



Impact of School-Based Mental Health Programming on Student Engagement and Attendance in South African Schools

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Abstract

South African schools often face challenges related to student engagement and attendance, particularly among students with mental health issues. A mixed-methods approach was employed, including pre- and post-programme surveys to measure changes in student engagement and attendance rates. Qualitative interviews with teachers and parents provided additional insights into programme effectiveness. The analysis revealed a significant increase ($p < 0.05$) in average monthly attendance from 78% to 83%, with an improvement trend observed over the course of the programme's implementation. School-based mental health programming significantly enhanced student engagement and attendance, contributing positively to educational outcomes. Further research should explore scalability and sustainability of such programmes in diverse South African school settings. Mental Health Programming, School Engagement, Attendance Rates, South Africa Treatment effect was estimated with $\text{text}\{\text{logit}\}(\pi) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i$, and uncertainty reported using confidence-interval based inference.

Keywords: *African contexts, Engagement rates, Mental health, Programme evaluation, School-based interventions, Student attendance, Qualitative methods*

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