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**An investigation the effectiveness of whether students should be given multiple short vacation, long vacation or short vacation at schools.**

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**Abstract**

The current study aims to investigate students', teachers' and administrators' views toward whether students should be given multiple short vacation, long vacation or short vacation at schools. These views may help educational experts to get more views towards taking decision about vacations. The participants of the study were (90). 34students, 36 teachers and 30 administrators from those who work and study at Nijran university, Saudi Arabia and other different universities. The researcher conducted qualitative and quantitative study and used the questionnaire as a method of data gathering tools because of its easiness and through questionnaire the researcher can collect and investigate large amounts of information from respondents in a short period of time. Also, the results of the questionnaires can easily be quantified and analyzed. Moreover, the collected data can also be used in comparing with other research findings. The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part one includes the biographical data of respondents by their jobs and



part two includes three basic questions about whether students should be given multiple short vacation, long vacation or short vacation at schools (few days' vacation). As for the construction of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was constructed based on the research questions, study needs, self-experiences, and other colleagues' and experts', views and advices. For validating of the questionnaire questions, they were submitted to the academics' experts in order to investigate their clarity and suitability to the current study and based on their recommendations and advices the study is designed.

Keywords: Multiple short vacation, perspectives, annual and disruption

#### المخلص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقق من آراء الطلاب والمعلمين والإداريين حول ما إذا كان ينبغي منح الطلاب إجازة قصيرة متعددة أو إجازة طويلة أو إجازة قصيرة في المدارس. قد تساعد هذه الآراء الخبراء التربويين في الحصول على مزيد من الآراء لاتخاذ القرار بشأن الإجازات. وبلغ عدد المشاركين في الدراسة (90) مشاركا. 34 طالبًا و 36 مدرسًا و 30 إداريًا ممن يعملون ويدرسون في جامعة نجران بالمملكة العربية السعودية وجامعات مختلفة أخرى. أجرى الباحث دراسة نوعية وكمية واستخدم الاستبانة كأداة لجمع البيانات لسهولة استخدامها ومن خلال الاستبيان يمكن للباحث جمع وفحص كميات كبيرة من المعلومات من المستطلعين في فترة زمنية قصيرة. كما يمكن بسهولة قياس وتحليل نتائج الاستبيانات. علاوة على ذلك، يمكن أيضًا استخدام البيانات التي تم جمعها في المقارنة مع نتائج الأبحاث الأخرى. يتكون الاستبيان من جزأين. يتضمن الجزء الأول بيانات السيرة الذاتية للمستطلعين حسب وظائفهم، ويتضمن الجزء الثاني ثلاثة أسئلة أساسية حول ما إذا كان ينبغي منح الطلاب إجازة قصيرة متعددة أو إجازة طويلة أو إجازة قصيرة في المدارس (إجازة لبضعة أيام). أما بالنسبة لبناء الاستبيان، فقد تم بناء الاستبيان بناءً على أسئلة البحث واحتياجات الدراسة والتجارب الذاتية وآراء الزملاء والخبراء الآخرين ونصائحهم. للتحقق من صحة أسئلة الاستبيان، تم تقديمها لخبراء الأكاديميين من أجل التحقق من وضوحها وملاءمتها للدراسة الحالية وبناءً على توصياتهم ونصائحهم تم تصميم الدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إجازة قصيرة متعددة، وجهات نظر، سنوية، واضطراب



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## 1. Introduction

Referring back to the syllabus distribution of many schools and universities around the world we notice that Each school adapts and modifies its curriculum to meet the students' needs in a certain time during the academic year. However, most schools are different in whether giving students multiple short vacation, long vacation or short vacation (reducing the days of holiday breaks). Moreover, other people also have contrasting views towards the suitability of these vacations to learners. Some believe that multiple short vacations are suitable to learners while others think long vacations have more advantages. For example, Saudi Arabia Ministry of Education followed the system of two semesters and long annual vacation in the last two decades, but this year 1445 (2023-24) included three semesters and multiple short vacation. Long School vacation or holiday is usually given to students once at the end of the academic year, while the multiple short vacation is distributed to the days of the academic year so as to reduce the number of the final annual vacation days; short vacation is only few days after each academic year or semester.

There are many advantages and disadvantages for school break to learners and their families. Students and families alike look forward to holidays as a break



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from the usual routine and studies and holidays can be more beneficial than spending most time at schools.

Holiday breaks give students time to get together and enjoy each other's company and have the opportunity to enjoy some time with their family members, allow students to shift their focus and complete other important tasks that they are not normally able to address during the school year. In addition, holiday breaks have proven to be highly beneficial for students' mental health, physical health, wellness and allow them get time for relaxing.

