.

According to Bordia (2022), the concept of a hidden curriculum refers to the unspoken or implicit values, behaviours, and norms that exist in the educational setting. Morality, participating in the socialisation process and public life are taught through a hidden curriculum. It establishes and preserves social relations. Students acquire expected standards and values from school, much as kids learn excellent manners from family members (Knoblauch, 2021)

However, from the available literature, it appears no research has been conducted with teachers, students and administrators in Akatsi College of Education on the question of whether the hidden curriculum should be given high priority in schools or whether it should be marginalised to allow more time for the formal curriculum (Thompson, 2017) as some scholars continue to argue that schools should focus on the work of learning rather than the inclusion of a hidden curriculum (Semper and Blasco, 2018). Based on this previously unexamined issue, this study seeks to shed light on the social structures of the college that incorporate a hidden curriculum and the role it plays in the comprehensive development of student teachers.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out the social structures and practices that integrate hidden curriculum and promote all-inclusive education of student teachers.

Research questions

The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the social structures and practices of the college that promotes hidden curriculum?
2. What role does the hidden curriculum play in the holistic development of student teachers at Akatsi College of Education?

Significance of the study

This study will be useful by the authorities of the college in sustaining its relevant cultural practices and promoting the multifaceted development of student teachers. It will be beneficial to the student teachers in that they will be well-rounded in their education. Understanding the hidden curriculum helps teachers become aware of the unintended messages and values that may be conveyed in their classrooms. This awareness enables them to make more informed decisions about their teaching methods and classroom management strategies. Teachers can use their knowledge of the hidden curriculum to create a more inclusive and equitable classroom environment. They can work to minimize biases and stereotypes that may be present in the hidden curriculum, ensuring that all students feel valued and respected. Prospect researchers to uncover trends and patterns in student conduct, attitudes, and experiences that can help guide their research. By gaining an understanding of the hidden curriculum, policy suggestions can be made to enhance school climate, equity, and student results. To encourage children to behave well and have great attitudes, educators can purposefully incorporate character education and values into the curriculum. Psychologists can research how the hidden curriculum affects students' social and emotional development, offering light on how educational experiences form people.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature is reviewed for implicit learning theory, the concept of hidden curriculum, the social structure that integrates the hidden curriculum, the role that the hidden curriculum plays in the development of student teachers, practical implications of this hidden curriculum to student teachers and the summary of related literature.

Implicit learning theory

This study draws on the theory of implicit learning. According to Rebuschat (2022), implicit learning is the unconscious acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. According to Plaks (2017), implicit theory is about fundamental beliefs that people use to understand their world and guide their behaviour. The researcher discovered that one type of belief about human nature - the belief that basic human traits are fixed characteristics or that they are flexible qualities that can be developed - has profound effects on how people function, how they relate to others and what they achieve. Research on implicit theory is gaining ground in addressing performance gaps, promoting intergroup relations and conflict resolution, fostering cultures of productivity, and improving health behaviours. This theory is consistent with the present study as hidden curriculum helps learners to learn indirectly through attitudes, values and practices that emerge spontaneously or unconsciously.

Concept of the hidden curriculum in teacher education

Many educators are not even aware that there is a hidden curriculum because many meanings are hidden in other contexts and are often exposed but not noticed because they are constantly present. There is a hidden curriculum that teaches many important things about the world through the mere experience of school life, even though this may not be intended or even recognised by the people who work in schools.

Early on in a child's schooling, there is a concealed curriculum. They develop moral character and moral values. In addition to learning to respect others, control their emotions, restrain themselves, put forth an effort, do their work, keep busy, cooperate, and be loyal to their teachers and classmates, they also learn to recognise right from wrong, be honest, trustworthy, fair, disciplined, dedicated, purposeful, and polite. Thus, it is character education in the classroom (Liu, 2021).

Boer and Daelmans (2020) noted that the hidden curriculum puts pressure on the moral development of students in school. By this, they implied that the aspect of discipline in the classroom and the avoidance of certain amoral acts such as cheating are values that are promoted by the hidden curriculum and therefore policy makers should bear in mind that the formal curriculum cannot solve the problems facing society without the help of the hidden curriculum.

