

Exploring the Impact of Grade 11 Boot Camp Implementation: A Teacher-Centric Perspective in a Secondary School at Mahobong, Lesotho

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7012122>

Received: 13 December 2023; Accepted: 16 December 2023; Published: 13 January 2024

ABSTRACT

This study examines the crucial grade 11 stage in Lesotho's education system—a transitional phase that assesses learners' eligibility for Higher Education Institutes entry. With only a small number of grade 11s meeting the entry requirements for Higher Education Institutes, the implementation of boot camps emerges as an intervention strategy to enhance grade 11s' learning experiences to meet tertiary entry requirements. The study is guided by Self-Determination Theory to explore teachers' perspectives and experiences in understanding the challenges and prospects associated with boot camp implementation for grade 11 students. Using purposive sampling, six teachers from a selected secondary school in Mahobong participated in semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that boot camps offer concentrated time for learning and foster improved academic performance. They also foster a sense of community among students and teachers. Challenges identified include limited school infrastructure and inefficient program monitoring. Recommendations made include the need for infrastructure improvement, motivation for supporting staff, and enhanced stakeholder collaboration to optimize boot camps' effectiveness.

Keywords: Boot camp, grade 11, teachers' views, teachers' experiences

INTRODUCTION

Education is perceived as a cornerstone of national development by various nations (Ayanwale, 2023; Petrosino et al., 2012). As a consequence, nations place great accent on offering quality education to its citizens for the development of relevant skills for improved health outcomes, poverty alleviation, and economic growth. However, within the education sector, this African proverb “it takes a village to raise a child” holds significant as it resonates with the educational context emphasizing the collaborative efforts indispensable for the holistic development of a child (Rocca et al., 2020). This adage finds particular relevance in the case of grade 11 students in Lesotho, where the induction of boot camps has emerged as an innovative strategy during the transitional stage of learners' academic journey being grade 11, demanding collaborative support for its success.

In Lesotho, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework (CAPF) of 2009 places grade 11 as a juncture for undertaking a summative assessment which is meant for certification and evaluating students' aptitude to fulfil the entry requirements for tertiary level (Ministry of Education and Training [MoET], 2009). The transitional period of grade 11 is one of the critical phases in Lesotho learners' academic journey. This phase seems to determine a learner's academic future, as students must satisfy entry requirements of tertiary institutions depending on the level of education being a certificate, diploma or first degree. The Council on Higher Education (CHE), responsible for accrediting programs in Higher Education Institutes (HEI) in Lesotho, raised a concern that even though there is a significant number of candidates

sitting for final examinations, only a few are absorbed into HEI (CHE, 2012; Matsolo et al., 2016). Even though the majority of learners would love to enrol for a degree, they find themselves being placed into bridging courses at tertiaries which are meant to ameliorate students' results. Furthermore, it is well known among Basotho that , there is a proliferation of private supplementary schools nationwide, indicating that many grade 11 learners are unprepared for tertiary levels. Therefore, there is a recognised need for a rapid intervention to exhaustively prepare grade 11 learners for smooth transition to tertiaries.

Recognizing the critical importance of the grade 11 phase, different schools implement strategies to enhance students' academic outcomes. The implementation of boot camps has appeared as one such strategy, vigorously supplementing traditional classroom instruction and anchoring in the grade 11 learners' phase (Sowells et al., 2016). Although the term "boot camp" is commonly associated with intense physical training, especially in the Lesotho Defence Force youth program for mitigating youth moral decadence (South African Broadcasting Services [SABC], 2023), in the educational context, it refers to short, intensive programs designed to provide students with a myriad of skills and experiences. Boot camps serve as educational intervention strategies meant to enhance grade 11 students' learning experiences (Wheeler & Wischusen, 2014).

