

# Hidden Curriculum and the Formation of Students Social Behavior in Community Learning Center (CLC) in Sabah Malaysia

Kiki Reski<sup>1</sup>, Eva Banowati<sup>2</sup>, Fadly Husain<sup>3</sup>, Hamdan Tri Atmaja<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,4</sup>Social Science Education, <sup>2</sup>Geography Education, <sup>3</sup>Sociology and Anthropologi Education,  
<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,  
<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Semarang State University, Semarang, Indonesia.

Corresponding Author: Kiki Reski

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20251296>

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of the hidden curriculum in shaping students' social behavior at Community Learning Center (CLC) in Sabah, Malaysia, with a particular focus on children of Indonesian migrant workers. The hidden curriculum refers to a set of values, norms, attitudes, and behaviors that are not explicitly taught but are absorbed by students through social interactions, school culture, and daily learning practices. Using a qualitative approach with data collection techniques including in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, this study examines how teachers interpret and implement the hidden curriculum to instill social values such as discipline, cooperation, social initiative, tolerance, and nationalism. The analysis is limited to a structural-functional perspective to explain how the hidden curriculum functions to maintain social order, integration, and stability of interactions among students. The findings reveal two main points. First, teachers understand the hidden curriculum as a process of shaping students' social behavior through social interactions, habituation, teacher role modeling, and school culture. Values such as tolerance, cooperation, responsibility, discipline, and nationalism

are not only taught formally but also internalized through concrete examples and students' everyday experiences. Second, the implementation of the hidden curriculum at CLC is carried out through various routine activities such as bringing lunch from home, classroom cleaning duties, peer-group learning, reciting prayers, and outing class activities. This study contributes to the discourse on nonformal education, particularly in the context of CLC, and highlights the potential of the hidden curriculum as an effective instrument for fostering positive social behavior among students who are children of Indonesian migrant workers growing up in oil palm plantation communities.

**Keywords:** *hidden curriculum, students' social behavior, community learning center, Indonesian migrant children*

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a planned and structured process aimed at developing human beings holistically, encompassing the dimensions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The achievement of these goals is carried out through the implementation of a curriculum. A curriculum is not merely a collection of learning materials accompanied by various teaching methods and assessment

techniques; it also reflects the ideology, philosophy, and direction of human development envisioned by a nation. Therefore, the curriculum plays a crucial role as a systematic guide for educational institutions in achieving educational objectives.

Curriculum is an educational program containing various learning materials and learning experiences that are programmed, planned, and systematically designed based on prevailing norms, and used as a guideline in the learning process for educators and learners to achieve educational goals. However, in practice, education does not always proceed exactly as designed. There are other dimensions that emerge beyond the formal plan in the form of values, norms, and habits that develop through social interactions within the school environment. This dimension is known as the hidden curriculum, which, although not explicitly stated in curriculum documents, is believed to have a positive influence on students' behavior and character formation.

The hidden curriculum consists of a set of values, norms, attitudes, and behaviors that are not taught explicitly but are absorbed by students through social interactions, school culture, and the dynamics of the learning environment. It plays a significant role in shaping students' character and social identity, as it reflects the values that live and develop within educational contexts. Umagap et al. (2022) explain that the hidden curriculum is also reflected in students' attitudes and their compliance with school regulations, including rules related to discipline, neatness in dress, appearance, and behavior during learning activities. Basyiruddin et al. (2020) state that the hidden curriculum supports the formal curriculum, providing a deeper understanding of personal experiences, norms, values, and beliefs that are not fully explained in the instruction delivered by teachers.