Social structures and practices inherent in the hidden curriculum

According to Kutsyuruba (2020), administrative style of the headmaster, mission and vision of the school, long-term learning, school culture, school rules, teaching strategies, teacher behaviour, extracurricular activities, performance record, school building, decision-making in the school and lack of individual attention are the issues that promote hidden curriculum in schools. Through these issues, many values are inculcated in the learners.

Social hierarchies

Faculty and administrators are frequently at the top of a hierarchical structure that students occupy at colleges. This may strengthen the notion that students should submit to authoritative figures and show obedience (Redhead and Power, 2022). Achieving academic success requires being obedient. While being obedient can undoubtedly make academic success easier, it is not a "must" for academic success. Academic achievement is influenced by a variety of elements, including a strong work ethic, good study habits, efficient time management, and critical thinking abilities. While obedience can aid in a student's ability to obey rules and directions, it is crucial that pupils also grow as thinkers and challenge the status quo. In truth, non-conformists who questioned conventional wisdom have historically included some of the most creative and effective thinkers. As a result, even if obedience can be useful in some circumstances, it is not the only or even the most crucial aspect of succeeding in school.

What transpires in a specific school may depend on the headmaster's management style. Teachers, counsellors, and administrators all agreed that some administrations have an authoritarian attitude and place a strong emphasis on following the rules strictly for some people while disregarding them for others. For instance, although some employees received the chance to enhance their education, others did not. For the same offence, unfortunate pupils are suspended, whereas students from good homes just get a warning. People are sloppy with their work, and many tutors in positions of authority have left their positions. A democratic character is also present in certain administrators. As an illustration, they feel that the new headteacher's efforts to alter the school's overall atmosphere have been successful. Compared to the former totalitarian climate, the current open climate appears to operate significantly more efficiently (Agezo and Baafi, 2017). Students and teachers participate in the execution of decisions under a democratic form of leadership. The school continues to perform well academically because it places great emphasis on effective classroom instruction. The new headteacher uses mild speech while listening to employee recommendations. He supports and encourages his teachers and has managed to improve morale at the school.

According to Johnson (2017), developing a mission, vision and goals for our school is often a lengthy process full of philosophical discussions and questions. How can

school leaders use the mission, vision and goals to prioritise and focus the work of the school? This is exactly what this study wants to find out.

Moreover, educators often overlook the importance of school culture and hidden curriculum when addressing educational issues. According to Rossouw and Frick (2023), teachers and administrators need to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the school environment by exploring the symbolic nature of the hidden or implicit curriculum because the environment is so important to everyone in the school system. The school environment affects everyone in the school. To understand the school better, administrators need to be aware of the strong influence of the institutional culture/climate, but sometimes they are not aware of the influence the culture has on the overall atmosphere of the school.

School culture affects all areas of the school. School culture is discussed in staff meetings, the nature of learning in a classroom, staff professional development and the emphasis on the importance of learning for all pupils. It is an important part of what makes a well-functioning school. A school's culture derives from its vision and established values. Whether the culture is strong or weak depends on the actions, traditions, symbols, ceremonies and rituals that are closely linked to the school's vision. Many educators are unaware of the importance of culture and it is often overlooked. Yet despite its importance, the hidden nature of school organisational culture may be the least discussed element in school development and improvement plans. The academic, social and behavioural expectations set by schools and educators communicate messages to students (Blasco, 2020).

One instructor can assign very challenging projects and be certain that every student would perform well on them, but another teacher might assign relatively simple activities and typically award every student with a "good" grade, regardless of how well done their assignments are. Students may learn more and feel more accomplished in the high-expectations class, while those in the low-expectations class may only put in enough effort to get by and show very little interest in the material (Hung, 2023).

Bell Schedule: Using a bell schedule to control the timing of courses and breaks can help students learn discipline and time management skills, but it can also limit their freedom and emphasise the value of being on time. Students must be regular and punctual for all school assemblies (De-Wet and Jacobs (2021). For example, on Fridays they go to morning worship from 6:30 to 7:00. Classes begin at 7:10. Evening classes also start at 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. This promotes discipline among the learners.

