Whose Interest Is Served by Schooling: Primary School Teacher's Role in the Reproduction of Beliefs That Affect Equitable Education in Ethiopia

Tesfaye Ebabuye*
PhD Candidadte, Addis Ababa University, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Northern Canada
PO box 9562, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251943428645 E-mail: tesfaye.ebabuye@yahoo.com

Amare Asgedom
Professor of Education, Addis Ababa University
PO box 1176, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251911407840 E-mail: asgedomamare@gmail.com

Abstract
With the help of phenomenological qualitative research, this study examines how the hidden curriculum exclusively serves the interests of particular ethno-cultural groups in a multi-ethnic country (Ethiopia). Data gathered from 32 students using semi-structured interview questions and a cross-case analysis of the transcribed data from 4 schools showed that the implicit messages students receive through the school's hidden curriculum serve the interests of the ethno cultural majority students and teachers. As a result, pupils from ethnocultural minorities encountered challenges of schooling and the educational system as a whole. Furthermore, by perpetuating and fostering the implicit perceptions and beliefs ingrained in the design and operation of the educational system that hinder equitable quality education for all, primary school teachers and students from ethnocultural majority groups played detrimental roles. The nature of the hidden curriculum, how to manage it, and how it functions to promote the interests of particular groups should be understood by teachers in multicultural and intercultural school environments.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main objectives of education listed under the global development and sustainable goal is the provision of equitable quality education (put source here). In order to achieve the goals of universal primary education and leaving no child behind, every country in the world strives to implement the goal of equal quality education through its educational policy and practice. Ethiopia, a country in East Africa with a population of over 120 million and more than 80 distinct ethno-cultural groupings, has worked to realize the objective of equitable quality education by creating and implementing a consecutive three five-year GEQIP programs (World Bank, 2008; 2011; 2017). The last five-year program called GEQIP-E, (equitable quality) is currently in the final stages of execution. GEQIP-E aims to effectively actualize equity at the primary school level on a national scale. It is crucial to recognize how teachers, students, school administrators, community members, and other actors shape the attitudes, perceptions, and educational practices that either advance or obstruct the provision of equitable, quality education. The struggle against the promotion of ideas and school policies that prevent fair access to high-quality education is specifically where teachers and students may play a key role. In order for education to serve the interests of solely the dominant culture, it is possible for teachers and students to perpetuate those beliefs and attitudes that indirectly undermine a fair and quality education. The opposite is also true: teachers and students must play a significant role in preventing the spread of educational practices that hinder access to quality education for all students in order for the educational system's structure and procedures to work in their best interests and ensure that no child is left behind.

It is typically argued that some values, such as democracy, tolerance, and responsibility, can only be learned by experience, which is why the concept of the hidden curriculum and resistance emphasizes the necessity of democratic practice in schools. So, Ethiopian youngsters must encounter the reality of population diversity if they are to value differences and work toward common goals that are free from inherent prejudices and ethnocentrism (Ambissa, 2010). Thus, Ethiopia's primary schools with a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds must put into practice what they hope to promote, particularly promoting diversity with togetherness. A more democratic educational system cannot be developed without the democratic growth of a society. On the other hand, it is improbable that a democratic society will emerge without a more democratic

educational system. This is only possible if youngsters from various ethnocultural backgrounds and experiences perceive school as a pleasant learning environment that broadens their knowledge, competencies, and level of confidence (Jayaram, 2010).

Subtle forces shape interactions, learning, identities, and experiences within every institution. These pressures, which are largely unintended, come from the hidden curriculum, deeply ingrained attitudes, values, and presumptions about language and culture, rules and regulations, and even the design of the classroom. The phrase "hidden curriculum" was first used by author Philip Jackson in his seminal work "Life in the Classrooms" from 1968; since then, educators, sociologists, and psychologists who want to highlight what goes on in the informal education system have embraced the idea. The unstated beliefs, values, and norms that are communicated to pupils through the underlying structure and meaning ingrained in the procedure and structure of school and classroom life are referred to as the hidden curriculum, according to Giroux (1979, 1981, 1984). The school's covert curriculum and implicit norms and ideals deserve a lot of attention. There are both visible and unnoticed curriculums in schools. To build a school culture that encourages favorable attitudes toward diverse cultural groups and supports students from these groups in achieving academic achievement, certain characteristics of the school environment must be changed (Rigieta, 2017).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The assessment conducted as a starting point for the preparation of the Ethiopian education roadmap identified the main inadequacies and difficulties that prevent equitable, quality education for all at the general education level and more specifically at the elementary school level. This assessment report, which was finally incorporated in the education roadmap, showed that there are glaring inadequacies in the country's primary school settings. Yet, there are also observed gaps in the assessment's knowledge of how teachers and students contribute to the dissemination of the implicit attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs at the primary school level that prevent equitable quality education. The important question of whose interests are served by the implicit ideas and perceptions produced and reproduced in elementary school settings is not well addressed in the report. As a result, the researchers in this study are curious to learn more about and comprehend how teachers and students contribute to the development and dissemination of these beliefs and perceptions that hinder equitable access to quality education. At Ethiopia's primary schools, with a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, we are also interested in examining whose interests are served by these beliefs, perceptions, and educational methods.

