



## The hidden curriculum in a Filipino pre-service physical educators' virtual ecology

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### ABSTRACT

The study was geared toward determining the factors embedded in "hidden curricula" in an online learning environment of a physical education teacher education program. This qualitative-descriptive study considered a complete enumeration of the Bachelor of Physical Education students from a state university in Pampanga, Philippines who voluntarily participated in this qualitative investigation (n= 135) by responding to structured and open-ended questions. Aided by Thematic Analysis, findings revealed six emerging themes that described the embedded hidden curricula in the online learning environment, namely: contributory factors in an online learning experience (OLEx); educational opportunities in the new normal learning set-up; unfavorable factors in using online learning environment; and proposed inputs in enhancing the teaching-learning process in an OLEx. The implications derived as an outgrowth of the identified positive and negative factors as expressed by the participants provided a conceptual understanding of the contemporary picture of the hidden curricula and how it would define the future of an effective online learning experience.

**Keywords:** Hidden curriculum; pre-service; physical educators'; physical education; virtual ecology

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## INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has triggered a major global crisis. As a result of the defacement of this crisis, billions of students worldwide have been affected (De Giusti, 2020). To avoid academic stagnation and the loss of educational opportunities, educational governing bodies are collaborating to ensure that every learner receives a high-quality education (Rotas & Cahapay, 2020). Flexible learning, in which students have the freedom to learn when and how they want, is one of the most widely used learning approaches today. The World Wide Web has made information access and educational content distribution available to a large portion of the world's population, assisting in the transition of distance education to the digital era. As a result of the advancement of technologies and the changing times and needs of the students, distance education has continued to evolve (Sangra et al., 2012). Additionally, in terms of integrating technologies into the teaching and learning process, the concept of education as a lifelong process poses a significant challenge for educational institutions. Thus, this

current crisis has provided an opportunity for educators to collaborate in order to create shared learning opportunities that will benefit everyone; thus, the terrifying COVID-19 pandemic has paved the way for rich teachable moments, educational opportunities, and the concept of "hidden curriculum."

### **Global Perspectives about Hidden Curriculum**

According to [Mahood \(2011\)](#), hidden curriculum is the process of socialization, knowledge, and skill transmission which consists of implicit messaging practices contributory to the multidimensional aspect of the learning environment that can be formal, informal, or hidden. Subsequently, [Bray et al. \(2018\)](#) unfold the context of HC as it encompasses supplementary tutoring that is parallel to regular schooling that is commonly referred to as "shadow education" due to its content which reflects the changes in the curriculum in the mainstream and the shadow changes in schools. Although HC is not explicitly mentioned in the approved curriculum, it is essential as any other type of curriculum because of the well-established concept that encompasses learning contexts, student and teacher actions, and other subjects influencing learning.

### **Hidden Curriculum in Different Contexts**

With the various and complex definitions of HC, different disciplines also have different approaches in describing it. As stated by [Gaufberg et al. \(2010\)](#), from a medical school education in a certain American college association, HC is defined in definitional elements of four concepts. First, "medicine as culture", where students recognized clinical medicine as a culture with distinct subcultures. Second, "haphazard interactions", in which unplanned and lack of direction in random events take place in the medical industry like fortunate and unfortunate accidents. Third, "role modeling", where students recognize different role models, favorable or unfavorable in their learning. Lastly, "medicine as ideal versus medicine as reality" is when students notice a misalignment between what they have learned in the curriculum and what they have experienced in actual clinical training. Using these four concepts, it improves the quality of the students' medical training experience and has all been identified as discrete elements of HC. Following the study of [Villanueva et al. \(2018\)](#) that was published in the American Society for Engineering Education, the identification of HC is central and can be tied up to an individual's emotions, self-efficacy, and self-advocacy. It is believed that when individuals experience scenarios, via vignettes, that center around the HC in engineering, they can identify HC through a frame of reference that can enable them to respond and react to witness scenarios. In line with education, HC is one of the concepts that will never vanish. Hence, several studies have been conducted in such exploration. According to [Çubukçu \(2012\)](#), within the concept of activities supporting the HC, this type of curriculum affects the character education of the student in decision making. Meanwhile, in the study of [Peng \(2015\)](#) and [Høgdaal et al. \(2021\)](#), HC has a negative impact on language classrooms, potentially lowering students' perceptions of the value and importance of good management. Through the contexts and conditions of implementing a program, the intended curriculum interacts with the HC which allows students to internalize certain modes of behavior, perspectives, and attitudes in the development of their character for schooling progress ([Gunio, 2021](#)).

