The Veiled Curriculum and the Capability of Youth to Resist Negative Peer Pressure

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Abstract

Most parents/guardians hope their children would be faced with only positive peer pressure, but many young people grapple with negative peer pressure-that seemingly overwhelming push to conform to harmful behaviors like drug abuse. This article reports research findings from a research conducted on the role played by accidental messages arising from social interactions in learning contexts on young people?s choices to follow their peers or not to imitate them. The target population of the investigation included 1246 young people from higher learning institutions in Nairobi city county. The researcher employed Taro Yamennes? sample size calculation formula in determining the sample size. The researcher used a self-made questionnaire with 64 items with a consistency coefficient of 0.83 and an interview guide with 14 items to gather data. The study results showed that inadvertent messages arising from peer interrelationships shape youths? ways of thinking, decision making, and their behavior.

Index terms— peers, veiled curriculum, at-risk youth, resist, negative peer pressure.

1 Introduction

verybody experiences peer pressure, but young people are more vulnerable to negative peer pressure and its damaging consequences because of their strong desire to belong and fit in. Peer pressure is mostly subtle and young people express it through behaving in ways that their peers believe is appropriate but other times social or peer pressure is more direct-coercing young people to do things they know are not right. Some young people are currently experiencing pressure that is influencing their willingness and ability to maintain safe behaviors around COVID-19 pandemic (Loriggio, 2020& Koenig, 2020). A research conducted by Wilson at. el., in 2020 revealed that some young people were experiencing "social or peer pressure to not wear a mask-reportedly receiving 'negative reactions' or 'odd looks' from their peers when wearing a mask or feeling 'weird' about wearing a mask" (p.1498). As defined by Hartney (2020) and Dabü (2018, p. 1), peer pressure is the influence peers have on one another while peers are part of one's social circle who tend to be of similar age group or share similar circumstances like same abilities, or status.

A peer does not always refer to a close friend because peers can include one's classmates, playmates, neighbors, churchmates or even classmates. Peers spend a lot of time together and that is why sometimes they unintentionally pick up some of their peers' habits and take risks they would avoid in the absence of their friends **??**Kleinschmidt 2018, p. 1). This observation concurs with **??**ipoff (2011) who claimed that peer pressure is not only stressful and overwhelming on young people, but it also alters the way one's brain behaves and as a result emotionally insecure young people feel crippled to control their own lives.

One's desire to belong persuades him or her to do things he or she knows are wrong while others succumb to negative peer pressure because of fear of the thought of getting kicked out of the peer group. Low levels of self-confidence and poor self-esteem are major reasons why some young people succumb to negative peer pressure. According to Aragon (2006), insecure young people often yield to risky behaviors like drug abuse, promiscuous sexual behavior, and even radicalization. Cummings & Miller-Graff (2015) defined "emotional

security as a regulatory process mirrored in people's higher-order organization response systems covering various cognitive, social, physiological, and emotional domains, which enable an individual to positively endure negative life situations (p.1). While emotionally secure people make decisions for themselves based on their core values and do not easily bow to negative peer pressure, emotionally insecure people lack the endurance to carry on and are easily overwhelmed by life challenges (Degges-White, 2017). The more insecure a person is, the easier it is for social groups to influence him or her to behave in particular ways.

Negative peer pressure can lead to high stress levels among young people, depression, antisocial behaviors, and poor decision-making. Both the silent and articulated peer pressure shape young people's ways of thinking and their choices to conform or not to conform (Calv´o-Armengol & Jackson, 2009). Passive or silent peer pressure stems from a young person who feels pressured to dress or behave like those who appear to have high social status among his or her peer group members while the articulated or active peer pressure involves young people intentionally behaving in a manner to pressure their peers to change their attitude towards certain things and behavior in certain ways which can be as simple as a high school student making fun of another student's way of dressing.

Peer pressure is strongest in learning contexts where young people spend on average 900 hours a year, interacting, and socializing with other peers (Bush, Ryan & Rose, 2011), during their formative years. This means creating conducive learning contexts would empower young people to not only say NO to negative peer pressure but to positively engage their brains in choosing friends wisely-peers who will not pressure them into doing paraphernalia that are likely to ruin their present and future lives (**??**Lipoff, 2011). Attention is however often directed towards young people's formal schooling because as noted by Melhuish et al. (2015) and Montaigne's (2013) it is perceived as significant in developing young peoples' competencies that reflect positively on their whole lives including their academic performance. The veiled curriculum however accounts for close to 90 percent of all young people's learning experiences (Massialas & Joseph, 2009 **??**&kcu, 2012). According to Alsubaie (2015), among other researchers, the veiled curriculum is more penetrative than the formal curriculum and its impact is felt by all in every learning context. This observation is echoed by Crossman (2019) who suggested that the veiled curriculum remains the most effective in inculcating moral values among upcoming generations as compared to the official curriculum. The researcher's desire to offer viable ways of holistically nurturing young people to be in sync with upright norms that can guide them in making wise choices, augmented the need to investigate on the role played by accidental messages arising from social interactions in learning contexts on young people's ability to resist negative peer pressure. The research was majorly guided by two specific objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between accidental messages arising from how role models in learning contexts say what they say and do what they do and young people's ability to resist negative peer pressure. 2. To determine the relationship between accidental messages arising from the values and beliefs role models cherish and young people's ability to resist negative peer pressure.