National policy papers like the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia ()and national educational policy accounts, have well-depicted educational and human rights of minority groups. International human and educational rights declarations, such as the UN declarations on human rights (1948, 1966, and 1992), the minority group educational rights declaration (1992), and the cultural rights declaration (1948) have also indicated the educational and human rights of ethno cultural minority groups. Yet, the researchers are not sure of the status of Ethiopian minority students in their respective schools. The researchers are keen to investigate if the background experience and the educational rights of minority students get the attention they deserve in the educational methods, procedures and structures of schooling in ethnically diverse settings. We are also interested to understand the role of implicit beliefs and perceptions of schooling in equitable education for all. To the best of our knowledge, no research has been done on the role that teachers and students play in the production and reproduction of implicit beliefs and perceptions that prevent equitable access to quality education in Ethiopian primary schools.. Even though Ethiopian researcher have done numerous studies on multicultural education, no studies have been done on the role that education plays in advancing the interests of only particular communities. The researchers therefore used knowledge of the theories of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990, 1992, 1993) and symbolic resistance to examine and understand how the hidden curriculum serves the interests of specific groups and how teachers and students play roles in the reproduction of perceptions and beliefs that hinder equitable quality education in primary schools with a diverse ethnic and cultural population (Giroux, 1981; Giroux, 1983a; Giroux, 1983b; Willis, 1977, 1981). So, the goal of this study is to understand how the hidden curriculum serves the interests of particular groups and how teachers and students can either combat or encourage the spread of attitudes and ideas that hinder equitable access to quality education.

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

Research question 1 - How do implicit perceptions and beliefs embedded in school practices serve the interest of specific groups in primary schools in Ethiopia?

Research question 2 – What roles do primary school teachers and students play in the reproduction of beliefs and perceptions that deter equitable quality education in Ethiopia?

2. Method of Study

With the use of a constructivist and critical research paradigm (Creswell, 2013), the lived experiences of 8 teachers and 32 students from ethnocultural minorities were investigated. A qualitative phenomenological (Moustakas, 1994; VanManen, 1990; 2017) approach was used for this study's research design, which was based

on data from semi-structured interview questions for an in-depth interview with 32 purposefuly selected students and 8 teachers from four different schools with ethnic minorities. Diverse students from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds and identities were accommodated at these schools.

Ethiopia has undergone a particularly damaging war between the Tigray regional state and the federal government for the past three years since November 3, 2020, despite recent attempts to end the conflict through the Pretoria peace accord. The war devastated the nation's infrastructure for education, health care, and other forms of development, particularly in the Afar, Amhara, and Tigray regions, and caused a significant loss of human life. As a result, this research was carried out in the midst of an ongoing conflict that began in the Tigray region and quickly spread to the Afar and Amhara regions. Students from various ethnocultural backgrounds, and in particular those minority students in majority-dominated school settings, suffer multidimensional rights violations and experience discrimination, exclusion, and alienation in multiethnic and multicultural school settings as the war spread to other parts of the country on a wider and larger scale.

It was extremely risky and difficult to conduct research that requires the cooperation of internal minority students in such school environments. Purposive sampling was used to select students from ethnic minority groups based on their ethnic backgrounds, and it was not simply embraced by school administrators, district officials, and public figures. Obtaining the administrators' approval and the security forces' safe passage to the study areas required a lot of effort. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the corresponding researcher managed to recruit teachers, and students from ethnic minority groups who gave informed consent and participated in the study for a period of four months, until data saturation set in (write the months and the year here).

The researchers created 900 pages of transcriptions of the interview data at the conclusion of their fieldwork. The interview was done in the students' mother tongues; Amhara, Oromo, Tigrayan, and Woyito and the transcription of the data was translated into English as a result. The researchers identified codes from a thorough and repeated examination of the translated and transcribed data, and these codes were then put into broad category of themes. Using the identified codes and constructed themes a cross-case analysis was carriedout for comparisons.

3. Results of the study

The four schools' cross-case data analysis led to the emergence of two theories (grand themes) and eight key themes that addressed the research questions about the purposes served by the hidden curriculum built into the system and structure of education, as well as the role of primary school teachers and students in combating or promoting ideas and procedures that hinder equitable, quality education. The two themes and their related sub-themes are presented in a table with a narrative interpretation in the section below.

Table 1: The distribution of themes related to favors across the four schools

Themes	Dengelber	Kemissie	Kirakir	Chacha
Experience	X		X	
Grade	X		X	X
Power	X	X	X	X
Resource (time, space, aid)	X	X	X	X
Status	X	X	X	X
Mobility	X	X	X	X
Criticality	X	X	X	X
Resisitance		X	X	

3.1 Favors – Benefit packages

The cross-case analysis of the themes that emerged regarding the favors played by the hidden curriculum in the ethnoculturally diverse primary schools revealed that the interests of the ethnocultural majority students and teachers were served by the hidden curriculum, which implicitly manifested itself in the educational process and structures.

