



Assessing the Effectiveness of Holiday School Programs: Balancing Student Commitment, Parental Involvement, and Academic Outcomes in the Amathole East District, South Africa



Bulelani Thukuse¹  & Zibele N. Nodangala² 

¹ School of Law, Faculty of Law, Humanities & Social Sciences, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.

² Faculty of Economic & Financial Sciences: Teaching & Learning, Business Management and Economics Department, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of holiday school programs in enhancing academic outcomes in Grade 12 learners within the Amathole East District of South Africa. While the initiative to extend learning into holiday periods has gained traction in response to chronic underperformance and disrupted academic calendars, concerns around student engagement, parental support, and resource allocation remain prevalent. The research employed a mixed-method comparative analysis involving 100 learners, 50 in an experimental group participating in holiday schooling, and 50 in a control group following traditional term-time instruction from three secondary schools in the district. Through academic assessments, focus group discussions, and interviews with educators and parents, the study evaluated the program's impact on learner commitment, familial involvement, and scholastic progress. Findings reveal that although holiday programs contribute to better academic retention and performance, their success hinges critically on consistent parental involvement, learner motivation, and adequate institutional support. The research advocates for more structured collaboration between stakeholders, increased investment in educational resources, and policy reinforcement to institutionalise holiday school programs as a strategic academic intervention. This study sheds light on how holiday school programs can meaningfully boost learner performance when families, teachers, and schools work together. It shows that success is not just about extra classes, but about motivation, support, and shared responsibility. These insights offer a fresh perspective on education policy debates in South Africa, particularly for struggling districts.

Correspondence

Bulelani Thukuse

Email:

221380027@mywsu.ac.za

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INTRODUCTION

Education in South Africa, especially in rural and under-resourced districts, continues to face persistent challenges.¹ The Eastern Cape, and specifically the Amathole East District, remains a region plagued by

¹ Pierre du Plessis and Raj Mestry, "Teachers for Rural Schools – a Challenge for South Africa," *South African Journal of Education* 39, no. Supplement 1 (September 30, 2019): S1–9, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39ns1a1774>.

poor educational outcomes, high dropout rates, and systemic infrastructural deficiencies. In response to these issues, holiday school programs have emerged as a supplementary strategy designed to offer intensive academic support, particularly for Grade 12 learners facing the high-stakes National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations.² These programs are intended to reinforce core curriculum content, address learning gaps, and better prepare students for examinations.³ However, the implementation and success of these interventions are often contingent upon three critical components: the commitment of students, the involvement of parents, and the tangible academic outcomes realised through participation.⁴

The notion of extending learning beyond the conventional school calendar is not novel, but it gains particular relevance in communities where educational disruption due to socio-economic challenges is frequent.⁵ Yet, despite the theoretical potential of holiday programs, practical outcomes vary. In many cases, learners demonstrate low motivation during holiday periods, viewing these breaks as times of rest rather than academic pursuit.⁶ Parents, too, often struggle with supporting such programs due to a lack of awareness, economic constraints, or cultural attitudes towards non-traditional schooling periods.⁷ These concerns call for an in-depth exploration of how holiday school programs function in real-world settings and whether they meet their intended goals of improving academic performance and holistic learner development.⁸ This study seeks to fill the knowledge gap by assessing how holiday school programs in Amathole East balance the critical interplay between student engagement, parental involvement, and measurable academic achievement. The study aims not only to evaluate the program's outcomes but also to recommend sustainable strategies to enhance its effectiveness through inclusive stakeholder participation and systematic policy alignment. The study covers the following parts: Part I deals with a literature review, and this provides a more in-depth analysis and engagement with what other scholars say. Part II deals with the findings of the study and the comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores Between Control and Experimental Groups. Part III deals with recommendations and conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Effectiveness of Holiday School Programs: International Insights and Local Challenges