### **Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education (HE)**

The hidden curriculum has mostly been used in basic education studies but is less applied in higher education since HC may focus more on the norms, values, and moral

components (Orón & Blasco, 2018). However, despite the shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach, HC still merits attention in higher education institutions (HEIs). These two approaches share important features in which students, not just teachers, are the target of change, and the all-important interpersonal relationship between teacher and students was sidelined. Students at the university are expected to use their principles in conjunction with their learning experiences to grow and develop competencies that will serve them well in social life and adult work, with greater emphasis on the principle of learning. If the faculty at the university continuously refuse to regard their work as a personal issue inseparably attached to their lives, HC will remain an issue in higher education (Orón & Blasco, 2018). In the study of Winter and Cotton (2012), they discovered that HC influences students' long-term sustainability which may improve their participation in existing activities or practices in class. Students were found to have varying levels of sustainability on campus, with some being less aware of social and economic sustainability, while others are being critical of their friends and university community's limited actions and students feeling disempowered from decision-making. Furthermore, the study discovered a variety of HC in higher education which features context-awareness capturing the university as a learning institution in a larger context, understanding the role as a member of the community inside the institution, and understanding the possibilities for action within the same ambit.

### **Hidden Curriculum in Physical Education (PE)**

Although Physical Education (PE) promotes individuals' holistic development in terms of physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects through properly chosen physical activities, HC remains invisible, unnoticed, and latent as it may seem as non-contributory to student learning. Despite the busy and active topics, lessons, and discussions, many latent barriers and motives affect learners in a PE class. One of these is gender stereotyping. This contestation is still present even in tertiary education, that masculine and feminine discourses, gender habits along gender segregation are still prominent in the landscape of PE (Preece & Bullingham, 2020). Munk and Agergaard, (2018) discovered that peer groups negotiate students' intentional silences and non-participation in PE discussions, which can also be linked in the HC. Further, a small number of these less socially respected PE non-participants were unaware of their status as non-participants or did not recognize it.

Although several studies have been conducted relative to the hidden curriculum in multiple settings and context, it is found through a thorough literature search in this study that the exploration of the hidden curriculum from an Asian perspective, particularly in the Philippines, and in the higher education context were necessary. Further, as the Philippines remains intact with the implementation of online learning modality, huge distinctions between the findings of studies pertaining to the hidden curriculum in a traditional in-person schooling, and online learning modality relevant to the time of pandemic were discovered. This study highlighted that the hidden curriculum in a physical education teacher education program in a virtual ecology which is defined as the hidden social concepts, values, barriers, or motives that could both prevent, and help the teachers and students to have an effective instructional delivery, different to the found related studies in different context which revealed that hidden curriculum can be defined through students' attitudes, behaviors, and social relations.

With the current set-up of continuous learning, it is important to emphasize the study's exploratory nature in the virtual ecology which examines hidden social concepts, values, barriers, or motives that are present in the instructional delivery via online classes. This

study determined emerging aspects of HC that are circling a physical education teacher education program. Although HC is not an overt curriculum, acknowledging its presence and prevalence in an online setting will be beneficial to teachers and students in planning, implementing, and evaluating the entire curriculum toward a quality teaching and learning experience.