3.1.1 Experience

At schools Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha, the choice, arrangement, and delivery of lesson materials are done implicitly to serve the interests of the pupils from the majority ethnic group. The findings showed that teachers from the ethnocultural majority groups choose, arrange, and present curriculum materials at schools Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha that are an exact reflection of the cultural capital of the dominating majority groups. Students from the ethnocultural majority are only taught about their history, experiences, aspirations, and dreams in the classroom.

The researchers discovered that the hidden curriculum inherent in the selection, structure, and delivery of the taught curriculum sometimes also hurts ethnic and cultural majority children. Particularly at schools Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha, such a mainstream curriculum organized exclusively based on the cultural capital

of the ethnocultural majority groups disadvantaged students from ethnocultural majority groups by closing the opportunity to learn from other cultures, aspirations, and experiences. Students from ethnocultural majority groups were shaped in such a way that they began to believe themselves to be better than any other pupils who did not belong to their group. Also, it left them less prepared and deprived of the chance to learn from other ethnocultural groups in both the classroom and in society, which hurt their ability to advance.

3.1.2 Grade

Because the classroom evaluation procedures at schools Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha were purely focused on the cultural capital of the ethno cultural majority of pupils, they seized the chance and received the highest classroom grade. The failure and poorer academic accomplishment of minority pupils, however, were caused by the exclusion of their knowledge and cultural capital from both classroom instruction and, consequently, from teacher evaluation procedures. The findings for school 4 showed that when minority students' cultural capital and experiences were taken into account and included in classroom instruction and evaluation, they became more competitive and achieved better results.

3.1.3 Power

Minority students are forced to abstain from running for school leadership posts since the election procedures in schools Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha are unfair. Minority students were denied the chance to run school organizations and co-curricular power structures because the election campaigns were hegemonically controlled by teachers and students from the ethnocultural majority group. Hence, in Ethiopia's ethnoculturally diversified elementary schools, the majority ethnic group children in each instance solely hold the reins of authority.

The cross-case analysis revealed that teachers at Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha schools instructed students to elect students with the "right" cultural capital, the top ten students with communication skills who are from ethnocultural majority students supported to control the school leadership positions, such as student parliament members and leaders, student police members and leaders, teacher assessment committee members and leaders, parent-teacher and student association members, and ethnic minority students' representatives. In line with this, the example in Kemissie School also showed that participation of all students in all important issues requires the top three students to represent their class and take part in decision-making. Similarly in Kirakir School, only the top-performing students were chosen to serve in the student parliament and take part in the school's overall decision-making process.

High-achieving male students from ethnocultural majority schools benefited from the implicit curriculum that was implicitly incorporated into the school's election process for leadership positions by cultivating in them the ability to question the equity, equality, and access to quality services provided for them. Several students from ethnocultural majority groups were produced as active citizens who can contribute and actively participate in civic engagement thanks to the hidden curriculum.

The hidden curriculum communicate a belief that, male students from ethnic groups with a majority had the ability to make decisions about matters that affected students' lives at the school as members of the parent-teachers and students association. This suggests that the ethnic and cultural majority of students participate in making decisions concerning the discipline of pupils. Hence, they have a direct say in the actions and penalties conducted against students from ethnic and cultural minorities, as well as against female students from ethnic and cultural majorities. As the parent-teacher and student committee is the one to decide over a student's fate who was caught as a "lawbreaker, the ethnocultural majority male students participated in the exclusion, dismissal, warning, and penalties taken against the ethnocultural minority students and the ethnocultural majority female students.

The ethnocultural majority male students then acquire cultural and social capital that makes them extremely powerful and enables them to successfully negotiate the educational system and schooling with better decision-making power and leadership positions than ethnocultural majority female students and ethnocultural minority students.

3.1.4 Resource

The predominant ethnic group of pupils at schools Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha had plenty of access to sports equipment, libraries, and other limited school facilities. The results of the cross-case analysis demonstrated that in all four schools, the teachers selected and implemented educational methodologies that allowed children of ethnocultural majorities to occupy a large portion of the time and space in the classroom. This was due to the fact that they were already recognized as "high achievers," which gave them freedom of movement in the classroom as they served as role players, facilitators, presenters for group work, group work leaders, and artists. Thus, pupils from ethnoculturally dominant groups occupied the bulk of the open space in the classroom.

3.1.5 Status

In schools Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha, a social hierarchy was constructed via differentiation practices, classroom assessment methods, and leadership positions, with students from ethnically and culturally

majority groups holding the highest rank. Therefore, implicit beliefs embedded in these processes of schooling served the interests of students who belong to the ethnocultural majority. These favoritism practices based on student academic achievement, gender, and power consolidation benefited these students to get the higher privilege in these schools.