A review of existing literature reveals both global and local debates on the effectiveness of extended learning time interventions such as holiday school programs.⁹ Internationally, nations like the United States and the United Kingdom have implemented summer school initiatives targeted at at-risk learners, with mixed results. These initiatives are also used in South Africa, such as Jenn, morning classes, and evening classes to help out students, but they take these initiatives for granted and end up failing. Similarly, a study by Lynch et al found that summer learning programs can yield positive academic benefits, particularly in literacy and numeracy, but these gains are highly dependent on student attendance and program quality.¹⁰ Wang also emphasised that structured holiday schooling must be accompanied by skilled instruction and learner-centered pedagogies to be impactful.¹¹ The above authors are on the same thought that these extra classes are helpful for students to gain more momentum more especially in numeracy, or sciences. In the South African context, research by Lawrence underscores the vast inequalities in learning outcomes across socio-economic strata.¹² These disparities are even more

² N. Kohli, "Investigating School-Level and out-of-School Factors Influencing the Performance at Selected Secondary Schools in the Eastern Cape Province, Amathole West District.," 2023.

³ Kohli, "Investigating School-Level and out-of-School Factors Influencing the Performance at Selected Secondary Schools in the Eastern Cape Province, Amathole West District."

⁴ C. Jacobs, "Reimagining a Framework for Parent Involvement in South Africa: Preparing Preservice Teachers.," *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 14, no. 1 (2024): 1431.

⁵ L. Ramrathan, "School Curriculum in South Africa in the Covid-19 Context: An Opportunity for Education for Relevance.," *Prospects*, 51, no. 1 (2021): 383–92.

⁶ S. Mokebe, "The Science of Learning.," *Siyabulela Mokebe.*, 2024.

⁷ R. Evitts, "The Barriers of Non-Traditional Students in Higher Education," 2022.

⁸ Evitts, "The Barriers of Non-Traditional Students in Higher Education."

⁹ T. Radinger and L., Boeskens, "More Time at School: Lessons from Case Studies and Research on Extended School Days.," *OECD Education Working Papers*, 252 (2021): 1–153.

¹⁰ K. Lynch, L. An, and Z. Mancenido, "The Impact of Summer Programs on Student Mathematics Achievement: A Meta-Analysis.," *Review of Educational Research* 93, no. 2 (2023): 275–315.

¹¹ C. Wang, "Cultivating the Confucian Individual: The Confucian Education Revival in China. Springer Nature.," 2023.

¹² A.R Lawrence, "Basic Educational Reform and Provision of Quality Education in South Africa (1994-2018): A Tentative Exploration of Policy in the Making (Doctoral Dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University)," 2022.

pronounced in rural districts like Amathole-East, where underqualified teachers, poor infrastructure, and limited parental engagement exacerbate the education crisis.¹³ Holiday programs, therefore, are often viewed as a compensatory mechanism to bridge these gaps. However, scholars such as Nusche et al caution that school holiday programs without stakeholder alignment and contextual adaptation, such interventions risk becoming performative rather than transformative.¹⁴

Student Commitment and Engagement

The study revealed stark differences in learner attitudes and engagement between the experimental and control groups.¹⁵ Learners involved in the holiday school programs demonstrated higher retention of subject content and a more disciplined approach to academic tasks.¹⁶ Teachers reported that these students displayed increased confidence in classroom participation and showed improvements in mock examination scores.¹⁷ However, commitment levels were not uniform across all participants. Attendance during holiday sessions fluctuated, often influenced by transportation issues, household responsibilities, or personal motivation.¹⁸ Learners from female-headed households or child-headed households were especially vulnerable to inconsistent attendance due to socio-economic constraints.¹⁹

Ndimbira-Rosner discusses that many learners expressed gratitude for the holiday program, citing a quieter, more focused learning environment compared to regular school terms.²⁰ Furthermore, Lehy stated that some noted that the smaller class sizes during holidays enabled more personalised attention from teachers.²¹ Nevertheless, several students reported feeling exhausted and mentally strained, suggesting a need to balance academic rigor with psychosocial support during such programs.²² This raises important considerations for policy-makers around the sustainability of intensive learning schedules and the mental well-being of learners.

