

# Hidden Curriculum Components, Learners' National Identity, and Self-efficacy: A Model for Iranian EFL Teachers

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## Abstract

Much of what educators address is the overt curriculum; however, there is a hidden curriculum that affects education in a very profound manner. As educators, we need to be aware of the EFL hidden curriculum which affects our educational settings and what we teach. In view of that, the purpose of the present study was to determine the relationship of EFL teachers' perspectives on hidden curriculum components in the Iranian institutional context with their students' self-efficacy and national identity. More specifically, the present study surveyed the probable existence of any significant correlation between EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components, their students' attitudes towards their own national identity, and self-efficacy. For this purpose, a model was suggested and tested using partial least squares variance-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components contributing to their students' national identity and self-efficacy. A total of 164 institutional EFL teachers in Iran completed the EFL hidden curriculum questionnaire. Besides, 987 students (about eighty percent of their learners) were asked to fill in national identity and self-efficacy questionnaires. Based on this model, all the correlations between the latent variables were significant except for three latent variables including the relationships among EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components (social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between teachers and learners) and their learners' self-efficacy. The findings highlight that EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum had a positive significant relationship with their students' national identity and self-efficacy. In addition, the results depicted all the relationships between latent variables were positive relations; while the relationship between EFL learners' national identity and self-efficacy was proved to be negative.

**Keywords:** EFL learners, Hidden curriculum components, National identity, PLS-SEM, Self-efficacy, Structural equation modeling (SEM)

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## INTRODUCTION

In educational systems, students receive highly valuable experiences the best part of which is unavailable in curricula. Students learn more than what they are systematically taught by teachers in schools (Alikhani, 2004). Students learn all the time through exposure and modeled behaviors, this suggests that they learn important social and emotional lessons from everyone who inhabits a faculty from the janitorial staff, the secretary, the cafeteria workers, their peers, also as from the department, conduct, and attitudes expressed and modeled by their teachers. Many educators are unaware of the strong lessons imparted to youth by these everyday contacts (Wilson, 1990).

Educational theorists have long determined that the formal curriculum does not serve as the only means of education within social institutions (Apple, 1980; Eisner, 2002; Jackson, 1968; Snyder, 1971; Tyler, 1969). There is also the hidden curriculum that serves to educate students. Some of the teachings of the hidden curriculum are deliberate, but many of the hidden curriculum dimensions come about through the exchange of students and educational settings as they experience situations within the educational setting and are not overtly taught. This refers to the curricular context in which school practices are enacted, including the governance of the school culture and the relationships among those within it.

Jackson (1968) is generally acknowledged as the originator of the term hidden curriculum in his book "Life in Classrooms". D'eon, et al. (2006) asserted that the hidden curriculum is a kind of learning that is acquired by students within organizational structure and entity in addition to the behaviors and actions of professors and managers. Thus, the first value of the concept of hidden curriculum implies that it calls attention to aspects of schooling that are only occasionally acknowledged and remain largely unexamined (Cornbleth, 2002). Moreover, the hidden curriculum represents the set of unwritten rules that no one has been directly taught, but everyone understands.

By definition, Vang (2006) assumes that the hidden curriculum is instructional norms and values not openly acknowledged by teachers or school officials but form part of the elements in a school context. Jerald (2006) mentioned that the hidden curriculum comprises an implicit curriculum that expresses and represents attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors, which are conveyed or communicated without conscious intent; it is conveyed indirectly by words and actions that are parts of the lifetime of everyone within a society. To deal with this issue, we should always understand that the hidden curriculum plays a positive or negative role within the education system in school; therefore, teachers need to remember it and the way it appears within the school.

An effective teacher is one among the foremost important factors in student achievement; thus, teachers must somehow take it upon themselves to rise above the system, guide and support their students to reach their goals through the hidden curriculum (Dickerson, 2007). Moreover, any ideological imposition or experiences learners receive during learning a foreign language will be significant for language teachers, instructors, administrators, and curriculum developers who need to be aware of the probable implicit mechanism that affects the EFL learners. Some studies (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Margolis, 2001) show that some messages or ideologies are oftentimes delivered unintentionally when the knowledge of textbooks is transmitted to learners. Thus, English teachers need to understand the potentially hidden curriculum of teaching English as a foreign language that might correlate EFL learners' variables such as national identity and self-efficacy. Identity perception and attitudes as a part of the hidden curriculum in the foreign language teaching are worth examining because during learning a language, teachers not only teach a foreign language but also change or shape the worldview of the learners implicitly. Mostafaei Alaei and Ghamari (2013) explained that claims over the harmful social effects of EFL learning were not arguably significant.

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy may be a more consistent predictor of behavior and achievement than the other related variables. Self-efficacy and foreign language learning as major variables have an

outstanding impact on student's level of achievement in foreign language learning. Karimi and Nafissi (2017) reported no significant differences between students' reading comprehension self-efficacy and reading proficiency between the two groups of the study utilizing different culturally-based materials. Taking the key function of self-efficacy, as an important affective factor, into account, it is important to pursue the investigation on the value of this factor in EFL (English as a foreign language) context to shed the light on its efficiency in terms of teaching and learning process. The review of the literature indicates the research on the association between the EFL hidden curriculum and self-efficacy in the EFL context has not been done. Thus, this research intends to provide a clear insight into the relationship between the concepts of the EFL hidden curriculum and EFL learners' sense of self-efficacy in the EFL communities to fill the prevailing gap within the literature. Furthermore, this study may offer English language institutes' administrators a better understanding of the perceived relationship between EFL teachers' perspectives on hidden curriculum and EFL learners' self-efficacy to assist them in enhancing their teachers' and their students' achievement.

This study aimed to examine and provide evidence of whether the hidden curriculum of EFL learning is positively correlating with the Iranian language learners' national identity and self-efficacy. Thus, there was a research gap in examining the relationship between EFL learners' national identity, self-efficacy, and learning a foreign language, which is the focus of the present study. Therefore, a broad analysis of the EFL hidden curriculum is needed to positively and effectively guide policy and practice toward improving the organizational capacity and success of the English language institutions' teachers and learners. In view of that, in this study, the researchers intend to explain the components of the EFL hidden curriculum from the EFL teachers' perspectives in relation to their EFL learners' national identity and self-efficacy through the verified proposed model.

