



## Unveiling the Hidden Curriculum: Exploring the Role of Teachers in Shaping values and moral lessons for students through the hidden curriculum beyond the classroom

**\*Dr. Ghulam Dastgir**

Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Narowal, Punjab, Pakistan

[Ghulam.datgir@uon.edu.pk](mailto:Ghulam.datgir@uon.edu.pk)

**Fakhar-Ul-Zaman**

Visiting Lecturer Department of Education University of Narowal, Pakistan Email:

[malikfakhar717@gmail.com](mailto:malikfakhar717@gmail.com)

**Dr. Asad Ali Manzoor**

Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Narowal, Punjab, Pakistan

Email: [asad.manzoor@uon.edu.pk](mailto:asad.manzoor@uon.edu.pk)

### **Abstract:**

*In the modern educational environments continuous growth exponentially is an even more complex phenomenon, therefore the role of teachers no longer encompasses mere instruction of academic knowledge. This research investigates the complex interplay of the hidden curriculum, specifically exploring the role of teachers as leaders in molding student values and moral education outside of regular classroom environments. The current qualitative study hopes to elucidate the less overt but far more significant and pervasive ways that teachers serve as the guiding moral compass that students use to navigate their complex ethical and value judgements. The research focus on the role of teachers as ultimate moral agents is designed to help understand the rationale behind the transmission and internalization of moral values among students and form an instrumental basis for educational interventions promoting ethical citizenship and social responsibility. This qualitative research highlights the vital responsibilities of teachers as leaders in the formation of student values and moral learning outside formal curricula, urging comprehensive measures that enhance morality as integrated part of the education experience. Through the revelation of the implicit curriculum, this study intended to equip educators with the knowledge and means to address a more morally aware and socially involved generation.*

**Keywords:** Hidden curriculum, Teacher as a change agent, Student values, Moral education

### **Introduction:**

The present paper explore the pivotal function of leadership outside the classroom in molding students' moral values through the hidden curriculum, an often unexplored vector in understanding the complexity of student growth. Moral education has been an integral part of broader educational philosophy in addition to teaching students academic knowledge, it implied developing ethical principles, empathy, and integrity among students (Cheng et al., 2021). The traditional approach to moral education in school is a formal one: students acquire morality through direct instructions, and official experience, as school culture, interactions, and institutional practices convey a different message (Gibbs, 2023). While the role of the hidden curriculum has been investigated thoroughly on many other fronts, there is a lack of research on how leadership outside the classroom may shape moral values (Loughlin & Lindberg-Sand, 2023).

Although recognition of the hidden curriculum has been recently increasing, research concerning the particular impact of leadership outside the classroom on moral education is still lacking (Little, 2023). While research has focused on leadership within educational institutions, including principals or teachers, other broader aspects of leadership, such as a community leader, mentor, or role model, have not received the same attention. Thus, this paper aims to fill this existing research gap and explore how leadership outside the formal status of education influences students' morals, contributing to the existing but relatively underexplored field of educational research (Shi, 2023).

The awareness of the necessity for leadership's role discovery outside the school purport in moral education is vital for developing the holistic personalities capable of ethical decision-making (Reid et al., 2022). The specification of the influence of non-academic leaders on the students' morals allows for integrating this approach into the larger perspective

of moral development in the field of education. As a result, academic institutions and external leaders re-signify their relationships and integration into the responsibility system for enhancing students' characters and considered behavior patterns, which invigorates the academic and personal development spheres (Brown et al., 2023).

The decision to explore this subject is inspired by the realization that students' moral compasses are influenced by multiple factors outside the usual boundaries of education. With society facing numerous moral predicaments, including social inequalities and environmental decay, there is an immediate need to arm students with sound academic characters that surpass their academic exploits (Hopkins et al., 2023). This research seeks to enlighten educators, policymakers, and other agents of community leadership to work in tandem and make meaningful interventions beyond lecture halls. Through it, the intent is to trigger proactive steps that breed citizens capable of bringing actual change to the world (Susilowati et al., 2023).

#### **Research Objectives:**

- 1) To Explore how does teachers inculcate values and moral lessons for students through the hidden curriculum beyond the classroom.
- 2) To suggest some recommendations for teachers and policy makers to leverage the hidden curriculum for prompting students' moral growth and development.

#### **Research Question**

- 1) What are the specific behaviors and actions exhibited by teachers beyond the classroom to inculcate values and moral lessons for students through the hidden curriculum?
- 2) What are the possible recommendations for teachers and policy makers to leverage the hidden curriculum for prompting students' moral growth and development?