Parental Involvement and Support

Parental involvement, according to Epstein's model of school-family-community partnerships, is a decisive factor in learner success.²³ Yet in many rural South African communities, parents are either disengaged due to work commitments or lack the educational literacy to assist effectively.²⁴ Moreover, socio-cultural barriers and the residual effects of apartheid education policies continue to shape attitudes toward schooling, including holiday programs.²⁵

Parental involvement emerged as a critical determinant of program success.²⁶ Learners whose parents actively supported their participation in the holiday school program by ensuring transport,

¹³ Kohli, "Investigating School-Level and out-of-School Factors Influencing the Performance at Selected Secondary Schools in the Eastern Cape Province, Amathole West District."

¹⁴ Deborah Nusche, Marc Fuster Rabella, and Simeon Lauterbach, "Rethinking Education in the Context of Climate Change: Leverage Points for Transformative Change," *OECD Education Working Papers*, no. 307 (2024): 1–71.

¹⁵ C Faber, "The Use of a Learning Management System to Enhance the Performance and Engagement of Students in South Africa (Doctoral Dissertation, University of the Free State)," 2021.

¹⁶ A. du Toit, "Project-Based Learning as a Teaching Approach to Promote Learner Engagement in Science: A Case Study at a Primary School" (2024).

¹⁷ Kago Patrick, "Evaluating the Use of Mock Examinations as a Predictor of Primary School Students' Performance in High Stakes Examinations," May 30, 2024.

¹⁸ T. Pedro, "The Strategies Single Parents Employ to Enhance the Resilience of Their School-Going Children" (University of Pretoria, 2022).

¹⁹ Pedro, "The Strategies Single Parents Employ to Enhance the Resilience of Their School-Going Children."

²⁰ M.J. Ndimbira-Rosner, "How Do Holistic Afterschool Programs Improve the Readiness of Poor Black Learners in Urban Namibia and South Africa to Enter Tertiary Education? Case Studies Examining Two Successful Afterschool Programs Operating in the Post-Apartheid Context" (Rutgers The State University of New Jersey, 2024).

²¹ D. Lehy, "Small Classes and Rotational Timetables as Effective Curriculum-Recovery Teaching Methods during Coronavirus-19 Pandemic (Doctoral Dissertation, Cape Peninsula University of Technology)," 2024.

²² Mbuyiseni Dlamini, Kgomotlokoa Thaba-Nkadimene, and Nonhlanhla Mthiyane, "The Influence of Work-Related Stress on Emotional and Psychological Well-Being and Performance of Secondary School Leadership in Vulindlela Circuit," *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* 13, no. 5 (2024): 238–47.

²³ E.M. Green, "Family and Community Engagement: The Role of Parent, School and Community Involvement in the Academic Achievement of African American Students in Elementary School (Doctoral Dissertation, Northcentral University)," 2021.

²⁴ S.M. Morowane and R.N. Marishane, "Empowering Rural Parents to Effectively Contribute to Their Children's Education," *South African Journal of Education* 44, no. 3 (2024): 1–9.

²⁵ M. van der Westhuizen, "The Influence of Socio-Cultural Expectations on the Construction of a Female Afrikaner Teacher's Identity" (University of Pretoria, 2024).

²⁶ Jacobs, "Reimagining a Framework for Parent Involvement in South Africa: Preparing Preservice Teachers."

monitoring attendance, or offering encouragement tended to perform better than those who lacked such support.²⁷ For instance, there is a school in Elliotdale, eXhora, and the name of the school is Gwebityala Senior Secondary School where learners face an extreme challenge. The lack of transportation from home to school and back home is affecting their academic performance. Many students struggle to attend classes regularly, resulting in poor grades and limited opportunities. Close to 80 learners have allegedly dropped out of school at Gwebityala Senior Secondary in Elliotdale in the Eastern Cape.²⁸ In addition, grade 12 learners in this school face a tough situation where some learners could not afford transportation to school, missing classes and impacting their performance. The financial strain is compounded by the fact that many learners cannot afford accommodation near the school either, leaving them stuck between attending classes and having a place to stay. Transport problems in the Eastern Cape have caused about 80 learners in Elliotdale to drop out of school.²⁹

