

Exploring Students and Teachers' Teaching and Learning Experiences from Academic Camps in Public Secondary Schools in Simiyu Region, Tanzania

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Abstract: This paper examined teaching and learning experiences of both teachers and students from academic camps. The concept of academic camps in the Tanzanian education context is new but well accepted by stakeholders at the grassroots level while the top managerial leadership of the country was against it. The study used mixed approach alongside with convergent design. It was conducted in Simiyu Region in Bariadi District. The population involved teachers, Head of Schools and students. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis was done through descriptive statistics for quantitative and content analysis for qualitative data. The findings show that teachers and students underwent both positive and negative experiences from academic camps. Among positive experiences are; improvement of academic performance and students life skills development by socialization. Among the notable negative experiences are shortage of infrastructures to sustain all students and at the same time outbreak of diseases to students due to lack of sanitation. The study concludes that; the issues of academic camps should be legally accepted hence create conditions for its operation.

Keywords: Academic Camps, Teaching, Learning, Experience

1. Introduction

Academic camps can be seen as opportunities to discover values, expand competencies and build knowledge that will enable students to have complete and fulfilling academic lives. Therefore, school camps, that is, academic camps give opportunities for teachers to build confidence and creativity in their students, generate in them positive connections with their fellow students, their teachers and make them learn how to engage with the community members (Papprill, 2018). Moreover, Academic camps are an efficacy situation for teenagers to develop their skills and understanding which are indispensable for academic success (Wilson & Sibthorp, 2018). On the same note Soto (2022) describes different types of camps as follows; first, Educational Enrichment Camp known as academic camps these have been practised a lot in academic life for students. They are geared for better achievement in different activities, example English camps (Rachmawati et al., 2020) and language camps (Shestakova et al., 2017), geography camps (Minca et al., 2015), mathematics camps (Franks & McGlamery, 2021).

Second, sports camps are the camps formed for the purpose of raising students' sport talents from school

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level to regional level up to national level. That means they take talented students from different school primary and secondary and train them, example UMISSETA, UMITASHUMTA-Tanzanian sports, which encourage sports through Tanzania and deliver most recent sports news. Third, regular camps always provide closer supervision, commitment on different activities for better achievement, most of these camps are repeated every year continuously, example summer camps (Goodwin & Staples, 2005), refugee camps (Alharbi, 2017). Fourth, special needs camps. These are the camps prepared for special need children with a lot of different activities which will make children learn activities like painting and drawing according to their disability. Example of special need is behaviour disorder, physical disability, learning disabilities. Fifth, specialty camp is the centre of attention on a particular activities or skills, example, dance, music, STEM-Science subjects, sports, language. Therefore, all these types of camps are applicable in our daily life, so teachers and students' experiences teaching and learning in different ways. In school context, academic camps are the reserved classes used for teenager students with common interest of studying together and learn from each other by the help of their teachers for better academic accomplishment.

Moreover, academic camps globally have been shown in different phases in the world as (subject camps, summer camps, refugees camps, cancer camps); STEM subject especially chemistry subjects that display the applicability of science in the girls' lives and guide them on the possibilities to pursue science careers and the purpose is to empower women in their future life and make them confident in their scientific abilities. Students learn more good things in science camp and help them plan for the future for better career choice (Uri et al., 2015) as well as summer camps that influence science subjects to make academic decisions of middle school students for educational experience (Sexton et al., 2003). On the same note, refugee camp help in tracking drop-out students in school, on the educational policies and practices and the role that parents play in preventing Palestinian students from dropping out of school (Al-hroub, 2015). Moreover, cancer camps in Canada planned to provide necessary information about the treatment and experience of that difficulty to handle diseases in the families. Children cancer experiences arise in the community to break out the inflexibility and harshness of cancer treatment (Mohrea, 2013). Therefore, these different formations of academic camp show the experience of teaching and learning to campers.

The current practised academic camps are not guided by the policy of the country and do not have legal framework that guide the education sector. However, this strategy's "academic camp" was influenced by the national objective outlined in the Tanzania's Development Vision for 2025. One of the five characteristics of the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 is a well-educated and learning community (URT, 2021). The more educated society understands the value of camping and is therefore prepared to supply the necessities for its execution. Therefore, in order to ensure that Tanzanian citizens are educated, this plan urges education stakeholders to use a variety of tactics. Therefore, since it is exceedingly unsafe to employ academic camps in classrooms without ministerial clearance, national policy guidance, or a legislative framework, everything in the education sector must adhere to tight regulations. Due to the necessity for close monitoring of these normal students, especially those who learn slowly and those with special needs, academic achievement will be lower in schools without academic camps.

