



Teachers' experiences of working with newly initiated basotho boy learners underwent indigenous male circumcision: A case of rural high schools in Free State Province, South Africa

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Abstract—It is essential to understand that parental involvement can protect children's schooling from sociocultural practices that interfere with their education. This study explores teachers' experiences of newly initiated young Basotho boy learners after attending Indigenous Male Circumcision (IMC) at rural high schools. A qualitative case study approach was employed in this study. Nine participants (n=9) were purposively selected, including four male and five female teachers from two rural high schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. All the participants were from the Basotho culture and spoke Sesotho as their home language. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during data collection. Narrative techniques were employed to analyze data. The results revealed that teachers experienced the following when newly initiated Basotho boy learners returned from the IMC. They highlighted that they knew that some attended initiation schools and others missed their year-end examinations. Some were motivated to education completion when they returned. Many learners changed behaviours and attitudes and were involved in substance abuse. The findings revealed that socioeconomic status could influence them to discontinue school attendance after undergoing IMC. This study recommends that indigenous male circumcision should recruit initiates above eighteen years of age and be strictly regulated by the South African government.

Keywords: Indigenous male circumcision, Newly initiated Basotho boy learners, rural high schools

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I. INTRODUCTION

MOST of the African constitutions provided global rights to children for quality education. Section 28 of the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution states that every child has the right to family or parental care (Section 28, 1, The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South African, 1996). A child is referred to as a person under eighteen (Section 28, 1, The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South African, 1996). The Constitution further highlights that individuals can enjoy their culture and practice their religion and language (Section 31, 1a, The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South African, 1996). Persons have the right to participate in cultural, religious, or linguistic with other community members to form, join and maintain cultural, religious, and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society (31, 1b). It is essential to consider that parental involvement could protect children's schooling from sociocultural practices that interfere with their education (Baker, Wise, Kelley & Skiba, 2016; Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017).

In Africa, male circumcision could be considered a crucial cultural developmental stage is leading to manhood. Boy circumcision started in ancient times in the Bible. It has been promoted globally. Indigenous male circumcision (IMC) is a ritual boys aged fourteen to sixteen undergo in the bush. They would be circumcised, taught about cultural norms, rules, and values, and return to their communities as men (Sithole, Mbhele, Van Rooyen, Khumalo-Sakutukwa, & Richter, 2009). IMC can be executed for various reasons. Some scholars recently

reported that it is mainly for commercialization (Mdhluli, Matshidze, Kugara, Vuma, & Mawere, 2021). Others stood that it is primarily a cultural right (Behrens, 2014) and a sacred religious custom (Mavundla, Netswera, Bottoman, & Toth, 2009). It is less performed for health reasons (World Health Organization, 2008). In South Africa, thousands of young boys often undergo indigenous male circumcision around November of every year and engage in cultural practices such as Lebollo for the Basotho tribe, Ulwaluko in the Xhosa tribe, and Murundu, Tshitambo, or Vhutuka in the Tshivenda tribe. This rite marks the passage from childhood to adulthood (Mpateni & Kang'ethe, 2020). For example, Lebollo focuses on removing the penis' foreskin, initiating young boys into adult roles, and reintegrating them into their families and communities (Siweya, Sodi & Douglas, 2018).

IMC is conducted in the mountain for a month, away from the disturbances of village life, for maximum concentration and increased chances of attaining training objectives and healing (Maharasoia & Maharaswa, 2004; Nomngcoyiya & Kang'ethe, 2021). For instance, ceremonies are performed by a trusted traditional healer by the parents or guardians of the boys and the community. Moreover, the traditional healer must be an older man with experience in the cultural norms, values, and rules of a particular tribe. IMC initiations are rituals and schools that form part of the cultural practice in South Africa and are protected by the South African Constitution (Douglas, Maluleke, Manyapelo, and Pinkney-Atkinson, 2018). Graduates can still return to their regular schooling when returning from undergoing IMC. Many newly initiated young boy learners return to formal schooling after attending IMC.

