

Nursing Students' Opinions on the Individual and Professional Acquisitions Achieved through Hidden Curriculum: A Cross-Sectional Study

Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinin Örtük Program Yoluyla Elde Ettikleri Bireysel ve Mesleki Kazanımlara İlişkin Görüşleri: Kesitsel Bir Çalışma

Şefika BAYRAKTAR
DEDEMOĞLU¹
Ayşe YACAN KÖK²
Emine KOL³



¹Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi, Bucak Sağlık Yüksekokulu, Hemşirelik Bölümü, Burdur, Türkiye
²Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Hemşirelik Fakültesi, Hemşirelik Esasları Bölümü, Antalya, Türkiye
³Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Hemşirelik Fakültesi, Hemşirelik Esasları Bölümü, Antalya, Türkiye



International Gazi Health Sciences
Congress, December 15–17, 2021, Ankara,
Turkey (Online). Oral Presentation.

Geliş Tarihi/Received 13.12.2024
Revizyon Talebi/Revision Requested 06.08.2025
Son Revizyon/Last Revision 20.08.2025
Kabul Tarihi/Accepted 01.09.2025
Yayın Tarihi/Publication Date 24.11.2025

Sorumlu Yazar/Corresponding author:

E-mail: ayseyacan13@gmail.com

Cite this article: Bayraktar Dedemoğlu Ş, Yacan Kök A, Kol E. Nursing Students' Opinions on the Individual and Professional Acquisitions Achieved through Hidden Curriculum: A Cross-Sectional Study. *J Nursology*. 2025;28(4):358-366. doi: 10.17049/jnursology.1601132



Content of this journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study was conducted to determine the opinions of nursing students on the individual and professional acquisitions achieved through hidden curriculum.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used to collect quantitative data in 2019–2020 academic year. The sample consisted of 395 nursing students from the Faculty of Nursing at Akdeniz University. Data were collected using a Personal Information Form and the Hidden Curriculum Evaluation Scale in Nursing Education.

Results: Participants had a mean total Hidden Curriculum Evaluation Scale in Nursing Education score of 158.94±22.38 (min:91 max:206). Participants gave the highest scores to the items “The staff at the school are helpful and friendly”, “The instructor’s approaches increase my desire to like the profession”, and “I have learned to respect other people’s values, beliefs and opinions throughout my education”. However, they gave the lowest scores to the items, “The materials used in the courses are associated with a certain point of view”, “Nursing is a valuable and valid profession in society” and “Instructors treat students they feel close to with more understanding and kindness”.

Conclusion: According to the results research, students’ opinions regarding student-teacher-school interaction, individual and professional acquisitions are positive. Based on this result, it is possible to say that students hidden acquire humanitarian and professional values during the nursing education process.

Keywords: Hidden curriculum, nursing, nursing education, nursing students, professional acquisitions, quantitative study

ÖZ

Amaç: Bu çalışma hemşirelik öğrencilerinin örtük öğrenme yoluyla elde ettikleri bireysel ve mesleki kazanımlara ilişkin görüşlerinin belirlenmesi amacı ile yapılmıştır.

Yöntem: Bu tanımlayıcı kesitsel çalışma Akdeniz Üniversitesi Hemşirelik Fakültesi’nde 2019-2020 akademik yılında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın örneklemini, fakültedeki 395 hemşirelik öğrencisi oluşturmuştur. Veriler “Kişisel Bilgi Formu” ve “Hemşirelik Eğitiminde Örtük Program Değerlendirme Ölçeği” kullanılarak toplanmıştır.

Bulgular: Öğrencilerin Hemşirelik Eğitiminde Örtük Program Değerlendirme Ölçeği toplam puan ortalaması 158,94±22,38 (min:91 max:206)’dir. Katılımcılar, “Okul personeli yardımsever ve dostça tutum içerisinde”dir, “Öğretim elemanlarının yaklaşımları mesleği sevmeye isteğini artırır”, “Okulda aldığım eğitim boyunca insanların değer, inanç ve görüşlerine saygı duymayı öğrendim” ile ilgili maddelere en yüksek puanı vermişlerdir. Bununla birlikte katılımcılar tarafından en düşük puanlanan ifadeler “Ders araç gereçlerinde belli bir görüşü çağrıştıran şekillere, yazılara yer verilir”, “Hemşirelik toplumda değerli ve geçerli bir meslektir” ve “Öğretim elemanları kendine yakın buldukları öğrencilere daha anlayışlı ve kibar davranırlar” şeklinde sıralanmıştır.