II.

2   Review of Related Literature

Learning context are characterized by three sorts of curricula (Sharpe, 2013 andAzimpour & **??**halilzad, 2015). The first type of curriculum is generally referred to as the 'official' curriculum. It contains detailed objectives and set learning activities and is prepared by authorized specialists. The second sort of curriculum comprises elements that are not included in the officially planned learning activities and is often referred to as 'the informal curriculum.' The third type of curriculum comprise accidental lessons arising from how activities in learning contexts are conducted as well as how people say what they say and do what they do-generally referred to as the hidden curriculum. One of the key aspects of the veiled curriculum that affects young people's learning and behavior involves peer influence (Rietveld, 2010). According to a research conducted by Rex in 2000) and Crossman in 2019 peers can diminish or enhance young peoples' enthusiasm to participate in learning activities and feel appreciated or be part of a specific peer group which is sometimes a cause of rebellion and misbehavior. This observation is in line with Ndakwa (2013) and **??**ukman and Kamadi (2014) who claimed that young people take up their peers at school as their role models.

The concept of a veiled curriculum dates back more than a century to John Dewey (1938), but the phrase hidden curriculum was coined by Phillip Jackson in 1968. It is based on the recognition that young people engross unrecorded lessons such as how they should relate with peers which are not openly recorded in any official curriculum. The main aim in this research is to spur educators to explore the intersections between the veiled curriculum and students' ability to resist negative peer pressure. The endeavor is informed by researchers like Massialas & Joseph (2009), **??**ubukçu (2012) and Crossman (2019), among other researchers who suggested that accidental lessons arising from the emotional, and social atmosphere of learning contexts, accounts for close to 90 percent of all young people's learning outcomes and have strong influence on young people's ways of thinking including their decision making.

According do what they do shape young people's beliefs, attitudes, and moral principles as well as their behavior have significant effects on learners' attitude, feelings, and their ethical conduct. Peer pressure is not exclusive in learning institutions, but students' anxiety is compounded by academic coursework demands, which more often than not, increases their risk of sexual promiscuity, substance abuse, stress and sometimes radicalization

(Mahmoud, Staten, Hall & Lennie, 2012). The stress weakens their self-confidence and negatively influences their ways of thinking, their behavior, and the kind of people they become.

Substantial amount of research has explored inner workings of learning institutions as well as the mechanisms through which schooling can reinforce cultural ideologies that serve dominant interests like ethnic, class, gender, or market interest (Apple 1995). For example, Giroux (2001), who is functionalist, argued that learning contexts not only provides instructions but also values, norms, and principles throughout young people's lives. Curriculum re-conceptualists like Apple (2004) saw the veiled curriculum as conveying values, beliefs, and attitude to young people as part of the overall school culture, but such learning is not explicitly stated in the official curriculum document. According to Dickerson (2007), the veiled curriculum comprises unintended lessons young people imbibe through experiences of being in a learning context rather than what they learn through the specified educational objectives. Other scholars like Margolis (2001) focused on the cognitive side of the veiled curriculum- the content of the subject matter because they believed every subject a teacher teaches has a veiled curriculum which is sometimes in contradiction with the goals of the official curriculum. Fyock (2008) Alsubaie (2015) students not only learn the content officially taught but also pick numerous unspoken lessons arising from undersigned teacher-student interactions which directly and indirectly exert both positive and negative force on their behaviour. This article focused on the relationship between young peoples' experiences in learning contexts and their succumbing to negative peer pressure. This is because veiled curricular exists whether educators want it to or not and we are better advised if we were cognizant of the accidental lessons arising from interrelationships in learning contexts and how best we can tap its positive elements to holistically nurture young people to resist negative peer pressure.

3 III.

4 Methods

The research employed mixed methods-"a research approach whereby researchers collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study" (Shorten and Smith, 2017).