This study has implications for the teachers, curriculum and material developers, policymakers, and the administrators in the EFL context. The researchers emphasize the importance of the awareness of the English

language teaching hidden curriculum and allow the audiences to get some insight into how EFL teaching and EFL teachers' perspectives correlate with the students' national identity and self-efficacy.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The term hidden curriculum was coined by Jackson (1968). He argued that we need to understand education as a socialization process. After Jackson's coinage, Snyder's (1971) hidden curriculum published as a more conceptually focused work. He focused on the space between a school's formal expectations and actual requirements versus what was "actually expected of students" (Snyder, 1971, p. 9).

The hidden curriculum asks observers to begin with what schools or organizations say they are teaching or doing (for example, their formal practices and curriculum-and as captured in documents such as course curricula, student and faculty handbooks, mission statements, and so on) and then move to the other-than-formal aspects of organizational life to ask, "What else is going on? What other kinds of learning are taking place?"

According to Haralambos and Holborn (1991, p. 702) "The hidden curriculum consists of those things pupils learn through the experience of attending school rather than the stated educational objectives of such institutions." Lee (2014) has focused on a hidden curriculum in English-to-Japanese books and stated that the hidden curriculum has positive impacts on students' learning. The results of the study done by Nami, et al. (2014) showed that the student-teacher relations and academic achievement, between the organizational structure of the university, the university and the social climate of their appearance were positively related to academic achievement. But there was no significant relationship between academic achievement and the physical structure of the class. Heidari (2013) showed that the impact of hidden curriculum on the studied dimensions (regulations, social relations, physical environment, human resources, sports, and training equipment, cultural variables, and social problems) in the behavior of students was significantly big. In addition, there was a difference between hidden curriculum correlation (in the dimensions of the physical

environment, human resources, sports, training, and cultural equipment) and behavior in terms of gender.

Pashazadeh (2013) found that there was a significant relationship between the hidden curriculum and social adaptability. Ghaderi (2011) concluded that one of the most important curricula implemented in the education system was the hidden curriculum. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between open and closed school climates for girls and boys. Besides, the impact of hidden outcomes on students of closed and open climate schools for boys and girls were considerably different. A study carried out by Hashemi, et al. (2011) also established that the hidden curriculum had positive and negative effects on the education of students. Students' learning to communicate and work collaboratively prepared their personalities to be stronger, more effective, and helpful for society.

Myles, Trautman, and Shelvan (2004) found that even though the hidden curriculum can be an issue in the classroom, it is the best way to teach social skills for students with special needs in a few minutes per day. Moreover, to address this issue, Myles (2011) noted that it is an essential matter to equip or provide teachers with methods or strategies to help their students realize the hidden curriculum through making opportunities for students to practice or apply one rule of the hidden curriculum once every day. For instant, writing one of the hidden curriculum rules on the board and reviewing it for five minutes every morning with students is a good idea to understand the hidden curriculum. As a result, teachers will observe a good difference in students' social recognition.

The hidden curriculum is informal learning that takes place along with the explicit curriculum. Its purpose depends on the theoretical lens through which the hidden curriculum is viewed. Hidden curriculum conceptions are checked out by different scholars from different lenses (Kentli, 2009; Ruff, 2013; Sager, 2013). Based on the above definitions, it can be implied that hidden curricula are considered learning things other than the formal and explicit objectives of the education system, which is acquired by the students in school. Numerous definitions and ideas proposed



for the hidden curriculum allow for understanding this term under different circumstances and from different viewpoints. Such experiences inevitably affect many aspects in a broader, more sustainable, and more influential manner in the formation of the experiences, transfer of ideas, attitudes, values, actions, and behaviors of the students along with the formal curricula; their dominance affects the whole process of education (Alikhani & Mehr Mohammadi, 2005). Despite the many controversies surrounding the concept and function of the hidden curriculum in general, researchers such as Abdulsalam (2008), Ahola (2000), Margolis (2001), Rennert (2008), Jacobson (2008), Tarshis (2008) believe that hidden curriculum is heavily influenced by the context in which learning takes place. In this study, hidden curriculum components are the constructs supporting Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis' (1981) dimensions of the hidden curriculum. Consistent with Saylor et al. (1981), hidden curriculum components are schools' social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between teachers and students.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

To sum up, having the idea that English language institutes, as an educational environment, play the key role in teaching English as a foreign language in Iran, and considering the EFL hidden curriculum relationships with learners' variables accordingly, the researchers consider it to be valuable to research in the area of EFL hidden curriculum in English language institutes. In this regard, this research attempted to find EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components, and investigate the relationship between EFL hidden curriculum and their students' attitudes towards their own national identity and self-efficacy which might have some important implications for pedagogy. Consequently, the study addressed the following research question:

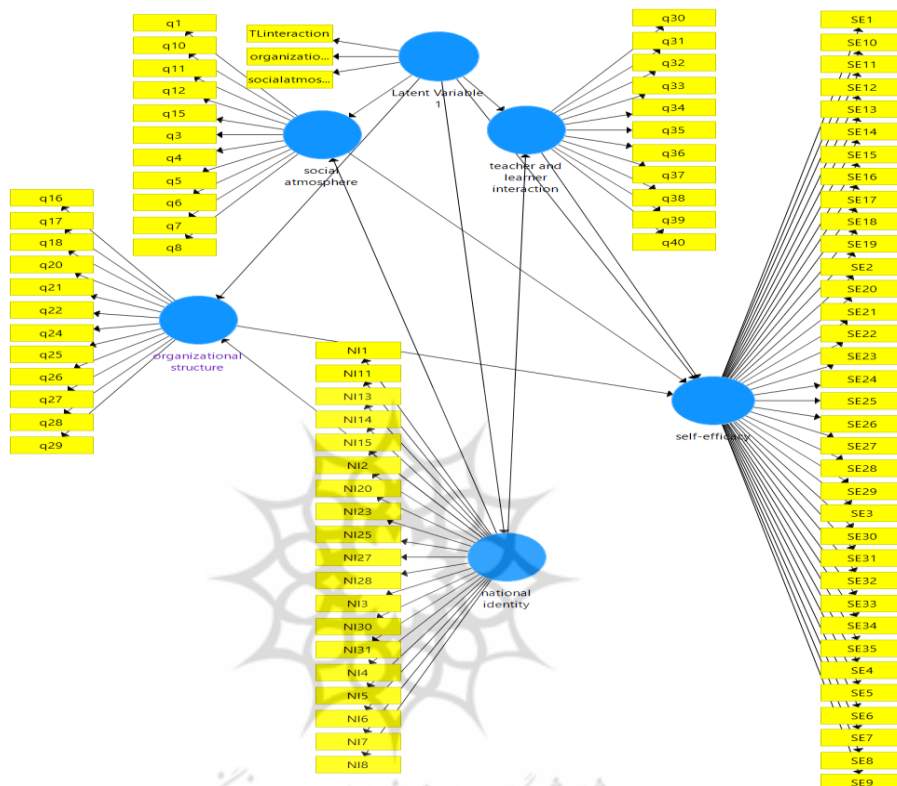
What is the model to describe the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components, their students' self-efficacy, and attitudes towards their own national identity?