The study was geared toward determining the factors composing the “hidden curricula” embedded in an online learning environment of a physical education teacher education program in a comprehensive state university in Pampanga, Philippines. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the positive factors that were identified by the participants to be contributory to their online learning experience (OLEx)?
2. What are the negative factors that influence their ability to actively participate in an online learning environment?
3. What inputs were provided by the participants to enhance the teaching-learning processes in an OLEx?

## **METHOD**

This study utilized qualitative descriptive research to provide an in-depth interpretation and understanding of individuals or groups’ perceptions, experiences, and opinions with regards to the context of “hidden curriculum” that will pave the way in accomplishing the initial goal of the study. Using a complete enumeration, census among 3rd year Bachelor of Physical Education students from a comprehensive state university in the province of Pampanga, 135 participated with the common characteristic of prior knowledge about the concept of the hidden curriculum.

An open-ended questionnaire was utilized as a mode of data collection with 5 aspects of inquiry. The instrument was subjected to content validation by five experts which resulted in 1.00 which indicates a high extent to validity according to Lynn's (1986) criteria to Content Item Validity Index. The questionnaire was administered through a learning management system that revolves around the positive and negative factors of “hidden curriculum. Pilot testing was initiated prior to the actual administration of the questionnaire to verify the grammar and appropriateness of the terms used in the set questions. After the verification of the questions, a consent form informing them of the know-about of the study was given to the Dean of the College of Education and to the participants.

In the analysis of the data, the strategy of Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis (2012) was utilized to provide insightful and thorough findings which led to the emergence of six major themes. The 2020 version of MAXQDA was used in coding segments and generating themes from the transcripts in order to further examine the codes and to formulate relevant subthemes and major themes targeting the objectives of the study. Further, Lincoln and Guba's (1986) establishment of trustworthiness which consists of four aspects namely credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, was used in evaluating qualitative content analysis as this has the goal of proving that the findings are worth paying attention to. Additionally, the gathered data from the participants vested several ethical standards throughout the process.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Positive Factors that are Contributory to the Online Learning Experience

#### Theme 1. Contributory Factors in the Online Learning Experience (OLEx)

The hidden curriculum (HC) may be characterized by positive factors that contribute to students' overall learning and satisfaction. Motivation toward students' learning and the educational opportunities in the new normal learning set-up emerged as the contributory factors in the OLEx which helped students cope in the new learning modality.

#### Subtheme 1.1. Motivation Toward Students' Learning

This subtheme emerged as an outgrowth of the HC to students' learning in the OLEx which considers the reality that motivation from within and support from the family and peers play a pivotal role in the teaching-learning process as recounted by the participants. It was discovered that self-motivation, family support, and positive peer influence are contributory factors that empower students to their overall learning and push them to keep going in developing their skills despite the struggling challenges. This notion was supported by [Hartnett \(2016\)](#) who claimed that motivation as a key factor to one's development helps learners in the development and achievement of online learning.

##### a) Self-Motivation

It was identified that intrinsic motivation has empowered the participants and given them the internal drive to strengthen their ability in achieving, producing, and developing their holistic skills. The participants acknowledge the presence of self-motivation as a critical factor that constantly pushes them to strive harder toward their overall learning. [Gustiani \(2020\)](#) supported the idea that intrinsic motivation plays a critical role in students' overall learning and satisfaction.

*"My life, goals or dreams are the most beneficial factors for me. possible that I wouldn't have what I have today if I didn't have goals. One of my motivations to keep going is to plan and achieve my goals step by steps [sic]" (P34)*

##### b) Family Support

In the new normal education, support from the family is critical for student development and behavior improvement. Students' academic achievement highly depends on the involvement of the family, considering the physical absence of the teachers and the time students spend learning at home, more specifically in virtual environments. Family support has emerged to be the students' powerful weapon in this trying time as it assists them in their academic success and later results in the improvement of their academic performance. Due to the encouragement and motivation given by their families, the participants became more focused and motivated to work harder on their studies. This shows that students who are receiving more interest and help from their family members are more likely to be involved inside the virtual classroom. [Lawrence and Fakuade \(2021\)](#) supported the idea that parental involvement, supervision, and motivation improve students' learning in a flexible modality and demonstrated significant contributions to the success of the learners in a virtual learning environment.