Functions of the hidden curriculum in teacher education

Hidden curriculum is important because it helps students acquire values through school rules and regulations, teachers' behaviour and the school motto. School rules like "Do not quarrel and insult", "Greet teachers and colleagues" and others inculcate values like respect, hard work, discipline, self-control etc. They added that negative social events have been occurring recently due to the crisis of values and cultural decay throughout the world. The so-called phenomenon of globalisation is erasing the boundaries as the prevailing cultures rule anytime and anywhere, the sensitivities of society and the values are no longer functioning and disappearing day by day. The new increasing trends of intergenerational violence include dishonesty, rebellion against parents and teachers, violation of social rules, drug abuse, suicide and other self-harming behaviours. This is an important task and responsibility of schools in dealing with these negative situations, the demand for the hidden curriculum. This is because school is not only a place of education but also a social environment for the students. At this point, the students' social values from the past can be transferred to the present through training and events. Castillo *et al*. (2023) stated that students in school are exposed to many values through both the formal and hidden curriculum, but the hidden curriculum is more efficient in transmitting values.

Ngindana *et al*. (2023) emphasised that the teaching of values in school is something that happens all the time. The teaching of values in school affects the programme by making some subjects less or more important and by influencing the interactions between teachers and students.

Teachers' self-reflection is an important part of the personal dimension. By honestly examining their attitudes and beliefs about themselves and others, teachers begin to discover why they are, and who they are and can confront biases that have influenced their value system (Berg and Conway, 2020). De-Wet and Jacobs (2021) said that teaching techniques used by teachers can trigger misbehaviour and that rude, arrogant, unsympathetic and sarcastic teachers, in particular, are likely to have discipline problems in their classes. However, some tutors also work according to the ethical principles of the profession. They are punctual, regular, dress well, teach well, write well on the board, give assignments, grade them and discuss them with the students. They have a good rapport with teachers and students. In addition, they are fair and strict and act as a substitute for parents. These tutors serve as moral role models for the students to emulate. These include hard work, honesty, fire and determination, kindness, selflessness, etc.

Another reason for the importance of a hidden curriculum is that it helps to foster good human relations through co-curricular activities. When students participate in sports activities, they get to know different friends in a group, which helps them develop new patterns of behaviour. Interacting with a group of friends allows

students to learn social behaviours that are not found in the family. In this way, children learn to comply with the norms of the group and to behave according to their role in the group (Dewantara *et al.*, 2021). Bowen (2021) found that student's participation in social activities makes them feel that they belong to the school and therefore they have a better appreciation of the quality of the school.

Co-curricular activities as a means of promoting the hidden curriculum include various co-curricular activities such as sports and recreational activities, student councils or clubs and the like. For example, the school offers non-denominational worship services for students on Sundays, where aspects of religious ideology and worldview are taught. The high school is aware of the importance of these events and often plans them carefully and thoughtfully. They also go to their denominations on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 18:00 to 19:00. These activities at the college have an important impact on the students' religious development, sociability, teamwork, leadership, communication, honesty, perseverance, etc.

According to Ulferts (2019), the way schools and teachers teach students can convey both intended and unintended messages. For example, students receive good grades or extra points if they hand in their homework on time, listen attentively, participate in class, raise their hands and generally do things they are told to do. Consequently, they learn that compliance is important and that certain behaviours are academically rewarded and can compensate for learning deficits. On the other hand, teaching strategies such as project-based learning or community-based learning, to name just two of many possible options, can convey specific messages, e.g. that skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, as well as qualities such as perseverance, resourcefulness and self-motivation are valued and important (in the case of project-based learning).

Hayashi (2019) explains that cooperative learning, questioning techniques, and role-playing motivate learners, clarify and extend concepts, promote critical thinking, relate cause and effect, and promote application of concepts

Practical implications of the hidden curriculum to student teachers or teacher education

Some practical implications of the hidden curriculum for student teachers and teacher education are mentioned below. In the first place, Siuty (2019) identified implicit norms and values. This is crucial for teacher education programmes to be aware of these implicit messages and work to promote inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive practices. Student teachers frequently absorb the implicit norms and values of the institution where they are trained. This can affect their teaching style, classroom management, and professional behaviour. Cultural

competence was identified. The hidden curriculum can affect a student teacher's understanding of cultural competence.