While the implementation of boot camps appears common among the so-called 'best performing' schools in Lesotho, this initiative has gained interest across various schools these days. This study specifically focuses on a secondary school in Mahobong, within the Leribe district in Lesotho, where boot camps for grade 11 students were highly embraced and implemented for the 2023 academic year by some secondary schools. It is crucial to understand that during a boot camp, typically, students leave their homes to be secluded in schools, participating in intensive educational activities beyond normal school hours to supplement traditional classroom teaching and learning. This short-range program aims to provide students with a concentrated learning environment free from familial disturbances, fostering skill development, promoting teamwork, and encouraging academic excellence.

The success of boot camps as an educational intervention during the grade 11 stage has broad implications for the holistic development of learners (Hamilton, 2015). For the effective implementation of boot camps, collective support is essential from all stakeholders, including parents, school administration, and teachers solidifying that it takes a village to raise a grade 11 student. However, teachers, as key stakeholders, play a crucial role in shaping and implementing boot camp programs and influencing students' academic outcomes. Teachers' perspectives and experiences are, therefore, central in understanding the perceived challenges and prospects associated with the implementation of a boot camp (Blomberg et al., 2022).

A considerable amount of literature has been published on boot camp in education (Sowells et al., 2016; Wischusen & Wischusen, 2007). However, these studies focus on boot camps outside the context of Lesotho, in particular Mahobong. Therefore, a gap in our understanding of teachers' views on boot camps for grade 11 learners in Mahobong poses a challenge for future program implementation. This complicates the potential for addressing challenges, optimizing the program for its effectiveness and evaluating its appropriateness for integration into Lesotho's educational system. The present study aims to investigate the perspectives and experiences of teachers from a secondary school in Mahobong to understand the challenges and prospects associated with the implementation of boot camps for grade 11 learners. This study not only contributes to the growing body of literature on educational interventions but also aims to facilitate ongoing improvements in education in Mahobong.

Research questions

1. How do Mahobong teachers perceive the challenges and prospects of implementing boot camps for grade 11 students?
2. How can the boot camp program be optimized to address to enhance its effectiveness?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The underpinning theory

This study is guided by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan in 2012. SDT explores factors that influence human motivation and behaviour, emphasizing that individuals have innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Meeting these needs is fundamental for fostering intrinsic motivation and optimal development (Marchand, 2022). SDT is relevant for examining the impact of grade 11 boot camp implementation from a teacher-centric perspective because it focuses on the motivational nuances underlying human behaviour. In the context of the boot camp, understanding how teachers support students' autonomy, competence, and relatedness provides understanding of the motivational factors contributing to student engagement, participation, and overall learning outcomes. The theory will guide the selection of a suitable methodology, such as in-depth interviews, to capture teachers' perspectives on how they facilitate autonomy, competence, and relatedness during the boot camp.

Educational Interventions in Developing Countries

Educational interventions, focusing on primary and secondary education in developing countries, reveal a diverse range of strategies (Ganimian & Murnane, 2014). Such interventions often target disparities in access to quality education, shortages in educational resources, and other socioeconomic factors that inauspiciously affect students' learning outcomes. These interventions are discussed below.

Demand-side Interventions

Dupas and Kremer (2017) define demand-side interventions in education as strategies aimed at addressing barriers individuals and families encounter in accessing and participating in formal schooling. Actually, these interventions are customized to convince communities to view education as an indispensable tool to navigate the complexities of this ever-changing world. This information is disseminated through meetings, seminars, and social online platforms to raise awareness about the importance of education and potential career opportunities.

Another strategy to influence communities' perceptions of education involves reducing the costs associated with schooling and making education accessible to all (Parmar & Banerjee, 2019). In the context of boot camps, demand-side interventions could involve sensitizing parents and students about the benefits of boot camps for academic excellence. Additionally, schools could provide subsidies to alleviate financial distress for parents, making boot camps more accessible across various socioeconomic backgrounds of grade 11s. This intervention ensures that boot camps retain students and make education available to all students, aligning with the objective outlined by the United Nations (UN), of which Lesotho is a member (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2017).