One educational context that offers an interesting opportunity for the application of the hidden curriculum is the Community

Learning Center (CLC) in Sabah, Malaysia. Its existence represents the only educational opportunity for children of Indonesian migrant workers who do not have access to formal schooling due to legal issues, citizenship status, or economic limitations. As a community-based institution, the CLC represents a formal educational space characterized by flexibility, participation, and greater alignment with the needs and cultural context of the local community. The CLC functions as a remote class of the Indonesian School of Kota Kinabalu (SIKK) and facilitates education at the elementary school (SD) and junior high school (SMP), as well as the Community Learning Activity Center (PKBM), which operates under the supervision of the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Kota Kinabalu. In general, CLC in Sabah can be categorized into two types: Plantation CLC, which are located in oil palm plantation areas and are generally established through cooperation between plantation companies and the Indonesian government; and Non-Plantation CLC, which are located outside plantation areas, such as in shop houses, church buildings, or residential areas.

The approach adopted in CLC tends to be contextual and adaptive to the social dynamics of the community, allowing for more personal and relevant learning experiences. These learning centers have significant potential as spaces where social values emerge and develop through educational practices that are not formally written but have a meaningful impact on students' behavior. Wahyudin et al. (2020) comprehensively explain the vision and mission, of Community Learning Center (CLC). The general vision of a CLC is the realization of a local community that is independent, more intelligent, more skilled, more productive, more prosperous, able to live together harmoniously, and continuously develop themselves as whole human beings created by God. The mission of the CLC is directed toward dynamically identifying the learning needs of local communities while mobilizing various

available resources and potentials to facilitate the implementation of quality learning and community empowerment processes, particularly for marginalized local communities.

Students in CLC face various challenges, including: (1) limited and non-formal access to education, as many children of migrant workers do not have access to formal schools due to unclear citizenship status or incomplete documentation; (2) social behaviors that still need to be shaped, as students coming from families under economic and social pressure may display behaviors requiring guidance, such as limited positive interaction skills, low empathy, or difficulties in group cooperation; (3) uneven student engagement, where participation in learning activities varies depending on learning motivation, family pressures, or obligations to help parents work, resulting in inconsistent active involvement; (4) unstable learning environments, as some CLC face inadequate facilities, threats of relocation, or limited human and financial resources, which affect the comfort and continuity of students learning; and (5) vulnerable and pressured social identities, where many students feel socially displaced because they are not recognized as Malaysian citizens and may also feel disconnected from their parents homeland. This condition often leads to identity confusion and low self-confidence. This causes them to tend to experience identity confusion and a lack of self-confidence, as migrant children develop a dual social identity, balancing between their original culture and the local culture. Hidden curriculum elements such as everyday language use, ways of showing respect to parents or teachers, and values of hard work become important tools in bridging these two identities.

Under these conditions, the hidden curriculum can serve as an effective means of shaping students' social behavior, including empathy, tolerance, cooperation, discipline, nationalism, and social initiative.

Informal interactions among students, teachers, and the surrounding community provide significant opportunities for the development of more inclusive social behaviors and identities. This study focuses on how teachers interpret the hidden curriculum and how its implementation contributes to shaping students' social behavior. The hidden curriculum is positioned as the main variable, directly related to the context of CLC in Malaysia as spaces of cultural negotiation for Indonesian migrant students. This research serves as an important foundation for understanding the social dynamics present in students' lives.

Academic attention to the role of the hidden curriculum in shaping students' social behavior in CLC remains relatively limited. Most studies focus on national curricula or technical aspects of learning within formal institutions. However, in educational contexts such as CLC, the hidden curriculum can function as an effective instrument for instilling values such as solidarity, tolerance, independence, social responsibility, social initiative, and nationalism.