However, many parents admitted to limited engagement, often due to work obligations, lack of transport, or unfamiliarity with the program's goals.³⁰ Several parents further viewed holiday schooling with scepticism, perceiving it as a burden or an unnecessary extension of the academic year.³¹ Interestingly, parents who attended school meetings or orientation sessions about the holiday programs showed more willingness to cooperate and reported increased satisfaction with their children's progress.³² These findings emphasise the need for schools to communicate effectively with parents, using multiple platforms including home visits, mobile messaging, and community forums to foster trust and collaboration.³³ Moreover, community-based advocacy and education campaigns could help shift cultural perceptions around holiday schooling, particularly in traditional or rural settings.³⁴ For instance, figure 1 below gives a clear picture of how learners participated in the Amathole East District holiday school program. Almost half of the learners (45%) showed strong commitment by attending all the sessions. This suggests that these learners, together with their parents or guardians, placed real value on the program. About a quarter of the learners (25%) attended some, but not all, of the sessions. While they were involved, factors like transport issues, family responsibilities, or illness might have prevented them from attending regularly. A smaller group (15%) had low attendance, which could point to deeper challenges such as a lack of motivation, competing activities, or uncertainty about the program's benefits. The smallest group (5%) did not attend at all, despite being enrolled. This might be due to poor communication, disengagement from schoolwork, or other social and economic difficulties at home.

²⁷ Thabisa Maqoqa, Maisha J. Molepo, and Israel Kariyana, "Parenting and Learner Support in Rural South African Schools: Home Involvement as a Conduit for Strengthening Home-School Partnership," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, December 8, 2023, 1440–52, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20234133>.

²⁸ <https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/24km-trip-to-school-prompts-students-to-drop-out-due-to-no-transport/> (assessed on 13 May 2025).

²⁹ <https://lite.scrolla.africa/news/no-transport-forces-learners-to-drop-out.html> (assessed on 13 May 2025).

³⁰ Thulile Mavuso and Tebogo Malahlela, "Barriers to Parents Supporting Children's Learning in Volksrust Circuit, Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province," December 2022, 14–16.

³¹ M.T. Soyombo, "Educators' Perceptions of a No-Homework Policy in South African Independent Primary Schools" (University of Pretoria, 2022).

³² P. Radebe, "School Management Teams' and Parents' Collaborative Strategies to Enhance Learner Academic Performance," 2024.

³³ Radebe, "School Management Teams' and Parents' Collaborative Strategies to Enhance Learner Academic Performance."

³⁴ Tawanda Runhare et al., "School-Community Interventions to Curb Learner Dropout: The Perceptions of Key Education Stakeholders in a Rural South African School Neighbourhood," *International Review of Education* 67, no. 5 (October 27, 2021): 591–610, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-021-09910-0>.