*“The positive things that have helped me to make my learning in class in this Flexible Learning Modality enjoyable are the support from my family especially my parents, the enjoyment caused by my friends and classmates” (P68)*

#### c) Positive Peer Influence

Peer interaction, as recounted by the participants, provides valuable help that they can get through in the new way of learning. The participants disclosed the notion that positive peer influence profoundly impacts their lives, as a learner in a virtual world. Likewise, the presence of their classmates, through the aid of applications plays a vital role in their learning as they become the constant reminder that allows them to become aware and updated about the past lessons and even the next ones. As evidently supported by [Yemen-Karpuzcu et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Aghaee and Keller \(2016\)](#), peer interaction is an important component necessary for online learning. Moreover, according to [Yemen-Karpuzcu et al. \(2017\)](#) student interaction is essential for learning because it allows students to formulate new ideas, demonstrate their comprehension, and reflect on their thoughts. Peer interaction also encourages students to construct genuine ideas which eventually improves their performance ([Aghaee & Keller, 2016](#)).

*“There are many tasks to accomplish, and my friends are one of the things that motivate us to keep going and cheer us up when we are feeling down” (P34)*

### **Theme 2. Educational Opportunities in the New Normal Learning Set-up**

Learning nowadays is more than just putting students at the center of education. It is about giving each student the opportunity for success. This theme emerged as a factor that positively influences students' learning experiences in the online learning modality. The findings of this study revealed that the influence of the new normal learning set-up in the digitalized revolution provides several educational opportunities to students, both curricular and extracurricular activities in the exploration of their physical ability, personality, and learning processes. The enrichment of virtual learning competencies and skills, socialization in virtual learning environments, and the conducive virtual learning environment emanated as efficacious factors in the teaching-learning process as recounted by the participants.

#### **Subtheme 2.1. Enrichment of Virtual Learning Competencies and Skills**

This subtheme surfaced as a contributory factor of HC in the new mode of learning which enables students to explore and improve their skills as 21st-century learners. The sudden changes in teachers' teaching responsibility, strategy, skills, and competency helped the learners to be more successful with the online classroom learning environment. It was revealed that pedagogical strategies in formal online learning and multimedia skills emerged as contributing factors that increased the engagement and involvement of the students in the educational process.

#### a) Pedagogical Strategies in Formal Online Learning

Effective online instruction requires learning experiences that are appropriately designed and facilitated by knowledgeable educators. Because students have a variety of learning styles or a mix of styles, online educators should create activities that incorporate multiple modes of learning. Concerning this study, after several examinations of the data, the teacher's pedagogical strategies adapted to the new learning environment revealed as a positive factor that helped the students to adapt to

the remotely undertaken teaching. Bao (2020) supported this scheme, stating that teachers' pedagogical strategies, such as activities that are appropriately relevant to the subject matter, helped students to be more focused in class. In addition, the style, techniques, and strategies of teaching by engaging students toward learning have been effective as they improved students' learning skills in virtual classes and contributed to their overall learning.

*"I'm also in favor of very interactive discussion and the various strategies of the teachers in delivering their lessons, for example, the use of (name of the teacher) various platforms or applications for his lessons or motivations" (P73)*

#### b) Multimedia Skills

The findings revealed that in the new learning environment, gadgets became the pathway in carrying out the sources of information. The acquisition of sustainable educational skills has become an important training outcome in the new normal education. One of these is the quality to acquire by using and gaining expertise in performing physical or digital tasks, called multimedia skills. The multimedia platform can stimulate the learning interests of students, offer possibilities for self-serving learning and provide support and feedback (Wang, 2009). The participants of this study revealed that the appearance of technology in learning enhances their skills specifically in this learning modality where technology is needed such as having a complete understanding of applications and appropriate use of designs in slide presentations including texts, colors, images, and even videos.