Based on a review of relevant studies, evidence suggests a relationship between the implementation of the hidden curriculum and the formation of students' social behavior. First, a study by Susanti Umagap, Lisy Salamor, and Titus Gaité entitled "*Hidden Curriculum as a Form of Character Education (A Study at SMK Al-Wathan Ambon)*" found that the hidden curriculum emphasizes the development of attitudes, character, competencies, and skills beneficial to students and complements formal education. Second, research by Edy Purwanto entitled "*Hidden Curriculum*" examined two aspects influencing the implementation of the hidden curriculum: relatively stable aspects (ideology, beliefs, and societal cultural values) and changeable aspects (organization, social systems, and culture). Third, a study by Zamroni entitled "*Hidden Curriculum and Inclusive Education in Non-Formal Schools: A Study in the Indonesia-Malaysia Border Area*"

analyzed how the hidden curriculum fosters social solidarity within non-formal educational communities. Fourth, the study by Aisyah titled *"The Role of Hidden Curriculum in Shaping students Character in Elementary Schools"* indicates that the hidden curriculum makes a significant contribution to character development, particularly through interactions with teachers, reinforcement of school culture, and unwritten rules.

Based on these references, it is evident that no study has specifically examined the implementation of the hidden curriculum in shaping students' social behavior within the context of community learning center (CLC) for children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia. This context is unique for two reasons. First, it involves complex social and cultural dynamics, where students grow up in multicultural environments and face identity challenges as migrant children. Second, administratively, CLC are registered as formal schools, yet in practice they can be categorized as non-formal educational institutions.

## **MATERIALS & METHODS**

The study was conducted in Sabah, Malaysia, specifically at CLC Genting Suan Lamba, located in Genting Suan Lamba Estate, Genting Plantation, Jalan Sukau, Kota Kinabatangan. CLC Genting Suan Lamba is a Community Learning Center at the junior secondary school level operating in the Sabah region. This site was selected as a representation of CLC that serve as schools for children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia, which are administratively classified as formal institutions but, in actual practice, operate in ways similar to non-formal and inclusive schools. The location was purposively chosen due to its distinctive characteristics and the researcher's access, which enabled in-depth observation and data collection.

The selection of this research site was based on four key considerations. First, its distinctive socio-cultural context, where

students live in a transnational situation: they carry Indonesian identities while growing up in the Malaysian environment. Second, its non-formal educational conditions, which allow for numerous informal and unstructured interactions that become fertile ground for the development of the hidden curriculum. Third, the close relationships between students and teachers, which enable social values to be implicitly instilled through daily activities. Fourth, the diverse backgrounds of students originating from various provinces in Indonesia, making the internalization of social values and norms a highly dynamic process.

This study employed a qualitative approach aimed at describing and understanding the role of the hidden curriculum in shaping students' social behavior. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploring hidden meanings, implicit values, and social processes that occur in students' everyday interactions within a non-formal school environment. The use of a qualitative approach aligns with Sugiyono (2024), who states that qualitative methods are referred to as naturalistic research methods because the research is conducted in natural settings. Data collection was carried out through three techniques to obtain holistic and in-depth data: observation to examine phenomena and events occurring in the learning center; in-depth interviews with teachers and students; and documentation analysis of relevant materials such as curriculum documents, activity reports, photographs of activities, weekly schedules, internal regulations, and teachers daily journals.

This study aimed to explore and interpret the meanings underlying the observed phenomena, particularly how the hidden curriculum influences the social behavior of CLC students. To ensure data credibility, source triangulation was employed by integrating data obtained from multiple sources, namely teachers and students. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis, which involved data condensation, data display,

and conclusion drawing. Data condensation was conducted by filtering and selecting relevant information from interviews, observations, and documents. In the data display stage, the data were organized into descriptive narratives. The final stage, conclusion drawing, involved interpreting the data to identify patterns, deeper meanings, and relationships between the hidden curriculum implemented in the school and students' social behavior. The findings were repeatedly verified to ensure accuracy and avoid misinterpretation.