Over the years, IMC has contributed to social and cultural

development, morals, and values that reinforce formal education (Kheswa, Mahola, & Dayi, 2020).

Although the benefits of IMC are acknowledged, it is essential to note its downfalls. These complications include genital sepsis and penis amputations among young boys (Anike, Govender, Ndimande & Tumbo, 2013; Douglas et al., 2018). Other scholars highlighted that indigenous male circumcision could cause deaths among young boys (Meel, 2010; Kepe, 2010; Douglas & Hongoro, 2018). It can affect the continuation of young boy learners' schooling. Similarly, the challenges related to indigenous male circumcision include newly initiated men's advancement in their education (Nomngcoyiya & Kang'ethe, 2021). It could also influence school discipline (Mohlaloka, Jacobs & de Wet, 2016). Furthermore, there is a change in the boys' behaviours after the ceremony has been completed. According to Douglas et al. (2018), the participants are forbidden to discuss the ritual with outsiders, and those who do, suffer severe sanctions by the community.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Indigenous psychology

According to Kim and Barry in Kim, Yang, and Hwang (2006), indigenous psychology is the scientific study of human behaviours or mind that is native, not transported from other regions, and designed for their people. This theory has not been adequately applied, especially in education research. This concept was first discussed by Kim and Berry (1993) in their book titled *Indigenous psychologies: research and experience in cultural context*. According to Kim, Yang, and Hwang (2006), it is an evolving system of psychological knowledge based on scientific research that is sufficiently compatible with the studied phenomena and their ecological, economic, social, cultural, and historical context. Kim et al. (2006) state that indigenous psychology advocates examining people's knowledge, skill, and beliefs about themselves and studying these aspects in their natural context. This theory aims to understand human behaviour or the actions of a particular group and its significance in that group.

Contrary to popular misconception, indigenous psychologies are not the studies of native peoples, ethnic groups, or people living in Third World countries; indigenous research has often been equated with the anthropological studies of exotic people living in distant lands. Indigenous psychology is needed for all cultural, native, and ethnic groups, including economically developing countries (Kim et al., 2006). Therefore, this study does not just focus on small or native groups of people; it can also be applied in looking at ethnic groups or specific cultures, such as Basotho. Again, indigenous psychology does not preclude using a particular method; indigenous psychology is a part of the scientific tradition, where an essential aspect of the scientific endeavour is discovering appropriate methods for the phenomenon under investigation (Kim, et al., 2006).

The use of indigenous psychology in this study is relevant since it focuses on the behaviours and beliefs of the Basotho group, indigenous people in the rural community in the Free State of South Africa. For example, an initiation school is an act coupled with the belief that young men should attend IMCs to become men. The development of indigenous psychology incorporates the notion of their cultural contingency into self-understanding. Indigenous psychology could place our effort to present culture and beliefs in educational psychology because the methodology is within an indigenous cultural context. Therefore, this study explored how this belief in IMC could affect young boy learners' academic performance at rural high schools. The study focuses on the Basotho tribe in Thabo Mofutsanyane District in South Africa.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to explore teachers' experiences working with newly initiated Basotho young boy learners from IMCs at high schools in the free state, south Africa. The study's research question was: What

are the teachers' experiences working with newly initiated Basotho young boy learners from IMCs at high schools in the free state, south Africa?

IV. METHODS

Research approach and design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. According to Maree (2019), words (concepts, terms, symbols) are the only instruments needed meaning, meaning there can never be effective communication without words. Maree (2019) highlighted that qualitative research is an exciting interdisciplinary landscape comprising diverse perspectives and practices for generating knowledge. With this approach, individuals can get a clear and different perspective. This study employed a case study research design, forming part of the qualitative approach design. Maree (2019) states that case study research refers to an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (a case) set within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident. In a case study, one can understand an individual, a small group, or a situation in-depth. Therefore, this study used the case study design., which investigated the teachers' experiences with newly Basotho young boy learners from the IMCs at rural high schools.