To examine any significant relationship between the designated variables (i.e., hidden curriculum components, self-efficacy, and national identity), a structural model is suggested. For model specification, the researchers hypothesized two paths from hidden curriculum to national identity and self-efficacy which is in accordance with Norouzi, Janat Fereydoni, and Moshakelayeh (2014), who stated that there was a relationship between the hidden curriculum and the students' national identity. Then, the researchers second hypothesized three paths from national identity to hidden curriculum components (social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between teacher and learners). It is in accordance with the results of Norouzi et al. (2014) who showed that there are relationships between schools' social atmosphere, schools' organizational structure, the interaction between teachers and students, schools and class's physical structure, and students' national identity.

Furthermore, other two paths were nominated from the social atmosphere construct and organizational structure construct of the hidden curriculum to self-efficacy. Interaction between the teacher and learners construct of the hidden curriculum was also connected to the self-efficacy, which is in agreement with the result of Alifat et al. (2016) who showed that the role of the components of the hidden curriculum in the social self-efficacy of students is significant. Eventually, the final three paths were drawn by the researchers from hidden curriculum to the social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between teacher and learners, which is in accordance with Reyshahrizadeh (2012), Fathi Vajargah and Vahed Choukadeh (2006), and Saylor et.al (1981).

The postulated model is presented in Figure 1. Circles depicted latent variables, while rectangles described the hypothesized model. It means that, for example, the latent variable social atmosphere has eleven indicators (survey item numbers = 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15).





**Figure 1:** The proposed model of latent variable analysis among the EFL hidden curriculum components, national identity, and self-efficacy

## METHOD

### Participants

A total number of 164 Iranian EFL teachers participated in this study, including 68 males (41.5%) and 96 females (58.5%). EFL teachers were selected from English language institutes that taught English at the intermediate level and above. All of these teachers participated in this study voluntarily. Participants were EFL teachers (Diploma 1.8%, Bachelor 31.9%, Master of Arts (M.A.) student 16.6%, M.A. degree 38.7%, Ph.D.

student 6.7%, and Ph.D. degree 4.3%). The teachers who participated in this study were from Mashhad, Tehran, Esfahan, Kerman, Semnan, Zanjan, Hamedan, Birjand, Gorgan, Torbat-e-Heydarieh, Tabas, Garmsar, Boushehr, Kermanshah, Arak, Ardebil, Malayer, Tabriz, and Torbat-e Jam. They were from different age groups ranging from 25 to 60; the mean age was 30 (SD=0.65). 77.8% percent of teachers studied English as an academic major (English language teaching 42.6%, Translation 15.4 %, English literature 13.6 %, Linguistics 6.2%, and other 22.2 %). Teachers' teaching experience was from five years to 25 years.

Furthermore, EFL learners of each teacher were voluntarily asked to fill out the English language learner's self-efficacy and national identity questionnaires simultaneously. A total number of 987 Iranian EFL learners who studied English at different language institutions of Iran participated in this study to provide us with their perspectives on their national identity and self-efficacy. The sample was selected from Iranian EFL learners who had studied English for at least two years. They were 357 males (36.2%) and 628 females (63.8%) from different age groups ranging from 15 to 35. The English level of EFL learners was intermediate (47.6%), upper-intermediate (29.6%), and advanced (22.8%).

## **Instrumentation**

### ***English Language Teaching (ELT) Hidden Curriculum Questionnaire***

In order to collect data on the EFL teachers' perspectives on hidden curriculum components, a researcher-made questionnaire was designed to measure and evaluate EFL teachers' perspectives on different components of the hidden curriculum. The questionnaire was designed and validated under the supervision of several experts in the field of applied linguistics and curriculum planning. The researchers used the Saylor et al. (1981) dimensions of the hidden curriculum. The questionnaire measures the social atmosphere (including 11 items), the organizational structure of the English Language Institute (including 12 items), and the interaction between EFL teachers and learners (including 11 items). A 5-point Likert-type scale from

strongly agree to strongly disagree was applied to rate the items. Using Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.83. The content validity of the questionnaire was determined by experts in the field of curriculum studies and applied linguistics. The construct validity of the questionnaire was determined by using the Rasch model (Sazegar, et al., 2021).

### ***National Identity Questionnaire***

The national identity questionnaire was used to investigate students' perspectives on their national identity. This researcher-made questionnaire was developed according to the underlying theories, research, and available literature. It is a 19-item survey consisting of different constructs for evaluating willingness to national identity, namely, (a) the western attachment (including 3 items), (b) homeland attachment (consists of 7 items), (c) the cultural attachment (includes 5 items), and (d) the artistic attachment (includes 4 items). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree). This questionnaire was designed in Persian to form it easier for EFL learners to reply and, consequently, to extend the return rate. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  analysis was conducted and an acceptable value of 0.85 was shown. In addition, its validity was confirmed through the Rasch model using WinSteps 3.73.

### ***EFL Learner's Self-Efficacy Questionnaire***

In this study, EFL learner's self-efficacy was measured through the questionnaire by Ghodrati, et al. (2014) which was adapted based on Mills (2004). This questionnaire consisted of 25 items in a five-point Likert scale, ranging from not confident (0), somewhat confident (1), moderately confident (2), confident (3) to very confident (4). Cronbach Alpha Analysis was conducted for the Persian questionnaire of the EFL learner's self-efficacy and an acceptable value of 0.95 was observed. Moreover, its construct validity was confirmed through the Rasch model using WinSteps 3.73 (Sazegar, et al., 2018).

## Procedure

A total number of 164 Iranian EFL teachers and 987 students were voluntarily asked to participate in this study to discover any significant relationship between EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components, their students' national identity, and self-efficacy. The survey was done in a paper-based format. Furthermore, since recognizing and matching students' responses to their teachers' questionnaire through Google Drive was not easy, the researchers decided to conduct the survey mostly in a paper-based format.