## **RESULT & DISCUSSION**

Based on the research findings, it was found that the hidden curriculum at CLC Genting Suan Lamba is understood by teachers as a curriculum that is not formally written, yet actively lives and operates in the daily life of the school. The hidden curriculum is not positioned as an administrative tool, but rather as a process of shaping student values, attitudes, and habits that takes place through social interaction, habituation, and school culture. These values develop indirectly through teacher role modeling, communication patterns, discipline enforcement, and the implementation of routine activities at the CLC. Sidabutar and Munnalang (2022) explain that if the implementation of the written curriculum (the actual curriculum) encounters obstacles, teachers need to equip themselves and apply the hidden curriculum, which can help them in fostering and developing students' interests and talents. This is because the hidden curriculum encompasses all forms of education, including social activities and traditional recreation, which can unintentionally provide themes when connected to learning, rather than formal schooling, according to Mustaghfiroh (2014).

The findings indicate that the hidden curriculum plays an important role in students character education, particularly in shaping social behaviors such as discipline, responsibility, social awareness, tolerance, cooperation, and adaptability. This process

occurs contextually, in accordance with the unique social and cultural conditions of CLC Genting Suan Lamba, which is located in Malaysia and serves children of Indonesian migrant workers. In this context, students not only learn to comply with school rules but also learn to regulate emotions, understand differences, and adjust their behavior in various social situations.

Adaptability emerged as one of the key points highlighted in the research findings. Students who initially experienced difficulties in following school rules, dress habits, time discipline, and social manners gradually became able to accept and practice them with self-awareness. This indicates that the hidden curriculum functions as a continuous social learning process, in which behavioral change does not occur instantly but develops through direct experience and habituation.

The study also found that the diversity of student's cultural backgrounds from South Sulawesi, West Sulawesi, West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, Java, to Papua creates a strong space for social learning. Within this multicultural environment, the hidden curriculum helps students develop tolerance, respect differing opinions, and understand norms and authority applicable in both Indonesian and Malaysian cultural contexts. Thus, the learning center functions as a safe social space for students to learn to live together amid diversity.

Concrete forms of hidden curriculum implementation are evident through various school habituation practices, such as bringing packed meals, cleaning duty schedules, peer learning groups based on plantation communities, and outing class activities. The practice of bringing packed meals fosters personal responsibility, modest living, health awareness, and sharing attitudes. Cleaning duty activities cultivate awareness that maintaining the environment is a shared responsibility, as reflected in students behavior of picking up litter without being instructed. This

indicates that environmental care values have been internalized by students.

Peer learning groups based on plantation communities represent another important finding. These activities have been shown to create a more inclusive and supportive learning atmosphere, especially for students who were previously quiet or lacked self-confidence. Social closeness and shared backgrounds make students more open, confident in expressing opinions, and capable of building better communication. Behavioral changes within these groups indicate that the hidden curriculum contributes significantly to students social and emotional development without being explicitly formulated in formal learning objectives.

Inter-CLC activities such as EKSPRESI, APKRES, and JAIM, which are conducted annually, serve as important platforms for instilling values of nationalism, courage, sportsmanship, and a healthy competitive spirit. Through these activities, students learn to recognize their potential, gain the courage to perform, and understand that achievement and love for Indonesia can continue to be nurtured even while living abroad. In this context, nationalism is not taught merely in symbolic terms, but through real experiences that allow students to feel recognized as members of the nation. Understanding the history and culture of both Indonesia and Malaysia also constitutes an important part of the hidden curriculum. By recognizing the intersections and differences between the two cultures, students learn that diversity is not a source of conflict but a form of social richness. This process encourages students to be open-minded, nonjudgmental, and capable of building healthy social relationships both within the school environment and in the wider community. These values are formed through experience, discussion, and teacher role modeling rather than through formal instruction alone.

Overall, the findings indicate that the hidden curriculum at CLC Genting Suan Lamba functions as a highly important complement

to the formal curriculum. Through habituation, social interaction, and school culture, the hidden curriculum is able to shape students' character, social readiness, independence, and national identity. The values acquired do not stop at the school environment but are also applied in family and community life, positioning students as potential agents of social change within their respective communities.