The governments at regional level have defended and accepted the initiative of academic camps, and value. These academic camps as seen as the brilliant idea in the initiative of these academic camps because it helps schools and individual students in improvement of the academic performance (Kamagi, 2020). As a result, each year in these academic camps, kids' performance significantly improved, which led to the national prediction of a bright future for students and schools. Followed by comprehensive academic plan known as "Mkakati wa kuboresha taaluma 2021," which is approximately translated as a strategy to improve academics in 2021, was established by the Simiyu Region. This plan was made to carry out the overall strategic objective with regard to education. The creation of academic camps is one of the tactics in this Simiyu academic plan (Secretary, 2021). Therefore, these academic camps are well accepted by the government at regional level that these academic camps increase the reading capacity of students, by making them stay away from things that interrupt their learning ability. These show that lower stakeholders encourage and support the initiative of academic camps.

The then two ministers from the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government Authorities and the Minister of Education, Science, and Technology, opposed the initiative of academic camps. The MOEST at the time was quoted as saying that schools shouldn't offer extracurricular activities like camps because it is perceived as a way to charge parents more money despite the fact that they are aware that education is free. This was said during the annual budget meeting in Dodoma in 2021–2022 (Mwananchi, 2021). Additionally, PORALGA prohibits all regular lessons, remedial classes, and school gatherings during holidays. This is made to make pupils complete household chores at home (Tamisemi, 2021). Therefore, outside the regular class hours, extra classes do not contribute to good performance. Therefore, the student's success is ensured by good attendance, adherence to the school schedule, and respect for one another.

Despite the fact that academic camps are not supported by the ministers, according to Glover (2011), and Klee (2022) the benefits of camps in the society in general are as follows; camps increase social connections, which mean that when students meet in the camp, they connect to forever friendship and they learn to resolve conflicts in a positive manner. Another advantage is that camps expose children to the natural world. This means that campers learn to respect and appreciate the world apart from their home experiences; they learn to protect the environment and friendly attitudes. Also camps allow children to live simply because they always live uniformly like food, shelter, clothing and following the routines of a day in a camp. Again, camps provide a safe, secure, supportive and healthy environment. Once participating in a full day activities often out of doors and enjoying regular, nutritious meals, campers always get time to refresh for the next day. Furthermore, camps build character and self-esteem and teach different skills that emulate leadership skills, co-operation, caring to campers. This will make the campers to be considerate to others; develop conflict resolution skills and become self-confident. Again, a camp is a place to experience fun, laughter, surprise and happiness. This mean that camps give relief and rest from the pressures, demands, schedules and stresses, which too often are a reality of young adolescents' daily lives. So, enjoyment, fun acting is very important aspect to human health and as medicine for a peaceful mind. Therefore, academic camps bring positive experiences to students and teachers in schools because, apart from teaching and learning, there is life. That means, academic camps improve communication skills among teachers and students as well as community members.

Definitely, the existence of academic camps in schools as organizations has been accepted by all lower stakeholders (regional officers, head of schools, teachers, community members and students). Subsequently to maintain this status, the presence of academic camps in schools has been seen as an important strategy in Simiyu region in terms of academic achievements on national examinations as they depend on the stakeholders' hard work. Along with individual student's efforts, these academic camps strengthen students' confidence, students' gain life skills by the guidance of their teachers, who teach them on how to manage different activities by making them have social interaction apart from their studies. Therefore, due to these academic camps, there was a need to investigate on teachers and students' positive and negative experiences of academic camps in public secondary schools specifically in Simiyu region Tanzania

1.1 Research Objective

This research was guided by one objective.

- Examining teachers and students' experiences of academic camps in public secondary schools

2. Methodology

This study used mixed approach where quantitative and qualitative questions that involved collecting and analyzing numerical and non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions and experiences were used (Creswell W, 2014). The research design used was convergent parallel mixed methods design where both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were used together at the same time (Creswell, 2014, Kroll & Neri, 2009). In this study, convergent parallel mixed methods design was used because it made the researcher deal with numerical and non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions and experiences of the use of the academic camps hence facilitating students' learning experiences and teacher teaching experiences based on the academic camps in public secondary schools. The study was carried out in Bariadi district in Simiyu region because the region had developed an academic strategy to improve academic performances in Simiyu 2021, and the introduction of academic camps was one of the objectives of the strategy (Secretay, 2021). The target population of this study were the head of schools because they were the leaders of all school activities. Others were teachers because they were the teachers of form four students and students because they were the targeted ones (form four students who were staying in the academic camps). Therefore, all of these fully participated in the secondary schools activities on the daily basis.