Sonuç: Araştırma sonuçlarına göre öğrencilerin öğrenci-öğretmen-okul etkileşimi, bireysel ve mesleki kazanımlara ilişkin görüşleri olumlu düzeydedir. Bu sonuca göre öğrencilerin hemşirelik eğitimi sürecinde örtük biçimde insani ve mesleki değerleri kazandığını söylemek mümkündür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Örtük program, hemşirelik, hemşirelik eğitimi, hemşirelik öğrencileri, mesleki kazanımlar, nicel çalışma

INTRODUCTION

Nursing education aims to help students learn the parameters of human-centered care and related values. Healthcare professionals should act sensitively and responsibly and possess virtues (justice, truthfulness, honesty, etc.) because they care for people.¹ Nursing education uses hidden curricula to teach such values to students. Although curricula are used as programs, aside from the etymological origin of the word, 'curriculum' is used in nursing literature as a way, form, style, and manner of achieving acquisitions.² Instead of limiting hidden curriculum to the curriculum, we need to think about it in a broader sense and consider the school and clinical atmosphere, acquisitions achieved through relationships with nurses, instructors and the community, and most importantly, the philosophy of nursing schools.³ Hidden curricula help schools implicitly teach students the philosophy of person-centered care and its associated values. Therefore, we should identify the acquisitions and make hidden curricula more common.⁴ This study was conducted to determine the opinions of nursing students on the individual and professional acquisitions achieved through hidden curriculum.

Philip Jackson was the first to use the term 'hidden curriculum' back in 1968. Jackson was investigating what he saw as a disconnect between what was explicitly taught in schools and what students were actually learning. He realized that hidden curricula make up about 90% of classroom occurrences. For him, hidden curricula consist of messages about authority and social rules that are not explicitly stated but that we expect students to perceive.^{5,6} Hidden curricula include informal expectations, implicit values and norms, educators' and students' attitudes, daily functioning, schools' physical and psychological structure, and extracurricular activities.⁷ When teachers treat each other kindly and show that they care about their students, students implicitly learn to respect and value others.⁸ Students internalize specific values through observation and experience. Schools that treat their students and staff kindly adopt a people-oriented style and use effective teaching methods to help their students adopt specific values. A school's social activities, environmental sensitivity, and relationships with other institutions are crucial in transmitting values to students.

A hidden curriculum is an informal, unwritten program that teaches the knowledge, opinions, perceptions, practices, beliefs, attitudes, and values. It also means a set of ideas (attitudes, opinions, and values) that students learn not from the formal curriculum but from the school experience. It is transmitted consciously or unconsciously. It has the

potential to affect individuals positively or negatively. It is inherently perpetuated within a school culture by influencing both educators and students.^{4,9} Hidden curricula have numerous organizational, cultural, social, and structural variables. We can group hidden curricula into three: administrative and organizational arrangements, school-environment interactions, and classroom atmosphere.^{3,6}

A hidden curriculum is a learning domain that teaches students social rules, norms, and values, in short, life.¹⁰ Hidden curricula promote affective development by providing a school life and learning environment that includes values, norms, expectations, and social interactions.¹¹ Hidden curricula shape students' values and behaviors by changing their attitudes, beliefs, and emotions,¹² affecting their self-esteem. Therefore, a student who completes a hidden curriculum process both knows himself or herself better and learns virtues (justice, honesty, generosity, and responsibility) by living them.¹¹

Hidden curricula help nursing students adopt personal, moral, and ethical values and develop professional skills. They also allow them to develop a professional identity and perform well professionally.^{12,13} Faculties, educational settings, academics, clinical and administrative nurses, and mentor students influence nursing students. They have many positive and negative experiences during their professional learning. Nurses and nurse educators must increase their knowledge and awareness to promote the positive messages of hidden curricula.^{14,15} Therefore, schools should develop their organizational philosophy and integrate their norms, values, and principles into their curricula.¹⁶

Turkish researchers have focused on hidden curricula for over two decades.^{6,10,17} There has been a growing body of research, especially in the last five years.^{4,11,18-21} Research shows that educators are often authority figures who adopt certain ways of communication, disciplinary techniques, and attitudes to reproduce their authority.²² Educators consciously or unconsciously engage in inconsistent behaviors that cause students to experience negative emotions. For example, students engage in discriminatory behaviors when they observe their teachers doing so. All forms of communication that educators establish with students return to students as implicit messages.²²

Researches show that some schools in Turkey implicitly transmit many undemocratic educational practices, such as teacher-centered education, physical and psychological violence, and perpetuating stereotypes (nationality, gender, and religion).^{23,24} In addition, some teachers overemphasize certain subjects, neglect extracurricular

activities and students' needs and feelings, exhibit undemocratic behavior, dominate students, teach inappropriate norms and values, and isolate themselves from students.^{9,23,24} On the other hand, some teachers use hidden curricula to transform their students into egalitarian, just, respectful, loving, and honest individuals who care about people and society.¹⁸ Considering this picture of the hidden curriculum in Turkey, this study has been planned within the scope of researching the subject and continuing the improvements.

