

## Curriculum Development and Hidden Curriculum: Theory and Practice

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### ABSTRACT

Curriculum development is a multifaceted process shaped by theoretical foundations and practical considerations. This article explores theories such as constructivism, cognitive theory, and moral development theory as the basis for designing a curriculum that is responsive and inclusive. It highlights the significance of both formal and hidden curriculum in shaping educational experiences. External factors such as policies, societal values, technology, and local uniqueness are examined to underscore the dynamic influences on curriculum structure. A holistic approach is offered for aligning academic objectives with personal development.

**Keywords:** curriculum development, formal curriculum, hidden curriculum

## 1 Introduction

Curriculum development is more than designing structured academic content. In practice, educators and learners engage in a broader experience that includes values and behaviors learned informally. These informal learnings, referred to as hidden curriculum, play an essential role in shaping student identity and social interaction. Theoretical frameworks raise the question of whether formal curriculum alone is sufficient to capture the educational goals of character formation, ethics, and adaptability in a fast-evolving world.

## 2 Literature Review

The foundation of curriculum theory lies in understanding how individuals learn and how educational experiences can be structured to maximize that learning [1]. Constructivism posits that knowledge is actively constructed by learners, requiring a curriculum that allows exploration and collaboration. Cognitive theory emphasizes internal mental processes, supporting the need for problem-solving activities and critical thinking in the curriculum. Moral development theory, as proposed by Kohlberg, highlights ethical reasoning as an educational goal, influencing how schools embed values in everyday practices [2].

## 3 Research Methods

This study utilizes a qualitative-descriptive approach, analyzing existing literature and policies related to curriculum development. Data were collected through document analysis from government curriculum guidelines, journal articles, and case studies from selected educational institutions [3]. The analysis emphasizes patterns of integration between formal and hidden curricula and their impact on student outcomes. Comparative observations of institutional practices provided contextual insights into how theoretical models are applied in practice [4]. Table 1 summarizes the types of data sources analyzed and their focus areas related to curriculum development.

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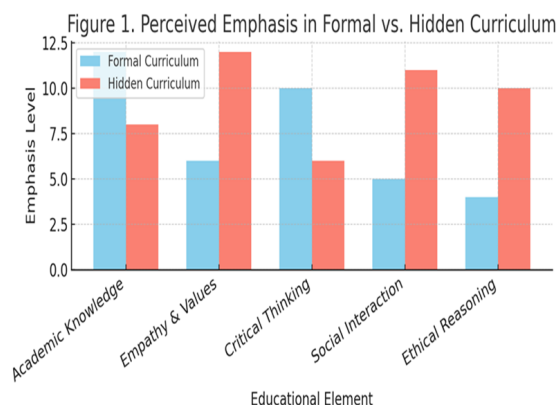
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## 4 Result and Discussion

The findings reveal a significant gap between what is formally documented and what students experience through informal learning. Formal curricula often overlook elements such as empathy, cooperation, or resilience, which are implicitly conveyed through school culture. Educators play a pivotal role in bridging this divide by aligning teaching strategies with desired values. Furthermore, policies that prioritize measurable academic achievements must also accommodate emotional intelligence and ethical development. Technology emerges as a double-edged sword—it facilitates learning but can also obscure personal interaction and cultural context. Schools that intentionally design activities around collaboration, inclusion, and reflective practice demonstrate a more balanced integration of both curriculum types. The analysis of institutional case studies shows varied levels of alignment between formal goals and actual student experiences. This discrepancy is visualized in Figure 1, which maps perceived emphasis on various educational elements in formal versus hidden curricula.

Table 12. The analysis of institutional case studies shows varied levels of alignment

No	Source Type	Description	Focus Area
1	Government Documents	National curriculum guidelines and education law	Formal curriculum framework
2	Journal Articles	Peer-reviewed studies on hidden curriculum	Ethical and behavioral dimensions
3	Institutional Case Studies	School practices from selected regions	Application of formal and hidden curriculum
4	Policy Briefs	Education policy analysis	Integration strategy and outcomes



Gambar 8. Perceived Emphasis in Formal vs. Hidden Curriculum

## 5 Conclusion

Curriculum development must evolve beyond rigid documentation and embrace the holistic nature of educational environments. Acknowledging and harmonizing formal and hidden curricula are key to developing not only competent but also conscientious citizens. By incorporating cultural relevance, ethical dimensions, and adaptive technologies, curriculum designers can create systems that are both rigorous and responsive to global and local needs. A human-centered approach ensures education remains transformative for individuals and communities alike.

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