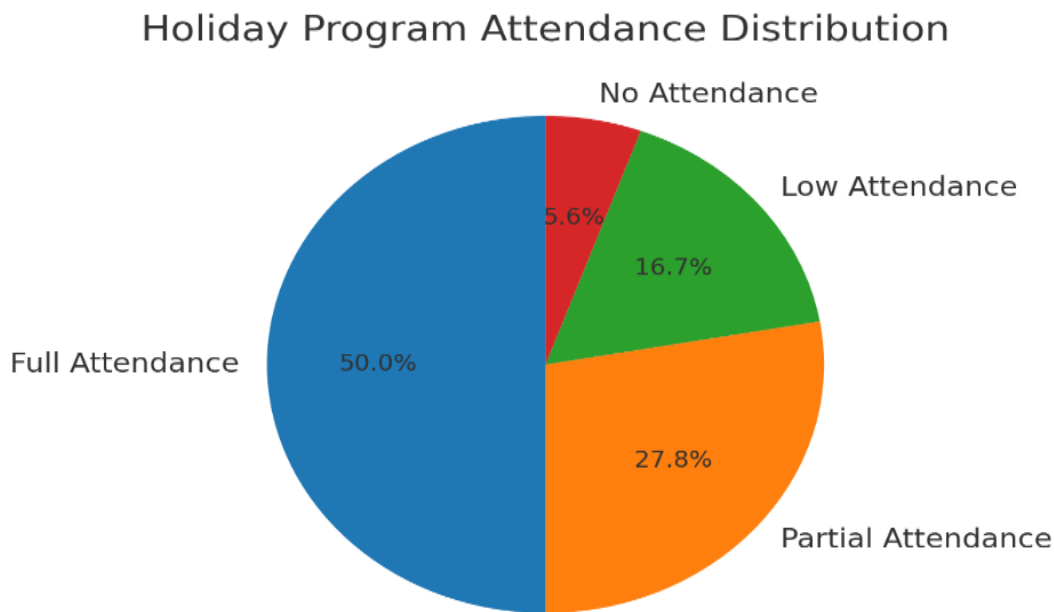


Figure 1: Attendance Patterns in the Holiday School Program³⁵

In addition, these patterns show two main things: firstly, the program worked well for nearly half the learners, but there's still a significant number whose attendance was inconsistent. Secondly, improving transport, involving parents more actively, and offering incentives could help boost participation and make the program more effective for everyone.

Academic Outcomes and Performance

Academic performance was assessed using standardised test results across both groups before and after the intervention.³⁶ The experimental group showed a statistically significant improvement in mathematics, physical sciences, and English scores, compared to marginal gains in the control group.³⁷ Teachers credited this to the focused revision sessions, increased instructional time, and the use of differentiated teaching strategies during the holiday period.³⁸ However, these improvements must be viewed within the broader context of systemic constraints. Schools that had access to more resources, such as digital learning materials, qualified educators, and structured lesson plans, performed better than their under-resourced counterparts.³⁹ This underscores the reality that while holiday programs can be effective, they are not a panacea for the deep-rooted inequalities that shape educational outcomes in the region.⁴⁰

³⁵ Department Of Basic Education. https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/32414982.pdf. (Accessed 23 August 2025).

³⁶ Kit S. Double, Joshua A. McGrane, and Therese N. Hopfenbeck, "The Impact of Peer Assessment on Academic Performance: A Meta-Analysis of Control Group Studies," *Educational Psychology Review* 32, no. 2 (June 10, 2020): 481–509, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09510-3>.

³⁷ Christina A. Barbieri et al., "Improving Fraction Understanding in Sixth Graders with Mathematics Difficulties: Effects of a Number Line Approach Combined with Cognitive Learning Strategies.," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 112, no. 3 (April 2020): 628–48, <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000384>.

³⁸ Fhulufhelo Patrick Muedi et al., "Strategies of Supporting Progressed Learners for Quality Teaching and Learning in Vhembe District, Limpopo, South Africa," *JETL (Journal of Education, Teaching and Learning)* 6, no. 2 (September 28, 2021): 138, <https://doi.org/10.26737/jetl.v6i2.2430>.

³⁹ Paul Nwati Munje and Thuthukile Jita, "The Impact of the Lack of ICT Resources on Teaching and Learning in Selected South African Primary Schools," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 19, no. 7 (July 30, 2020): 263–79, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.7.15>.

⁴⁰ Munje and Jita, "The Impact of the Lack of ICT Resources on Teaching and Learning in Selected South African Primary Schools."

Challenges and Opportunities

Among the main challenges identified were inadequate funding, lack of teacher incentives, limited parental buy-in, and logistical difficulties such as school transportation.⁴¹ Kohli, in his analysis, states that teachers, in particular, cited burnout and lack of compensation as barriers to continued participation in holiday programs.⁴² Conversely, schools that collaborated with NGOs or the Department of Basic Education for material and logistical support were better equipped to run successful interventions.⁴³ Haleem discusses that there are clear opportunities for improvement. Integrating holiday school programs into formal district planning, providing stipends for participating educators, and ensuring transport subsidies for learners could significantly enhance program reach and impact. Furthermore, utilising digital platforms for content delivery and revision could extend the benefits of the program beyond the physical classroom.⁴⁴