*"I become more aware of the technology that will help me as a future teacher how to edit and make various school works through word and pdf" (P8)*

### **Subtheme 2.2. Socialization in Virtual Learning Environments**

Students in a virtual school are no different from traditional school students when it comes to socialization, the central element which influences learning. Students can still interact with their instructors and even their classmates in virtual classrooms, which is critical to their success and likewise serves as a cornerstone to students' effective online learning in developing a community of inquiry. Socialization in the virtual learning environment was identified as a positive factor by the participants in an online learning modality because it allows them to stay informed about what is going on, both inside and outside the virtual classroom and draws an outline that highlights harmonious social relationships through information transmission toward academic success. This idea was supported by Yemen-Karpuzcu et al. (2017) and Aghaee and Keller (2016), that interaction between peers is critical to students' online learning. According to Yemen-Karpuzcu et al. (2017), the interaction between and among students is an important requirement for learning because it allows them to formulate new ideas, discover understanding about various concepts, and reflect on their thoughts together. The parallel interaction also encourages students to develop ideas that are capable of being implemented in the real world (Aghaee & Keller, 2016).

*"I think one of the positive hidden curriculum [sic] that I have in this flexible learning is the easiest communication with your friends like meeting them in google meet and even having a group chat." (P22)*

### **Subtheme 2.3. Conducive Virtual Learning Environment**

The provision of a conducive learning environment during virtual classes, like having a personal space while studying and the absence of external noises helped the participants to focus on their studies with the improvement of attention and reduction of stress and anxiety. It was further justified that the presence of having a good learning environment is one of the most important factors in their learning process as it helps improve their concentration as well as their mental ability to focus. According to [Hviid et al. \(2020\)](#), who backed up the consensus, a good learning environment, such as a good level of lighting in the house combined with proper ventilation, aid in improving students' academic performance.

*“In the flexible learning modality, the lesson can be revisited if I am unable to attend the class through the recordings of the discussion, that is why I don't have to worry about the lesson. Also, if I didn't understand what had been discussed, I could ask my classmates to help me understand the lesson” (P13)*

### **Negative Factors Emerging in an Online Learning Environment**

#### **Theme 3. Unfavorable Factors in an Online Learning Environment**

The drastic shift of learning discloses several effects which adversely impact the acquisition of skills and knowledge of the students. The technicality of the overall use of technology has emerged as unfavorable for students in online learning. These consequences, which include student-related factors, teacher-related factors, environment-related factors, and technology-related factors, revealed the most significant issue that participants face in this uncertain time. For them, technology is not always efficient, that it is more difficult for them to grasp concepts being taught, and that online learning leads to social isolation.

#### **Subtheme 3.1. Student-Related Factors**

These factors refer to the things and circumstances that are contributory or can be retrieved from a student's life. Student-related factors include managing school and life responsibilities, socio-economic hindrances, insufficiency of devices used in online learning, parental expectations, and health-related issues that emerged as factors affecting their learning processes.

##### **a) Managing School and Life Responsibilities**

These refer to duties, jobs, and responsibilities of a student as a child, a community servant, and a sibling such as part-time jobs, household chores, or being a servant of the church in their community. These entities were discovered to be roadblocks to students learning in an online learning environment, as their study time was spread out to accommodate their other out-of-school obligations. Some students also stated that they are doing part-time jobs just to provide something on their table, while others responded that they are babysitting while studying, simultaneously. [Ainscough et al. \(2018\)](#) supported the idea that non-academic duties such as lack of time, work commitments, social commitments, and unspecified commitments, as well as academic commitments such as content complexity and lecture time, are viewed as barriers to undergraduate students' learning.