The instruments that were used to gather information from the public secondary schools in Simiyu especially in Bariadi district were the interviews and questionnaires. The sample size was 77 participants including 5 head of schools, 30 teachers and 42 students. The sampling techniques used were both probability and non-probability. Systematic sampling is found in probability sampling and purposive sampling is in the domain of non-probability sampling. Both of these techniques were used to obtain all of the study's participants. Data analysis was done numerically (statistic method) for the quantitative data and content analysis on qualitative data. This used patterns of the words to evaluate the content of the research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The researcher followed all the ethical considerations including obtaining the clearance letter, permission letter, the consent form and lastly the researcher considered

the anonymity and assurance of confidentiality of the information provided by the participants in the field (Usman et al. 2018).

3. Results and Discussion

The findings are presented based on research objective. The objective of this study intended to cover the teachers and students experiences of academic camps in public secondary schools. These findings categorised teachers and students' experiences according to two sections, both positive and negative experiences of the academic camps. The sections which contain these findings have been categorized by identification of the content on head of school interviews and in addition to statistical methods on frequencies and percentages generated from data solicited from questionnaires.

3.1 Teachers and Students' Positive Experiences of the Academic Camps in Public Secondary Schools

Based on objective of the study, the participants identified the positive experiences of academic camps in public secondary schools. On this, data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. With regard to this aspect, the findings are presented tin Tables and quotations. It was important to establish teaching and learning experiences by focusing on the positive experiences of these academic camps by teachers and students respectively

Table 1: Positive Experiences of the Academic Camps

Positive experiences	S/(f)	%	T/(f)	%
Improvement of the students' academic performance	13	31%	8	27%
Developing of life skills	4	10%	3	10%
Change of students' behaviours	4	10%	3	10%
Sharing of academic potentials	8	19%	7	23%
Completing of topics on time	4	10%	3	10%
Reducing working distance from home	5	12%	3	10%
Developing students' talents	4	10%	3	10%
Total	42	100%	30	100%

Source: Field work 2022

3.1.1 Improvement of Students' Academic Performance

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that, 31% of the participants in students' questionnaires indicated that the experience of teaching and learning in academic camps bring positive impact to the society that is improvement of students performance is due to students developing self-study and discussions, students getting enough time to engage in studies, good performance of students themselves. The learning and teaching experience for students at academic camps consists of being able to contact their teachers frequently to request assistance when necessary and being able to complete several

exercises, do exams, and assessments that also aid teachers in their development as subject matter experts.

Also the findings from Table 3.1 above indicate that, 27% of the participants based on the teachers questionnaires indicate that teaching and learning experience at academic camps was being carried out through providing enough time for students to study, providing a lot of exercises, tests, examinations to improve students' performance and improvement of students' concentrations on academic camps. As a result, the experience of teaching and learning in academic camps was found to aid in the sharing of knowledge, and these academic camps were noted to give students more time by keeping them active and occupied with their studies through discussions aimed at revising what they had learnt. Additionally, students' success was noted to be the result of encouraging both low achievers (zero cases) and those higher learners to keep their status through sharing of the study materials.

This was also proved by head of schools during interview. It was revealed that they also had the same opinion on student's performance. On this regard, the head of school 'D' was quoted as saying;

“...Based on my observation this academic camp stimulates students' self-study, improves the school's performance and makes learners have a lot of time to discuss with their fellow learners” (Interview with the Head of School 'D' June 2022)

Also, the head of school A during interview, she was quoted as saying;

“I am lucky, in my school the good performance has been attracting support from donors (CRDB, NMB, TPB, Miners, Traditional healers, even the external sponsors) and provision of pads for girl' students (from donors). Likewise, the willingness of parents to help their children by donating items like money or food makes students perform better” (Interview with the Head of School 'A' June 2022)

Also, the head of school 'B' was quoted as saying the following during interview;

“...In my school, good performance of students has been attracting D donors to increase the construction of classrooms Donors have also dug a well that we use for fetching water that we use for different purposes ...” (Interview with the Head of School 'B' June 2022)

According to the quotes above, academic camps persuade parents to donate something for their children since they do observe a positive impact on their children's performance. As a result, high performance aids schools in a variety of ways, such as encouraging donors to give more assistance to the schools in terms of money and material things

Therefore, one of the primary roles in academic camps regarding the experience of teaching and learning were viewed and received with satisfaction in relation to the increase in academic performance. This implies that everyone involved collaborates to achieve the academic performance goal. The role of academic camps on academic performance was proved by Masre et al., (2020) who give explanation on how motivational camps affect first-year biomedical science students' academic performance and time

management. Johnson et al., (2014) focus on student achievement as well as school culture analysis and a plan for establishing productive learning environment.