Once the data was obtained, it was entered into SPSS 24. Then various statistics for the data were calculated and summarized. Then, to propose a structural model, partial least squares variance-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed. The researchers chose SmartPLS (3.2.4) software as an alternate to SEM since it works efficiently with a high number of indicators and variables (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014), small sample sizes, and complex models that contain latent variables, series of effects, and multiple group comparisons of those more complex relationships (Hair, et al., 2014; Lowry & Gaskin, 2014; Rezaei, 2015; Rezaei & Ghodsi, 2014; Shahijan, et al., 2014; Vinzi, et al., 2010). Moreover, it is more fitting where there is not much conceptual theory. It is largely applied to develop models in exploratory research (Ravand & Baghaei, 2016; Rönkkö & Evermann, 2013). Meanwhile, the researchers used partial least squares variance-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), an exploratory technique to test the relationship among latent variables and to investigate the path relationships in models.

The first stage in evaluating SEM is validating the model. All variables of the study were considered as explanatory variables (Figure 1). Having conducted bootstrapping analysis, the researchers analyzed just indicators, latent variables, and paths reached the significance level of .05. As an alternative, PLS-SEM operates a nonparametric bootstrap procedure (Davison & Hinkley, 1997) to test the significance of probable path coefficients in models.

## Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine EFL teachers' opinions on the extent to which their perspective on the EFL hidden curriculum components contributed to their students' national identity and self-efficacy; therefore, the study design is a correlational one. To place the puzzle pieces of three constructs of the EFL hidden curriculum and their connection with learners' national identity and self-efficacy, this study was done based on a quantitative research design involving the analysis of quantitative data from two researcher-made and one ready-made questionnaire.

## RESULTS

The study's model assessed the correlation among the variables by the PLS-SEM approach applying SmartPLS (3.2.4) software. The reliability and validity of the proposed model were evaluated and established by the researchers before beginning to analyze the structural model of the study. Next, the impacts assess the reflective measurement model, outer loadings, composite reliability, AVE, and discriminant validity were calculated. The evaluation standards for the model are demonstrated via Total Effects Table (See Appendix A), Table 1, and Outer Model Table (See Appendix B).

**Table 1:** Criteria for the Evaluation of the Models (Reliability and Unidimensionality)

Variables	Unidimensionality			DG.rho	eig.1st	eig.2 <sup>nd</sup>
	Mode	Items	Cronbach alpha			
EFL hidden curriculum	A	34	0.724	0.845	1.94	0.658
Social atmosphere	A	11	0.854	0.736	2.04	1.339
Organizational structure	A	12	0.687	0.784	2.57	1.299
Interaction between teachers & learners	A	11	0.719	0.800	2.84	1.157
National identity	A	19	0.873	0.893	5.94	2.058
Self-efficacy	A	25	0.961	0.964	13.03	1.854

Latent variables' outer loadings examination specifies that loadings are between 0.33 and 0.85. However, the outer loadings indicators below 0.3

were removed from the model. Moreover, as the Outer Model Table (See Appendix B) illustrated, the details of each latent variable, along with the corresponding latent variables outer loadings were presented. Undesirable items have been removed in each latent variable. In addition, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients and the outer loadings pointed out good reliability and validity for the model.

As a final point for assessing the measurement model, Discriminant Validity Table according to the Fornell–Larcker criterion (See Appendix C) presented the discriminant validity based on Fornell and Larcker (1981) principle. The off-diagonal values in the matrix suggest the relationships among the latent variables, which means there is discriminant validity between all the components according to the cross loadings' criterion.

When the reliability and validity of the construct measurements were confirmed, the structural model was examined to recognize the model's predictive capabilities and consequently the associations among components of the proposed model. The results emphasized that the structural model and all the beta paths are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) except for the three paths from hidden curriculum components to the self-efficacy. Moreover, the goodness of the fit (GFI) was shown to be 0.36 which is considered a good fit.

As Table 2 illustrates, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) explains how much the variance of each latent variable is explained by the other latent variables. In this study, the coefficient of determination,  $R^2$ , is 0.655 for the organizational structure endogenous latent variable which specified that the latent variable organizational structure mainly explains 0.655% of the variance in the hidden curriculum. Also, the coefficients of determination,  $R^2$ , are 0.610 and 0.413 for the interaction between the teachers and learners and social atmosphere endogenous latent variables respectively which specified that the latent variables' interaction between the teachers and learners and social atmosphere explain 0.610% and 0.413% of the variance in the hidden curriculum respectively. The coefficients of determination for the self-efficacy and national identity endogenous latent variables are 0.026 and 0.016, respectively. This in turn specifies that the



latent variables of self-efficacy and national identity slightly explain 0.026% and 0.016% of the variance in the hidden curriculum.

**Table 2:** Summary Inner Model

	Type	R <sup>2</sup>	Block_ Communality	Mean_ Redundancy	AV E
Hidden curriculum	Exogenous	0.00			0.64
	Endogenous	0.01	0.646	0.000	6
National identity	s	6	0.293	0.004	0.29
	Endogenous	0.41			3
Social atmosphere	s	3	0.288	0.119	0.28
	Endogenous	0.65			8
Organizational structure	s	5	0.316	0.207	0.31
Interaction between teachers & learners	Endogenous	0.61	0.313	0.190	6
	s	0			0.31
Self-efficacy	Endogenous	0.02			3
	s	6	0.497	0.013	0.49

\* Composite reliability should be 0.7 or higher. \*R<sup>2</sup> of 0.75 signifies substantial, 0.50 is moderate, and 0.25 implies weak. \* AVE should be 0.4 or higher. AVE = average variance extracted.

Path coefficients, numbers on the arrows, demonstrated how strong variables affected each other. Furthermore, the loading of every path coefficient consents the researchers to recognize variables' statistical significance. According to Total Effects Table (Appendix A), there is no relationship between the hidden curriculum components with each other from the EFL teachers' perspectives. All the relationships in Table 2 have a direct relation, while the relationship between EFL learners' national identity and self-efficacy has indirectly been a negative value of -0.034.

The study of the inner model enlightened that organizational structure, with loading of 0.802, has a very strong relationship with the hidden curriculum. Accordingly, the interaction between the teachers and learners is highly correlated with the hidden curriculum, (0.778) and social atmosphere, (0.600). The inner model also proposed that the hidden curriculum has a significant relationship with self-efficacy ( $r = 0.240$ ) and national identity ( $r = 0.127$ ) constructs. Moreover, the self-efficacy endogenous latent variable was shown to be directly negatively correlated with the hidden curriculum components construct and indirectly by the

national identity construct. The relationships between hidden curriculum components and self-efficacy are -0.177 for interaction between the teachers and learners, -0.165 for organizational structure, and -0.135 for social atmosphere respectively. National identity endogenous latent variable demonstrated a direct positive correlation with the hidden curriculum components. The most influential effects of national identity on hidden curriculum components were associated to the social atmosphere (0.166), organizational structure (0.045), and interaction between teacher and learners (0.022), respectively.