Participants and setting

The population of this study consisted of all teachers from schools in the QwaQwa area, Thabo Mofutsanyane District, Free State province. Nine participants (n=9), four males and five females) were purposively selected from two high schools. All participants were teachers who worked and resided in rural Basotho community schools. Their cultures and home languages were considered in this study. Most participants had at least five years of teaching experience working with newly initiated young boy learners who went through IMC. They had sufficient knowledge about the behavioural problems young boy learners portray at school. The participants were interviewed in English or Sesotho as their home language. All of them were responsible for teaching grades 8 to 12 levels. The researcher believed that the participants could understand and respond to questions related to IMC or indigenous circumcision rituals. They know young boy learners between the ages of 13 and 18 attending school.

Instrument

The study used in-depth semi-interviews as an instrument to collect qualitative data. An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and learn about the participants' ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviours (Maree, 2019). These interviews consisted of open questions about teachers' views and opinions on their experiences working with newly initiated Basotho young boy learners when they returned from the IMCs.

Data analysis

This study used the narrative technique to analyze qualitative data to interpret data from teachers' experiences on newly initiated Basotho young boy learners from IMCs at rural high schools. Participants are expected to narrate their stories and experiences related to boy learners who underwent IMC. After the interviews, the researcher created a detailed transcript of verbal materials for this study. According to Kim (2016), narrative analysis as an inquiry is an understanding of human experiences through stories that could help better understand human phenomena and existence. The narrative researchers revealed that members experience the social reality in a field setting or try to present specific historical actors' worldviews and experiences at a particular point in time (Neuman, 2014). Various steps of narrative analysis were used as follows in this study. Identifying a problem involved the researcher identifying a problem, which served as the purpose of the study. This allowed me to comprehend the private or collective encounters of participants. The next step focused on specifying and choosing participants for the study. The researcher selected participants

to hear different opinions and views regarding the study. These participants were cautiously selected based on their experience with newly initiated young boy learners from the IMCs at the rural high schools. Collecting participants' stories consisted of deciding how to collect stories from the participants through verbal semi-interviews. The researcher made participants comfortable with the data collection method that they chose. The retelling of everyone's story consisted of assessing and scrutinizing the data they collected. It involves classifying the most important details, arranging, ordering information, and narrating a story that explains the encounters and experiences of the IMCs at high schools. Rearranging the story helped comprehend the story by sequencing it in a logical order. The story involves the setting, participants, issues, concerns, actions, and solutions. Collaborating with the participants involved working with them, ensuring that their stories were correct and addressed all essential details. It also ensured that the researcher had included vital information while retelling the story based on the participants' experiences.

Furthermore, these steps ensure the story's credibility as the researcher can confirm the details and ensure they are accurate and valid. The researcher ensured trustworthiness through the four criteria: credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability. Credibility, even though the study's sample was selected through purposive sampling. The researcher ensured that participants' responses were reported in detail in confirmability. The researcher-maintained dependability by ensuring that results should strive for consistency even though they could be repeated. In transferability, the researcher correlated the study results in one situation to another, and the findings interacted with the previous studies.

Ethical considerations

The researcher obtained permission to conduct this research from the University of the free state ethics committee. Approval was granted from the Free state department of education and the school principal to access schools. Participants signed informed consent to participate freely in this study. The participation was voluntary, and teachers have ensured the right to agree or decline and discontinue participating at any stage in the data collection process when they should feel uncomfortable. It is important not to claim a purpose for research while doing it for something else. Participants were informed about the meaning of the study from the beginning of the process. The researcher showed courtesy as much as participants were expected to voice their genuine opinions or experiences in the study. The researcher built a trusted relationship with participants, which resulted in more successful and fruitful results that would not jeopardize the study results. Even though the risk of physical harm is rare, researchers tend to unknowingly put participants in highly awkward situations. This study ensured that its questions did not cause distress to participants. This study confirmed protecting the privacy of participants and their identity after the information is gathered. Participants remained anonymous, and their personal information confidential such as names, ages, residential addresses, and school names in which the study was conducted. The qualitative approach gives detailed information about the participant's opinions, experiences, and feelings. Furthermore, the interpretivism research paradigm believes that people socially create reality or the truth and comprehend it subjectively.