5 a) Design

The research employed sequential mixed methods design to minimize limitations of either approach. The researcher began with quantitative data collection and analysis phase, which informed the follow-up qualitative phase to explain and enrich the quantitative data as suggested by Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) and Hubbard (2010). The researcher went through the filled questionnaires to identify factors tested in the first phase that respondents had perceived as having significant (strongly agree) or not having significant (strongly disagree) influence on their ways of thinking and used them to develop an interview guide with 14 open-ended items to gather in-depth explanations through face-to-face interviews.

6 b) Environment

The target population of the research was 1246 undergraduate students in Christian universities in Nairobi City County. The researcher employed Taro Yamane's sample size calculation formula. The formula is given by n = N/ (one + Ne^2): where n=corrected sample size, N = population size, and e = Margin of error (MoE), e=0.05. Hence at 5% MoE., the sample size from Africa International University was 680 (1+680 (0.05^2) = 680/2.7 = 251.85~252 while from Kenya Methodist University was 566/ (1+566 (0.05^2) = 566/2.42 = 233.884~234-a total of 486 youth. The researcher stratified students in each university and proportionately selected random samples of students. According to Creswell (2009), stratified sampling produces are more inclusive because they incorporate sub-groups of small populations, which researchers are likely to leave out if they employ other sampling procedures.

7 c) Respondents

The sub-groups at KeMu students were also divided according to three schools: school of education & social sciences (SESS), school of business and economics (SBE) and school of medicine, health sciences & technology (SMHST) while at AIU the subgroups included school of theological studies (STS), school of business and economics (SBE) and school of education arts & social sciences (SEAS). Table 1 summarized samples drawn from the universities' student populations.

8 d) Instruments

The researcher used a self-developed questionnaire with five-point rating scale: strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree and strongly disagree. The content validity of the 64-item questionnaire was determined by four research experts determined while its reliability was determined through Chronbach's alpha which gave a reliability coefficient of 0.83.

9 e) Data Gathering

With permission from National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI), the researcher personally distributed 486 questionnaires. Out the distributed questionnaires 417 were correctly filled and returned. The researcher also conducted faceto-face interviews with 10 key informants to comprehensively explore the why and how of accidental lessons. The researcher met all the participants, and after explaining the aims of the research, she invited each of them to participate in the research.

10 f) Treatment of Data

Data was analyzed using descriptive and Pearson correlation statistics in the SPSS program version 25 program. The descriptive statistics determined frequency of respondents' views on the Likert scales while the Pearson correlation coefficient tested, the relationship between independents and dependent variables. The grounded theory analysis approach was utilized in analyzing the qualitative data because it offers researchers a more neutral view of understanding human behavior their normal social context.

11 IV.

12 Findings and Discussions

As revealed by the findings reported in this article, the primary value of the veiled curriculum is that it calls attention to aspects of schooling that are rarely acknowledged and majorly remains unexamined. The descriptive statistics indicated that most of the respondents agreed that accidental messages arising from learning institution's interrelationships have both positive and negative effects on young people's decisions and behavior. 84.4% of the young people who participated in the said research agreed that moral principles cherished by role models in learning contexts instil in them a craving to stand up for what is right even sometimes against their friends' points of view. 80.3% of the young people who participated in the said research agreed that unspoken messages arising from the ways people in their learning institutions intervene when they have challenges in life encourage them to be more cautious in how they live. 79.8% of the young people who participated in the said research agreed that the way older peers behave makes them see free thought as a fruitful practice in the teaching-learning processes which means unintended messages arising from social interactions can inspire independence and reduce chances of yielding to negative peer pressure among young people. 69.6% of the young people who participated in the research agreed that unplanned messages arising from how appraisal is carried out in learning contexts inspire them to prioritize competition over collaboration. 69.4% of the young people who participated in the research agreed that unplanned messages arising from learning contexts' ways of dealing with students caught in the wrong inspire in them a desire to freely associate with people of the opposite sex which can lead promiscuous behavior. 68.7% of the young people who participated in the research agreed that rules that require young people to handle their academic tasks inculcates in them a desire to work independently which can reduce negative peer influence. 65.7% of the young people who participated in the research agreed that the way some peers treat younger peers emphasize interrelationships are mostly one-way-that is older peers have higher knowledge and are more powerful and young peers must be respectful and compliant. These findings concur with Jerad (2006) who argued that providing young people with safe surroundings not only protects teachinglearning time from needless interruptions but promotes values and norms that motivates hard work in young people.

A univariate analysis conducted on null hypothesis 1: there is no significant relationship between accidental lessons arising from how role models say what they say and do what they do and students' ability to resist negative peer pressure, indicated a positive and significant relationship between unintended lessons arising from learning institutions' interrelationships and young people's attitude, decisions, choices, and behavior. The coefficient of determination also known as the R square results in table 2 indicated a p value of 0.000 which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05. This led to the rejection of null hypothesis 1: there is no significant relationship between accidental lessons arising from how role models in learning institutions say what they say and do what they do and young people's ways of thinking and their choices to yield to negative peer pressure.