According to Hunter and Cook (2018), role modelling is a practical implication of the hidden curriculum. Student teachers observe their mentor instructors and faculty members and pick up knowledge from them. Their opinions of what it means to be a good teacher can be influenced by these role models. Mentors in teacher education programmes must reflect the teaching philosophies and values they seek to promote.

Longfellow (2018) in his part mentioned socialization in the teaching profession as one practical implication of the hidden curriculum. Through their experiences in schools and teacher education programmes, student teachers are socialised into the teaching profession. They learn about the demands and obligations of being a teacher, as well as the unwritten laws and standards of the profession.

According to Perera (2023), power dynamics is another practical implication of the hidden curriculum. Oftentimes, secret curricula show how power relations operate in educational organisations. Student teachers can learn about hierarchies and power structures, and navigate them. Their interactions with coworkers, administrators, and students may change as a result of this awareness.

Silveira *et al.* (2019) crowned it by mentioning professional identity. The unspoken curriculum has the power to influence a student teacher's sense of self. It may affect how they view themselves as educators and how devoted they are to the field. Programmes for teacher education ought to promote professionalism and moral behaviour.

Summary of the literature review

The literature highlighted various social structures such as the mission and vision of the school, social hierarchies, rules and regulations and practices that integrate a hidden curriculum in schools that enables values to be taught to learners. Various roles that the hidden curriculum plays in the lives of learners to make them well-rounded have also been identified. The practical implications of the hidden curriculum such as implicit norms and Values, role modelling and socialization in the teaching profession were identified. In conclusion, educational institutions must be aware of the hidden curriculum and work to develop a culture and organisational framework that supports fairness and inclusivity for all students.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

In this study, a case study was used. The strengths of case studies are that many details are collected. Scientific

experiments can also be conducted within the case study framework (Gustafsson, 2017). One of the weaknesses of this research design is that the data collected cannot necessarily be generalised to the wider population. A qualitative-interpretive approach was adopted in this study. Qualitative research involves the collection of extensive narrative data (i.e. non-numerical data) on many variables over a period of time to gain insight into the phenomena of interest.

It has also been criticised on the grounds that there is bias due to the proximity between the researcher and the participants. In addition, the knowledge gained may be difficult to generalise (Guenther and Falk, 2019). Despite these weaknesses, it is believed that this design is the most appropriate because qualitative research can help identify multifaceted issues and potential solutions.

Sampling procedure

Eight (8) tutors were selected from the college for the study. These tutors include six heads of departments, the quality assurance officer and the deputy head of the college. These participants were selected because they are the curriculum implementers of the college. Ten (10) student teachers were also selected purposively. These include the president, vice president, women's officer, secretary and six class prefects. These individuals were selected to obtain comprehensive information. The researcher used purposive sampling to select participants who represent a wide range of perspectives or experiences. The researcher continued to purposefully select participants until data reached saturation, meaning that new participants no longer provided significantly new insights or information related to the research questions. This is in line with Constantinou *et al.* (2017) statement that a participant number of two to ten is sufficient to achieve saturation in a qualitative study. According to Shaheen and Pradhan (2019), purposive sampling is used to select 'information-rich cases' from which much can be learned about the phenomenon under study. Participants were given pseudonyms such as respondent "A", "B", "C", "D", etc so that their identity is protected.

Research instruments

Focused group interviews were used for the students and in-depth interviews (for the tutors) as methods of data collection. These instruments were developed based on the purpose, objectives and research questions of the study. For the focus group interview, participants were selected according to experience or expertise in order to obtain a wide range of ideas on an open topic. The focus group discussion was formal, controlled, and pre-determined in time and place, usually tape-recorded and

transcribed for analysis.