Provision of school inputs

The provision of school resources constitutes a key intervention in enhancing education. This strategy involves allocating essential resources such as textbooks, classrooms, and qualified teachers, all of which are essential in enhancing the overall quality of education (Cobb-Clark & Jha, 2013; Rodriguez-Segura, 2022; Sciarra & Hunter, 2015). Chaudhary (2015) emphasizes the fundamental role of textbooks in the learning process, as they contribute to fostering critical thinking and analytical skills by providing up-to-date and relevant information. Additionally, the provision of adequate classrooms, properly equipped to create environments conducive to effective learning, is an essential intervention in education (Dupas & Kremer, 2017; Mandukwini, 2016). Levy et al. (2009) highlight that in Burkina Faso, the construction of schools and other associated interventions had a positive impact on learner enrolment. This evidence of increased enrolment authenticates the view that well-designed classrooms motivate both teachers and learners. Some

resources include digital tools, such as computers, smart boards, and educational software such as Easyman, aimed at enhancing the educational experience with interactive and dynamic content (Mphats'oane et al., 2023). All these resources, including boot camps, are basic elements that education stakeholders must ensure are provided to enhance the quality of education.

Governance reforms in education

Reforms in the education sector play a crucial role in ensuring that education aligns with the contemporary context (Kurata, 2023b). Research by Anna Popova et al. (2022) reveals that governance reforms in other developing countries have primarily focused on mobilizing additional resources and decentralizing management. In some countries, such as Lesotho, the reforms aim to update the curriculum and assessment to address contemporary issues (MoET, 2009).

In addition to reforms targeting the curriculum and assessment, various policies implemented by developing countries intervene in different sectors of education. For example, Glewwe and Miguel (2008) highlight that absenteeism in Kenyan schools was a significant concern before the introduction of school-based health interventions. However, the intervention reportedly reduced absenteeism by 25 per cent in selected treatment schools. In Lesotho, the introduction of "Free Primary Education" (FPE) ensures that all children, irrespective of their parents' socio-economic status, have access to education (Lekhetho, 2013).

Individualized, repeated teacher training interventions

According to Nishimura (2014), this intervention focuses on instructing educators in specific tasks or tools, often associated with particular teaching methods. The emphasis lies on the need for customized and recurrent professional development sessions for teachers. Duflo and Kremer (2017) underscore that this intervention aims to address the unique needs of teachers by emphasizing specific skills or tools relevant to their teaching practices. Instead of being a one-time event, this intervention involves continuous training sessions over time, enabling teachers to deepen their understanding, refine their individualized pedagogical approaches, and stay updated on the latest educational strategies and methodologies. Boot camps have emerged as one such intervention that many schools in Lesotho are currently showing interest in.

Transition Periods in Education

The transition from one academic level to another represents a critical juncture in every student's academic journey. STEM Learning (2022) concurs that this transition encompasses various significant factors associated with the new environment, including unfamiliar teaching styles, new rules, and behavioural expectations. Gregory (2022) emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the distinct needs and expectations of students during transitional stages, highlighting the necessity for student preparedness. To ensure students are adequately prepared for this transition, STEM Learning (2022) underscores the need for diagnostic assessments to identify gaps and variations in students' knowledge and skills. Utilizing data obtained from diagnostic assessments ensures the provision of focused interventions or modifications to teaching approaches, enabling students to access the curriculum and make significant progress. In the context of Mahobong, understanding how grade 11 students experience this transition becomes essential, especially considering boot camps as a potential intervention to anchor grade 11 students and enhance their preparedness.

Effectiveness of Boot Camps in Education

The effectiveness of educational boot camps has garnered increasing interest among researchers and educators, prompting a deeper exploration of their impact on student learning and development. The effectiveness of boot camps spans a wide range, including academic enrichment, skill-building, and

character development (Hamilton, 2015; Sowell et al., 2016). A growing body of literature suggests that boot camps can yield positive outcomes by addressing specific educational needs or challenges within a short time frame (Wischusen & Wischusen, 2007). Although boot camps can have a compressed duration, even lasting two weeks, the accelerated learning within reinforces learners' academic skills and improves outcomes. The concentrated nature of boot camps allows for the preparation of learners for standardized tests, such as the summative assessment undertaken by grade 11 students in Lesotho.