3.1.2 Developing Life Skills

The findings as revealed in Table 1 indicate that, 10% of the student participants, through questionnaires indicate that the experience of teaching and learning in academic camps help in developing students' life skills on how to live with their fellow students in academic camps. This is due to their learning of negotiating skills. This is because, learning thinking skills and learning social skills are better for developing students' life skills. Thinking abilities include things like problem-solving, critical thinking, information processing, exercising choice, making informed decisions, and goal-setting. In contrast, social skills include things like establishing trusting bonds with loved ones, friends, and peers, speaking and listening clearly, taking ownership of one's actions, and controlling stress. Therefore, gaining various knowledge in life skills, promotes self-awareness, and students living in academic camps are all required to develop life skills. These academic boot camps improve relationships between students and teachers, foster student cooperation and unity, and foster strong social contact.

The findings as revealed in Table 3.1 indicate that, 10% of the teacher participants whose responses were generated from the questionnaire show that teaching students to negotiate in a variety of situations is a good way to build their life skills. Teaching students thinking skills will also aid in the development of life skills, and teaching social skills is preferable. Since counselling is one of the negotiating skills, improving life skills is crucial if we want to get things done smoothly and let kids understand why they are in academic camp. Students can then understand their values, goals, and strengths thanks to this.

These findings were also proved by head of schools during interview, where they had the same opinions on developing life skills. On this, the head of school 'D' was quoted as saying:

“...in my opinion, these academic camps strengthen co-operation among students as well as among teachers and students and make it easy for students to live in the camp because they know their fellow students' behaviours...” (Interview with the Head of School 'D' June 2022)

Likewise, this finding was proved by the head of schools during interview where the head of school 'B' was quoted as saying:

“...in my judgment, academic camps are the place to express fun, bring unity among students and expose children to nature of the world because they learn different life skills from their fellow students...” (Interview with the head of school 'B' June 2022)

According to the aforementioned comments, academic camps are a place where kids acquire and build their life skills and learn how to communicate with the outside world. Moreover, they are the places which improve teacher-student cooperation. These academic camps assist students to expressing humour and delight in their free time through their engagement in sports and games.

Therefore, the competencies that support students in thriving in their surroundings are the development of life skills. Because every camp is located at a different geographical position which isolates it from the interaction of others, therefore, without life skills, students cannot live comfortably. Therefore, academic camps help students learn these abilities. These findings relate with those of Delhi, (2019) who stated that the summer programmes engaged the students' cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains and provided a tremendous learning experience. Students learned in a laid-back setting while expressing their own interests, joking, and being creative. Likewise, Sangathan, (2019-20) refers to negotiating, social, and intellectual abilities as "life skills," which means that kids need to acquire these abilities in order for them to exist in the same community. Therefore, self-realization is a crucial aspect of negotiation skills since it enables people to understand their goals, values, and capabilities. Negotiation skills are particularly important to teachers and parents because they are adults who cannot be forced to make a decision.

3.1.3 Change of Student's Behaviours

The findings as revealed in Table 1 indicate that, 10% of the student participants indicated through questionnaires that changing of student's behaviour is through controlling and reducing their improper behaviour and this prevents them from engaging themselves in street gangs. It also makes them busy with their studies. This encourages positive relationship between students and teacher's thus changing student's behaviours.

Likewise, the findings as presented in Table 3.1 indicate that, 10% of the teacher participants' responses as generated from the questionnaire indicate that students' behaviours are identified through monitoring them and protecting them from community influences (interference), increased students' social connection or familiarity through socialization which changes students behaviours and controlling students' discipline as well as encouraging co-operation among students will change their behaviours. Generally, academic camps expand students' performance as they make them use their time effectively.

On this regard, the head of school 'A' during interview, was quoted as saying

"I am thankful my school got support of the ward office, by providing the community police to maintain peace and harmony in school environment to make sure students behaviours is in control" (Interview with the head of school 'A' June 2022)

According to the quotation above, academic camps aid in modifying kids' conduct. Since parents can see that their children are in safe hands, they become supportive of the academic camp's perceived function of behaviour regulation. Similarly, it was found that the ward office was assisting the schools by providing them with community police to uphold peace and harmony.