Volume XXI Issue X Version I The univariate analysis conducted to test null hypothesis 2: there are no significant relationship between values and beliefs cherished by role models and students' ability to resist negative peer pressure, indicated a positive and significant relationship between unintended lessons arising from values and beliefs cherished by role models and young people's attitude, decisions, choices, and behavior. The coefficient of determination also known as the R square results in table 3 indicated a p value of 0.000, which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05. This led to the rejection of null hypothesis 2. there is no significant relationship between accidental lessons arising from values and beliefs cherished by role models in learning institutions and young people's ways of thinking and their choices to yield to negative peer pressure. The interviewed participants' responses generally concurred with the quantitative data. 9 participants out of the interviewed 10 key informants claimed that the veiled curriculum was more influential in determining students' worldviews, decisions, and choices. According to the key informants the accidental messages were ingrained in learning institutions' social atmosphere and casual interrelationships and neither curriculum designers nor instructors were very familiar with the accidental messages young people pick and they influence their response to negative peer pressure. Participants 02, 06, 09 and 10 claimed that veiled messages conveyed through how

instructors evaluate students' learning, especially those emphasize the importance of learners wholeheartedly obeying every teacher's instruction were detrimental to student's critical thinking skills. Participant 05 echoed the same sediments when she asserted "some accidental messages arising from values and cultural inclinations learning institutions cherish shape young people's knowledge acquisition styles, their view of self as well as how they relate with peers. According to participant 10 instructors including parents or guardians are better advised if they thoroughly understood influences of accidental messages arising from learning institutions' interrelationships on young people's responses to peer pressure.

When the researcher probed the participants on why they perceived accidental messages arising from learning institutions' interrelationships as having significant influence on their learning experiences, the 10 participants suggested that learning atmosphere is crucial in how students learn and turn out to become in their adult years. Participants 07 and 09 claimed that "the first day they entered their university classroom, the emotional atmosphere of the classroom immediately separated them from their high school world relaxed world." The researcher prompt to understand what they meant by 'university's classroom emotional atmosphere separated them from their high school world" and they said "the university's learning context created wide open doors of free interactions with unlike in high school where teachers strictly monitored students' movement. According to the two participants, freedom in higher learning institution immediately begins to grow one up. Participants 01 and 08 claimed that "benefits of a learning institution's emotional atmosphere that is friendly and a little bit strict are endless because such an environment discourages students from being passive receivers of ideas, boosts their self-esteem as well as nurtures their problem-solving skills which in turn helps to resist negative peer pressure.

Both the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that conducive learning contexts are more likely to have a positive impact on young people's ways of thinking and their choices to conform or not to conform to negative peer pressure while negative (unconducive) learning environments are likely to cause some young people to engage in risk behaviors. The implication here is that it is not advisable for educators to be ignorant of the vailed curriculum if they desire to holistically nurture young people to resist negative peer pressure. Things as simple as how educators rebuke a weak student in class can either reinforce negative attitude in a student leading to low self-confidence in his or her competencies while in other students it can cause lack of hope instead of inspiring them to work on improving themselves. This means social learning environments can impose unnecessary stress on young people and encourages incorrect views of reality which in turn can enhance anxiety and undermine their ability to resist negative peer pressure.

V.

13 Conclusion

Current researcher concludes that when designing and implementing any curricula, educators must consider the presence of the veiled curriculum and map its positive elements on the official curriculum to holistically nurture young people's inner self-confidence, their resilience and perseverance to enable them to resist negative peer pressure. This is because one's experiences in social contexts can either positively or negative shape his or her whole life including his or her decisions to conform or not to conform to negative peer pressure. We are therefore better advised if we created conducive learning contexts to not only nurture a holistic worldview in young people but to also nurture critical thinking skills to enable them to overcome negative peer pressure. This means education implementers must also set humane rules, and reasonable expectations proportional to young people's capability so as to nurture them to wisely choose when and what to conform to and when to simply say NO to negative peer pressure.

Figure 1:

1

Figure 2: Table 1 :

2

Indicator	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	78.291	1	78.291	1180.354.000	b
Residual	24.143	364	.066		
Total	102.434	365			

Figure 3: Table 2 :

3

Indicator	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	82.141	1	82.141	550.010	.000b
Residual	50.777	340	.149		
		Total	132.918		

Figure 4: Table 3 :

259 Year 2021

.1 A

261 The Veiled Curriculum and the Capability of Youth to Resist Negative Peer Pressure

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