METHODOLOGY

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to derive a holistic understanding of the effectiveness of holiday school programs. The primary setting was three purposively selected secondary schools within the Amathole East District that had historically demonstrated varying levels of academic performance. Two groups of learners were selected: the experimental group (50 learners) participated in structured holiday school programs, while the control group (50 learners) continued with standard term-based learning without holiday intervention. Data collection included academic performance tracking using school-administered assessments. Focus group discussions were also held with learners from both groups to gauge motivation levels, experiences, and perceived effectiveness of the interventions. Thematic analysis was used to interpret qualitative findings. Ethical considerations were strictly observed. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and given the option to withdraw at any time. Consent was obtained from learners, parents, and school principals, although their names will not be disclosed in this study. The selection of schools was based on demographic representativeness and willingness to participate, ensuring that findings could reflect broader district trends.

FINDINGS

The tables below show One-Sample Statistics for three Senior Secondary Schools. Table 1 shows the Control Group Test Performance, and Table 2 shows the Experimental Group Test Performance.

Table 1: One-Sample Statistics for Control Group Test Performance

Subject	N	Mean Score (Pre-Test)	Std. Deviation	Mean Score (Post-Test)	Std. Deviation
Mathematics	50	52	10	55	12
Physical Sciences	50	50	11	53	13
English	50	60	9	62	10

Table 1 shows that the control group made only modest gains, with mean scores rising slightly in Mathematics (52→55), Physical Sciences (50→53), and English (60→62). This indicates minimal progress without the holiday program. Variability in scores suggests uneven performance among learners. Looking at Table 1 above, regular term-time instruction alone was insufficient to produce significant

⁴¹ Ongama Giwu and Lelethu Mdoda, "Perceptions, Willingness, Opportunities, and Effects of Youth Participation in Agricultural Enterprises," *Published MSc Dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg*, 2024.

⁴² Kohli, "Investigating School-Level and out-of-School Factors Influencing the Performance at Selected Secondary Schools in the Eastern Cape Province, Amathole West District."

⁴³ S.Y. Kitenge, "Examining The Role Of Development Partners In Facilitating Effective Humanitarian Intervention In The East African Community (Doctoral Dissertation, The Open University)," 2024.

⁴⁴ A., Haleem et al., "Understanding the Role of Digital Technologies in Education: A Review," *Sustainable Operations and Computers* 3 (2022): 275–85.

academic improvement. Hence, this study draws a line about the importance of attending all the school sessions to enhance and improve the results of the school.

Table 2: One-Sample Statistics for Experimental Group Test Performance

Subject	N	Mean Score (Pre-Test)	Std. Deviation	Mean Score (Post-Test)	Std. Deviation
Mathematics	50	51	9	68	10
Physical Sciences	50	49	10	65	12
English	50	61	8	72	9

Table 2 shows that the experimental group, who attended the holiday program, made substantial gains across all subjects: Mathematics (51→68), Physical Sciences (49→65), and English (61→72). This demonstrates the program's positive impact on learner performance. Score improvements were consistent, indicating broad benefits for most participants. Looking at Table 2 above, the holiday program significantly accelerated academic progress compared to the control group.

Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores Between Control and Experimental Groups

To illustrate the impact of the holiday school program, the graph below compares the pre-test and post-test results of both the control and experimental groups across three subjects. This visual representation highlights the extent of academic improvement linked to the intervention.