The proposed model in this study demonstrated that all the correlations between the latent variable and the indicators in their outer model are significant except for three latent variables including the relationships among EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components (social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between teachers and learners) and their students' self-efficacy.

Additionally, to check if the path coefficients of the inner model are significant (t-statistics), the researchers ran the bootstrapping procedure, which measures the distribution of the sample by the use of random sampling methods (Varian, 2005). According to Wong (2013), in a two-tailed t-test with a significance level of 5%, the path coefficient could be significant if the t-statistics is larger than 1.96. In the present study, as shown in Bootstrapping Results Table and t-statistics for path coefficients (See Appendix D), all the relations were statistically significant except for the relationships between the EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components and their students' self-efficacy.

In addition, the model's effect size ( $f^2$ ), which shows contribution of exogenous latent variable to an endogenous latent variable's  $R^2$  value, highlights a small effect (Table 3). Effect size is essential because the effect size aids researchers to judge the overall contribution of a research study, as Chin, et al., (1996) assert, the researchers should not only state whether the relationship between variables is significant or not, but also inform the effect size between these variables. The  $f^2$  assesses the change in the  $R^2$  value when a certain exogenous construct is excluded from the model and

shows whether the deleted predictor construct has a practical impact on the  $R^2$  values of the endogenous construct.

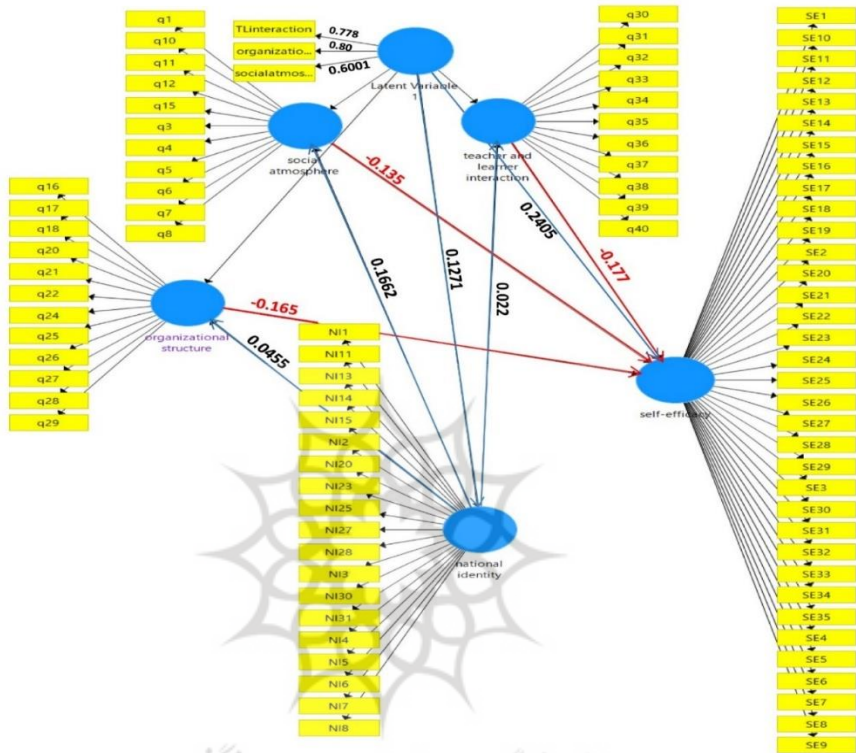
The model's effect size  $f^2$ , showed a very small contribution of an exogenous latent variable to the endogenous latent variable's  $R^2$ . In our model, social atmosphere, organizational structure, the interaction between the teacher and learners, and national identity received an effect size of 0.01, 0.01, 0.006, and 0.02 respectively, showing a small effect; however, even small effects designate important model relationships (Chin, et al., 2003).

**Table 3:** *Effect Sizes of the Structural Model (F Square)*

	Hidden curriculum	National identity	Self-efficacy	Social atmosphere	Organizational structure	Interaction between teacher and learners
Hidden curriculum		0.02	0.12			
National identity				0.01	0.01	0.006
Self-efficacy				-0.001	-0.001	-0.001
Social atmosphere	0.01					
Organizational structure	0.002					
Interaction between teacher and learners	0.002					

\* The effect size of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 show small, medium, and large effects, respectively. (Marcoulides & Saunders, 2006)

Figure 2 illustrated the structural model of latent variable analysis among EFL teachers' perspectives on hidden curriculum components, their learners' national identity, and self-efficacy.



**Figure 2:** The structural model of latent variable analysis among EFL hidden curriculum components, national identity, and self-efficacy

## DISCUSSION

This study is considered to be among few attempts to fill the gap of research in exploring the relationship among different components of the hidden curriculum (social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between the teacher and learners) from the EFL teachers’ perspectives with the EFL learners’ national identity and self-efficacy. In view of that and supported by the prevailing literature, the researchers proposed and tested a

model through PLS-SEM utilizing SmartPLS. The data fitted the model significantly, which obtains support for the suggested hypothetical model.

Inner model path coefficient sizes and significance showed the relationship between EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum is significant on their students' national identity (0.127) and self-efficacy (0.240). There is a direct positive significant relationship between these variables. It is in agreement with prior research that has shown there is a relationship between the hidden curriculum and students' national identity (Norouzi et al., 2014). Moreover, it is in accordance with the research findings of Alifat et al. (2016), who pointed out that the role of the components of the hidden curriculum (teacher's role, the role of teaching method, the role of assessment, rules, and regulations, physical location, and content) on social self-efficacy of the students is significant.

The results of the present study indicated that all the relationships between latent variables are direct, while the relationship between EFL learners' national identity and self-efficacy has indirectly been a negative value of -0.034. This revealed the gap among other studies regarding the relationship between EFL learners' national identity and self-efficacy.

Moreover, the effect of the EFL learners' national identity is significant on all three hidden curriculum components (social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between teachers and learners) which contains a direct positive significant relationship between these variables. In other words, a greater understanding of learners' national identity will increase the latent variables of hidden curriculum components.

Some scholars as Ghorbani, et al., (2009) agreed on the relationship between the hidden and national identity; they believed that the hidden curriculum plays a significant role in strengthening the national identity of students. Moreover, Fathi Vajargah and Vahed Choukadeh (2006) demonstrated the key role schools' social atmosphere operating in the education of students' citizenship. They also mentioned that the schools' organizational structure and the interaction between teachers and students affect the citizenship education of students. In addition, Mahdavi and Piltan (2009) concluded that the type of social interaction of the school affects the

students' national identity. Alizadeh Aghdam, Shiri, and Ojaghlou (2010) showed that education contributes to the improvement of national identity indicators for students. Wyse (2008) maintained that implicit social factors and sociological lessons affect the students' national identity.