Boot camps can also be seen as an opportunity to foster holistic development, addressing not only academic skills but also social, emotional, and interpersonal skills crucial for students' overall growth (Wichman, 2022). Wheeler and Wischusen (2014) note that boot camps may motivate students to excel academically and engage in self-directed learning. Another observation is that boot camps ensure the retention and progress of students in tertiary education. Additionally, these programs could enhance students' teamwork and collaboration skills, fostering a sense of community and shared goals. Moreover, boot camps are perceived as a platform for preparing students for future challenges, equipping them with problem-solving skills, moral values, and immersive learning experiences (Hamilton, 2015; Moonpreneur, 2023; Vollstedt, 2018).

Challenges in Implementing Boot Camps in Education

The implementation of boot camps presents a myriad of challenges, particularly in developing countries like Lesotho. Hill (2012) and Hamilton (2015) highlight resource constraints as a significant factor posing hurdles for the effective implementation of boot camps. These resources encompass financial limitations, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of educational materials. Additionally, Karakuş (2021) emphasizes that the readiness of teachers to adapt to new pedagogical approaches emerges as a critical factor in the success of any educational intervention, including boot camps. There is a need for orientation and ongoing support to teachers engaged in boot camp implementation to ensure its success. Furthermore, the engagement and support of parents and the community are vital for the success of any educational intervention, such as boot camps (Nkokana, 2022). Failure to consider these stakeholders could hurt the implementation of boot camps, given the crucial role of parental and community support.

Moreover, Ralejoe (2016) highlights cultural factors as having a significant influence on the success of educational initiatives. It is advisable to consider cultural sensitivity so that any educational intervention, such as boot camps, aligns with the cultural context, especially in the case of Mahobong. Ineffective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can indeed pose a challenge for boot camps, as they are crucial for assessing the impact of educational interventions. It is essential to collect data that reflects the outcomes of any intervention to assess the success and challenges of the program. Some challenges related to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms include insufficient data collection methods hindering the ability to assess the effectiveness of boot camps and identify areas for improvement (Youth Endowment Fund, 2023).

METHODS

The study employed a qualitative case study (QCS) design to investigate the perspectives and experiences of teachers from one school in Mahobong, aiming to understand the challenges and prospects associated with the implementation of a boot camp for grade 11 students. The QCS design was chosen because it allows for the exploration of a phenomenon in its natural context, providing a rich description of the problem (Kurata, 2023a; Mokati, 2023). Due to the nature of QCS, it enables researchers to gather in-depth information on teachers' experiences and views regarding the impact of implementing a boot camp for grade 11 students at Mahobong.

For sampling, the study adopted purposive sampling based on its effectiveness in selecting participants relevant to the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). Six teachers were purposively selected from the

population of sixteen teachers who taught grade 11 classes (specifically, grade 11 A and B) at a secondary school in Mahobong. The selection was based on the fact that these teachers were actively involved in teaching grade 11 during the boot camp, making them knowledgeable about the specifics of the program. It is crucial to note that the sample size of six teachers comprises two sampled organizers out of three and four subject teachers from three departments: the Department of Languages, the Department of Mathematics and Science, and the Department of Commercials. This sampling strategy aligns with Creswell's (2008) concept of maximum variation, emphasizing that it ensures the richness of data. **Table 1** provides an overview of the participants' profiles.