The semi-structured interview was conducted on a one-to-one basis. A semi-structured interview guide was used, recording the features of the hidden curriculum that are noticeable in the life of the college. The main topic of discussion is the role of the hidden curriculum in teaching and learning at Akatsi College of Education.

Procedure for data collection

Each interview segment lasted about forty minutes. Mostly, probing questions were used to get more information about a particular topic, event or person. The interview was recorded using a mobile phone device. Photos of some of the participants' class notes were taken. Permission was obtained from the participants before recording the interviews. The interview data was transcribed and returned to the interviewees for cross-checking (member-check). Participants were given pseudonyms so that their identities were protected. All information collected were kept unanimous, those that may have led to the identification of the participants were deleted.

Data analysis

The data collected was transcribed manually. After manual transcription, the annotated transcripts were read and initial observations were made. Common themes were identified and manual open coding approach was used to code them. The analysis of the data was done manually using the thematic approach. Then, the researcher cut and pasted the codes in batches. This is the point where the researcher took data excerpts out of their original context (the interview or focus group transcript) and merged them with other data examples on the same topic to look for patterns in the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What are the social structures and practices of the college that promotes hidden curriculum?

This question was asked to find out the social characteristics and practices of the college that implicitly promote student teachers' learning. The characteristics of the school that were found out include:

College administration

The instructors who participated in the interview stated that the administration at their school has changed as a result

of the principal who was essentially transferred there to boost morale. Teachers, counsellors, and administrators unanimously agreed that the previous administration placed a strong emphasis on rules that were closely adhered to by some but disregarded by others. For example, some employees were allowed to continue their education while others were denied. Interviewee "A" reported during the interview that;

> *When the administration meets with students to discuss problems with them before a final decision is made, it promotes democratic principles among students. When students visit the administration office, it teaches them procedures on how things should be done and teaches them how to solve their problems* (Transcript of interview 12/3/2023).

The response indicates that the administrative style of the principal plays a very important role in shaping learner behaviour. This correlates with Agezo and Baafi's (2017) findings that when the management style is democratic, both students and teachers cooperate in implementing decisions. The opposite may be true if the leader uses an autocratic leadership style.

The school's mission and vision

The teachers interviewed stated that the school's mission in "Akatsi College of Education exists to train teachers equipped with pre-requisite professional knowledge, skills values and attitudes to engage in professional practice that adequately prepares students for life-long learning". The vision "To be a National and International Model in churning out professionally qualified, effective and committed teachers for basic schools through competency-based training". The motor of the school is "head, heart, and hands", reflecting the three domains of learning (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor). Interviewee "D" reported during the interview that:

> *The mission, vision, and motto of the college act as a vehicle to get both tutors and students to their destination. Therefore, the tutors serve as role models for the students to emulate. Both tutors and students work hard, determined, dedicated, disciplined, and enthusiastic to achieve this mission and vision of the* college (transcript of interview 12/3/2023).

This means that the school's mission, vision, and engine serve as a guide to lead the school's activities to success. This is consistent with Kutsyuruba (2020) finding that the school's mission, vision, and engine can serve as a vehicle that will lead the school to success.

The college culture

Regarding the culture of the college, the interviewed tutors and the conversations with students revealed that the grades for continuous assessment have some problems. They said there is no standard for continuous assessment grades. For example, one teacher may set relatively difficult assignments and expect all students to do well on those assignments, while another teacher may set comparatively easy assignments and usually grade all students "pass" even if the quality of their work is low. In a class where expectations are high, students may learn much more and have a greater sense of accomplishment, while in a class where expectations are low, students may work just enough to get by and have comparatively little interest in the instruction they are given. This means that there should be criteria for awarding points for ongoing student assessment so that students can work with enthusiasm.

Students mentioned time consciousness. Students often have to juggle multiple responsibilities, including schoolwork, co-curricular activities, and personal life. Time consciousness helps them strike a balance and allocate time appropriately to each aspect of their lives. Interviewee "A" reported during the interview that they go to morning worship on Fridays from 6:30 to 7:00. Classes begin at 7:10. Evening study also begins at 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m (Transcript of interview 12/3/2023). This is in line with De-Wet and Jacobs' (2021) finding that using a bell schedule to control the timing of courses and breaks can help students learn discipline and time management skills, but it can also limit their freedom and emphasise the value of being on time. Students must be regular and punctual for all school assemblies.