Turkish researchers have focused on the concept of a 'hidden curriculum' in nursing education in the last five years.^{4,18-21} Orgun et al.¹⁸, Yanmis and Ozcan¹⁹, Elmalı Simşek and Aksoy²⁰, Türkmen Keskin and Sezer²¹ assessed the hidden curricula in nursing education. Akcakoca and Orgun⁴ developed a measurement tool to identify and evaluate the hidden curricula in nursing education.

AIM

The aim of this study is to examine nursing students' views on the individual and professional acquisitions gained through the hidden curriculum in nursing education.

Research Questions/hypothesis

- What individual acquisitions do nursing students report gaining through the hidden curriculum?
- What professional acquisitions do students perceive as being shaped by the hidden curriculum?
- How do students describe the implicit messages, values, and experiences conveyed in their educational environment?

METHODS

Design and Sample

This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted to determine the opinions of nursing students on the individual and professional acquisitions achieved through hidden curriculum. This study followed the Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) checklist.²⁵

The study was carried out among students studying at the Nursing Faculty at Akdeniz University between February and March 2020. The research population consisted of 978 students enrolled in the 2019-2020 spring semester from the nursing faculty. Participants in the study were 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders. The sample size was determined using the sampling method with known population. The sample's minimum size was determined to be 276 with a 95% confidence interval ($\alpha=0.05$) accepting $P=.50$ and a sampling error of $\pm 5\%$. The study was completed with 395

students who volunteered to participate and answered all questions completely.

Data Collection

The data were collected face-to-face using a personal information form and the Hidden Curriculum Evaluation Scale in Nursing Education (HCES-N). The personal information form consisted of four items on students' sociodemographic characteristics. The HCES-N was developed by Akcakoca and Orgun⁴. The instrument consists of 43 items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale. It has three subscales: 'school atmosphere', 'professional acquisitions', and 'student-teacher-school-interaction'. Thirteen items are reverse-scored (13, 18, 20, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43). The total score ranges from 43 to 215, with higher scores indicating that the hidden curriculum is more consistent with the formal curriculum and helps students attain the desired acquisitions.⁴

Data Analysis

The Cronbach's alpha of the total scale was reported as 0.914 in the original validity and reliability study, and it was 0.91 in the present study, indicating strong internal consistency. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics, Armonk, NY, USA 23.0) at a significance level of 0.05. Number (n), percentage (%), mean, standard deviation (SD), and median(min-max) were used for descriptive statistics. The data were normally distributed. Therefore, an independent t-test was used for two independent groups, while an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for more than two groups. A Tukey's HSD test (post hoc) was used for pairwise group comparisons to determine the source of difference.

Ethical Considerations

The study, was approved by the Clinical Research Ethics Committee of Akdeniz University Faculty of Medicine (Decision Date: 08.01.2020, No: 65), and institutional permission was granted. Participants were informed before the research and their consent was obtained after they were informed that their data would remain confidential. The study was conducted in accordance with the principles set forth in the Declaration of Helsinki.

RESULTS

Students had a mean age of 20.33 ± 1.64 years. More than half of the students were women (69.1%). More than a quarter of the students (26.3%) were happy with their major (Table 1).

Students had a mean HCES-N score of 158.94 ± 22.38 . They had mean HCES-N 'school atmosphere', 'professional acquisitions', and 'student-teacher-school-interaction'

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics

Characteristics		n	%
Gender	Woman	273	69.1
	Man	122	30.9
Grade (year)	1	145	36.7
	2	92	23.3
	3	95	24.1
	4	63	15.9
Are you happy with your major?	Yes	104	26.3
	No	157	39.8
	Undecided	134	33.9
Age (year)	Mean±SD (Min-Max)	20.33±1.6417-25	

SD, Standard deviation; Min, Minimum; Max, Maximum

Table 2. HCES-N mean total and subscale scores

HCES-N Scores	Mean±SD	Min-Max
School atmosphere	69.99±11.12	21-105
Professional acquisitions	47.74±8.77	12-60
Student-teacher-school-interaction	41.22±9.27	10-50
Total score	158.94±22.38	43-215

HCES-N: Hidden Curriculum Evaluation Scale in Nursing Education; SD, Standard deviation; Min, Minimum; Max, Maximum

subscale scores of 69.99±11.12, 47.74±8.77, and 41.22±9.27, respectively (Figure 1, Table 2).