Table 1. Participants profile

Participant	Sex	Department	Category
Teacher 1	Male	Department of Languages	organiser
Teacher 2	Female	Department of Mathematics and Science	organiser
Teacher 3	Female	Department of Commercials	Subject-teacher
Teacher 4	Female	Department of Languages	Subject-teacher
Teacher 5	Female	Department of Languages	Subject-teacher
Teacher 6	Male	Department of Mathematics and Science	Subject-teacher

Regarding data collection, semi-structured interviews were employed to gather information. The interview questions were distributed through face-to-face sessions and phone calls. The researchers chose the semi-structured format as it provides detailed insights into participants' thoughts and behaviours, allowing interviewees to express their opinions and develop their ideas (Mokati, 2023).

For data analysis, inductive thematic data analysis was utilized. This process involved coding, organizing, developing themes, and interpreting data to provide explanations for the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). In terms of ethical considerations, the participating teachers were informed by the researchers that their involvement in the study was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality of participants' names and the school's name was carefully maintained.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings and discussions derived from the semi-structured interviews administered to six teachers. It is essential to note that the findings and discussions align with the two research questions:

1. How do Mahobong teachers perceive the challenges and prospects of implementing boot camps for grade 11 students?
2. How can the boot camp program be optimized to enhance its effectiveness?

Equally important, teachers' responses are categorized based on the questions administered to address the research questions.

Research Question 1: How do Mahobong teachers perceive the challenges and prospects of implementing boot camps for grade 11 students?

Academic and Learning Benefits of Boot Camp

The first question was designed to find out about perceived benefit of boot camp. Teachers identified several benefits of the boot camp approach. A common view among participants was the improvement in overall academic performance of learners, noting increased motivation and high test scores during the camp. The

majority of participants endorsed boot camp for creating an intense learning environment, where both teachers and students invest energy and have sufficient time for interaction and independent learning stressing the ample instructional time available with committed learners. For example, one interviewee said

Boot camp creates more time for teachers to attend to every learner concerning their studies.

Another interviewee said,

It helps to gather students in one place so that they can have enough time to revise together and teachers will also be able to find them in one place.

These results provide important insights into the academic and learning benefits of the boot camp approach. What is interesting is that all respondents praised the boot camp for these two advantages. The first benefit highlighted the ample time available and the students' reliability in attendance, leading to enhanced overall academic performance. Additionally, teachers commended the boot camp for providing an intensive learning environment and fostering extensive teacher-student interaction. These are rather encouraging results as they offer a sustainable solution to the prolonged concern of teachers about limited time in the grade 11 academic year. The boot camp approach emerged as a positive strategy, optimizing time, fostering motivation, and contributing to a supportive and effective learning environment. These findings somewhat align with Wischusen and Wischusen's (2007) assertion that boot camps reinforce learners' skills and improve outcomes, as mentioned by one teacher.

Boot Camp and Community Building

When asked about the boot camp's impact on community building, the majority of respondents viewed the program as promoting a sense of community by encouraging collaboration among learners. The most important result to emerge from the respondents was that students from both classes, grade 11 A and B, not only worked together on school tasks but also engaged in other activities such as sharing meals and boiling water. One interviewee remarked that,

Education is a three-legged pot: teachers, learners and parents. Boot camp creates a good atmosphere for learners to study with the help of their teachers and parents. In essence, it creates a better community for learners to learn better.

Other responses to this question included this remarks from another respondent,

Since teachers and learners spend most of the time together, teachers influence learners to do their work under their supervision, in the same way, learners also motivate teachers to help them by consulting and asking teachers questions when they encounter difficulties.

In this study, boot camps were found to foster a sense of community among students, promoting collaboration in both academic and non-academic activities. What is curious about these results is that they highlight the boot camp's potential to reinforce teamwork and self-directed learning. The reported potential of boot camp here suggest that the program is compatible with the 21st-century teaching and learning context that seeks to promote a host of skills including the one fostered by boot camp. These results concur with Dupas and Kremer's (2017) suggestion that for educational interventions such as boot camp to be successful, Continuous Professional Development is essential to enhance teachers' skills for the holistic development of a learner.

Positive changes in students' behaviour and attitudes

Respondents were asked to state the noticed positive changes in student behaviour and attitudes.