The cross-case analysis conducted regarding the contribution of teachers to the development of attitudes and institutional norms that hinder equitable access to high-quality education attested that, across Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha teachers conveyed discriminatory messages and meaning structures through the hidden curriculum embedded in their choice, application, and management of classroom instructional approaches. The researcher discovered that the implicit attitudes and behaviors that prevent the implementation of an equal quality education for everyone in the ethnoculturally diverse primary schools are deepened by the teacher's selection and execution of classroom instructional methodologies. The cultural and social capital of the ethnocultural majority groups was encouraged and promoted by the chosen and implemented instructional methodologies shown in these schools.

3.1.6 Mobility

While the mobility of the ethnocultural majority students in Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha is commendable given their exclusive access to the right and higher resources, grades, power, and status, the dreams and aspirations of ethnocultural minority students are dashed, and the likelihood and degree of dropout from school are very high.

Teachers consequently agreed that the so-called "Top Ten," which was made up primarily of male students from ethnic majority groups, should make use of the limited resources. Since they were cast as "others," "the incompetent," "the immigrants," "the usurpers," "the violent," and "the unsettling," students from ethnic minorities were dissuaded from aiming for a better educational outcome and educational mobility. They frequently hold the opinion that their history and experiences are not relevant to learning and teaching. Hence, they disregarded their experiences and goals related to their ethnocultural past, but they tended to adopt and adhere to the "highly valued" and dominant culture of the ethnocultural majority groups.

3.1.7 Critical thinking

As members and leaders of the student police in Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha schools, ethnic-cultural majority male students obtained the unique power to make surveillance against other pupils in the ethno-culturally varied primary schools. High-achieving ethnically and culturally diverse male students had plenty of opportunities to hone their critical thinking, true judgment, critiques, reasoning, and evaluation abilities as members of the teacher assessment committee and leaders. The hidden curriculum contributes to the development of male pupils from ethnocultural majorities who reflect and challenge the effectiveness of their instructors and other school authorities. They had the chance to create a counterbalance and a power of check and balance against the school administration.

The cross-case analysis also demonstrated that the hidden curriculum implicitly manifested in the school election system for power and leadership positions in the school and classroom served the interests of male students from the ethnocultural majority by facilitating their election as representatives of ethics in the schoolyard.

3.1.8 Resistance

At Kemissie and Kirakir schools, ethnic minority students occasionally show symbolic opposition to the arbitrarily set regulations and disciplinary procedures, as well as the arbitrarily allotted resources and the exclusive use of those resources by ethnic minority students. As a result, they coordinate and support quiet opposition against these procedures and the educational system. They are frequently identifiable and branded as rioters. According to the cross-case research, it was discovered that students from ethnic and cultural minorities were acting symbolically against the ideologies that were being inculcated into them via the structure and procedure of education. Nonetheless, they used graffiti, dress regulations, communication rules, class cutting, and sometimes dropping out of school as passive and symbolic forms of resistance.

The students from the ethnocultural minority groups demonstrated their passive resistance by drawing codes and symbols on their uniforms, as well as occasionally the names of heroes from their background whose history and triumph were never told in schools or were told in a negative way in the context of the school and society. Also, it was discovered that, as a kind of resistance to the educational system, ethnocultural minority students generally skipped classes, arrived late for school, and were not actively participating in classroom discourse, classroom activity, or group discussions. Also, it was shown that in schools with a diversity of cultures, ethnic minority kids form friendships with "in-group" peers in the hope that they will be able to defend themselves against any insensitive behavior on the part of ethnic minority students, teachers, or administrators. They typically engaged in resistance to school initiatives and felt unfairness and prejudice against them because of these in-group connections and ties. These intra-group relationships and affiliations can occasionally lead to physical altercations, especially outside of the school grounds.

However, all the symbolic resistance demonstrated by ethno cultural minority students especially at school

2 and 3 ended with hurting the minority students themselves. Because as they cut classes, drop out of school and exhibit bad behaviors they became expelled from schooling and hence they educational mobility aborted. Hence, resistance in schooling and then form of its manifestation disadvantaged the minority students.

Table 2. The distribution of themes related to teachers multiskilling and flexibility across the four schools

Themes	Dengelber	Kemmissie	Kirakir	Chacha
Conspirators		X	X	
Judges		X	X	X
Ambassadors	X	X	X	X
Accreditors	X	X	X	X
Manipulators		X	X	X
Donors	X	X	X	X
Lobbysis/Activists	X	X	X	X
Gate keepers	X	X	X	

3.2 Multiskilling and flexibility

In the four selected ethnoculturally diverse primary schools, a cross-case analysis of the role of teachers and students in fostering or combating school practices and beliefs that hinder equitable quality education revealed that teachers actively supported these practices and beliefs through the hidden curriculum that was implicitly ingrained and made manifest through the educational process and structures. The researchers found teachers are versatile role players who act as spy, conspirator, preacher, judge, guardian at the same time in ethno culturally diverse school settings.