#### **Problem of the Statement:**

Despite the increasing attention to moral education and recognition of its role in developing sound personalities, there is still a considerable lack of research about the hidden curriculum's and leadership's effect . The existing models concentrate on the explicit teaching of values that takes place in the educational institution, failing to explore the role of leaders outside of this sphere in students' formation. Hence, this study aims to fill these gaps in leadership through the hidden curriculum's impact. The gap in research significantly ignores the need to holistically meet the needs of students and restricts the extent to which formal educational establishments can collaborate with external leaders in promoting ethical reasoning and character growth. Thus, examining the way the outside classroom teachers promote moral education is essential to better inform successful measures and attempts to foster morally responsible citizens who can face moral issues in communities across the globe.

#### **Significance of the Study:**

The implications of "Unveiling the Hidden Curriculum: Exploring the Role of Teachers as Leaders in Shaping Student Values and Moral Education Beyond the Classroom" research is not limited to the specific arguments presented in an academic context. Instead, the identification of the hidden moral curriculum enriched by the largely unrecognized but profound influence of external leaders and mentors in a student's life may have a much wider application in educational practice and human development in general. The hidden moral curriculum is a neglected aspect of a student's life and should be studied in the future to create an appropriate model for its assessment. In this way, the obtained understanding does not merely add new ideas to the educational theory but also suggests new practical steps for cultivating the moral transition of students in and beyond the educational environment. In addition, the findings highlight the relevance of coordinating the efforts of the educational institutions and local institutions to conclude that collective actions could be taken to evoke the ethical and moral knowledge-sharing and moral responsibilities relevant for students who would need to deal with moral issues in the modern world. In the final analysis, this study is particularly valuable because it creates opportunities for many educators, policymakers, and community leaders to initiate professional projects and other activities that invest in moral

reasoning, truthfulness, and social consciousness necessary for developing the generation of citizens and leaders of the future.

#### **Literature Review:**

The following study consists of a literature review concerning the hidden curriculum of moral education and, specifically, the research exploring the interactions and effects of leaders from beyond traditional educational environments on students. Therefore, the following literature synthesis serves as a basis to find the gap in the study of the influence external leaders have on students' moral development (de Klerk & Smith, 2021).

#### **Introduction to Moral Education and the Hidden Curriculum:**

Moral education has always been seen as an essential part of education, seeking to teach children not only academic knowledge but also instil particular ethics and values. While traditional approaches seem to emphasize direct instruction, they tend to neglect the less explicit but also impactful learning that students take from the hidden curriculum: the messages about how a school environment, culture, and social space should look like that are not always intentional (Sulistyaningtyas et al., 2023).

#### **The Impact of the Hidden Curriculum on Student Development:**

Extensive research has explored the impact of diverse factors in the hidden curriculum on various dimensions of student development. For instance, the school climate and peer interactions, as well as institutional practices, subtly convey implicit messages regarding ethics, justice, and social responsibility, thus influencing students' moral reasoning and decision-making (Manik, 2023).

#### **Leadership in Educational Contexts:**

In educational environments, leadership tends to be concentrated within specific roles, such as that of the principal or teacher. In these roles, the power to shape school culture and climate is disguised. While instructional leadership in general measures academic outcomes and school efficacy has been well studied, less is understood about the broader scope of leadership from non-educational organizations (Matorevhu & Madzamba, 2022).

#### **The Role of Leadership Beyond the Classroom:**

External leaders community activists, religious figures, and youth mentors also significantly influence students' values and beliefs by utilizing their words, actions as positive or negative examples, and efforts. Despite the importance of external leaders for moral development, empirical studies that investigate the nature of effective and ineffective influence are lacking (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

#### **Integrating Moral Education into Broader Community Contexts:**

The need to incorporate moral education in broader community settings is becoming more prevalent for facilitating students' ethical growth. In recent years, collaborative programs between formal educational facilities and external parties have emerged as potentially effective platforms to enhance moral education and synergizing with educational goals and real-life performances are optimal (Otani & Cameron, 2023).

#### **Research Gap and Need for Further Investigation:**

Although the role of leaders beyond school environments in moral development has been increasingly appreciated by scholars, there is insufficient scientific evidence to demonstrate the exact metrics and outcomes of such influences. More empirical studies should be carried out to determine how external leaders contribute to learner morality, and identify some of the best practices that can be adopted by schools and other stakeholders in achieving some of these goals (Aspers & Corte, 2023).