Remarkably, teachers' views surfaced mainly in relation to students' willingness to sacrifice their evening time to attend classes with enthusiasm. Moreover, teachers noted that students easily collaborated in groups for both classroom activities and assignments. The comment below of one respondent illustrates this,

What I have anticipated in the boot camp is that students were able to get good marks in the mock exam which is a positive change. Again behaviour wise they were good.

Another respondent said,

Students started discussion groups and were more positive towards learning.

The results presented here show changes in students' behaviour and attitudes resulting from the boot camp. These results suggest that the boot camp enhanced motivation for learning, which has the potential for academic improvements. The possible explanation for these findings is that students were guided on how to utilize boot camps for their benefit. Notably, guidance to students aligns with the demand-side interventions strategy, emphasizing persuading students about the benefits of education (Dupas & Kremer, 2017). Additionally, these positive attitudes may result from the care and support the school provides to students. The school offered subsidies, reducing the cost per student to an affordable amount. Even those who could not afford to pay were included. Due to such support, working hard became a way for students to express their appreciation while at the same instant paving the way for their easy transition to tertiary.

Challenges faced in a boot camp

In response to question about challenges experienced in implementing the boot camp, a number of issues were identified. However, a common concern amongst interviewees was about a small number of students misbehaving and leaving the campus without permission. This unauthorized leaving of hostels also resulted in students smuggling drugs into the hostels. Consequently, students faced disciplinary actions that led to their expulsion. As Teacher 2 put it:

Some boys were found with drugs while some of the girls were most of the time found outside the school premises at awkward times such as at 9 in the evening with their boyfriends.

In their accounts of the events surrounding motivating supporting staff and organisers of the boot camp, a number of teachers expressed their concern that there are teachers who are commuting and they engage in high costs, especially on weekends. They also expressed their heart-felt concerns for organisers who have to commute daily and monitor the boot camp daily. The comment below illustrates these concerns,

It was difficult for organisers because they had to ensure that learners ate well, slept in a conducive environment daily as well and attended classes at the same time and also manage learners' behaviour.

One individual added,

It is difficult to monitor students in and out of the campus. Some usually go home without reporting especially on weekends since no teacher is available at school. This usually happens when other teachers miss classes allocated to them.

These findings emphasise the intricate task of organizing a boot camp. The challenges suggest the need for a collaborative and comprehensive approach to address educational, behavioural, and logistical issues to ensure the success of a boot camp. Some of these challenges were not unexpected, as the school already faces issues like student drug abuse and inappropriate behaviour, particularly affecting girls' self-control. These challenges emphasize Nkokana's (2022) perspective that educational interventions require parental involvement for success. With parental involvement, challenges such as drug abuse and misbehaviour can

be more effectively addressed and never impact the boot camp negatively.

Research Question 2: How can the boot camp program be optimized to enhance its effectiveness?

Solutions implemented for making the boot camp program better

When teachers were asked to suggest ideas for making a boot camp a success, two teachers highlighted the practical solutions they implemented. One teacher highlighted that they recorded expenditures for financial management, estimating the amount students could pay, the school's subsidy amount, and scheduling the boot camp duration. To manage the demanding task of monitoring food service, organizers formed a task team of four girls responsible for serving. Another teacher mentioned that they successfully addressed challenges related to resource and time management. The respondent said,

I organized resources such as photocopying question papers before lessons. I also broke the overall content by grouping similar topics before the presentation.

The findings showcase proactive measures taken by teachers to improve the boot camp program and effectively tackle challenges. These results highlight the significance of efficient planning, financial transparency, and task delegation in optimizing the boot camp experience. What is noteworthy is that, among the six respondents, only two teachers reported implementing solutions. This suggests that while challenges existed, they were not so severe to an extent that they could negatively impact the overall success of the boot camp.