The acquisitions students acquired through the hidden curriculum related to the school atmosphere were grouped under the following items: *'The staff at the school are helpful and friendly'*, *'Instructors specify the evaluation criteria about the course and practice before an exam or homework'*, and *'Instructors are role models with their attitudes and behaviors'*. Students rated these items the highest regarding school atmosphere. However, the following items had the lowest scores: *'The materials used in the courses are associated with a certain point of view'*, *'Activities such as banners, brochures, and seminars promoting the profession are held at the school or near the school'*, and *'The school management and instructors care about socio-cultural activities as well as the courses'* (Figure 1).

The 'professional acquisitions' subscale items with the highest scores are as follows: *'I have learned to respect other people's values, beliefs, and opinions throughout my education'*, *'I have learned that nurses can enhance their knowledge by participating in scientific meetings or following the literature'*, and *'The education I received at school taught me the necessity of teamwork'*. The items with the lowest scores are as follows: *'Nursing is a valuable and valid profession in society'*, *'The education I received at school improved my scientific perspective'*, and *'I have learned to establish good communication with the patient*

and patient relatives throughout my education' (Figure 1).

The 'student-teacher-school interaction' subscale items with the highest scores are as follows: *'We experience gender discrimination at school'*, *'School management and instructors force students to adopt a certain perspective'*, and *'Discriminatory attitudes are exhibited toward students from different cultures or ethnic groups'*. The items with the lowest scores are as follows: *'The behaviors of instructors negatively affect my feelings about my life'*, *'Instructors treat students they feel close to with more understanding and kindness'*, and *'The hierarchy is very obvious between school personnel and instructors'* (Figure 1).

Fourth-year students had a significantly higher mean HCES-N score than second-year students ($P<.05$). Students who were happy with their major had a significantly higher mean HCES-N score than those who were not ($P<.05$). There was no significant difference in the mean HCES-N scores between male and female students ($P>.05$, Table 3).

Table 3. The distribution of HCES-N scores by sociodemographic characteristics

Characteristics	Total Score (Mean±SD)	F/t	P
Gender			
Woman	160.24±21.19	1.727	.08*
Man	156.04±24.67		
Grade (year)			
1	161.89±20.97	4.858	.002**
2	157.80±22.72		
3	152.29±21.41		
4	163.84±24.37		
Are you happy with your major?			
Yes	163.70±22.71	4.103	.01**
No	158.81±21.88		
Undecided	155.39±22.16		

*t, Independent samples t-test; **F, One-way Analysis of Variance; HCES-N, Hidden Curriculum Evaluation Scale in Nursing Education

There was no significant difference in the mean HCES-N subscale scores between male and female students. First-year students had the highest mean HCES-N 'school atmosphere' subscale score ($P<.05$). Fourth-year students had the highest mean HCES-N 'student-teacher-school-interaction' subscale score ($P<.05$). Students who were happy with their major had the highest mean HCES-N 'school atmosphere' ($P<.05$) and 'professional acquisitions' ($P<.05$) subscale scores. There was no significant difference in the mean HCES-N 'student-teacher-school-interaction' subscale scores between students who were happy with their major and those who were not ($P>.05$, Table 4).

Student-Teacher-School-Interaction Subscale Items

34. The behaviors of instructors negatively affect my feelings about my life
 35. Instructors are insistent on making students agree with their ideas
36. We experience gender discrimination at school
 37. The school management and instructors demonstrate an oppressive attitude about respecting them
 38. There is gender discrimination among students in clinical practices
39. School management and instructors force students to adopt a certain perspective
 40. Instructors treat students they feel close to with more understanding and kindness
 41. Instructors criticize the people and books that do not adhere to their opinions
42. Discriminatory attitudes are exhibited toward students from different cultures or ethnic groups
 43. The hierarchy is very obvious between school personnel and instructors

Professional Acquisitions Subscale Items

22. I have learned the importance of the nursing profession in life
23. I have learned to respect other people's values, beliefs, and opinions throughout my education
 24. I have learned to establish good communication with the patient and patient relatives throughout my education
 25. I have realized that using learning and teaching activities is important in nursing practices
 26. I have learned that I should be proud to be a nurse
27. I have learned that nurses can enhance their knowledge by participating in scientific meetings or following the literature
28. The education I received at school taught me the necessity of teamwork
 29. The education I received at school improved by empathy skills, 30. The education I received at school increased my sensitivity toward social changes
 31. I have learned that professional ethical principles are important in nursing practice
 32. The education I received at school improved my scientific perspective
 33. Nursing is a valuable and valid profession in society.