### **Teachers Interpretation of the Hidden Curriculum**

Based on teachers understanding, the hidden curriculum is perceived as an invisible curriculum that is not formally written in the prevailing national curriculum documents. Instead, it is implemented in the daily life of the school. Teachers interpret the hidden curriculum as values, attitudes, and habits that are formed through interaction processes, habituation, and the application of school rules and culture. These values are instilled indirectly through teacher role modeling, the way teachers communicate with students and with fellow teachers, the enforcement of discipline, and the implementation of routine activities at CLC Genting Suan Lamba. This finding aligns with Maryani and Sulisworo (2015), who explain that the hidden curriculum is reflected in teachers' behaviors, attitudes, speech, and treatment of students that convey certain moral messages. These findings are in line with modern character education theory, which emphasizes the importance of teachers as role models, facilitators, and motivators in character development (Hakim et al., 2023; Jamaludin et al., 2022). Such value formation occurs through role modeling, the selection of responses when dealing with student conflicts, and the way teachers organize classroom routines. This highlights the importance of teachers not only as instructors but also as social agents and value models.

Teachers also interpret the hidden curriculum as a continuous and contextual process of character formation, aligned with

the social and cultural conditions of the CLC Genting Suan Lamba environment. Values such as tolerance, cooperation, and adaptability are not developed solely through written rules, but through real experiences encountered by students as they interact across diverse cultural backgrounds, engage in shared habits formed through togetherness, and actively participate in various CLC and community activities. In this sense, the CLC demonstrates its role as a social space that provides students with opportunities to learn how to face differences and resolve problems.

Salamor and Ritiauw (2021) explain that within the hidden curriculum, teachers act as key determinants of student success, depending on how they play their role and utilize this curriculum to develop student's character. So that the hidden curriculum can enhance the quality of education. The hidden curriculum constitutes an essential component of character education, particularly in shaping social behaviors such as discipline, responsibility, social awareness, and students' ability to adapt to their environment. Its role in character education operates through real-life and contextual experiences encountered by students in their everyday school life. Without being explicitly articulated in written form, social behaviors are instilled through habituation, school culture, and interactions among teachers, between teachers and students, and among students themselves.

In addition to shaping attitudes and behavior, teachers view the hidden curriculum as an important means of developing students' adaptive skills. Through the implementation of dress codes, time discipline, group work, and various social activities, students learn to adjust to their environment and to the demands of being both students and members of society, particularly in terms of following prevailing social rules. This adaptive process is evident when students who initially struggle to follow certain rules or habits gradually come to accept, understand, and practice

them with self-awareness, without external intervention.

The unique condition of students as children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah contributes to the development of social skills that differ from those of students in Indonesia. Malaysian culture has become embedded in their daily lives, as many of them were born, raised, and grew up in this country. Students grow within a multicultural environment, with Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah predominantly originating from South Sulawesi and West Sulawesi, followed by East Nusa Tenggara, West Nusa Tenggara, Java, and Papua. This condition provides a context in which students grow amid differences, yet are united by shared circumstances and adherence to the rules of the host country. Teachers therefore perceive that through the hidden curriculum, students not only learn to follow rules but also learn to manage emotions, respect differences, and adjust their behavior in various social situations. As a complementary element, the hidden curriculum helps students build social readiness, independence, and resilience across different environments, enabling them to adapt effectively both in school and in the broader community. Sesady et al. (2022) explain that individuals use their reasoning to choose whether to behave well or poorly for their own benefit. Thus, when individuals interact with society or others, reasoning is required to select behaviors that are rational and ethical in social interactions.

Teachers consistently encourage students to explore their own abilities by providing opportunities for them to express their views, share personal experiences, and reflect on the lessons delivered. This pedagogical approach not only enhances academic understanding but also fosters self-awareness, communication skills, and students' social competencies. This is consistent with Purwanto (2022), who explains that the hidden curriculum functions as a tool and method to strengthen students' knowledge beyond formal subject

matter; to create an engaging learning atmosphere that fosters interest and respect for teachers through effective communication styles and the breadth of teachers' knowledge; to develop valuable skills for students; to cultivate a democratic society; to serve as an effective mechanism of social control over both student and teacher behavior; and to enhance students learning motivation and academic achievement.