V. RESULTS

Thematic results

Awareness of attending IMCs

The responses from the participants showed that teachers were aware of Basotho young boy learners' attendance at the IMCs during school days. Teachers mentioned that since they were community members and formed part of the IMC committee in their areas in November every year, the parents usually inform them about Basotho young boy learners enrolling in IMC schools. Teachers recognized that some parents played their role by notifying the school. Below are

examples of what some participants said:

"Most of the time, I only become aware the following year when they return to school" (Participant 1).

"Yes, I am aware. I reside in the same community" (Participant 4).

"We get the information from the community that in December, children are taken for IMC. So, the very same information comes to the school, so we know that some of our learners will be there" (Participant 3).

However, teachers indicated that some parents could not initially report to the school when the child went for IMC.

"No, most of the time, parents do not report; the parent will only report when we just found out that the learner has absented themselves from school. That is when we call the parents and find out about the learner. They do not report at the initial stage" (Participant 4).

Learners missing the end-of-year examinations

Responses from teachers indicate that Basotho young boy learners missed their end-of-year examinations when they attended IMC, which could impact their academic performance.

"Yes, definitely! Ummm ... because I want to believe that they must write all their examination in full to proceed to the next grade. But failure to do so is when they must repeat a grade" (Participant 1).

Teachers mentioned that Basotho young boy learners in previous years would miss their end-of-year examinations when they went to IMC. Still, now it has occurred on rare occasions.

"Yes, it happened several years ago. But of late, our government has taken an initiative to control the IMCs" (Participant 4).

Some teachers mentioned that Basotho young boy learners do not miss the entire examination. But what usually happens is that they might fail to write one or two papers written towards the end of year examination.

"We do come across such learners. They leave the last paper that should be written because the initiation school would have opened" (Participant 1).

Consequently, Basotho young boy learners who did not write their examinations when they underwent IMCs may be compelled to repeat a grade. However, it depends on their results.

"Uhhmm, it will depend on the results for the following year. Although some of them would have failed to write the last paper, they passed and got promoted to the next grade. It affects some of them negatively when they fail" (Participant 1).

Changing behaviours and attitudes after returning from IMC schools

The responses from teachers showed that Basotho young boy learners changed their behaviours and attitudes after returning from IMC schools. Their behaviours changed unfavourably towards teachers and peers at school. For example, they bullied their peers and started joining gangs. These learners created or joined gangs based on the different IMC schools they would have attended. At the same time, other boys joined existing bands. These gangs become rivals with other boys who went to a different IMC school. Teachers mentioned that boy learners become unruly and undisciplined at school. The abstracts from participants illustrated these.

"In most cases, they are bullies, smoke dagga, are not cooperative, and mostly get involved with gangs" (Participant 2).

"When they return from IMC schools... You know we have a serious... severe challenge in their behaviours. Their behaviours changed drastically. One, they start disrespecting educators. Two, they will start smoking because they feel they are now adults or men, as they put it. So, most of the time, we have a serious problem in terms of discipline" (Participant 1).

Teachers further agreed that the Basotho young boy learners' attitude towards other learners, especially girls, was not great. They have become stubborn and seemingly bully other learners who have not gone to IMCs like them.