School Atmosphere Subscale Items

1. Courses meet the personal development needs of students
 2. There is a good sense of cooperation at school
 3. The instructor's approaches increases my desire to like the profession
 4. There is a good sense of cooperation between the instructors and students at school
 5. The learning environment in the class facilitates my learning
 6. The school management and instructors care about socio-cultural activities as well as the courses
 7. I felt that I was a part of school during my education there
 8. Homework given by the instructors contributes to my professional development and creativity
 9. Rules and regulations in the school are applied to everyone equally
 10. The school environment increases my life motivation
 11. The exams involve questions that require thinking and reasoning
12. Instructors are role models with their attitudes and behaviors
 13. The materials used in the courses are associated with a certain point of view
 14. Instructors support students in the fields in which they are interested
 15. I can report my recommendation/complaints about the teaching methods or exams to the instructors
16. The staff at the school are helpful and friendly
 17. The architectural characteristics of the school are appropriate for nursing education
 18. There are activities such as banners, brochures, and seminars aimed at making someone adopt a certain idea, opinion, and ideology in or out of school
19. Instructors specify the evaluation criteria about the course and practice before an exam or homework
 20. Activities such as banners, brochures, and seminars promoting the profession are held at the school or near the school
 21. Students use the materials and equipment of the school carefully

Figure 1. HCES-N Mean Total and Subscale Scores*

*The areas shown in bold are the items with the highest mean score

Table 4. The distribution of HCES-N subscale scores by sociodemographic characteristics

Characteristics	School Atmosphere	Professional Acquisitions	Student-Teacher- School Interaction
Gender			
Woman	70.42±10.68	48.29±8.50	41.52±9.49
Man	69.02±12.04	46.49±9.25	40.52±8.74
	t= 1.154	t= 1.893	t= 0.990 P=.32*
Test and P	P=.24*	P=.05*	
Grade (year)			
1	72.21±10.32	48.48±8.24	41.21±9.29
2	68.64±11.32	46.91±9.69	42.25±8.65
3	67.73±10.59	46.23±8.64	38.34±9.93
4	70.27±12.58	49.51±8.43	44.06±7.97
	F= 3.776	F= 2.430	F= 5.613
Test and P	P=.01**	P=.06**	P=.001**
Are you happy with your major?			
Yes	72.77±11.47	49.93±8.24	40.99±10.00
No	70.40±10.71	47.53±8.34	40.87±9.12
Undecided	67.33±10.78	46.26±9.35	41.79±8.87
	F= 7.434	F= 5.294	F= 0.395
Test and P	P=.001**	P=.005**	P=.67**

* Independent samples t-test; ** One-way Analysis of Variance; HCES-N, Hidden Curriculum Evaluation Scale in Nursing Education

DISCUSSION

In this study, students had a total mean HCES-N score of 158.94±22.38 (min:91 max:206). indicating that they achieved most of the hidden curriculum learning. Yanmis and Ozcan¹⁹ found that Turkish students (n= 235) had a total mean HCES-N score of 138.54±23.27 suggesting that they achieved some of the acquisitions of the hidden curriculum. Orgun et al.¹⁸ reported that Turkish students had a total mean HCES-N score of 50.87±12.07, indicating that they had a moderate perception of the hidden curriculum of their department. Compared to the two studies, it is possible to say that the transfer of value through implicit learning and the students' perceptions of the hidden curriculum are good in the faculty where the research was conducted. Students' perceptions about the hidden curriculum can be affected by factors such as the standards of the university, students' social class, culture, and social and academic life at university.⁴ The Faculty of Nursing at Akdeniz University, where the study was conducted, meets the standards in terms of academic/student ratio, physical infrastructure equipment and social and academic life.²⁶ In the present study, the finding that students had better perceptions about the hidden curriculum may have resulted from this situation.

In nursing education, the instructor's one-on-one interaction with the student makes the student feel at the center and in a valuable position as a learner.²⁷ The increase in the number and quality of instructors is

important in terms of the frequency of encountering the student's role model. Bargezar et al.²⁸ argue that students learn better in faculties with well-equipped academics and good physical infrastructure. They conclude that the hidden curriculum significantly impacts learning due to the interaction between academics and students, and the relationship between academics and students.²⁸ Salehi²⁹ also states that academics and educational nurses implicitly contribute to student learning.²⁹ The results of this study indicate that nursing students achieve 'student-teacher school interaction' and 'professional acquisitions' through the hidden curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of the number and guidance of educators.