3.2.1 Conspirators

Teachers are skilled at identifying and interacting with a student whom they perceived as a pleasing one and they approach in a positive way. As a result, pupils who are successful in pleasing teachers receive better grades, awards, and high expectations, which contributes to the inequality of different students with different backgrounds and it also created a barrier for providing all students with quality education.

Teachers and students at Kemmissie and Kirakir schools collude against one another, according to the cross-case analysis conducted across the four institutions. Even though both ethnocultural minority and majority students are extremely aware of the implicit rules and expectations of teachers, they nonetheless try to placate them with the "correct" standards of behavior. Teachers are skilled at implicitly favoring the students who belong to the ethnocultural majority.

3.2.2 Judges

At Dengelber, Kemmissie, Kirakir and Chacha schools teachers who belong to the ethnocultural majority serve as judges. They punish misbehaving students and those who violate the school's policies and disciplinary measures. They decide on sanctions and penalties for students, which might include expulsion from school and fines. They never give suspicious pupils a chance to express their concerns, yet they nonetheless make a decision on their own that is regarded as the final word. Students who are accused of violating school policies, including occasionally unwritten ones, do not have the right to critically examine the claims and the repercussions of any alleged wrongdoing.

The researchers observed school officials and teachers in Dengelber, Kemmissie, Kirakir and Chacha schools as they used a variety of sanctions against students from ethnic and cultural minorities, including reprimanding, scolding, taking points off of grades and test scores, corporal punishment, warning letters, calling parents and issuing warnings, and expulsion from school for a year. The researchers evaluated these school practices by teachers as they were giving an implicit message to ethnic and cultural minority children that they are helpless to modify and criticize teachers' arbitrary punishment methods. These school procedures gave students the impression that their only choice is to remain silent and submit to the sanctions imposed on them.

Teachers were seen taking possession of pupils' belongings in numerous instances as a form of retribution for their minor transgressions. Teachers have also been seen bullying students who attempted to stand up for their human and educational rights, as well as burning student belongings on the school grounds. Also, it was noted that teachers were omitting pupils from class for lengthy periods of time, including days, weeks, and sometimes entire years. As a result, in the primary schools, which have a diverse ethnic and cultural population, teachers contribute to the development of discipline practices that undermine equal quality education.

3.2.3 Ambassadors

Teachers and students from ethnic and cultural majority groups serve as ambassadors in Dengelber and Kirakir schools. As representatives of ethics and moral character, these educators and pupils have been chosen by the school administration as role models and ambassadors. Other members of the school community including ethnocultural minority students are not given a clear explanation of the selection and nomination procedures or intentions. These teachers and students can only serve as ambassadors for ethics and good behavior because of

the school administration's arbitrary selection and nomination.

3.2.4 Accreditors

With the help of the tests and exams they administer in class, teachers in Dengelber, Kirakir and Chacha schools serve as accreditors, classifying pupils as high and low performers. Different expectations were developed for different pupils in different ability groups as a result of the students' arbitrary classification into various ability-based, segregated classroom groupings. This, in turn, discouraged equitable, quality education for all in elementary schools with a mixed ethnic and cultural population. The situation in Kemissie school is unique because majority and minority students from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds attend their education while being seated in various classrooms with various shifting systems.

3.2.5 Manipulators

Teachers who are members of ethnic majority groups deselect and select the objectives and content of their instructional sessions to incorporate their narratives, histories, and areas of interest and to omit the cultural capital, background, and experience of "others" across Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha schools. These teachers were observed using their own cultural and social capital exclusively to plan and deliver lessons in the classroom that excluded the experiences, aspirations, dreams, backgrounds, and narratives of students from ethnocultural minority groups, crippling the provision of equitable, high-quality education.

The selection, arrangement, and delivery of course material are particularly affected by teachers' beliefs, according to a cross-case examination of the researchers' classroom observations. And it was discovered that these belief systems actually manifested themselves in their methods of curriculum adaptation and classroom instruction.

3.2.6 Donors

Classroom observations by researchers at Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha schools revealed that teachers who belong to an ethnocultural majority discriminate against pupils who belong to an ethnocultural minority. While choosing and applying instructional strategies, teachers who belong to ethnic or cultural majorities discriminate against students in terms of their access to the classroom, academic time, classroom space, and teaching aids and resources. The researcher saw that teachers from ethno cultural majorities exclusively donated pupils from the ethnocultural majority had plenty of opportunities to use the time, space, and resources for classroom instruction entirely. Owing to this technique, culturally diverse primary schools become exact replicas of society outside of the classroom, where there is worrisome mistrust and suspicion among people who are members of different ethnocultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences.

3.2.7 Lobbyists

Teachers were found to have implicitly discriminatory roles in the selection, deselection, inclusion, and exclusion of students based on their cultural background and cultural capital. According to the researchers' observations of the implementation of these election systems at Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha schools the unfair school election systems at the ethnoculturally diverse primary schools engrained prejudice and discriminatory beliefs that disadvantaged and excluded students from ethnic and cultural minority groups from prominent leadership positions and power structures.