Suggestions for improvement

Teachers offered recommendations to enhance the boot camp program. They stressed the importance of orienting students to enhance their preparedness and discourage immoral behaviour. Teachers also advocated for infrastructure improvements to enable extended on-campus stays for students. Additionally, they emphasized the need for hiring a matron to ensure the monitoring and security of students. One teacher said,

Security should be improved for students. Additionally, funds from students should be paid on time but can be quarterly as part of school fees.

Another teacher said,

I think the boot camp can be made better by providing more buildings and keeping students on campus from January till November when they close.

Regarding how teachers believe the school administration and stakeholders can support the boot camp, teachers emphasize the importance of collaborative efforts to ensure the success and improvement of the initiative. In recognizing the significant efforts of those organizing and facilitating the boot camp, teachers suggest that organizers should receive allowances as a form of motivation. This acknowledgement aims to boost morale and allows teachers to focus solely on academic activities.

For example, one interviewee said,

Allowance should be given to the organisers of the camp as a form of motivation. Teachers who attend evening classes should be transported to their places for their safety

Another teacher also said,

I wish there could be a tuck shop in school to limit student's movement in and out of the campus to buy from the shops.

These suggestions provided by teachers to improve the boot camp program demonstrate a keen awareness of key areas that can enhance the overall experience for both students and organizers. One interesting finding is a concern for enhanced security measures and the hiring of a matron to ensure the monitoring and safety of students underscores the importance of a secure and controlled environment for the success of the boot camp. This is a serious consideration because a failure to contain students and ensure their security would compromise the boot camp's essence. As Hamilton (2015) noted, boot camps are designed for concentrated and accelerated learning to reinforce learners' academic skills and improve outcomes. Therefore, loose monitoring of students affects the program's credibility, and parents' faith in their children's safety becomes a serious concern. Overall, these suggestions by teachers reflect their efforts to make the boot camp more effective, secure, and sustainable.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and discussions from the semi-structured interviews with Mahobong teachers revealed the challenges, benefits, and recommendations for improving the boot camp program for grade 11 students. In response to the first research question, teachers emphasized the academic and learning benefits of the boot camp, citing ample time availability, reliable student attendance, improved academic performance, a sense of community among students and teachers, and positive changes in students' behaviour and attitudes. In conclusion, the boot camp has nuanced benefits, covering academic, social, and moral aspects, aligning with the holistic development needs of learners in the 21st century, and preparing them for success in tertiary education.

However, challenges affecting students, teachers, organizers, and other supporting staff were identified. Despite these challenges, the overall conclusion is that the benefits of the boot camp outweigh the challenges. Collective intervention from all stakeholders is essential for successful implementation. The findings suggest that the upcoming boot camps will likely run smoothly, assuring the critical stage of grade 11, with the boot camp serving as a crucial element in preparing students for the transition to tertiary education.

Addressing the second research question, teachers suggested and implemented practical solutions to overcome challenges. These solutions included financial management strategies, task delegation for food service, efficient resource organization, student orientation for preparedness, early parent communication, infrastructure enhancement for extended on-campus stays, hiring a matron for monitoring and security, providing allowances for organizers and supporting staff, and establishing a tuck shop. The conclusion is that the boot camp is a multifaceted program requiring collective efforts from all stakeholders to find solutions for smooth implementation.

In summary, the findings depict the boot camp as a multifaceted program covering academic, logistical, behavioural, and security aspects. The innovation demonstrated positive outcomes, effectively addressing the challenges associated with the transitional phase of grade 11. Boot camp instills skills, values, and attitudes crucial for preparing learners for the tertiary stage and ensuring their smooth progress and retention. Despite challenges, their impact is not severe enough to hinder the overall success of the boot camp. Based on these conclusions, recommendations include enhancing stakeholder collaboration, continuous teacher training, student orientation programs, financial planning and transparency, infrastructure enhancement, recognition and motivation for supporting staff, task delegation, parent engagement, and the establishment of on-campus facilities such as a tuck shop to further optimize the effectiveness of the program.

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