Therefore, it appears that living together for a time has an impact on the academic camps as this changes students' behaviour. This finding relates with that by Ilyasin, (2019) who provides information on the discipline practices used by the students, sharing customs, activity control, genetic makeup, and force composition.

3.1.4 Sharing Academic Potentials

The findings as generated from Table 3.1 indicate that, 19% of the students participants as it was revealed in the questionnaire which solicited information on sharing academic potentials, indicated that students' sharing of academic potentials was revealed in sharing materials like past papers, books and taking part in discussions, doing examinations with neighbouring schools as well as taking part in remedial classes including getting academic help at the department level. In order to ensure that everyone passes their national examination, students would be required to share all of their resources during academic camps.

The findings as generated from Table 3.1 indicate that, 23% of the teacher participants who filled in the questionnaire administered to teachers to seek information on sharing academic potentials indicate that teachers' sharing of the academic potentials was revealed through planning for academic issues and implementing those plans such as planning for debate subject clubs and helping students and teachers have good and favourable learning environment. Again, sharing academic potential was noted through all of the members of departments who were working together and helping each other thus showing unity among them. Likewise, supervising remedial classes was found to be one of the ways of helping students. Likewise sharing different materials with other teachers indicated that for better academic performance, there must be interaction of different materials. Sharing academic potential with students and teachers is therefore possible because they have different backgrounds unlike it would be the case with other teachers who did not enjoy such experience. On this regard, the head of school 'B' had the following to say during interview

“...in my perspective, the establishment of the academic camps at the regional level included the top and low performing students, who were brought together from all the schools in the region for the purpose of sharing their academic potential.” (Interview with the head of 'B' June, 2022)

On the same issue, the head of school 'C' had the following to reveal during interview:

“...in my school, students take a joint exam to assess their academic potential. Giving students a lot of exams really helps them to improve their performance. ...” (Interview with the Head of School 'C' June 2022)

According to the statements above, regional schools were preparing both top and bottom performers before combining them for academic camps where they could share their academic potential. In that case, schools were putting students to the test by offering them a lot of examinations in order to make them share their intellectual potential.

Therefore, sharing academic potentials plays an important role in how academic camps understand their responsibilities and how they might change for the better. This was shown by Yuniarsih et al., (2020) who considered that academic success and knowledge sharing (knowledge donating and knowledge gathering) are the factors that should be considered in academic camps.

3.1.5 Complete Topics on Time

The findings as revealed in Table 3.1 indicate that, 10% of the student participants who reacted to the questionnaire, their responses showed that prior to the formation of academic camp, the strict deadline made it challenging to them to finish the topics on time. According to the results revealed in the questionnaires administered to students, it was noted that in order for students to finish the topics on time, they should attend all classes and they should have enough time to talk about the challenging subjects in order to help them grasp them. Therefore, students must manage their time by concentrating on their academics in order to finish the topics they are required to on time.

The findings as revealed in Table 3.1 indicate that, 10% of the teacher participants revealed in the questionnaires administered to them that teaching during the weekends and during night studies was a good way for teachers to finish topics on time. It was noted that these were the strategies used by teachers to ensure that students should understand the materials they were being therefore, finishing the topics on time. Especially for those subjects that had a lot of notes, like history and biology.

These findings were also complemented by those found from head of schools who during interview, revealed the importance of the academic camps in making students finish studying their topics on time. On this regard, the head of school 'D' had the following to say;

“Academic camps encourage teachers to complete topics on time and give plenty of exercise, examinations, and tests to students because they stay in the same location and are available if teachers need them.” (Interview with the Head of School 'D' June 2022)

The findings as revealed above imply that academic camps encourage teachers to complete topics on time by allocating time for study. Teachers were then able to give students who needed a lot of exercise and correction during the academic camps. Additionally, it was found that teachers were employing a variety of techniques to ensure that students were completing topics on time even in courses that would otherwise require extensive notes.

In order to ensure students' academic achievement, one of the perceived objectives of the academic camps was to teach students challenging material and have they finished it on time. On the same note Cyril, (2015) said that academic camps ensure that students are well-prepared, organized, and focused in order to make manage their daily lives and submit their academic tasks on time.

3.1.6 Reducing Working Distance from Home

The findings as presented in Table 1 indicate that, 12% of the student participants indicated through the questionnaire that academic camps were helping them reduce the walking distance to school, prevent students from engaging in street gangs as well as making them stay away from domestic activities at home and making them avoid sexual harassments. Therefore, teaching and learning experience in academic camps was found to make a great achievement in students' academic life.