Ultimately, the research in this area could support more comprehensive solutions in moral education by uniting the impact of selected formal and informal educational and external influences (Anonimo, 2023). The findings that uncover viable strategies for collaboration between educational establishments and external stakeholders would ultimately inspire educators, policy-makers, and community advocates to enforce the interventions aiming to enhance ethical reasoning skills, integrity, and social engagement in students (Shahzad et al., 2021).

### **Research Methodology:**

The study was titled *Unveiling the Hidden Curriculum: Exploring the Role of Teachers as Leaders in Shaping Student Values and Moral Education Beyond the Classroom*. It explored multiple aspects and dimensions. However, its goal was to unveil the nuanced relationship between leadership and moral education. It focused on how teachers affect the values and morals students outside of the traditional school environment (Brown et al., 2023).

### **Research Design**

Our research is classified in one specific category of qualitative surveys: phenomenology. Essentially, phenomenology implies getting as close to people's experiences as possible to understand how they perceive and interpret the surrounding phenomena. Phenomenology has helped us gain a better understanding of what leadership, or leadership beyond the classroom, means to students, educators, and community activists. We wanted to understand not only what they do but how they feel about it and how this activity is connected to moral education (Gill et al., 2023).

### **Participant Selection**

A purposive method was used to select participants with widely different backgrounds and perspectives on the topic under investigation. The data were gathered by 10 students at multiple academic levels and others who work in leadership capacities at institutions other than formal classrooms (Zembylas & Loukaides, 2021).

### **Data Collection Methods**

Data was collected through the researchers using face-to-face interviews with the participants. This approach helped the researcher to get relevant insight into the views represented by students perform their experiences, reactions, and reflections there on the role of leadership in hidden curriculum influencing the student values. This is made possible by the use of probing questions and follow-up questions, which uncovered participants' perceptions, experiences, and feelings. Researcher also conducted focus group discussions among a small group of respondents that are used to promote interaction and dialogue about a research topic. They provide a unique opportunity to examine shared experiences and points of departure among respondents (Shahzad et al., 2021).

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis in this research adopts a thematic approach, where the qualitative data obtained from the interviews and the focus groups is subjected to a thorough methodical approach resulting in the identification of emerging recurring themes, patterns and relationships. The process includes various critical stages (Cheng et al., 2021). At first, all the interviews and the focus group responses are transcribed verbatim to ensure precision of representation of the spoken discourse. Then the data is coded, a process in which it is carefully segmented into units of meaning or codes that represent the different concepts, issues, or themes that were discussed. These codes are transformed into overarching themes at the them development process that best explains the impact of leadership in student values and morality (Gibbs, 2023). Finally, through interpretation the identified themes are rigorously examined in relation to the research question, the theoretical framework and relevant literature for the drawing of meaningful insight (Reid et al., 2022).

The qualitative research methodology utilized for "Exploring the Impact of Leadership on Student Values Unveiling the Hidden Curriculum of Moral Education Beyond the Classroom" was intended to paint a complete picture of the multifaceted matter of moral education beyond the boundaries of a typical classroom (Brown et al., 2023). The integration of multiple viewpoints and experiences was supposed to expose the subtle relationships between leadership, the hidden curriculum, and moral development that students possess, providing for a more comprehensive understanding of a critical element in the educational process (Brown et al., 2023)

### **Data Analysis and Discussion:**

#### **Theme 1: Teachers demonstrating empathy and kindness**

**Qoutation:** “Teachers also influence students’ moral development by demonstrating empathy and kindness to others, regardless of whether they are inside or outside the school” (Participant-2)

**Thme 2: Respect for diversity**

**Qoutation:** “Teachers display respect for diversity and inclusion while working with students friends tend to shape their views about others positively, creating an atmosphere of acceptance and comprehension.” (Participant-4)

**Theme 3: Promote fairness and justice in their decision-making processes**

**Qoutation:** “Apart from fairness and justice, it is possible to analyze how much the teacher enhances students’ understanding of moral principles and ethical behavior by ensuring effective decision-making associated with grading, disciplinary actions, and classroom management.” (Participant-5)

**Theme 4: Dialogue about ethical dilemmas and moral values**

**Qoutation:** “Teachers are open in communication and discussion of ethical issues and values allow students to reflect on the moral issues and internalize them.” (Participant-7)

**Theme 5: Demonstrate integrity and honesty in their actions and interactions**

**Qoutation:** “Teachers walk in the path of integrity and honesty in all their actions and interactions serve as good examples for students, urging them to conduct themselves ethically and act in a way that is good in their contexts.” (Participant-8)