### **Implementation of Hidden Curriculum in Shaping Students Social Behavior**

At CLC Genting Suan Lamba, several routines and activities are implemented, including bringing packed meals, participating in cleaning duties, group study sessions with peers from the same plantation, reciting prayers, and outing classes. The habit of bringing packed meals to school represents a tangible implementation of the hidden curriculum, shaping students' social behavior. Through this routine, students are trained to take responsibility for their personal needs by preparing their own meals, organizing their belongings before leaving for school, and practicing simple living. Additionally, bringing meals encourages sharing, care for peers, and hygiene awareness. Students learn to appreciate that meals prepared at home either cooked by a parent or packed by themselves require thought and effort. This process reinforces the internalization of positive values, enabling students not only to understand these values but also to apply them in daily life.

Another concrete example of hidden curriculum at CLC Genting Suan Lamba is the practice of praying before starting lessons. This activity functions not only as a religious routine but also as a medium for instilling tolerance and respect for diversity. By allowing students from different religious backgrounds Islam, Christianity, and Catholicism to lead the prayers, teachers implicitly teach students that every religion contains values worthy of respect. Consequently, students learn that

differences in faith do not prevent harmonious coexistence, fostering mutual respect and openness toward diversity.

This approach cultivates inclusivity in students, allowing them to experience tolerance directly rather than merely learning it theoretically. Through simple practices, such as taking turns leading prayers, students understand that despite differences in belief, their primary goal at school is to learn and develop into better individuals. Beginning lessons with shared prayers promotes a peaceful, respectful, and joyful learning environment, motivating students to engage actively in their studies.

Teachers at CLC Genting Suan Lamba also encourage students to express themselves and share personal experiences. Teachers ask questions about various aspects of student's home life, including living conditions, daily routines, and habits. These questions create a safe space for students to open up, including discussing past experiences that may have been traumatic. Opportunities for storytelling position teachers as attentive listeners, guiding students from small anecdotes to deeper reflections on daily life and personal challenges. Ahyani (2018) notes that students aged 12-15, in early adolescence, frequently undergo behavioral and social development, a stage in which they explore curiosity and social interaction.

Teachers play a crucial role in instilling discipline, respect, and honesty. Discipline is demonstrated through adherence to school rules, including personal cleanliness and grooming, such as maintaining appropriate hairstyles, trimming nails, and wearing school uniforms according to regulations. Uniform compliance extends beyond following rules; students learn to prepare their uniforms independently before coming to school and ensure they meet the daily requirements. During group activities like cleaning duties, students learn teamwork and collective responsibility, understanding that maintaining school cleanliness is a shared obligation, not solely the task of a single individual or group.

Values such as tolerance and nationalism are central to the hidden curriculum at CLC Genting Suan Lamba. These values are seen as essential for students' future social life, particularly for Indonesian migrant children growing up in Sabah, Malaysia. Tolerance is cultivated through daily interactions within a multicultural school environment, enabling students to coexist harmoniously. The CLC hosts students practicing three religions: Islam, Catholicism, and Christianity. A meaningful experience for non-Muslim students is being invited to celebrate Islamic festivals such as Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha at Muslim classmates' homes. These experiences teach that diversity is a social blessing to be celebrated rather than avoided or resented. Students learn that Indonesian identity is maintained not only through formal symbols but also through daily actions reflecting mutual respect. They understand that togetherness does not require similarity. This illustrates how the hidden curriculum fosters discipline, tolerance, empathy, cultural sensitivity, and nationalism through lived experiences in the school and plantation community.