The findings as revealed in Table 1 indicate that, 10% of the teacher participants indicated in the questionnaire administered to them that academic camps were making students avoid home temptations,

reduce long walking to school and make them not engage in domestic works. Therefore, teaching and learning experience indicated that academic camps were helping students reduce working distance.

Therefore, the experience of teaching and learning in the academic camps indicates that reducing the walking distance helps students to avoid temptations. On this matter, Marlow & Dabbish,(2011) indicate that psychological distance has been shown to inhibit worldwide spread, and maintaining distance ensures success in various facets of life. Thus, staying at academic camps makes the distance from home to schools that would require students to walk to and from be reduced.

3.1.7 Developing Students' Talents

As indicated in Table 3.1 the findings indicate that, 10% of the student participants indicated through the questionnaire responses that these academic camps not only were they improving students' academic performance but also they were helping them discover their skills. According to the results of the questionnaire given from students, it was found that sports encourage students to be active and give them a sense of humour and delight. Subsequently, via athletics, students can fight against illnesses and develop their hidden skills. It was noted that majority of children appear to have talent, but the sport teachers who coach and direct them need to give them a little boost.

Again, as presented in Table 1 the findings indicate that, 10% of the teacher participants indicated through the questionnaires administered to them that teachers were likely to develop students' talents through coaching games and counselling them on the importance of identifying and developing their talents. That implies that teachers should constantly be available to boost students' talents by directing them in the proper paths and instilling confidence in them.

Therefore, since students are given so much freedom to play any game they choose during academic camps, those of them who participate in sports not only they be fit but also discover their latent skills. This was proved by Jones et al., (2019) who noted down the growth of talented college students which can be made to grow through their aptitude, talent, and accomplishments.

Generally, the positive experiences of teaching and learning to teachers and students in academic camps are shown as experiences that help students to concentrate on their studies without interactions. Ali, (2020) writing on camping activity's positive experiences identifies positive experiences of camping that they help reset the internal body of knowledge to teachers and students. Also Glover, (2011) and Klee, (2018) point out how camps' positive experiences on students fosters stronger social ties, exposing them to nature and making them live simply while they grow in moral character and self-worth. Children learn by imitating the camp counsellors' cooperation, kindness, and consideration for others. As students engage in uncommon activities, pick up new abilities, and manage on their own away from home, they grow more capable and self-assured.

3.2 The Negative Experiences of Academic Camps in Teaching and Learning Experiences

The study aimed at examining the negative experiences of the academic camps in teaching and learning in public secondary schools. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and focus group.

The findings are presented in Tables and quotations. These findings are categorized into safety of academic camps and negative experiences of academic camps in teaching and learning experiences.

3.2.1 Safety of Academic Camps

Table 2: Safety of the Academic Camps

	Safety of academic camps	Frequency	Percentage
Little Security	Lack of school fence in some schools	7	10%
	Lack of dormitories	8	11%
	Danger health of students	11	15%
Security	Presence of schools that have school fences	4	6%
	Presence of teachers acting as matrons and patrons	37	51%
	Presence of community members' support	5	7%
Total		72	100%

Source: Field work 2022

The findings as presented in Table 3.2 from the questionnaires administered to both teachers and students identify that there is little security in academic camps. On this regard, 10% of the participants believed that lack of school fence in some schools was leading students to lose their belongings which included money, uniforms, and other necessities. Again, 11% of the participants revealed that academic camps lacked dormitories, toilets, bathrooms, and dining halls infrastructures that would ensure security of the academic camps. In addition, 15% of the participants said that academic camps were posing a health threat to students. This means that most of these academic camps were improvised camps where students were sleeping in the class instead of dormitory.

In contrast to what has been discussed above, the findings as presented in Table 3.2 based on the questionnaires administered to both teachers and students indicate that academic camps had security. This was indicated by 6% of the participants who said that some of schools had school fences hence ensuring protection of students and their belongings. Again, 51% of the participants said that due to the presence of the academic camps teachers were there acting as matrons and patrons. There were also school guards who were there to ensure the security of students in these academic camps. On their part, 7% of the participants demonstrated that the support of the community members in ensuring the security of academic camps, as well as schools being situated in a safe environment away from harmful things like wild animals and evil people showed that the academic camps were a safe place for students to study.