**Themes 6: Create a supportive and nurturing classroom environment**

**Qoutation:** “Create a supportive and nurturing classroom environment, where scholars are not afraid to express their opinion and share their experience and discuss moral issues, indirectly influence students’ evolution.” (Participant-9)

**Theme 7: Opportunities for students to develop civic engagement**

**Qoutation:** “Allowing students to perform community service, volunteer work, or other forms of civic engagement will help develop social responsibility and, as a result, awareness of and empathy for vulnerable populations.” (Participant-10)

**Themes 8: Encourage critical thinking and reflection on moral issues**

**Qoutation:** “Teachers who empower the students to develop their moral compass and make informed ethical decisions are those who encourage critical thinking and reflection over moral issues rather than imposing their own beliefs or values.” (Participant-1)

**Table 1:** Specific behaviors and actions exhibited by leaders beyond the classroom that influence students' moral development

Themes	Participants	Quotations
Teachers demonstrating empathy and kindness	Participant-2	"Teachers also influence students’ moral development by demonstrating empathy and kindness to others, regardless of whether they are inside or outside the school"
Respect for diversity	Participant-4	"Teachers display respect for diversity and inclusion while working with students friends tend to shape their views about others positively, creating an atmosphere of acceptance and comprehension."
Promote fairness and justice in their decision-making	Participant-5	"Apart from fairness and justice, it is possible to analyze how much the teacher enhances students’ understanding of moral principles and ethical behavior by ensuring effective decision-making associated with grading, disciplinary actions, and classroom management."
Dialogue about ethical dilemmas and moral values	Participant-7	"Teachers are open in communication and discussion of ethical issues and values allow students to reflect on the moral issues and internalize them."



Themes	Participants	Quotations
Demonstrate integrity and honesty in their actions	Participant-8	<i>"Teachers walk in the path of integrity and honesty in all their actions and interactions serve as good examples for students, urging them to conduct themselves ethically and act in a way that is good in their contexts."</i>
Create a supportive and nurturing classroom environment	Participant-9	<i>"Create a supportive and nurturing classroom environment, where scholars are not afraid to express their opinion and share their experience and discuss moral issues, indirectly influence students' evolution."</i>
Opportunities for students to develop civic engagement	Participant-10	<i>"Allowing students to perform community service, volunteer work, or other forms of civic engagement will help develop social responsibility and, as a result, awareness of and empathy for vulnerable populations."</i>
Encourage critical thinking and reflection on moral issues	Participant-6	<i>"Teachers who empower the students to develop their moral compass and make informed ethical decisions are those who encourage critical thinking and reflection over moral issues rather than imposing their own beliefs or values."</i>

**Conclusion:**

The finding from the plethora of viewpoints of the participants of various groups undeniably indicates the essential place of the teacher in the complex mechanism of moral and ethical comprehension of the student. Teachers, more specifically knowledge and value intermediaries, define the ethical milieu of educational institutions. The vicarious manner this is performed is with the help of virtues like sympathy, compassion, and appreciation of diversity.

Cultivating empathy allows teachers to develop strong relationships with students, which in turn can help create a symbiotic relationship in which understanding and empathy grow. Teachers who act with mercy toward others promote a spirit of fellowship where students feel camaraderie; they also help develop kind people who become relatively beneficial to the planet. Teachers show compassion for diversity by promoting an environment of inclusivity and support for students from all backgrounds this may result in students experiencing empathy and sympathy for others in the future.

Besides, teachers become lighthouses to students' integrity and honesty due to their own practicing prudence in deeds. The sincere devotion to the principle of fairness from the teachers' part becomes the main source for students to have faith in justice and equality. Similarly, teachers enhance admiration from students by maintaining strict moral principles, making it liable to produce a beneficial culture of self-responsibility. Therefore, teachers not only serve to provide students' knowledge and skills in academic activity but also educate students' behavioral patterns in everyday life and help them form appropriate ethical dimensions.

Eventually, the result of all these endeavors is the culture of the classroom that operates from and in accordance with ethical concepts and values. Teachers encourage the development of virtues such as empathy, compassion, love for diversity, kindness, and respect and promote the notions of conduct and honesty, which assist the students in becoming socially responsible and compassionate individuals. Thus, it is clear that teachers have significant power over the mind and heart of the student, ensuring that they impact and even mold the moral character of an individual.