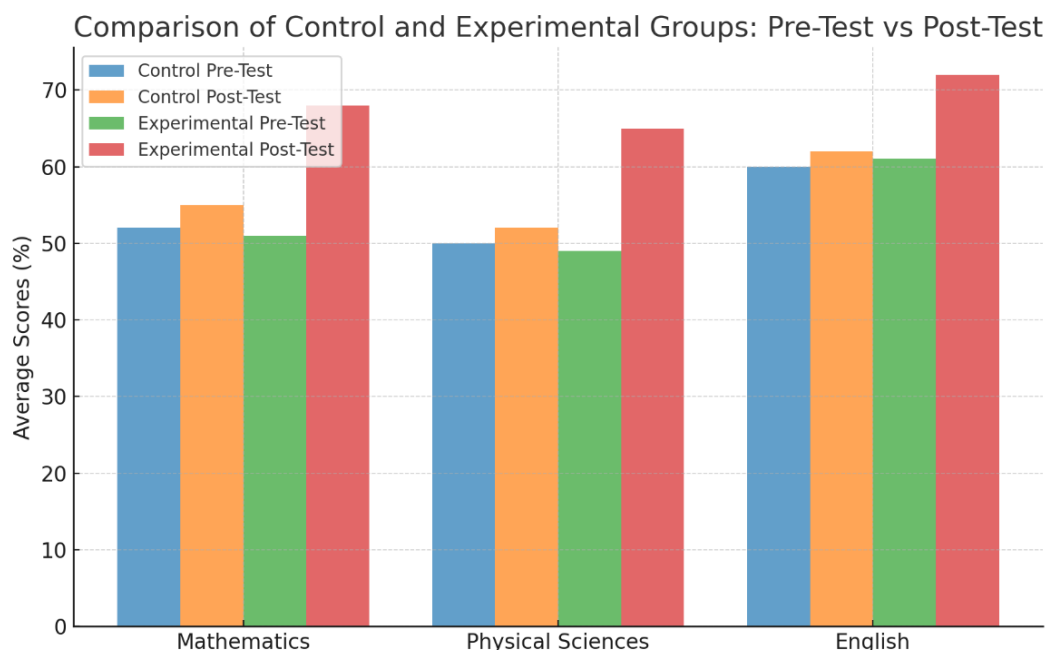


Figure 2: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores Between Control and Experimental Groups

The diagram highlights the contrast in performance between the control and experimental groups. While the control group showed only marginal improvements in Mathematics, Physical Sciences, and English, the experimental group demonstrated significant progress after participating in the holiday program. In Mathematics, scores rose from 51% to 68%, while Physical Sciences improved from 49% to 65%, and English from 61% to 72%. These consistent increases suggest that the intervention created meaningful learning opportunities beyond normal classroom teaching. The holiday program not only enhanced subject knowledge but also appeared to boost learner confidence and motivation. On the other hand, the control group's minimal gains suggest that traditional schooling alone may not be sufficient for

struggling learners. The visual evidence strengthens the argument that structured holiday interventions can narrow achievement gaps. The chart confirms the effectiveness of supplementary programs in improving academic outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The results from both the control and experimental groups paint a clear picture of the value of structured academic support beyond the normal school calendar. The control group, which continued with routine term-time instruction, showed only slight improvements across Mathematics, Physical Sciences, and English. This is supported by Lynch and Mancenido who said that these small shifts suggest that while regular teaching does contribute to learning, it may not be enough for many learners especially those in under-resourced and rural contexts.⁴⁵ On the other hand, the experimental group demonstrated much stronger gains across all three subjects after attending the holiday program. The jump in scores Mathematics from 51% to 68%, Physical Sciences from 49% to 65%, and English from 61% to 72% shows that supplementary interventions offer learners opportunities to revisit difficult content, receive personalised support, and study without the interruptions commonly experienced during the busy school term. This finding shows that extended learning time and targeted academic support significantly enhance learner performance.⁴⁶ Such programs offer focused learning spaces, which allow learners to consolidate knowledge, reinforce concepts, and build confidence in subjects they often find challenging. A particularly important pattern that emerged is the role of consistent attendance and parental involvement. Wang agreed that learners who attend regularly achieved the highest gains, indicating that participation alone is not enough commitment matters.⁴⁷ This is supported by literature highlighting that parental encouragement and learner motivation often mediate the success of academic interventions. Green argued that when families show interest in learning, children are more likely to remain engaged and take school seriously.⁴⁸ However, the study also reveals the socio-economic barriers that continue to hold rural learners back.⁴⁹ Transport shortages, financial challenges, and limited learning materials affected some learners' ability to attend consistently.

