

Abstract Submission

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Title

From Bias to Belonging: An Evidence-Informed DEIJB Curriculum Audit Model for
Advancing Educational Equity in Hong Kong

Research Overview (English, 50 words)

This paper examines the design, implementation, and outcomes of a DEIJB-aligned curriculum audit in a diverse Hong Kong secondary school, demonstrating how context-specific, targeted curriculum interventions mitigate hidden curricula, entrenched biases, and strengthen student belonging. Findings point to an evidence-informed, scalable model for just and sustainable educational transformation.

Purpose of Study

Despite decades of policy attention to multiculturalism, ethnically minoritised students in Hong Kong continue to experience systemic exclusion, under-representation, and racialised bias within mainstream schooling. Empirical findings from Doing Equality Consciously (DEC) (2019)—a mixed-methods study spanning

Hong Kong classrooms and corporate contexts—demonstrated that Hong Kong’s most entrenched implicit biases operate along race, nationality, gender, and perceived academic competence, with South Asians and other non-Chinese minorities disproportionately positioned as deficient or peripheral. Crucially, the DEC study found that broad, generic diversity interventions were largely ineffective, and in some cases reinforced defensive resistance, while intentional, evidence-informed, and bias-specific interventions generated measurable attitudinal shifts. Building directly on these findings, this study investigates whether a DEIJB-aligned curriculum audit, explicitly designed to respond to contextually identified biases, can function as an effective educational intervention. DEIJB extends conventional DEI approaches by integrating relational justice and practices of belonging, recognising that equity work must address historical harms, epistemic exclusion, and institutional silences—not only representation.

The study asks whether such a targeted curriculum intervention can:

1. Surface and disrupt internalised bias among students;
2. Increase teacher awareness of unconscious bias and microaggressions;
3. Make visible the hidden curriculum and absent narratives;
4. Reframe learning outcomes around equity, justice, and belonging; and
5. Offer a sustainable and scalable model for Hong Kong schools navigating just transitions in education.

Research Methods

This mixed-methods study was conducted through a pilot DEIJB curriculum audit with a government-aided school with one of the highest concentrations of ethnically diverse students in Hong Kong. The intervention was explicitly designed as a **knowledge exchange and testing site** for the DEC recommendations.

Phase 1: Foundational Research Integration

The curriculum audit framework was derived directly from DEC findings, including documented biases against South Asians, women in STEM, East Europeans in English language contexts, and an over-valuation of “excellence” associated with colonising Western states. These insights informed the audit’s guiding questions, indicators, and counter-narrative strategies.

Phase 2: Curriculum Audit and Redesign (2024–2025)

Four subjects—Science, Global Politics, English Literature, and Citizenship & Social Development—were analysed using the DEIJB Framework. The audit examined:

- representational patterns and omissions;
- normative assumptions embedded in examples, histories, and texts;
- alignment between stated learning outcomes and lived student realities; and
- opportunities for counter-stereotyping and epistemic inclusion.

Unit plans were redesigned to foreground Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, and ethnically diverse Hong Kong communities, and to critically interrogate power, identity, and injustice.

Phase 3: Implementation and Participatory Teacher Engagement

The audit was conducted collaboratively, with pre-audit surveys, mid-audit consultations, post-intervention surveys, and structured debriefs with teachers. DEIJB-aligned prompts were embedded into lessons (e.g., gender equality legislation, trans and non-binary recognition, quotas, citizenship regimes), supporting dialogic and restorative pedagogies.

Phase 4: Qualitative and Institutional Data

Data sources included teacher interviews and reflections, student feedback from workshops, school testimonial letters, and evaluative documentation from the DEIJB Lab's broader professional learning networks.

Key Findings and Discussion

1. Enhanced Student Engagement and Critical Consciousness

Teachers consistently reported increased engagement when curricula addressed issues of identity, equity, and justice. Students demonstrated deeper critical thinking and greater openness to diverse geopolitical, cultural, and historical perspectives.

2. Disruption of Internalised Bias and Stereotyping

Exposure to counter-narratives and diverse role models prompted students to question racialised and gendered assumptions, particularly those previously normalised through curricular silence.

3. Increased Teacher Reflexivity and Bias Awareness

Teachers identified previously unexamined beliefs related to racism, sexism, and transphobia, reporting greater confidence in recognising and addressing microaggressions through restorative approaches.

4. Making the Hidden Curriculum Visible

The audit revealed a consistent privileging of Western states and epistemologies. Revised curricula redistributed narrative authority, directly addressing long-standing representational imbalances.

5. Institutional-Level Transformation and Sustainability

The intervention catalysed systemic change, including the establishment of an Equity, Diversity and Understanding (EDU) Committee, a Student DEI Advisory Committee, diversification of library holdings with 20+ books by Indian, Pakistani, Filipino authors, professional development for 60 teachers on microaggressions and restorative justice practices and redesigned units across multiple subjects. These outcomes suggest that **curriculum audits function as institutional levers**, not merely pedagogical tools.

Contribution and Implications

This study offers one of the first empirically grounded, DEIJB-aligned curriculum audit models in Hong Kong, demonstrating how unconscious bias research can be translated into sustained educational practice. By evidencing that **targeted, justice-oriented interventions outperform generic DEI approaches**, the study contributes to scholarship on sustainability, just transitions, and inclusive

education, with relevance for plural societies navigating postcolonial and racialised inequities.

Keywords

DEIJB; Curriculum Audit; Unconscious Bias; Hidden Curriculum; Educational Equity