Student relationships at CLC Genting Suan Lamba are founded on cooperation, mutual respect, and acceptance of differences. Students report that their interactions extend beyond the school environment into digital spaces, including social media accounts created collectively to share videos and photos of their activities. In group work, students emphasize that they avoid discriminatory behavior despite differences in ethnicity or religion. They understand that discrimination treats individuals unequally and can harm others, which contradicts the values learned at school. This behavior exemplifies social learning shaped by shared experiences and a school culture emphasizing equality. Consequently, student interactions reflect the hidden curriculum's role in promoting unity and mutual respect. Murti and Wardani (2018) argue that the school environment serves not only for academic development but also as a

platform for social interaction among students, fostering exposure to diverse characters and behaviors.

Students' participation in annual CLC events such as EKSPRESI, APKRES, and JAIM functions not merely as competitions but as key experiences in shaping their behavior. Interviews reveal that during these activities, the hidden curriculum emerges naturally as students engage in practices from training to execution, culminating in achieved outcomes. Participating students experience personal growth, managing nervousness, fear of mistakes, and striving to perform well. These emotional experiences foster courage, self-confidence, and problem-solving abilities. Students recognize that performing in front of peers requires not only talent but also mental readiness and the willingness to take risks. Students' social behavior encompasses all actions performed in specific social contexts.

Mutual respect is evident in students' ability to discuss decisions, collaborate, and complete collective tasks without prejudice. They routinely sit together during group assignments, exchanging ideas to reach consensus. Tolerance manifests not merely in words but in daily habits, especially regarding religious diversity. Group study activities with peers from the same plantation contribute significantly to social behavior development, enhancing communication, openness, expression, and teamwork. Assignments relate to their experience as Indonesian children living in Sabah. Collaboration also occurs during routine school activities such as cleaning duties, where students learn collective responsibility. These experiences demonstrate how the hidden curriculum is reflected in teacher role modeling, integrity, and consistent daily routines, fostering disciplined student behavior.

Students actively internalize positive social values through daily interactions, observation of teachers, and participation in school activities. Respect is a key value emphasized. Despite a multicultural student

body with differences in culture, religion, ethnicity, and residential background across various plantations, students develop inclusivity and tolerance. They understand that diversity does not diminish their identity as Indonesians. Consequently, students learn to respect differences, maintain harmony with peers, and foster a sense of unity in their learning environment. This finding aligns with Nasution and Rahmawati (2020), who assert that the hidden curriculum serves as an effective space for shaping moral and ethical behavior, highlighting the importance of social environment and interpersonal interactions in forming foundational attitudes that cognitive instruction alone cannot achieve.

Rules at CLC Genting Suan Lamba extend beyond formal discipline to include the development of social behavior. A key rule emphasizes treating peers kindly, avoiding mockery, ridicule, and offensive language. Students are taught to assist peers facing learning difficulties rather than belittling them. Teachers stress that interactions require appropriate attitudes: some situations demand firmness, while others require patience and gentleness. Through their own conduct polite speech, respectful behavior toward parents and peers, and appropriate boundaries when students act disrespectfully teachers model ethical interaction. Umagap et al. (2022) note that implementing the hidden curriculum implicitly fosters students who excel not only intellectually but also emotionally and socially.

## CONCLUSION

The hidden curriculum at CLC is understood by teachers as an unwritten curriculum implemented through daily interactions, positive habitual practices at school, school culture, teacher role modeling, and routine activities. From the teachers perspective, what students see, feel, and experience has a stronger influence than what is merely taught verbally in the classroom. Teachers play a central role as

social agents and value models, instilling students' attitudes, character, and social competencies contextually through example, communication, discipline enforcement, and students' active participation in various CLC activities.

Teachers are aware that their role extends beyond delivering instructional content; they are figures whose actions are constantly observed and emulated by students. The implementation of the hidden curriculum shapes student social behaviors, including discipline, tolerance, responsibility, cooperation, social initiative, adaptability, and nationalism. This process occurs through routine habituation, peer learning groups based on plantation communities, outing classes, bringing packed meals, maintaining personal and environmental cleanliness, and inter-CLC activities. These practices enable students to experience authentic learning, character development, increased self-confidence, courage, and emotional maturity.