Finally, the results revealed that the EFL hidden curriculum components (social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between teachers and learners) from EFL teachers' perspectives do not support a significant relationship with their students' self-efficacy. Thus, only there is a direct negative relationship between EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components and their students' self-efficacy. The results are not in line with Greta (2009) who reported that classroom climate, the interaction between learners, and the interaction between teachers and learners affected learners' self-efficacy. However, the negative correlation coefficients between hidden curriculum components (social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between teachers and learners) and self-efficacy are not in line with Alifat et al. (2016) and Greta (2009).

To sum up, the correlation coefficients between latent variables indicate that there is a direct positive relationship between EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum, EFL hidden curriculum components (social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between teachers and learners), and their students' national identity. However, the relationship between the hidden curriculum, hidden curriculum components, and self-efficacy is negative. Besides, outer model loadings confirmed that all the correlations between the latent variable and the indicators in their outer model are significant except for three latent variables including the relationships among EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components (social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between teachers and learners) and their students' self-efficacy.

The study of the inner model enlightened that organizational structure has a very strong relationship with the hidden curriculum. Accordingly, the interaction between teachers and learners is highly



correlated with the hidden curriculum and social atmosphere. Moreover, the self-efficacy endogenous latent variable was shown to be directly negatively correlated with hidden curriculum components construct and indirectly correlated with the national identity construct. The relationship between EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components and their students' self-efficacy is low for the interaction between teachers and learners, organizational structure, and social atmosphere, respectively. Learners' national identity endogenous latent variable was shown to have a direct positive correlation with EFL teachers' perspectives on the hidden curriculum components. The most influential effects of the learners' national identity on the EFL teachers' perspectives on the hidden curriculum components related to the social atmosphere, organizational structure, and interaction between the teacher and learners respectively.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Whether acknowledged or neglected by educators, the hidden curriculum is present in each institute. The present study aimed at studying in case any significant relationship exists between the latent variables in the proposed model of the study in Iran (Figure 1).

The data fitted the proposed model of the study well. The findings of the structural model demonstrated that all the correlations between the latent variable and the indicators in their outer model were significant except for three latent variables including the relationships among EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum components and their students' self-efficacy.

This study offered some implications for policymakers, materials designers, institutions' administrators, and language teachers. The results highlighted an important fact regarding the negative relationships between EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum and their students' self-efficacy. A future key concern of those who are in charge of curriculum planning might be updating EFL curriculums to contribute to the improvement of the EFL learners' self-efficacy, both theoretically and practically.

Implicit messages are transmitted from educational centers, generally, and institutional contexts, in particular, to the learners which are beyond the stated educational objectives. Understanding the hidden curriculum is essential to understand how it functions within an English language institute setting and among those within it. To this aim, a hidden curriculum model for EFL teachers was confirmed to advance the existing body of knowledge in the field of curriculum development and planning; therefore, the study attempted to determine how the EFL hidden curriculum components are perceived by teachers as one of the factors that correlate with their students' national identity and self-efficacy. This structural model for EFL context may provide a framework for policymakers and materials designers, institutions' administrators, and teachers who wish to implement a coherent and strategic approach to curriculum planning. Furthermore, this study may offer institutions' administrators a better understanding of the perceived relationship between the EFL hidden curriculum and its relation to the learners' national identity and self-efficacy to assist them towards their teachers' and students' achievement. Besides, the results of this study assist teachers to understand student needs and provide them with a safe and efficient supportive learning setting.

One of the limitations of this study is that it covers Iranian institutional EFL teachers and students. Future research can be carried out within university contexts and other settings to generalize the findings. Moreover, administrators and researchers can consider the results of this research to operate on planning and designing any appropriate relevant courses for the proposed model. Another line of research could explore the relationships of EFL hidden curriculum with other latent variables especially from teachers' perspectives not only in private language institutes but also in public schools in Iran. Moreover, the study's sample was limited to Iranian English language teachers who teach English at English language institutes. Future studies will be needed to evaluate how the EFL hidden curriculum may act as a predictive power on students' success.

This research study was an initial attempt to explore if this line of inquiry between EFL teachers' perspectives on the EFL hidden curriculum,

their students' national identity, and self-efficacy exists meaningfully significant. Given the results from this initial, future studies should delve more deeply into this topic to see if the results can be replicated in other sites with similar students and with a larger population. Furthermore, the present EFL hidden curriculum model can be assessed by considering other related latent variables (e.g., teachers' self-efficacy, burnout, etc.). The idea and the concepts in this model are dynamics and still in the process of finding the best model; thus, it will always be developed with other participants and different statistical populations.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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## Appendix A

Total Effects

Relationships			Direct	Indirect	Total	
1	Hidden curriculum	->	National identity	0.127	0.000	0.127
2	Hidden curriculum	->	Social atmosphere	0.600	0.021	0.621
3	Hidden curriculum	->	Organizational structure	0.802	0.005	0.808
4	Hidden curriculum	->	Interaction T & L	0.778	0.002	0.780
5	Hidden curriculum	->	Self-efficacy	0.240	-0.356	-0.116
6	National identity	->	Social atmosphere	0.166	0.000	0.166
7	National identity	->	Organizational structure	0.045	0.000	0.045
8	National identity	->	Interaction T & L	0.022	0.000	0.022
9	National identity	->	Self-efficacy	0.000	-0.034	-0.034
10	Social atmosphere	->	Organizational structure	0.000	0.000	0.000
11	Social atmosphere	->	Interaction T & L	0.000	0.000	0.000
12	Social atmosphere	->	Self-efficacy	-0.135	0.000	-0.135
13	Organizational structure	->	Interaction T & L	0.000	0.000	0.000
14	Organizational structure	->	Self-efficacy	-0.165	0.000	-0.165
15	Interaction T & L	->	Self-efficacy	-0.177	0.000	-0.177

## Appendix B

Criteria for the Evaluation of the Models (Outer Model)

Latent variable	Sub-constructs	Weight	Loading	Communality	Redundancy
<b>Hidden curriculum</b>					
	1 Social atmosphere	0.386590	0.745	0.5548	0
	1 Organizational structure	0.431170	0.859	0.7382	0
	1 Interaction between teachers & learners	0.425427	0.803	0.6446	0
<b>Social atmosphere</b>					
	3 q5	0.223106	0.497	0.2470	0.10201
	3 q6	0.232665	0.533	0.2843	0.11741
	3 q7	0.333204	0.622	0.3864	0.15957
	3 q8	0.152462	0.372	0.1385	0.05720
	3 q11	0.357068	0.642	0.4121	0.17021
	3 q12	0.268097	0.602	0.3623	0.14963
<b>Organizational structure</b>					
	3 q13	0.255284	0.433	0.1878	0.07757
	4 q17	0.205493	0.570	0.3244	0.21272