Hidden curricula include norms, values, and practices that are transmitted through role modeling and have a profound impact on student learning. In this study, students stated that their academics were helpful and kind people who respected their values and beliefs, suggesting that these academics implicitly transfer values to students through their attitudes and behaviors. In this study, students also noted that their academics made them love nursing and encouraged them to develop empathy. Academics' attitudes and behaviors influence students' professional and personal development, manifested in the care they provide to their patients.^{12,15,16} The attitudes and behaviors of academics also help students develop values (respect, love, compassion, etc.) and build self-confidence.²⁸ The findings suggest that hidden curricula help students internalize personal and professional values and develop a professional identity. Although hidden curricula are not formal programs, they are distinct outcomes that reflect a school's nursing and care philosophy in its curricula. A school's philosophy determines the quality of education and helps students adopt different perspectives and reasoning.³⁰

In the study, some students did not express positive statements about the adequacy of school atmosphere and clinical atmosphere in terms of making them feel professional. They mostly stated that there are few activities such as posters, brochures, and seminars at school, that nursing is not a valuable and valid profession in the society, and that guidance on approaching the patient as a student is limited. Especially in nursing education, students want to belong to the institution they study and feel like a member of the profession. Along with the school atmosphere, the clinical atmosphere is also very important in creating this environment for the student. In the school atmosphere, students care about presenting the profession to the society with posters, brochures and visual materials.^{16,28} Students especially care about the visibility of the profession on the web page and in the media and

they are satisfied with the professional prestige. In addition, students also attach importance to activities such as seminars, congresses and workshops that increase professional togetherness and emphasize the common language and sharing of common values.^{16,28,31} The mentoring of clinical nurses and the warm and sincere approach of patients and their relatives to students are another factor that paves the way for students to feel like members of the profession and to be proud of their profession.^{15,16} In Karimi et al.¹⁶, students viewed improving a professional image as a motivating factor of learning through hidden curricula. One of the students stated, *'What I've learned outside the official curriculum has been useful for both my patients and me. For example, the patient will have a positive attitude toward her nurse, and after she gets better, she will tell other people that her nurse treated her kindly, which is important to me...'* According to Poreddi et al.³², we need to improve the image of nurses and the nursing profession in society in order for nursing students to have positive experiences in professional learning through hidden curricula.³² Professional knowledge, skills and development platforms (congress, symposium, seminar, etc.) in the dimension of school atmosphere help students to socialize and develop a sense of professional belonging and identity. In this respect, the nursing curriculum should be reviewed in terms of the contributions of the school atmosphere to the student.

The results of this study indicate that first-year students perceived the school atmosphere in a more positive light than other students, suggesting that the faculty should revise its curriculum and improve the acquisition of the school atmosphere. In the Fundamentals of Nursing course, students receive theoretical and practical training in small groups of 15 students per instructor. This allows each student to frequently communicate with the instructor and experience an individualized, learner-centered school atmosphere. Studies on school atmosphere show that first-year students are more satisfied with their instructors, nursing education, and school than older students.^{33,34}

Perceptions of school atmosphere and professional acquisition were higher among students who were satisfied with their school than those who weren't. This situation can be explained by the readiness of the students. In other words, nursing students who are satisfied with their major choose to study nursing because they love the profession. Therefore, they are more likely to overcome the difficulties associated with the profession. Researches show that nurses who are satisfied with their profession have lower levels of burnout and higher levels of job satisfaction and

are better able to withstand the profession's challenges than those who are dissatisfied.^{35,36} The same is valid for nursing students.

Limitations

The outputs of this study should be interpreted taking into account some limitations. The first is the examination of a single institution's achievements through hidden curriculum, potentially limiting the transferability of results. However, the results of this study can be transferred to nursing students at other institutions at the national and international level. Secondly, due to the fact that studies on this subject are just being done in Turkey, both the instructor and the students encounter expressions that they are not familiar with. Finally, considering that the data collection method used in this study was a questionnaire, the psychological state of the respondents, which was beyond the control of the researcher, may have affected their answers.

The results of this study indicate that nursing students' opinions regarding student-teacher-school interaction, individual and professional acquisitions are positive. The school environment helps them adopt specific values, such as equality, helpfulness, empathy, and respect. They especially internalize specific human values through student-teacher-school interaction. In addition, they acquire professional values through communication with academics and colleagues. On the other hand, they need faculty events where they can discuss professional issues and network with colleagues. Universities should constantly update their nursing curricula because they are transforming students into health professionals who provide care to people. For example, universities should revise their nursing curricula and provide free time for students to attend professional activities such as seminars, symposiums, conferences, etc. In addition, universities should consult with students before revising their curricula.

Etik Komite Onayı: Etik kurul onayı Akdeniz Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Klinik Araştırma Etik Kurulu'ndan (Tarih: 08.01.2020, Sayı:65) alınmıştır.

Bilgilendirilmiş Onam: Katılımcılara araştırma öncesinde bilgi verilmiş ve verilerinin gizli kalacağı konusunda bilgilendirildikten sonra onay alınmıştır.

Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.