In order to promote cleanliness among the students. Participant "E" emphasized that:

> *In her college, the houses are cleaned every month. Their dormitories, bathhouses, gutters, etc. are scrubbed, and the grounds are weeded. As a result, their houses are very clean and there is no outbreak of diseases. The college emphasizes the saying that "a sound mind leaves a sound body". This means that students are indirectly taught to live in a clean environment (transcript of interview, 3/17/2023).*

Also, they eat in the same hall, at the same table, and mix in the dormitory. This is a way to bring the ethnic groups together and they see themselves as one people with a common destiny. This confirms the findings of Rossouw and Frick (2023) that the way students come together to do common things promotes national unity, acquisition of values through school rules and regulations.

From the respondents' point of view, hidden curriculum

is important because it helps students acquire values through school rules and regulations, teachers' behaviour, and the school's motto. They argued that school rules such as prohibiting fights and insults, greeting teachers and peers, and other values such as respect, hard work, discipline, self-control, and so on. They added that recently negative social events are occurring due to the crisis of values and cultural decay all over the world. The so-called phenomenon of globalization is erasing the borders, as the prevailing cultures rule anytime and anywhere, the sensitivities of society and values are being lost day by day. The new increasing trends of intergenerational violence include dishonesty, rebellion against parents and teachers, violation of social rules, drug abuse, suicide and other self-injurious behaviours. This is an important task and responsibility of schools in dealing with these negative situations, the demand for the hidden curriculum. School is not only a place of education but also a social environment for students. At this point, the social values of the students from the past can be transferred to the present through training and events.

The student teachers interviewed stated that some instructors forced them to buy unapproved pamphlets at college. This sometimes leads to disciplinary problems in the class. This is consistent with the statement of De-Wet and Jacobs (2021) that teaching methods can trigger misbehaviour and that especially rude, arrogant, unsympathetic and sarcastic teachers are likely to have discipline problems in their classrooms. However, some teachers also operate according to the ethical principles of their profession. They are punctual, regular, dress well, teach well, write well on the board, give assignments, grade them, and discuss them with students. They relate well to teachers and students. In addition, they are fair and strict and act as a parent substitute. These tutors serve as moral models for students to emulate, such as hard work, honesty, fire and firmness, kindness, unselfishness, professionalism, teamwork, excellence etc.

Co-curricular activities

Co-curricular activities are another reason why respondents believe that hidden curriculum is important is that it helps to promote good interpersonal relationships through extracurricular activities. When students participate in sports activities, they learn different things. Having friends in a group helps them develop new behaviours. Interacting with a group of friends provides students with the opportunity to learn social behaviours that do not occur in the family. In this way, children learn to comply with the norms of the group and behave according to their roles in the group (Dewantara *et al.*, 2021). Silveira *et al.* (2019) state that students who participate in social activities feel a sense of belonging to the school and therefore have a better perception of the

quality of the school.

Student teachers mentioned co-curricular activities as a means of promoting the hidden curriculum. Respondent "B" said that:

> *Various co-curricular activities, such as sports and recreational activities, student councils or clubs, and the like help students in acquiring values. For example, the college offers non-denominational worship services for students on Sundays that teach aspects of religious ideology and worldview. The college recognizes the importance of these events and often schedules them carefully and thoughtfully. They also go to their denominations on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 to 7 p.m. (Transcript of interview 6/02/23).*

These activities at school have an important impact on students' religious development, sociability, teamwork, leadership, communication, honesty, perseverance, etc. Teaching strategies are one means by which hidden curriculum helps in promoting values. The way schools and teachers teach students can convey both intended and unintended messages. Participants discussed many things about instructional strategies. For example, students get good grades or extra credit if they turn in homework on time, listen attentively, participate in class, raise their hands, and generally do things they are told to do. Consequently, they learn that it is important to comply and that certain behaviours are academically rewarded and can compensate for learning deficits. Participant "D" explained that:

> *Instructional strategies such as cooperative learning, role-playing, and discussion can convey certain messages, e.g., that skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, as well as traits such as persistence, resourcefulness, and self-motivation, are valued and important (transcript of interview, 12/3/2023).*

This is consistent with Hayashi (2019) explanation that cooperative learning, questioning techniques, and role-playing motivate learners, clarify and extend concepts, promote critical thinking, relate cause and effect, and promote application of concepts.