Teachers through the hidden curriculum, which appeared in these school election systems, sent the message that only students who can express themselves clearly and fluently in the language of the majority, who have excellent academic performance, typically ranking 1–3 in the class, have excellent moral character, and who can win the support of the majority of their peers, should represent students at all leadership and power structures. Teachers were thus seen to be encouraging students from the majority ethnic group to run co-curricular and extracurricular clubs, leading to an inequitable educational experience for students from various ethnic groups. The ideas that "students from ethno-cultural majority groups are well disciplined, high achievers, and capable of leading co-curricular and extracurricular clubs and activities" were being spread by teachers in a tacit way.

3.2.8 Gatekeepers

According to the cross-case study conducted in this regard, teachers at Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha schools encourage attitudes and behaviors that prevent equal access to high-quality education by using terminology and labeling against various students from various backgrounds as part of a hidden curriculum. Teachers at all of the primary schools chosen for this research, which are ethnoculturally diverse, created and employed school labeling languages and terminology to categorize and group pupils into several stereotypical groupings. Hence, through the hidden signals and meaning structures ingrained in teachers' labeling language and terminologies across the cases, teachers promoted school behaviors and attitudes that hinder equal quality education.

Many labeling concepts and words that send prejudiced, stereotyped, and discriminatory messages to students from cultural minorities have been established and utilized by teachers at Dengelber, Kemissie, Kirakir and Chacha schools. The cross-case findings also showed that teachers from ethnic majority groups frequently reprimanded ethnic minority students, which caused them to accept and act in accordance with the preconceived notions and judgments of teachers against them in the schoolyard. In a variety of educational settings, the

researchers saw teachers using various labeling terminologies and language against students from ethnic and cultural minorities, which contributed to inequitable education among varied students..

4.   DISCUSSION

The goal of this research was to investigate and understand how the hidden curriculum functions to further the interests of particular groups through the process and structure of education. It also looked at how teachers can either combat or encourage the spread of implicit beliefs and school policies that prevent equitable access to quality education. The study's findings thus showed that the hidden curriculum of education through grades, as well as the power, mobility, and hegemony of their cultural capital in the classroom's instructional approaches and assessment techniques, serve the interests of ethnocultural majority groups, including majority students. Some institutional features of schools often deny some student groups equitable educational opportunity (Banks & Banks, 2010). Such a strategy teaches students from dominant groups that they are the norm, and as a result, they frequently believe that anyone who is different from them is intellectually or culturally underprivileged. Students from subjugated cultures, on the other hand, accept the idea that their cultures, families, languages, and experiences are inferior and begin to feel inferior. And so, the function of the hidden curriculum is social control, which has been defined variously as political socialization, inculcation of values, preservation of a class system, training in obedience and docility, and so forth (Apple, 2004; Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1995). These teachers exclude ethnocultural minority students and deny them the right to utilize the time, space, authority, and resources of the classroom through their choice and implementation of teaching practices that discriminate against students based on their ethnic backgrounds. Similar to this, Kay and Liz (1997) claimed that assessment is problematic because it implies that students actively create their own versions of the hidden curriculum based on their experiences with assessment. Teachers should examine these processes as a whole rather than in isolation. Each of their pupils is a part of numerous status groups at once, and these affiliations, in combination with social dynamics in general, determine how each student thinks and behaves. According to Carol and Jane (2014), although being a member of an ethnic minority group does not always entail economic disadvantage or have the same implications, students with low economic and ethnic minority status may be particularly at risk of poor academic achievement, particularly subject to low teacher expectations, and among those least likely to be identified for advanced academic classes. Similarly, Victor (2016), found that teachers had lower expectations for minority students than for the other groups, especially the ethnocultural majority students.

Teachers by their choice and implementation of instructional methodologies that discriminate against the ethnic and cultural minority pupils, they were actively implicated in increasing beliefs and school practices that undermine equitable quality education. Students from ethnic and cultural minority groups developed conforming and non-questioning behaviors by accepting the unfair judgments made against them without critically analyzing and questioning their applicability. Ethnic minority students in the majority dominated classroom increase the likelihood that they may experience victimization, rejection, and exclusion compared to more ethnic minority students in ethnic minority dominated classrooms (Ozdemir, Sun, Korol, & Statin, 2018). When neither the teacher nor the students are entirely aware of the subliminal cultural signals being expressed and reinforced through the hidden curriculum, the classroom can truly become deadly (Giroux, 1979, 1981, 1983, 1984). Students from ethnic and cultural minorities were forced to believe that education and academic mobility should not be among their life goals since they lack the ability to perform better than other groups. Similarly, Apple (1980) stated that schools reflect society, particularly in the classroom's unspoken curriculum. Schools, with their social relationships, and covert teaching, essentially assure the development of docile laborers that a society needs.