*“...because you're at home, being asked to do household chores is inevitable and you cannot do anything about it but to obey.” (P9)*



#### b) Insufficiency of Devices Used in Online Learning

This finding refers to the capacity of students to possess gadgets and devices needed in the online learning modality. Insufficiency of devices used in online learning is also considered as a factor that negatively affects students in the online learning environment. In a virtual class, one of the requirements to survive is to have gadgets equipped with advanced specifications and a stable internet connection which are necessary for synchronous classes. Being incapable of possessing these resources is a major problem for students in online learning. This notion was supported by the study of [Noor et al. \(2020\)](#) who stated that the major problems that students face in online learning are unfavorable study environments, unequal access to gadgets, insufficient online study material, no access, or slow internet speed, and load shedding.

*“Technological challenges, so, similar to how my Wi-Fi connection is unstable, my devices appear to be in need of a rest and need to be replaced. My smartphone, which is the only device I use to enter class, occasionally collapsed, resulting in my screen being [sic] black and unable to see anything; additionally, when my phone is overheated, it will force close apps, preventing me from using them until it cools down and the worst of all, sometimes my phone will simply reboot by itself, leaving me stunned.” (P24)*

#### c) Parental Expectations

These refer to the parents' choice of words, expectations of their children that result in parental pressure. Parental expectations are always considered unfavorable factors, especially during the online learning modality. This study discovered that their parents' high expectations and standards become a burden for them to learn. According to [Eriksen \(2021\)](#), the parents' explicit demands and parental pressures negatively affect students' health, thereby affecting their class achievement.

*“Parental pressure, I can't tell my father about the pressure I'm feeling because he's sick, and I don't want to waste his sacrifices just to send me to school. However, it adds to the stress and pressure I'm feeling as a result of the things I'm dealing with or thinking about.” (P24)*

#### d) Health-Related Issues

These are the physical and psychological discomfort and illnesses brought by the new mode of learning which include eye strain, back pain, emotional stress, and pressure. These health-related issues greatly affect students' learning in an online learning environment. In the study of [Barrot et al. \(2021\)](#), as a result of the influence of the virus and the sudden shift of the education system, students' mental health together with their online learning experiences were affected.

*“Since I'm always in front of my laptop sometimes I eat late, so my health is affected, and I always have a headache so sometimes my brain cannot absorb a lot of information. I can easily get a headache when the discussion is so long, so I can't understand the whole discussion.” (P70)*

### **Subtheme 3.2. Teacher-Related Factor**

Failed instruction is a result of poor delivery and mastery of the lesson, and it is a negative factor affecting students' academic engagement during online learning.

Teachers' irrelevant citing of stories and examples is viewed as futile according to the participants and just only adds a burden to their overall learning because for them, it only consumes time and mobile data. This notion was supported by [Kromka et al. \(2020\)](#) that students find the instructor's narratives to be relevant when it is discussed concerning students' current difficulties. However, many students find the narrative irrelevant if the instructors engaged their personal stories because these may not contribute much to the course content.

*"Maybe, we were given an activity that we had no idea, or we hadn't experienced it and also didn't fit in with the subject being taught, because it's easier for students to understand if they've already experienced it." (P115)*

### **Subtheme 3.3. Environment-Related Factor**

This subtheme refers to circumstances that distract both asynchronous and synchronous classes that include noisy neighbors, household noises, animal sounds, noise from vehicles, and other environmental noises. Further, power interruptions and bad weather that affect internet signals resulting in learning disruptions are unfavorable factors affecting students' learning in the online learning mode. According to [Mina et al. \(2020\)](#), one of the cited problems that students encounter in online learning is the stress that is caused by the noise produced by the environment.