Also, with regard to the issue of security, the head of school "A" during interview, said that, community members were ensuring there was security in the academic camps:

“...to ensure the safety of the academic camps, our school has a school fence. The community members assist when they notice a problem, and there are also school guards, teachers (matrons and patrons), and teachers on duty. Therefore, the academic camps are a safe place for students” (Interview with the Head of School ‘A’ June 2022)

According to the quotation above, whether a school is fenced or not, the community members were always responsible for ensuring the safety of its academic facilities. In addition, there were matrons, patrons, school guards, and teachers who were always on duty cooperatively maintaining the school security. Therefore, due to the absence of infrastructure, the majority of participants in the study said that there was no safety for children living in school camps and that this was putting them at risk. It was noted that there were no security issues at the school, students were participating in school events without any problems, and some of the neighbouring parents who were residing there were providing security. These findings are also highlighted by Ambrose et al. (2019) that those who directly write about improving health and safety at camps should take into account the needs of the children who stay there.

3.2.2 Negative Experiences Facing Students in Academic Camps

Table 3: Negative experiences facing students in academic camps (response from students)

Negative experiences	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of water supply	9	21%
Unavailability of alternative sources of energy	11	26%
Lack of sports and game gears	2	5%
Lack of infrastructures	6	14%
Outbreak of diseases	10	24%
Lack of learning materials	4	10%
Total	42	100%

Source: Field work 2022

The findings as presented in Table 3 based on the questionnaires administered to students indicate that there were several negative experiences facing students in academic camps. These were revealed as follows; 14% of the participants indicated that there was lack of infrastructures as well as lack of mattress and beds. Again, 21% of the participants said that there was lack of water supply. Also 26% of the participants said that there was unavailability of alternative sources of energy. Moreover, 5% of the participants said that there was lack of sports and game gears. On their part, 24% of the respondents said that there was outbreak of diseases to students living in the academic camps as well as lack of health services near the school. Again, 10% of the participants believed that there was lack of learning materials to facilitate students throughout their studies in the academic camps. Moreover, it was reported that some of the students were facing psychological problems as well as home sickness.

Table 4: Negative Experiences Facing Students in Academic Camps (response from teachers)

Negative experiences	Frequency	Percentage
Little security to students and their properties	4	13%
Lack of infrastructures	15	50%
Parents delay to pay their contribution	6	20%
Students face outbreak of diseases	5	17%
Total	30	100%

Source: Field work 2022

As revealed in the findings as highlighted in Table 3.4 as analysed based on the questionnaires administered to teachers', it was indicated that there were several negative experiences facing students in the academic camps as follows: 13% of the participants believed that there was little security to students and their properties, 17% of the participants thought that students were facing outbreak of diseases by being in academic camps. 50% of the participants said that there was lack of infrastructures to accommodate students in the academic camps and 20% of the participants believed that students' challenges in the academic camps was noted when their parents delayed to pay their food contributions on time.

Additionally, during an interview, the head of school "C" mentioned difficulties that students living in the academic camps were usually facing. He mentioned these challenges that some students were being implicated in immoral behaviour and that there was also parental tardiness in providing food. To school for the students studying in academic camps:

“...honestly, students frequently complain to me about property theft among themselves. Then some students start having sexual relationships with other students, which disturbs some of the other students because it is immoral. Some people have also lost their freedom...” (Interview with the Head of School 'C' June 2022)

On the same matter, the head of school 'B' during interview also identified the challenges that were facing students living in the academic camps to be lack of academic infrastructures and water supply:

“The infrastructure at my school is not enough as it struggles to handle all students at once, and some students were frequently become sick because of the poor circumstances at academic camps...” (Interview with the Head of School of 'B' June 2022)

Likewise, the head of school 'A' was noted saying that delay of some parents to pay their children's food contribution was really a challenge to students:

“In my opinion parents' failure to provide food donations on time (economic wise) is a big problem to students living in the academic camps...” (Interview with the Head of School 'A' June 2022)

The aforementioned remark implies that students were confronting several difficulties because of some of the students' immoral behaviour, such as thieving (students stealing things). Since there were no

enough infrastructures to support the academic camps, students were left vulnerable to losing their properties

Therefore, as revealed in the findings, students were encountering numerous difficulties when learning in the academic camps in terms of their physical health, sense of security and material possessions, something which was making them feel uneasy. On the same note Ba (2014) indicates the analysis of the educational issues that the Syrian refugees were facing while living in camps, difficulties were categorized as cultural differences between parents and children. It was also noted that lack of school supplies and negatively impacted student and teacher psychology were other difficulties that educational stakeholders in the camps must contend with.