The research also showed that teachers were actively involved in the production and reproduction of a variety of labeling terminology and words that discriminate against, and stereotype, students from ethnic and cultural minorities. The cultural capital of ethno cultural majority students was the sole factor considered by teachers when choosing, organizing, and delivering classroom experiences and content, as well as when conducting classroom assessments. According to Merfat's (2015) research, ethnic and cultural minority groups assigned to the lower tracks were thus taught that their concerns, opinions, and aspirations didn't matter as much as those of their privileged peers in the advanced tracks, who belonged to the ethnocultural majority. They also received instruction in academic material that was of a lower level. Similar to this, Kay & Liz (1997) noted that evaluation is frequently emphasized in the educational literature as the educational technique that most effectively sets the hidden curriculum. With their use of classroom evaluation procedures, teachers from ethnically and culturally dominant groups contribute to the deterrence of equitable quality education. The assessment methods created by the teacher in the classroom were utilized to subtly favor students from ethnocultural majority groups.

The study found that teachers from the ethnocultural majority groups contributed to the spread of beliefs and perceptions that hindered equitable access to quality education by promoting prejudice and stereotyping through teaching methods and primary school structures. Similar findings were made by Ozdemir, Sun, Korol,

and Statin (2018), who found that members of mainstream society may view the rise of ethnic minorities as a threat to the very existence of their cultural norms and values. Pupils in elementary schools with a diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds contribute to the development of prejudice towards students from ethnic and cultural minorities and obstruct a fair and quality education for all. The findings also showed that teachers play the roles of judges, activists, and distillers, which encouraged the spread of ideas and school policies that prevent equitable quality education. The findings of this study also showed that teachers, through the hidden curriculum ingrained in school labeling language, actively and covertly participate in the creation and usage of labeling terms and language that discriminate against and prejudice ethnocultural minority pupils. Similar findings were made by Mark (1995), who found that class, gender, and ethnicity may all have an impact on teachers' perceptions, which in turn can have an impact on what curricula are offered, how they are taught, and how they are evaluated. As a result, they were encouraging the use of these prejudiced and stereotypical terms, which discouraged equal access to quality education.

With individualized education, teachers contributed to the discrimination and exclusion of children from ethnic and cultural minorities. It was discovered that children from ethnic and cultural minority groups were actually disadvantageous by differentiated instruction. In this regard, Merfat (2015) discovered that curricular differentiation is one component of the social structure that originally develops in schools and limits individual agency. It is particularly alarming when the curriculum is differentiated based on characteristics of status groups, such as ethnicity, gender, parental socioeconomic status, immigrant status, or disability status, as it suggests that not all pupils have an equal chance to succeed in school. These differential opportunities may result in lifetime differences in employment, health, and well-being. It appears that teachers and pupils from ethnocultural majority groups have grown to hate, fear, and suspect anyone who does not share their ethnicity, culture, or language. As a result, schools, through their instructional strategies and teaching methods, perfectly reflect the society beyond their doors, where there is frightening mistrust and hostility among the members of various ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds in Ethiopia. Similar to this study, it was discovered that pupils from ethnically and culturally underrepresented backgrounds are more likely to suffer injustice in environments where those majority groups predominate (Ozdemir, Sun, Korol, & Statin, 2018).

Teachers unwittingly encouraged activities that drove pupils to choose students from ethnocultural majority groups who have the "desired" social and cultural capital to be leaders and solely hold school leadership posts. These practices were supported by school election procedures. According to Jean, Floyd, and Jenny (2017), the hidden curriculum heavily emphasizes students' coping mechanisms and methods for assimilating into the power dynamics of school culture. Teachers and school officials' actions during the school election process subtly convey the idea that because members of ethnic and cultural minorities lack the "desired" social and cultural capital, they are not eligible to serve as leaders. Teachers and school administrators were subtly encouraging the idea that students from the ethnocultural and linguistic majority groups are naturally suited for positions of leadership and power, but that students from the minority groups are not, and should not aspire to, hold such positions. Similar findings were made by Ozdemir, Sun, Korol, and Statin (2018), who discovered that asymmetric power interactions develop as classes grow more ethnically homogenous. Adolescents from ethnic linguistic minorities in such situations frequently lack assistance and have less numerical or social influence than their peers from ethnic linguistic majorities.

The researchers discovered that through the hidden curriculum ingrained in the operation and practice of co-curricular and extracurricular activities, teachers actively but covertly create views that prevent equitable quality education. According to Apple (1981), our educational institutions may not be as effective as we would like in promoting equality and democracy. The overt and covert information found in schools contributes significantly to the persistence of a stratified social order that is glaringly uneven by gender, class, and ethnicity.

With their implicit views and school practices ingrained in school discipline and rule systems, teachers were also covertly contributing to the impediment of equitable quality education. Teachers from the ethnocultural majority subtly convey to students from ethnocultural minority groups that they are the most disturbing pupils in the school and should be severely disciplined, expelled, and excluded from education. Similarly, Padma (1990) discovered that teachers' views, biases, and actions subtle or overt, conscious or unconscious operate to discriminate against pupils from underrepresented groups, girls, children from scheduled castes and tribes, and students from low-income parents.