*"The unintentional/intentional noise, So, when I'm attending my class via Google Meet, there are some unintentional noises coming in, such as the sound of the chicken, the sound of the catfighting, and occasionally a vendor selling food or something, our neighbor doing some welding work, hammering metals, and so on." (P24)*

### **Subtheme 3.4. Technology-Related Factors**

This subtheme refers to the things and circumstances that have something to do with the technology that students encounter in the online learning environment. These hindrances include poor internet connection, device malfunction, and social media distractions. Hence, these are also the prime hindrances that the students of a certain university in Bangladesh are facing ([Dontre, 2021](#)), more specifically in terms of the financial crisis to access high-cost internet, and gadgets or devices. Additionally, the students' use of smartphones and social media stimulates detrimental effects to student learning during online classes.

#### **a) Internet Connectivity**

Poor and unstable internet connection is a common problem for students in online learning. It is their main source of information to acquire essential skills and knowledge during these difficult times. Many students are enduring limited data connection just to keep up with synchronous classes, and as for those with an unlimited internet connection, sudden power outage and sudden loss of the signal of their internet service providers are their main problems. This finding is not surprising anymore. It was found out in the study of [Mina et al. \(2020\)](#) that the major concerns of the undergraduate students taking up online classes include poor and weak internet connection together with sudden loss and error of connections.

*"...for me, this is the biggest problem we face that is really caused sometimes even when focused on learning. Sometimes, your teacher thinks that when they call you to speak*

*and do not respond, they think you are not listening or what, but the truth is you are really trying to find a better place to find a signal and study properly.” (P8)*

#### b) Multimedia Distractions

This refers to the distractions brought by social media platforms. Students are tempted not to listen or focus during synchronous classes and they would prefer to browse their social media sites instead. Since students are not obliged to open their cameras because of the limited internet connection, they have the full freedom to do anything behind the screen, and sometimes, they tend to chit-chat and gossip with their friends and cheat during the assessments. Distraction to social media, according to [Shetty et al. \(2022\)](#), is one of the academic challenges that students face in online learning.

*“I am distracted in social media once I saw a post that caught my attention, I am distracted [sic] the whole session. I am listening but my attention is on social media.” (P110)*

### **Generated Inputs to Improve the Teaching-Learning Processes in an Online Learning Experience**

#### **Theme 4. Proposed Inputs in Enhancing Teaching-Learning Process in an OLEx**

Teaching and learning processes may vary due to different strategies of teachers and the coping strategies of students, especially in this time of the pandemic. Proposing different factors from different struggles and experiences of the students will help the institution to address this kind of recommendation that has been part of the HC to enhance the teaching and learning processes in an online learning modality. Recommendations for the program, students, institutions, and teachers are stated, viz:

#### **Subtheme 4.1. Empowering Students Related to Academic and Extracurricular Activities**

This subtheme is a participant-provided recommendation for the program that will enhance and empower students in extracurricular activities such as inter-sectional competitions and webinars that prioritize students' mental health with utmost recognition of the HC. According to [Makarova and Reva \(2017\)](#), extracurricular activities are excellent tools to motivate language learners which positively contribute to learners in building confidence. In addition, according to [Garrecht et al. \(2018\)](#), aside from regular compulsory school hours, extracurricular activities help students to develop their decision-making and become a valuable element to their school lives.

*“Maybe teachers will give BPE students enough time to comply with the requirements and just continue co-curricular activities to boost the confidence of BPE students...” (P8)*

#### **Subtheme 4.2. Organization of Synchronous and Asynchronous Sessions**

This subtheme emerged as a recommendation for teachers to organize the scheduling of synchronous and asynchronous classes and consider students who lack resources and increase the number of asynchronous classes. Synchronous e-learning is a type of learning that has the potential to assist e-learners to form learning communities. Because they can ask and answer questions in real-time, learners and teachers perceive synchronous e-learning as more social and less frustrating. Asynchronous e-learning, on the other hand, allows learners and teachers to maintain work relationships even when

they are not online at the same time and is often facilitated by media such as email and discussion boards. Students respond positively to synchronous learning because it is engaging; however, increasing live interactions may cause scheduling issues, reduced convenience, flexibility, and effectiveness.