3.2.3 Negative Experiences Facing Teachers in Academic Camps

Table 5: Negative Experiences Facing Teachers in the Academic Camps (responses from teachers)

Negative experiences	Frequency	Percentage
Difficulty in controlling students behaviours	8	27%
Minimal time for personal responsibility in the community	4	13%
Lack of incentives	5	17%
Lack of infrastructures	8	27%
High population of students compared to the number of teachers	1	3%
Failure of parents to contribute food	2	7%
Extending working hours	2	7%
Total	30	100%

Source: Field work 2022

The findings as presented in Table 5 as based on the questionnaire administered to teacher respondents indicate that there were negative experiences facing teachers during teaching in the academic camps. These were mentioned to be: 27% of the participants said that there was difficulty in controlling students' behaviours that is monitoring, controlling and managing students' behaviour and discipline during regional camps. For example some girls were missing in the academic camp, and they were not at home. Likewise, as 3% of the participants said that there was a high population of students compared to the number of teachers. Again, 13% of the participants said that teachers were having less time for discharging their responsibilities in the community. Also 27% of the participants said that there was lack of infrastructures that is; houses to accommodate teachers near the schools. Again, 7% of the participants said that teachers were facing challenges due to the failure of parents to contribute food for their children. On their part, 17% of the participants believed that there was lack of incentives to motivate teachers for their hard working. Again, 7% of the participants said that most of the teachers said to have been facing challenges on extending their working hours. Similarly, it was found that teachers were not willing to work therefore they were being forced to by educational officers.

These findings were also echoed by the head of school "C" who during the interview, indicated that teachers were facing a lot of problem due to these academic camps:

“...Actually, coming to school during weekend is a challenge to teachers. This is because they can do other productive works in the community. Since they never get that chance, they fail to participate effectively in the community activities.” (Interview with the Head of School ‘C’ June 2022)

These findings were also echoed by the head of school ‘E’ who, during the interview identified the challenges that were facing teachers such as lack of accommodation something that was endangering their life due to having to walk during the night:

“Walking in the night is a problem and dangerous to my teachers. The teacher on duty must stay at school until the end of the reading preparation 11:00 and make sure the students have slept before he or she goes back to his or family. He or she will be required to come back at 04:30 to make sure they are awake.” (Interview with the Head of School ‘E’ June 2022)

Likewise, the head of school ‘C’ said that lack of incentives like motivation to teachers was a challenge to him and his staff:

“...In my school there is no motivation to teachers (giving them money as a gift) because it is part of their work” (Interview with the Head of School ‘C’ June 2022)

According to the findings highlighted above, teachers' commitment to serve students on weekends was preventing them from spending time with their families and participating fully in community activities. Another issue for instructors was walking to and from the academic camps during the night which was exposing them to dangers of different categories such as being assaulted by criminals or dangerous animals. Additionally, it was noted that teachers lacked motivation to work

Based on the findings as presented above, it can be said that teachers were facing difficulties and had negative experiences since they were spending their spare time teaching rather than engaging in personal pursuits like caring for their families. Since teachers were expected to be at school all day caring for students, they were not free to meet social obligations or use their leisure time as they liked. On the same note, Rubenstein, (2013) observed that the difficulties stakeholders were facing included lack of financial assistance and educational resources, hardship brought on by conflict, cultural and racial barriers impeding educational endeavours, and a lack of parental supervision. These were demonstrated by pointing out the difficulties that teachers were facing.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that, the experience of teaching and learning in academic camps is a strategy that creates positive impact in schools the positive impact on teaching and learning experience in academic camps on national examinations each year, was acknowledged by all education stakeholders. Despite the negative experiences facing teachers and students in teaching and learning experience in the academic camps, there are a lot of positive experiences to students living in these academic camps that expose them to social interaction and other benefits

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are made into three categories; recommendations for policy, for administrative action and for further research.

5.1 Recommendations for Policy Making

For policy issues, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology should:

1. Direct the establishment of career guidance and counselling units in those schools which have academic camps
2. Include a component that offers psychological support to students living in the academic camps.

5.2 Recommendations for Administrative Actions

For administrative actions;

1. The school organizations should educate the society on the importance of education.
2. The government should build teachers' quarters so that they can live close to the school to assist students.
3. The schools should motivate teachers to make them increase their morale in teaching and learning activities.
4. The school organizations should prepare seminars and workshops for teachers who stay with students in the academic camps.

5.3 Recommendations for further research

For further research, the coming researchers should;

1. Deals on how remedial classes improve academic performance in public secondary schools
2. Focus on how to relate academic camps with digitizing education system in public secondary schools.
3. Focus on difficulties facing education stakeholders on how they practise academic camps without being supported by the government.

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