	4	q18	0.247052	0.483	0.2332	0.15289
	4	q20	0.265738	0.644	0.4149	0.27207
	4	q21	0.235506	0.631	0.3983	0.26114
	4	q22	0.191006	0.629	0.3960	0.25963
	4	q24	0.184330	0.535	0.2857	0.18736
	4	q26	0.239223	0.461	0.2128	0.13952
	4	q28	0.222796	0.515	0.2654	0.17405
<b>Interaction between teachers &amp; learners</b>						
	5	q31	0.220258	0.530	0.2804	0.17112
	5	q32	0.287679	0.715	0.5106	0.31161
	5	q33	0.182515	0.672	0.4510	0.27523
	5	q34	0.114707	0.348	0.1209	0.07379
	5	q35	0.227395	0.608	0.3702	0.22593
	5	q36	0.142321	0.494	0.2440	0.14891
	5	q37	0.175435	0.498	0.2484	0.15157
	5	q38	0.181121	0.495	0.2449	0.14948
	5	q39	0.220662	0.587	0.3451	0.21058
<b>National identity</b>						
	2	NI1	0.104680	0.649	0.4206	0.00679
	2	NI2	0.196135	0.668	0.4461	0.00720
	2	NI3	0.005496	0.403	0.1627	0.00263
	2	NI4	0.154139	0.576	0.3316	0.00535
	2	NI5	-0.001279	0.415	0.1718	0.00277
	2	NI6	0.075623	0.578	0.3344	0.00540
	2	NI7	0.148958	0.693	0.4808	0.00776
	2	NI8	-0.023623	0.276	0.0763	0.00123
	2	NI11	0.175878	0.588	0.3460	0.00559
	2	NI13	0.089985	0.453	0.2052	0.00331
	2	NI14	0.074584	0.609	0.3706	0.00598
	2	NI15	0.123451	0.663	0.4391	0.00709
	2	NI20	0.100812	0.565	0.3189	0.00515
	2	NI23	0.065082	0.552	0.3045	0.00492
	2	NI25	0.081704	0.470	0.2213	0.00357
	2	NI27	0.051178	0.332	0.1099	0.00177
	2	NI28	0.058548	0.449	0.2013	0.00325

	2	NI30	0.128478	0.501	0.2515	0.00406
	2	NI31	0.098669	0.606	0.3672	0.00593
<b>Self -efficacy</b>						
	6	SE1	0.126653	0.771	0.5942	0.01565
	6	SE2	0.104120	0.734	0.5389	0.01420
	6	SE4	0.090525	0.709	0.5031	0.01325
	6	SE5	0.078254	0.751	0.5635	0.01484
	6	SE6	0.099556	0.687	0.4717	0.01243
	6	SE8	0.081759	0.781	0.6102	0.01608
	6	SE9	0.069383	0.749	0.5609	0.01478
	6	SE10	0.039597	0.810	0.6556	0.01727
	6	SE11	0.109895	0.770	0.5933	0.01563
	6	SE13	0.010233	0.712	0.5074	0.01337
	6	SE14	0.059052	0.704	0.4962	0.01307
	6	SE15	0.107481	0.596	0.3553	0.00936
	6	SE16	0.000567	0.608	0.3699	0.00974
	6	SE17	0.013412	0.583	0.3401	0.00896
	6	SE18	-0.029431	0.692	0.4792	0.01262
	6	SE19	-0.010659	0.721	0.5193	0.01368
	6	SE20	0.021603	0.662	0.4387	0.01156
	6	SE21	0.070513	0.691	0.4779	0.01259
	6	SE26	0.091896	0.738	0.5451	0.01436
	6	SE27	0.049847	0.696	0.4842	0.02339
	6	SE29	-0.037506	0.721	0.5194	0.01368
	6	SE30	0.044484	0.606	0.3674	0.00968
	6	SE32	0.011283	0.624	0.3888	0.01024
	6	SE34	0.130026	0.757	0.5725	0.01508
	6	SE35	0.055785	0.682	0.4656	0.01226

\*Loadings more than 0.3 are acceptable. (loadings >0.3)

#### Appendix C

Discriminant Validity according to Fornell–Larcker Criterion (cross-loadings)

EFL hidden curriculum		Hidden curriculum	National identity	Social atmosphere	Organizational structure	Interaction between teachers & learners	Self-efficacy
1	Social atmosphere	<b>0.744</b>	0.128	<b>0.844</b>	0.458	0.352	-0.054

National identity	1	Organizational structure	<b>0.859</b>	0.103	0.392	<b>0.913</b>	0.533	-0.106
	1	Interaction between teachers & learners	<b>0.802</b>	0.076	0.295	0.558	<b>0.974</b>	-0.116
	2	NI1	0.031	<b>0.648</b>	0.144	0.126	0.008	-0.369
	2	NI2	0.131	<b>0.667</b>	0.194	0.117	0.138	-0.370
	2	NI3	-0.026	0.403	-0.023	-0.019	0.086	-0.112
	2	NI4	0.080	0.575	0.122	0.133	0.120	-0.232
	2	NI5	-0.032	0.414	0.043	-0.082	0.067	0.027
	2	NI6	0.012	<b>0.578</b>	0.173	0.019	0.018	0.001
	2	NI7	0.074	<b>0.693</b>	0.190	0.067	0.109	-0.121
	2	NI8	-0.036	0.276	-0.013	-0.062	0.042	0.152
	2	NI11	0.123	<b>0.588</b>	0.154	0.179	0.063	-0.258
	2	NI13	0.068	0.453	-0.041	0.115	0.125	-0.082
	2	NI14	0.019	<b>0.608</b>	0.116	-0.001	0.087	-0.015
	2	NI15	0.058	<b>0.662</b>	0.157	0.068	0.082	0.006
	2	NI20	0.069	<b>0.564</b>	0.122	0.076	0.031	-0.188
	2	NI23	0.017	<b>0.551</b>	0.142	0.001	0.032	-0.159
	2	NI25	0.049	0.470	0.109	0.003	0.080	0.008
	2	NI27	0.032	0.331	0.209	-0.031	-0.059	-0.084
	2	NI28	0.038	0.448	0.215	-0.071	-0.008	0.024
	2	NI30	0.107	<b>0.501</b>	0.106	0.143	0.023	-0.017
2	NI31	0.064	<b>0.605</b>	0.094	0.066	0.067	-0.104	
Social atmosphere	3	q5	0.308	0.080	<b>0.496</b>	0.203	0.156	-0.039
	3	q6	0.374	0.003	<b>0.533</b>	0.194	0.189	-0.068
	3	q7	0.310	0.211	<b>0.621</b>	0.123	0.142	-0.117
	3	q8	0.261	0.034	0.372	0.186	0.069	0.003
	3	q11	0.389	0.226	<b>0.641</b>	0.294	0.163	-0.070
	3	q12	0.352	0.095	<b>0.601</b>	0.161	0.227	-0.067
	3	q13	0.346	0.161	0.433	0.200	0.228	0.017
Organizational structure	4	q17	0.378	0.088	0.129	<b>0.569</b>	0.171	-0.074
	4	q18	0.359	0.096	0.127	0.482	0.175	-0.194
	4	q20	0.520	0.132	0.202	<b>0.644</b>	0.375	-0.046