Yazar Katkıları: Fikir- ŞBD, AYK, EK; Tasarım- ŞBD, AYK, EK; Denetleme- EK; Kaynaklar- ŞBD, AYK, EK; Veri Toplanması ve/veya İşlemesi- ŞBD, AYK; Analiz ve/veya Yorum- ŞBD, AYK, EK; Literatür Taraması- ŞBD, AYK, EK; Yazıyı Yazan- ŞBD, EK; Eleştirel İnceleme- EK

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazarlar, çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan etmiştir.

Finansal Destek: Yazarlar, bu çalışma için finansal destek almadığını beyan etmiştir.

Yapay Zeka Kullanımı: Araştırmanın veri toplama, analiz, yorumlama ve makale hazırlama süreçlerinin tamamında yapay zekâ tabanlı herhangi

bir araç ya da uygulama kullanılmamıştır.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethics committee approval was obtained from Clinical Research Ethics Committee of Akdeniz University Faculty of Medicine (Decision Date: 08.01.2020, No: 65)

Informed Consent: Participants were informed before the research and their consent was obtained after they were informed that their data would remain confidential.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Author Contributions: Concept- ŞBD, AYK, EK; Design- ŞBD, AYK, EK; Supervision- EK; Resources- ŞBD, AYK, EK; Data Collection and/or Processing- ŞBD, AYK; Analysis and/or Interpretation- ŞBD, AYK, EK; Literature Search- ŞBD, AYK, EK; Writing Manuscript- ŞBD, EK; Critical Review- EK

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Financial Disclosure: The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

Use of Artificial Intelligence: This study did not utilize any artificial intelligence-supported tools or applications at any stage, including data collection, analysis, interpretation, or manuscript preparation.

REFERENCES

- Kaya A, Boz I. The development of the Professional Values Model in nursing. *Nurs Ethics*. 2019;26(3):914-923. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969733017730685>
- University of Delaware. Definitions of Curriculum. Last reviewed August 20, 2025. Accessed October 25, 2025. https://www1.udel.edu/educ/whitson/897s05/files/definitions_of_curriculum.htm
- Sarikhani Y, Shojaei P, Rafiee M, Delavari S. Analyzing the interaction of main components of hidden curriculum in medical education using interpretive structural modeling method. *BMC Med Educ*. 2020;20(1):176-184. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-020-02094-5>
- Akcakoca B, Orgun F. Developing a measurement tool for evaluating the hidden curriculum in nursing education. *Nurse Educ Today*. 2021;97:104688. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104688>
- Jackson PW. Life in classrooms. Teachers College Press, 1990.
- Yuksel S. The hidden curriculum. *Educ Sci*. 2002;27(126):31-37. <https://doi.org/10.15390/ES.2002.522>
- Serhatlioglu B. Function of hidden curriculum in the process of acquisition of social skills. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Firat; 2012.
- Ahola S. Hidden curriculum in higher education: Something to fear for or comply to?. 2000; Innovation in Higher Education Conference.
- Çobanoğlu R, Engin Demir C. The visible side of the hidden curriculum in schools. *İÖÖ*. 2014;13(3):776-786. <https://ilkogretim-online.org/index.php/pub/article/view/6213>
- Alkan MF. Investigation of teachers' perceptions about hidden curriculum through metaphors. *IJTES*. 2017;9:204-211. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/goputeb/issue/34356/380295>
- Yurtseven N. The investigation of teachers' views about the role of hidden curriculum in planning and carrying out the instruction. *UEAD*. 2019;3(1):62-83. <https://doi.org/10.32960/uead.513425>
- Yazdani S, Momeni S, Afshar L, Abdolmaleki M. A comprehensive model of hidden curriculum management in medical education. *JAMP*. 2019;7(3):123-130. <https://doi.org/10.30476/JAMP.2019.45010>
- Kelly SH. The hidden curriculum: Undergraduate nursing students' perspectives of socialization and professionalism. *Nurs Ethics*. 2020;27(5):1250-1260. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969733019881714>
- Kalantary S, Chehrehgosha M, Shirazi N, Behmadi M, Araghian Mojarad F, Jouybari L. Training professionalism using hidden curriculum in an internship course: Account of experiences of undergraduate students of surgical technology. *Strides Dev Med Educ*. 2018;15(1): e65704. <https://doi.org/10.5812/sdme.65704>
- Karimi Z, Ashktorab T, Mohammadi E, Abedi H, Zarea K. Resources of learning through hidden curriculum: Iranian nursing students' perspective. *J Educ Health Promot*. 2015;4:57-64. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2277-9531.162368>
- Karimi Z, Ashktorab T, Mohammadi E, Abedi HA. Using the hidden curriculum to teach professionalism in nursing students. *Iran Red Crescent Med J*. 2014;16(3):e15532. <https://doi.org/10.5812/ircmj.15532>
- Akbulut N, Aslan S. Hidden curriculum: Scale development. *Elect J Soc Sci*. 2016;15(56):169-176. <https://doi.org/10.17755/esosder.89734>
- Orgun F, Özkütük N, Akçakoca B. Investigation of nursing students' views of hidden curriculum in their faculties. *KED*. 2019;27(3):1337-1345. <https://doi.org/10.24106/kefdergi.3149>
- Yanmis S, Ozcan S. Evaluation of effectiveness of the hidden curriculum in nursing students: East Turkey. *Africa J Nurs Midwifery*. 2021;23(1):1-16. <https://doi.org/10.25159/2520-5293/7971>
- Elmalı Simsek H, Aksoy M. Comparison of the hidden curriculum for nursing education of two different universities in the east and west of Türkiye. *J Inonu Univ Health Serv Vocat School*. 2024;12(2):389-399. <https://doi.org/10.33715/inonusaglik.1378869>
- Türkmen S, Sezer TA. Nursing students evaluate the hidden curriculum in their faculties: A cross-sectional study. *J Nursology*. 2025;28(2):103-114. <https://doi.org/10.17049/jnursology.1418510>
- Öztürk A, Taşpınar M. Analysing studies conducted on hidden curriculum in Turkey: A meta-synthesis research. *GÜJGEF*. 2021;41(1):251-305. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/1452520>
- Saldıray A, Doganay A. Gender in hidden curriculum: A qualitative study of gender in the hidden curriculum of a primary school. *Turk Stud*. 2017;12(25):671-704. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.12299>
- Fidan M, Tuncel M. Evaluation of information technologies teachers' in-class behaviours in the context of hidden curriculum. *JEF*. 2018;14:31-56. <https://doi.org/10.30786/jef.411639>