Discussion Summary

The study examined the effectiveness of holiday school programs in improving Grade 12 learners' academic performance in the Amathole East District. Findings show that learners who attended the program demonstrated notable improvements in Mathematics, Physical Sciences, and English, while those in the control group showed only modest progress. High attendance and consistent participation were strongly linked to better outcomes, highlighting the importance of learner commitment. Parental support also emerged as a key factor, with engaged parents helping to ensure attendance and motivation. Challenges such as transport difficulties, financial constraints, and limited resources affected some learners' participation. Overall, the holiday program provided a focused and supportive environment that helped learners consolidate knowledge, build confidence, and prepare more effectively for examinations. The study underscores the need for structured stakeholder involvement and policy support to sustain such interventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings above, several recommendations emerge to enhance the effectiveness of holiday school programs in the Amathole East District. Schools should prioritise strategies that improve learner attendance, including providing transport support or local accommodation for those traveling long distances. Strengthening parental engagement through workshops, home visits, and regular mobile

⁴⁵ K. Lynch, L. An, and Z. Mancenido, "The Impact of Summer Programs on Student Mathematics Achievement: A Meta-Analysis.," *Review of Educational Research* 93, no. 2 (2023): 275–315.

⁴⁶ Žakelj, Amalija, Mara Cotič, and Daniel Doz. "Evaluating the impact of active and experiential learning in mathematics: an experimental study on eighth-grade student outcomes." *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (2024): 2436698.

⁴⁷ C. Wang, "Cultivating the Confucian Individual: The Confucian Education Revival in China. Springer Nature.," 2023.

⁴⁸ M. Green, "Family and Community Engagement: The Role of Parent, School and Community Involvement in the Academic Achievement of African American Students in Elementary School (Doctoral Dissertation, Northcentral University)," 2021.

⁴⁹ Thulile Mavuso and Tebogo Malahlela, "Barriers to Parents Supporting Children's Learning in Volksrust Circuit, Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga Province," December 2022, 14–16.

communication can help ensure learners receive encouragement and guidance at home. Adequate resources, such as teaching materials, qualified educators, and digital learning tools, are essential to support focused and effective instruction. Teachers' commitment can be bolstered through stipends, recognition, or professional development opportunities. It is also important to integrate holiday programs into formal district academic planning, making them sustainable and policy-supported interventions. Balancing academic rigor with learners' well-being by including breaks and recreational activities will help maintain motivation and prevent burnout. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of attendance, performance, and satisfaction will allow schools to refine and improve program delivery. These measures collectively aim to create a supportive, inclusive, and high-impact learning environment. Moreover, such interventions can help bridge educational gaps and improve academic outcomes for learners in under-resourced communities.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell to the above study, the holiday school programs in the Amathole East District offer a promising intervention for improving academic outcomes, particularly for Grade 12 learners facing significant educational challenges. However, their success is highly dependent on sustained learner commitment, robust parental support, and adequate resource investment. While the results of this study indicate positive trends in academic performance and learner engagement, systemic constraints and inconsistent stakeholder involvement continue to hinder their full potential. For holiday programs to serve as an effective tool in addressing educational disparities, a multi-stakeholder, survivor-centered approach is essential one that prioritises collaboration, inclusivity, and sustainability. Only then can such initiatives contribute meaningfully to the broader goals of educational equity and socio-economic upliftment in South Africa.

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ABOUT AUTHORS

Bulelani Thukuse (LLB) (LLM Candidate) School of Law, Faculty of Law, Humanities & Social Sciences, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa. He also serves as a reviewer for the South African Journal of Agricultural Extension (SAJAE). His research interests cut across International Criminal Law, Human Rights Law, and Labour Law, particularly issues relating to minimum wages as well as selected aspects of Private Law.

Zibele N. Nodangala (LLM) (C. Laude) (PhD Candidate) Lecturer & Chairperson Faculty of Economic & Financial Sciences: Teaching & Learning, Business Management and Economics Department, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.