	4	q21	0.479	0.103	0.266	<b>0.631</b>	0.370	-0.037
	4	q22	0.543	-0.021	0.140	<b>0.629</b>	0.405	0.018
	4	q24	0.419	0.112	0.191	<b>0.534</b>	0.188	0.046
	4	q26	0.447	0.111	0.307	0.461	0.325	-0.071
	4	q28	0.460	0.011	0.223	<b>0.515</b>	0.347	-0.114
<b>Interaction between teachers &amp; learners</b>								
	5	q31	0.469	0.113	0.161	0.374	<b>0.529</b>	-0.039
	5	q32	0.507	0.122	0.245	0.313	<b>0.714</b>	-0.182
	5	q33	0.451	-0.038	0.105	0.258	<b>0.671</b>	-0.102
	5	q34	0.282	0.048	0.010	0.178	0.347	0.007
	5	q35	0.479	0.070	0.247	0.359	<b>0.608</b>	-0.092
	5	q36	0.431	-0.028	0.087	0.301	<b>0.493</b>	0.001
	5	q37	0.352	0.093	0.021	0.297	<b>0.498</b>	-0.050
	5	q38	0.415	0.030	0.198	0.269	<b>0.494</b>	-0.065
	5	q39	0.494	0.127	0.332	0.305	<b>0.587</b>	-0.001
<b>Self-efficacy</b>								
	6	SE1	-0.118	-0.270	-0.075	-0.104	-0.135	<b>0.770</b>
	6	SE2	-0.081	-0.205	-0.088	-0.116	-0.069	<b>0.734</b>
	6	SE4	-0.098	-0.195	-0.004	-0.113	-0.094	<b>0.709</b>
	6	SE5	-0.065	-0.145	-0.109	-0.030	-0.063	<b>0.750</b>
	6	SE6	-0.099	-0.155	-0.067	-0.085	-0.089	<b>0.686</b>
	6	SE8	-0.052	-0.320	-0.042	-0.087	-0.097	<b>0.781</b>
	6	SE9	-0.060	-0.213	-0.064	-0.030	-0.081	<b>0.748</b>
	6	SE10	-0.022	-0.220	-0.079	-0.013	-0.019	<b>0.809</b>
	6	SE11	-0.092	-0.257	-0.132	-0.077	-0.073	<b>0.770</b>
	6	SE13	0.012	-0.166	-0.027	0.029	-0.049	<b>0.712</b>
	6	SE14	-0.036	-0.163	-0.014	-0.038	-0.113	<b>0.704</b>
	6	SE15	-0.114	-0.009	-0.051	-0.086	-0.116	<b>0.596</b>
	6	SE16	0.002	-0.014	0.023	-0.046	0.017	<b>0.608</b>
	6	SE17	-0.002	-0.151	0.009	-0.015	-0.037	<b>0.583</b>
	6	SE18	0.036	-0.088	0.038	0.049	-0.023	<b>0.692</b>
	6	SE19	0.032	-0.085	-0.047	0.012	0.039	<b>0.720</b>
	6	SE20	0.001	-0.109	-0.059	0.020	-0.036	<b>0.662</b>
	6	SE21	-0.061	-0.225	-0.095	-0.044	-0.040	<b>0.691</b>

6	SE26	-0.080	-0.126	-0.108	-0.076	-0.050	<b>0.738</b>
6	SE27	-0.029	-0.231	-0.025	-0.057	-0.058	<b>0.695</b>
6	SE29	0.069	-0.188	0.044	-0.005	0.020	<b>0.720</b>
6	SE30	-0.033	-0.075	0.023	-0.091	-0.051	<b>0.606</b>
6	SE32	-0.001	-0.163	0.083	-0.037	-0.082	<b>0.623</b>
6	SE34	-0.109	-0.243	-0.082	-0.141	-0.112	<b>0.756</b>
6	SE35	-0.038	-0.116	-0.087	-0.027	-0.036	<b>0.682</b>

Note. Bold values are loadings for each item which are above the recommended value of 0.5.

#### Appendix D

Bootstrapping Results and t-statistics for Path Coefficients (Inner Model)

<b>National identity</b>			
	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>t-statistics</b>	<b>P value</b>
Intercept	0.000	0.000	1.000
Hidden curriculum	0.127	1.63*	0.105
<b>Social atmosphere</b>			
	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>t-statistics</b>	<b>P value</b>
Intercept	0.000	0.000	1.000
Hidden curriculum	0.600	0.986*	0.314
National identity	0.286	2.73*	0.000
<b>Organizational structure</b>			
	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>t-statistics</b>	<b>P value</b>
Intercept	0.000	0.000	1.000
Hidden curriculum	0.802	0.172*	0.242
National identity	0.176	0.000*	0.331
<b>Interaction between teachers &amp; learners</b>			
	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>t-statistics</b>	<b>P value</b>
Intercept	0.000	0.000	1.000
Hidden curriculum	0.778	0.157*	0.300
National identity	0.221	0.445*	0.046
<b>Self-efficacy</b>			

	Estimate	t-statistics	P value
Intercept	0.000	0.000	1.000
Hidden curriculum	0.240	0.920*	0.359
Social atmosphere	-0.135	-0.114	0.225
Organizational structure	-0.165	-1.08	0.284
Interaction between teachers & learners	-0.177	-1.21	0.229

\* The critical  $t$ -value is 1.65 for a significance level of 10%, 1.96 for a significance level of 5% and 2.58 for a significance level of 1% (all two-tailed).