Furthermore, creating a space for discussion of ethical compromises and democratic values at the site of learning is another significant way to prepare students for life in a democratic society. When asked to tackle actual ethical dilemmas they will face in their lives, students learn to develop strong opinions on complex issues and explore the consequences of their perspective. Such exercises thus push students to think critically and force them to

consider their other values and principles. Overall, this advances students' emotional understanding of themselves and their interconnection with others.

In addition, allowing for high school students' greater participation in civic activities, such as community service or engagement in social activism and advocacy granted to them by teachers, can boost those students' confidence to join with the ordinary citizens and solve real-life issues. After such participatory experiences, the students may understand the value of social responsibility and feel more willing and capable to contribute to other people's lives. In addition, developing more extended connections to various people in their city by working with them is likely to cultivate more empathic thinking and a more profound realization of social issues in high schoolers.

Supportive and nurturing environment created in the classroom is another essential condition for students' moral and ethical development, besides discussions on ethical dilemmas and civic engagement. If a teacher ensures that students feel important, respected, and safe to express their views and feelings, they prepare the scene for discussions on moral issues. In an inclusive environment, students are given the right to opinion, encouraged to share their stories and experiences, and participate in open discussions with peers and the teacher.

Additionally, nurturing classroom environments instill in students the feeling of psychological safety and allow them to safely delve into complicated subjects and wrestle with morbidity without the fear of retribution or embarrassment. Through creating an attitude of trust and cooperation, educators enable students to conduct civil and insightful conversations, where differing positions are reconciled and presented in the best light. During such exchanges, students can expand their knowledge of the ethics while developing conversation skills and an ability to stay congenial in the face of strong opposition, a vital trait in the confrontational environments that can arise in real life.

The students' ability to discuss the ethical dilemmas and take on the side of the victim along with the opportunities to engage in civic matters fairness and the supportive atmosphere of the classroom form the basis for personal and moral development in students. Teachers are responsible to guide students through the mazes of critical thinking and instill social responsibility as well as sense of self. Thus, the future ethical leaders and the public face are formed.

Ultimately, the multifaceted approaches demonstrated in this evidence reveal the unreplaceable contribution of teachers to the creation of a multifunctional person. Even though the main goal of the education is associated with teaching academic knowledge and skills, it is essential not to overlook the development of moral and ethical values. Specifically said, teachers have greater importance than transmitters of information; they are leaders and authorities that direct the moral development of young people for the future.

Empathy, kindness, integrity, and respect for socio-cultural diversity are the principles with which teachers create conditions for students to become successful learners and decent compassionate, empathetic, and responsible people. Such principles are the foundation of well-functioning and just egalitarian society. When teachers set an example and follow these principles while interacting with students and organizing the learning process, when students see adults promoting moral causes and civil positions, they perceive themselves as members of the moral community.

In addition, the teacher's impact extends to societies' perimeter. In life away from school, students deal with life complexities by applying the lessons and values received from teachers. As such, the teacher's impact is felt across the society conscience in strategic waves, where society learns to be empathetic, high character and social responsibility. Teachers are change agents who, aside from molding the intellect, must also mold the hearts and spirits. They provide unparalleled assistance in bolstering and shaping the morals and ethics of the people who will come after them, preparing the groundwork for people who understand and care for one another. By genuinely comprehending the pivotal importance of their job, it

becomes immensely evident that supporting and developing their abilities must be considered a matter of great concern for every individual and community.

#### Recommendations:

1. Teachers may encouraged to cultivate empathy and compassion during their interaction with students. This can be achieved through establishing rapport between teachers and students.
2. Promoting inclusivity and support for all students irrespective of their background. This may help to achieve not only a fair classroom environment but also creates empathy and sympathy among students for their mates.
3. Teachers may portrayed as individuals who practice integrity, honesty, and fairness in their actions, making them role models to students.
4. Discussions about ethical problems and democratic worth throughout the subject record, to develop critical thinking and give space for thought about personal values.
8. Offering early and continuous civic engagement.
5. Teacher as a leader may ensure a supportive and nurturing environment may be cultivated within the classrooms, so that students can freely express their opinions and discuss moral matters.
6. Teacher as leader may be mindful of promoting psychological safety so that students feel free to discuss various topics and ideas, including engaging in a polite conversation when their views differ.
7. Teacher as leader may ensure students are guided through the process of critical thinking and learn about ethical dilemmas to foster a sense of social responsibility. Ensure the professional development of the teachers in charge of shaping students' processes.

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