"Ohh, they normally discriminate, and because of that discrimination, that is where gangsterism emerges. Because they tend to discriminate against one another, they ill-treat other learners. But because we have our school code of conduct and the disciplinary committee in our school, we also involve the parents when a learner mistreats other learners. So, we apply the school code of conduct and deal with the matter accordingly" (Participant 4).

"It is negative, in the sense that they exclude learners that have not yet been

to IMC school and start bullying those learners, which is not good at all" (Participant 3).

"Uhhmm. You know you teach a learner from grade 10. When he was in grade 11, he went to IMC. He returned the following year, and he did not pass the class. Uhhmm. The first thing you will notice is the learner's stubbornness. He has changed from what you know him to be to something else" (Participant 1).

In addition, Basotho young boy learners' behaviours of disrespect are not limited to learners but also extend to teachers. They emphasized that the disrespectful behaviour was not directed to a specific gender among the teachers; thus, they disrespected both male and female teachers.

"No, it does not differ with gender because they disrespect all of us" (Participant 3).

The changing behaviours and attitudes could affect young boy learners' academic performance at school.

"Most of the time, it affects them; some even go to the extent of discontinuing school. It affects them drastically in terms of their academic performance because we will find that they have lost interest in studying their books. They always have reasons why they did not do their work. Moreover, most importantly, they do not have time for their books. They have time for everything except their books" (Participant 1).

Lack of school interest after IMCs

The responses from teachers suggested that Basotho young boy learners lost interest in school after returning from IMC school. Teachers claimed that young boy learners seemed to lose interest in their studies. Further, they highlighted what they observed from young boy learners who return from IMCs. They gradually lacked motivation by missing school and not regularly attending until they eventually stopped coming to school. Since they do not respect the teachers, they do not care if they do their schoolwork.

"As indicated, some lose their motivation....." (Participant 3).

It is important to note that even though some are not motivated, some Basotho young boy learners are still motivated toward their studies from those mentioned above.

"...while others do have motivation because you find that some who come from there are motivated to pursue their careers...." (Participant 3).

"In terms of motivation, they return, losing interest in school activities and academic work. I do not know what takes place there. I have never been there, but most of them are affected negatively. Like I have indicated before," (Participant 1).

"It is because some of them are opting to discontinue school attendance. Whereby you feel that they will attend, for example, term one and immediately after term two, because they are no longer interested in learning and because of these gangsters that they are in, they find it difficult to continue, then they eventually discontinue" (Participant 3).

"Yes! Hundred percent, it affects them because they are no longer as active as they used to do. So, that is why I do not know what is happening there. The information they got there impacted negatively towards their studies because they no longer show interest" (Participant 4).

The above could explain that these changes in terms of motivation might influence learners' academic performance and achievement.

Involvement in substance abuse after returning from IMC

The responses from teacher participants demonstrated that Basotho young boy learners who return from IMC school could be involved in substance abuse. Teachers agreed that young boy learners used substances like marijuana, cigarettes, and alcohol within the school premises, which is not allowed.

"Many of them return from there and struggle with substance abuse. They struggle with alcoholism, and it gets to the extent that they come to school drunk, especially on Mondays. So we returned them home. That is what we are dealing with" (Participant 1).

"Mostly, marijuana, almost 99% of them smoke dagga" (Participant 2).

"Yes! Because they start smoking dagga at the IMC, most of them. I want to believe 95% of them" (Participant 2).

"Yes! It's a norm for them to say that. Whenever I want to use these substances, it will be through IMC. Because whenever they come from there, they use it. And it is like, it is permitted, I do not know how. Like to be a man,

you should drink, smoke, all those sorts of things. It would help if you were a gang member" (Participant 3).

Many teachers mentioned that these young boy learners had been recommended to rehabilitation centres and school counselors and social workers for assistance through interventions about the dangers of substance abuse. Their parents are notified of the related conduct of their children. The school does all these steps to help learners who return from IMC and start abusing substances.