What role does the hidden curriculum play in the development of student teachers at Akatsi College of Education in Ghana?

This question was asked so that the various roles that hidden curriculum plays in the development of student

teachers in the Akatsi College of Education could be uncovered. These roles were identified and discussed in detail.

Character education or formation

The tutors interviewed felt that the hidden curriculum helps with character education or formation. Character education is about teaching students how to make good choices and behave accordingly. The reason for this is that students tend to emulate the good character or behaviour of teachers and sometimes their own peers who exhibit good behaviour. These include, for example, good behaviour, a sense of responsibility, respect for others, and control of emotions. This is consistent with (Liu, 2021) statement that good character helps people lead a democratic lifestyle that includes equality and respect for others and is able to provide positive values to society. The purpose of character education is to raise individuals who are able to understand moral values and be productive when they are children, and use their abilities to do their best and the right thing and live with an understanding of the meaning of life in their youth (Liu, 2021).

Hidden curriculum consists of real life experiences

According to the interviewees, the hidden curriculum consists of real life experiences. All students should internalize a curriculum (hidden curriculum) that consists of certain social norms in order to exist as effective and productive citizens first in school and then in a larger society. With the help of organizing meetings, monitoring students, and all other cultural idiosyncrasies, the hidden curriculum encompasses everything to train students indirectly. Participant "E" emphasized that:

> When students participate in meetings by chairing, voting, and doing other things, they unconsciously learn leadership roles, which mirror the situation in real life (transcript of interview, 3/17/2023).

Social development of students

It has been found that students' social development is as important as cognitive development, and to demonstrate social development, a secondary curriculum that includes social and cultural features of the school is given more importance than the formal curriculum. According to the teachers who were interviewed, the hidden curriculum promotes students' social development through school activities such as social gatherings, club and union meetings, entertainment, and others. Participant "C" noted that:

> When students participate in some school activities, they learn to enjoy the company of their classmates and become interested in all kinds of people, enjoy interacting with others or groups. It is interesting to note that conversation, free movement, and cooperation in work are tools for social development in school and the community. Thus, students would not become "outsiders" but could fit well into society to fulfil their social obligations (transcript of interview 3/3/2023).

This view of the interviewees is consistent with Knoblauch (2021) findings that three measures can be taken in a school to promote social development: (i) creating and maintaining quality human relations between the school and the community, (ii) designing teaching methods that are satisfactory from a social point of view, and (iii) providing a sufficient number of purely social occasions such as parties, dances, varied entertainment, visiting other schools, organizing debates, and others.

Promotion of national unity

The participants mentioned that the ethnic groups are brought together and see themselves as one people with a common destiny through hidden curriculum. The way teachers teach the different Ghanaian languages in the college can convey both intended and unintended messages. Different people with diverse language backgrounds do group assignments in class. They also eat in the same hall, at the same table, and mingle in the dorms. This confirms the findings of Rossouw and Frick, (2023) that the way students come together to do common things promotes national unity.

Conclusions

It was found that the hidden curriculum manifests itself in many areas of school life. As it plays a very important role in shaping the behaviour of student teachers. Students see their tutors as role models because they see them as models of knowledge in the school. They also set rules and regulations for student safety. The unspoken school curriculum also performs hidden functions by assuming responsibility for instilling in students the virtues necessary to thrive in any successful society. Due to this, the hidden curriculum is relevant in educational settings, and as a result, everyone involved in education should be aware of its relevance in colleges.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that teachers use hidden

curriculum as an additional means of implicit instruction. In addition, teachers and administrators should serve as role models for students. Principals should promote good school culture to promote hidden curriculum.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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