25. von Elm E, Altman DG, Egger M, et al. The Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) statement: Guidelines for reporting observational studies. *J Clin Epidemiol.* 2008;61(4):344-349. [https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2007.11.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2007.11.008).
26. Higher Education Information Management System. Report on the number of faculty members by unit group name. Last reviewed August 20, 2025. Accessed October 25, 2025. <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>
27. Biles J, Murphy K, Moyo P. Undergraduate nursing students' course expectations, actual experiences, and associated satisfaction levels: A mixed methods survey. *Teach Learn Nurs.* 2022;17(1):102-108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2021.10.005>
28. Barzegar F, Paryad E, Jafroudi S, Kazem Nezhad Leyli E, Ghanbari Khanghah A. Nursing students' viewpoints: Effect of hidden curriculum on learning. *J Holist Nurs Midwifery.* 2018;28(1):26-34. <https://doi.org/10.18869/ACADPUB.HNMJ.28.1.26>
29. Salehi S. Students' experience with the hidden curriculum in the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery of Isfahan University of medical sciences. *J Med Edu.* 2006;9(2):79-84. [https://doi.org/ 10.22037/jme.v9i2.721](https://doi.org/10.22037/jme.v9i2.721)
30. Simsek A, Kartal S. Philosophical movements in the aims of the Turkish education system. *J Int Soc Res.* 2019;12(65):873-880. <https://doi.org/10.17719/ijsr.2019.3500>
31. Cachon-Perez JM, Gonzalez-Sanz P, Carretero-Rios MA, et al. Experiences of first year undergraduate nursing students sing Instagram in their clinical practicum during COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study. *Nurse Educ Today.* 2022;119:105590. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2022.105590>
32. Poreddi V, Konduru R, Math SB. Assessing the attitudes and perceptions towards nursing profession among nursing students. *Nurs J India.* 2012;103(1):6-8. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23534180/>
33. Özdelikara A, Babur S. Education satisfaction of nursing students and influencing factors. *DEUHFED.* 2016;9(1):2-8. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/deuhfed/issue/46796/586800>
34. Farooq S, Rehman R, Dias JM, Hussain M. Perceptions of nursing students of educational environment at a private undergraduate school of nursing in Karachi. *J Pak Med Assoc.* 2018;68(2):216-223. https://ecommons.aku.edu/pakistan_fhs_son/306
35. Akyuz İ. Investigation of level of nurses' burnout and depression in terms of working conditions and demographic characteristics. *J Bus Econ Stud.* 2015;3(1):21-34. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/355398>
36. Cetinkaya F, Akbulut Z, Dur N, Eryalcin O, Korkmaz M. Analysis of job satisfaction and burnout level of nurses in different generations. *Int J Caring Sci.* 2017;10(3):1507-1513. https://www.internationaljournalofcaringsciences.org/docs/44_cetinkaya_original_10_3.pdf