There is evidence that students from ethnocultural minority backgrounds have negative schooling experiences that limit their opportunities to improve their background experiences, sociocultural identity, knowledge, and skills. The reaction of ethnocultural minority students to this form of schooling process and structure was opposition and resistance. A schooling process and structure that disempowers ethnocultural minority students is usually met with stiff resistance and opposition from these students. Students express their symbolic opposition to schooling through various forms of implicit opposition. The study revealed that the ethno cultural minority students demonstrated the symbolic and passive resistance to schooling and the education system. Similar to this, Bernstein (2013) indicated that students from ethnic and cultural minorities exhibit

resistance on many different levels and in a variety of ways, including by engaging in serious behavioral problems, refusing to accept the teacher's beliefs. The students from the ethnocultural minority were acting in passive defiance of the authorities' rulings on several matters that were important to them. Teachers and school administrators, however, frequently classify these actions as misbehavior and administer punitive measures for these students (Katy, 2012). The researchers noticed the pupils from ethnic and cultural minorities muttering when they were disciplined for teacher-perceived offenses and breaking rules like attire and communication regulations. Similar to this result, Giroux (1983) suggested that these students may use comicalness to disrupt a class, use group pressure to distract teachers from class lessons, or purposefully disobey the teacher's instructions while attempting to create shared spaces. Students from ethnic and cultural minorities avoid participating in class discussion and debate and often refuse to respond to queries from the teacher. There is overwhelming evidence that students who are dissatisfied and uninterested in the typical educational experience engage in resistance activities, attempt to influence the dominant culture, or refrain from participating in such activities (Anyon, 1980; Giroux, 1983; Willis, 1977).

The hidden curriculum, which is implicitly embedded in the process and structure of schooling, allows ethnocultural minority students to question some of the beliefs and practices that impede equitable quality education. Some of them try to figure out why the school arbitrarily excludes them based on their ethnocultural background. They also questioned why teachers and students from ethnocultural majority groups arbitrarily label them with discriminatory terminology and language. Students from ethnic and cultural minorities used multidimensional opposition and resistance techniques to demonstrate their symbolic opposition to schooling. Because of this, students who are resistant frequently have bad school experiences that uphold the injustices that are motivating them to be resistant. Lack of academic credentials or being branded as someone who is unable or unwilling to learn could limit one's possibilities in the future (Katy, 2012). These students never experience the sense of freedom or control over their destinies that other resistant change agents in society may enjoy.

5. Conclusion and implications

The results and subsequent discussion of the results of this research demonstrated that in these educational settings, the assumption and notion about the role of formal education as an instrument of individual achievement, equal opportunity, and large-scale social mobility have been broken. The educational system is set up in a way that favors pupils from the majority ethnocultural group while ignoring the needs of minority students. Teachers play a key role in the creation and perpetuation of inequality among various students with different ethnocultural backgrounds and experiences due to the way education is organized and carried out in these schools, which subtly convey messages that favor the cultural capital of the majority groups. Teachers who belonged to the ethnocultural majority in these institutions played roles that encouraged the transmission of beliefs, perceptions and school practices that hindered fair access to quality education.

Many students are reducing their involvement in daily school practices while simultaneously displaying superficial conformity to the school's ideology, and they are choosing styles of resistance that are silently revolutionary in the most immediate sense but can be politically progressive in the long run. Ethnic cultural minority students never explicitly ignore and oppose the dominant culture of the ethnocultural majority group; instead, they usually fight against teachers and school authorities through symbolic resistance and school opposition. They expressed opposition to the structure and process of schooling through symbolic oppositions and resistance implicitly embedded in their cultural capital, such as dress, walking style, language accent, and terminology use. Teachers and school officials were opposed because ethnocultural minority students believed that school segregation, differentiation, and different treatment of students based on their ethnic background were based on teachers' biased perceptions and negative expectations of them. The hidden curriculum, which was implicitly embedded in the process and structure of schooling, resulted in ethnocultural minority students' resistance to the education system. Resistance was thus produced, allowing ethnocultural minority students to demonstrate symbolic resistance and opposition against some forms of teacher and school authority, modes of instruction, classroom assessment techniques, and arbitrarily defined labeling and stereotyping language and terminology. We can be optimistic and hope that by constructing action rooms, the school community will go some way toward critically questioning, challenging, and posing the possibility of changing them. In order to accept disparities among various pupils with various ethnocultural origins, the implicit beliefs, values, dispositions, and educational procedures generally need to be modified and rebuilt. The hidden curriculum and its implicit attitudes and values, which actively promote educational unfairness and inequality among different students, should receive a lot more attention.

Teachers in multicultural education settings require training to improve their knowledge of and skills in managing the hidden curriculum in the classroom, including its conception, manifestation, function, and role in stratification of pupils according to social status.

But, in order to create a society that is more equal, just, and functional, we must consider the reasons why certain students who are less fortunate than their more fortunate counterparts obtain education that is of a

significantly lesser caliber. We must understand why the aspirations and dreams of students with little economic and social status continue to go unmet in terms of their educational demands.

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