*"I think there are also limited things the program may do but it will really help the student, the first one is the due date of activities should be reasonable and last one is that the asynchronous meeting should be followed." (P25)*

#### **Subtheme 4.3. Constant Monitoring on the Needs of the Students**

Motivation is difficult to instill in the lives of many people, particularly students on this platform. It was discovered in this study that one of the problems that students face today is the lack of learning monitoring. In the analysis of data, the participants suggested that teachers should regularly check their conditions and the current levels of their performance in this new set-up to provide appropriate assessments toward learning. The participant investigated how the lack of teacher monitoring affected their virtual learning and stated that if the teacher monitors their status, they will later understand the appropriate assessment and approach they will take. Continuous monitoring of students' needs for continuous improvement will eventually allow the institution to adjust primarily based on students' changing needs in enhancing their learning experiences.

*"The program can administer sessions through webinars or activities in a classroom to check on students as well as teachers and address the emerging conditions that might affect the teaching and learning process. Also, simply asking questions can address the hidden curriculum, and if there are cases that need to resolve, making resolutions and problem-solving shall be taught to the students." (P50)*

#### **CONCLUSION**

The concept of the so-called "hidden curriculum" revealed that there has been an enormous outgrowth of both positive and negative elements that this new online learning platform brought to the students. The presence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was revealed as a key factor in continuous students' learning improvement in acquiring educational opportunities in the new normal learning set-up. On the contrary, the presence of environmental distractions disrupted the continuity of the teacher's teaching and the learner's learning processes, thereby affecting the steadfast acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values. This abrupt change from the students themselves, teachers, and the technology has impacted flexibility in the Bachelor of Physical Education degree program because of the new learning environment.

As hidden curriculum can be characterized by negative factors, its impact on the students' ability, personality, and functional health remains latent. By investigating the negative factors and their impacts to reveal the hidden curriculum, this study established the realization that the asthenic student-teacher relationship, and jeopardized functional health, are detrimental to students' significant learning experiences in a virtual ecology. Moreover, to create a meaningful and effective education amid the online learning modality, the students believe that stakeholders must contribute their share together to disburdening the detrimental impact of the HC on students. Practices that are beneficial for the students' acquisition of skills and knowledge must be placed at a premium. Moreover, since the HC positively affects the students as well, it is advisable to

acknowledge the positive elements of the HC to establish sustainable quality education in a virtual ecology.

These findings, however, cannot be applied to all university students. First, as the study's scope is within a certain university in Pampanga, Philippines, a similar study should be carried out with students from other colleges to discover if there are any similarities in the factors that influences students' physical ability, personality, and learning processes in the online learning environment. Second, due to the results being derived from the third year BPEd students, any finding of the study cannot be transferred to other year levels. Therefore, it is recommended for future studies to consider the other year level's perspective as it would also be interesting to explore whether the HC varies in the lenses of different year levels or programs. Lastly, since the results were derived from a single open-ended questionnaire and were administered through online context only, future researchers are recommended to utilize multiple instruments other than open-ended questions to gather wider perspectives in the so-called Hidden Curriculum.

Based on the results, motivation is a huge contributory factor toward effective learning in an online learning environment. Therefore, it is recommended that students should seek motivating factors to stay focused as they face a wide range of issues in all aspects of their lives. Since it was also proven that the acquisition of ethical and positive values helps students to gain a meaningful learning environment amid the online learning modality, it is important as well for the students to practice digital etiquette as the internet is their primary tool in online learning. Following the needs of the learners who were greatly affected by technical and technology-related issues like poor internet connectivity, malfunctioning of devices, and power outages, it is recommended for teachers to record every session and upload it through their learning management system. Internal monitoring by the college administrators is encouraged by regulating the number of activities or workloads given to the students. The requirements may be established based on the needs, priorities, safety, and benefit of the students. Also, the provision and sustainability of virtual co- and extra-curricular activities are encouraged as these promote students' sense of commitment, creativity, and rapport.

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