Cross-cultural and interreligious interactions within a multicultural environment further facilitate the internalization of social values and inclusivity among students as children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia. This study demonstrates the relevance of the hidden curriculum in multicultural settings, positioning it as a valuable reference for non-formal education in similar contexts.

### **Declaration by Authors**

**Acknowledgement:** None

**Source of Funding:** None

**Conflict of Interest:** No conflicts of interest declared.

## REFERENCES

1. Ahyani, Latifah Nur. (2018). *Buku Ajar Psikologi Perkembangan Anak dan Remaja*. Kudus: Universitas Muria Kudus.
2. Basyiruddin, Mirza. Rukayah. Roemintoyo. (2020). *Teaching Strategies as a Powerful Hidden Curriculum: A Review Study*. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 397.

3. Hakim, A., Nurhadi, D., & Sari, F. (2023). Guru sebagai Fasilitator Pendidikan Karakter di Abad 21. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 14(2), 88-102.
4. Jamaludin, J., Sari, L., & Wulandari, T. (2022). Pendidikan Karakter dalam Kurikulum Merdeka: Konsep dan Implementasi. *Jurnal Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran*, 8(1), 15-29.
5. Maryani, I., & Sulisworo (2015). *The Analysis of Hidden Curriculum at Elementary School in Indonesia*. Interasional Joint Semiar an School Administratio and Multicultural Society.
6. Murti, A. dan Wardani, K. (2018). Perilaku Sosial dalam Pembelajaran Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial pada Kelas Rendah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Ke-SD-an*, 4(3), 432-435.
7. Mustaghfiroh, H. (2014). *Hidden Curriculum* dalam Pembelajaran PAI. *Edukais: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, 9(1).
8. Nasution, M., & Rahmawati, L. (2020). Hidden Curriculum dan Pendidikan Karakter: Studi Kasus pada Anak Marginal. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 18(3), 221-235.
9. Purwanto, Edy. (2022). Hidden Curriculum. *Adiba: Journal of Education*, 2(2).
10. Salamor, L., & Ritiauw, S. P. (2021). Analisis Keberadaan *Hidden curriculum* dalam Pengembangan. *Jurnal Moral Kemasyarakatan*, 6(1), 34-43.
11. Sesady, S. F., RAF, Nufida. Muhammad, Rahmat. 2022. Media Sosial: Perilaku Sosial Asmara dalam Perubahan Sosial Remaja. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosiologi dan Humaniora*, 13(2).
12. Sidabutar, H., & Manullang, J. (2022). Diskursus Tujuan Hidup Manusia dalam Perspektif Filsafat Pendidikan. *Indonesia. Widyadewata*, 5(2).
13. Sugiyono. (2024). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
14. Susanti Umagap, M., Rahail, Y., & Hetharie, S. (2022). Kurikulum Tersembunyi dan Pendidikan Karakter dalam Aktivitas Pembelajaran. *Jurnal Kewarganegaraan*, 6(2), 50-60. P-ISSN: 1978-0184 | E-ISSN: 2723-2328. Universitas Pattimura.
15. Wahyudin, U. Hufad, A. Purnomo, dan Sulistiono, E. (2021). *Community Learning Center (CLC) Service Improvement for Expatriate Children*. Atlantis Press. *Advances in Social Science, Educational and Humanities Research. Proceedings of the First Transnational Webinar on Adult and Continuing Education (TRACED 2020)*.

How to cite this article: Kiki Reski, Eva Banowati, Fadly Husain, Hamdan Tri Atmaja. Hidden curriculum and the formation of students social behavior in community learning center (CLC) in Sabah Malaysia. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2025; 12(12): 965-975. DOI: [10.52403/ijrr.20251296](https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20251296)

\*\*\*\*\*