"We start by engaging them as educators. From there, we invite people from outside. I remember last year we invited the services of social workers to assist us with learners that were addicted to drugs. Some are caught within the school premises because they also bring it to school. We call the parents so that we can involve them in that. And from there, we refer them to ADAF, an NGO that seeks to help learners dealing with substance abuse" (Participant 1).

"We talk to them and call the counselors or whoever can help them. I always refer them to ADAF. ADAF helps them stop smoking dagga, but it does not happen; they do not stop" (Participant 2).

Teachers indicated that when these learners are under the influence of substances, they misbehave, become uncontrollable, and cannot concentrate on what they are taught in class.

"Some learners miss classes to go to the toilets and do drugs. The use of substances is also directed to their behaviours" (Participant 5).

"Yes, it can, because if the learner takes the drug, they become uncontrollable, misbehaves, and irrational. The learner does not do his work. The learner's academic performance is discontinuing, so most of them become discontinuing" (Participant 4).

"Yes, a whole lot. A whole lot. One, they lose interest. They tend to have a concise concentration span; therefore, they want to go out frequently. And that affects them in terms of concentrating in class. Some of them bunk classes and stay in the toilets. That is how much it affects them. Some come here and would have used drugs on their way to school. And if he comes here, you cannot do anything with him. He is not cooperating, does not hear what you are saying, and so on" (Participant 1).

This study suggests that attending IMCs could influence substance abuse among young schoolboy learners. It might affect young boy learners' academic performance.

Influence of socioeconomic status

Teachers' responses indicated that the socioeconomic status of Basotho young boy learners could influence the IMCs. The family status of the learner affects their choice of going to IMC. For example, in a family where no one succeeded academically, the only form of achievement is going to IMC. Such learners see IMC as more important than attending school and obtaining a matric certificate. In that family, no one motivates the child to complete their formal schooling, resulting in them dropping out of school upon returning from IMC.

"Uhhmm, I think, you know, the socioeconomic circumstances affect them. Two, I would say the area or community these learners come from also affects them in one way or another. You would find that most of them come from families where they do not have anyone to look up to. Or the members of the family did not progress anywhere. To him, that becomes a negative factor that hampers. To him, initiation is far more important than academics because no one is to motivate him; there is no one to encourage him" (Participant 1).

The family's financial instability could be considered a socioeconomic status that might influence young boy learners to join gangs by committing criminal acts after returning from IMC school. All teachers agreed that learners joined gangs when they returned from IMC school, discontinuing their academic performance.

"...And then again, the people they associate with. Most of the young people here will find that they belong to gangs. So, they think it is a normal way of living. Others think stealing and harassing people is a way of life" (Participant 1).

"Gangsterism plays a major role. Because of the blankets they wear from the IMC, the colour of their blankets falls under certain gang. They call themselves Matshekga, Makaota Ma-succell" (Participant 2).

School discontinuing upon returning IMCs

The responses from teachers indicated that young boy learners discontinued upon returning from IMC. Teachers mentioned that many

young boy learners returning from IMCs ended up not finishing their schooling and resorting to just stopping. They highlighted that the reasons behind this included some of the previously discussed substance abuse, lack of motivation, and sheer deviant behaviours.

"In terms of leaving school, learners leave school because they do not want to abide by the school's code of conduct. As I have indicated, their behaviour changes drastically when they return there. They feel that no one can tell them anything. That is one of the reasons they are discontinuing" (Participant 1).

"They see themselves as men, one. Two, because of substance abuse like dagga, they are always running after that and no longer interested in school. They do not see the necessity of coming to school" (Participant 2).

"Some even discontinue school instead of accepting disciplinary measures" (Participant 1).

"Sometimes they feel the pressure of the work we give them. They have been taught something we do not know, and they discontinue school" (Participant 3).

Some Basotho young boy learners who return from IMC school cannot abide by the rigid school rules, and the clash between learners and teachers could result in them discontinuing. They believed they had become men, and schooling was no longer an option.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings suggested that teachers experienced the following at rural schools. They knew Basotho young boy learners attended IMCs, and only a few missed their year-end examinations. After returning from IMCs, others changed their behaviours and attitudes to disrespect teachers and peer learners. Consequently, they started bullying other learners at school. The results found that young boy learners were motivated to complete their schooling after the IMC.

In contrast, others lose school interest after IMCs, affecting their academic performance. They stopped attending school regularly and could not focus on their work as expected. The Basotho young boy learners are involved in substance abuse after returning from IMC. However, this study could link the abuse of substances to the attendance of IMC. Their families' socioeconomic status could influence their schooling. Teachers experienced boy learners' school discontinuing upon returning from IMC. They only realize that the boy learners are not attending school or when the learner's parents come to school to inform them. Basotho boy learners believed that after IMC, they were now men and wanted to be independent and make a living for themselves. This is because they become unruly at school and refuse to take advice from anyone.

Teachers usually know when the learner returns to school the following year. Recently, the only instance that can happen is when a learner probably missed the last exam of the year, and frequently, this does not affect their academic performance. This study suggested that boy learners go to IMC after schooling (after Grade 12). It indicated that most young boys are vulnerable and immature in the objectives and values of IMC, an African cultural heritage. There are limitations to generalizing these findings as we did not have easier access to boy learners who undergo the IMC to understand their experiences after the IMCs.

Furthermore, this study was a case study conducted in two schools in a specific rural area. Therefore, this recommends further research in other schools in rural areas. The results might have been different from those discussed. Finally, the results relied on teachers' experiences working with young boy learners who return from IMC. Their experiences are additional, and their opinions differ depending on preconceived ideas about IMCs and other external factors, which is a limitation.

It is essential to note that initiation schools pose specific issues to young boy learners' academic performance, as shown in this discussion. These issues should be adequately addressed by identifying factors influencing learners' academic performance after IMC. It was discovered that learners who return from IMCs face many challenges that interrupt their schooling and need help when returning from IMCs.

We believe that this study will shed light on these factors. The study recommends that learners only go to IMCs once they have completed their formal schooling or are eighteen. IMCs are intended to transform boys into men, and in our schools, we need learners who are still youngsters and willing to abide by the schools' rules. This will reduce boys' school discontinuation after IMC. The department of education should implement the policy IMC under the age of eighteen.

As we conclude, there is evidence that young boy learners who returned from IMCs face jeopardizing their academic performance in our rural areas. These factors ranged from the behaviours they portrayed, such as abuse of substances, lack of motivation, socioeconomic factors, and others mentioned in the study. These factors could quickly appear once a learner returns from IMC. We cannot indefinitely say that these learners should not go to IMCs. IMCs have been part of our culture for a long time, and we cannot allow new institutions like formal schooling to dismiss them. We should find a way to ensure that both institutions survive without disturbing the other. Our African indigenous knowledge has many benefits; these IMCs provide that knowledge. Parents could help their children by following their progress, and boy learners should directly inform teachers about attending the initiation schools.

IMC greatly benefits from celebrating and appreciating our culture, especially in this changing world. IMC offers a lot of the indigenous knowledge our ancestors survived on. Also, since we are in an era where we want to decolonize the curriculum and Africanise our schools, initiation schools are an essential source of knowledge. Attending initiation schools can interrupt a learners' academic performance. However, schools can adopt strategies to mitigate the plethora of challenges related to attending an initiation school. If teachers promptly identify these learners and offer some intervention, such problems can be mitigated. It should also be mentioned that not all learners who return from IMC have issues that affect their academic performance. If we consider indigenous psychology, we can attempt to understand why individual learners act and behave the way they do after returning from IMC. Furthermore, this theory can help us understand the significance of institutions like IMCs. Institutions like IMCs are needed in society, but we should be conscious of how they affect other institutions, such as formal schools.

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