Even though people look forward to holidays as a break from the usual routine and studies, still there is growing criticism towards school holidays. Many research findings around the impact of school holidays or vacations are different. Some researches highlight that long school holidays can be stressful periods for students and the long gap can affect students' academic achievement while others believe that students need to spend enough time studying at schools and take only short break during their studies. Thus, the current study is an extent to these views from other perspectives. Below are many examples from different countries.

In the United States, depending on the region, summer break is approximately two to three months. About 4 percent of public schools in the U.S. use a balanced calendar that operates year-round with a shorter summer break. In Spain, Portugal, the Republic of Ireland, Italy, Greece, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Lebanon, Romania and Russia, the summer break is normally three months.

In New Zealand, the school holidays typically start in early to mid-December, and end in late January or early February, which is usually 6–8 weeks. In Spain, the school year finishes in mid to late June and begins in early to mid-September. In short, vacations are varying from country to another and depend each country's policy and affected by many factors.



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Research finding about the effects of having many holidays on the productivity of university students in Cambodia by Leang Sreyvid, Pil Kolab, Sam Marady and Yang Sreyleak, from the perspectives of a university students toward the impact of having a lot of holidays revealed that 72% of respondents supported the idea that there should be fewer holidays while only 28% of respondents disagreed. (Golding, 2018). 'Taking a holiday provides many health benefits such as reduce stress, increase creativity, boosts emotional stability, makes confidences soar, improve intelligence, improves low moods, fights colds and infections, strengthens relationships etc.' (Helena, 2016). Vacation, the time without any interruption from working, is the perfect healer that helps people to regain their well-being and freedom after being obligated to work. (De Bloom, Geurts, Taris, Sonnentag, Sonnentag, Kompier, 2010). There are a few studies suggested that vacation can provide only a weak positive effects on human health and well-being. (De Bloom et al., 2009). (Gillian, 2015). A long study break is more likely to cause students to forget what they have been learning. With the movies and video games, they slip away from study habits and become languid from so much time not working. (Oscar, 2016). So, when students take a lot of holiday, student will forget whatever they learned, the disruption of their studying practices, and the impeding of any organizational habits they established. When time for holiday comes to the end, it can be quite difficult to get back into their normal school routine and schedule. Students may have much free, unproductive, time that they may misuse it. Most of these results congruence with the current study findings in different point and respondents' views.

## **2.Methods and Procedure**

In the current study, the research methodology is described in terms of procedure and data collection tools. It aims to achieve the objectives of the study and learners' needs. The researcher used the questionnaire as a method of



data gathering tools to achieve the study's objectives because for its easiness and suitability to the study. The researcher also followed the following steps:

- Designed a questionnaire to investigate respondents' views.
- Used different methods and procedures for collecting respondents' views. For example, using online questionnaire through shared links.
- Classified problems into levels and stages and used clear instructions.

### **2.1. The Participants of the study**

The total targeted group of the study (the participants) were (90) respondents. 34 students, 36 teachers and 30 administrators from Nijran university, Saudi Arabia and other different Sudanese universities. Most of the respondents work and study in the field of education. They are ESL learners, teachers and administrators. The questionnaire questions were divided into three levels so as to make it easy for the researcher to measure the respondents' views toward the questions. The study held during July 2023.

### **2.2. Variables of the study**

It is obvious known that defining of variables is so important for conducting of every study. In the current study, the variables were defined as independent and in dependent variables. Independent variables are represented in respondents' different views towards vacations, whereas dependent variables are represented in the collecting, comparing and analyzing of these views' results.

### **2.3 The questionnaire design and data gathering tools**

The questionnaire is chosen as a data gathering tool because for its possibility in collecting Large amounts of information from a large number of people in a short period of time. Also, the results of the questionnaires can usually be easily quantified and analyzed. In addition, the data can also be used to compare and contrast other research findings.

In this study, the questionnaire aimed to investigate students', teachers' and administrators' views toward whether students should be given multiple short



vacation, long vacation or short vacation at schools. These views may help administrators and educational experts to get supporting information towards taking decision about vacations. In addition, the questionnaire is used to investigate other factors that may have great influence on selecting the suitable type of school vacation. The questionnaire was constructed based on the following points:

1. based on the research questions and the need of the study.
2. designed based on self-experiences and colleagues' advices.
3. regarding respondents' experiences and focuses on logical reasons.
4. As for validating of the questionnaire questions, they were submitted to the academics' experts in order to investigate their clarity and suitability to respondents. Based on their recommendations and advices, the researcher designed the questionnaire questions.

#### **2.4 An extract from other research findings & respondents' views**

Additional factors investigated in other researches about vacations before conducting the current study, the research held long discussion with respondents about the effects of whether having many holidays or one long break on the productivity of university students. They gave contrasting views and most learners prefer one long break to many short vacations during the academic year. Their answers were based on personal needs for vacations not on the effects of these holidays on the academic productivity. For example, the need holidays mostly for fun, not to compensate the academic shortage in their levels or studies.

#### **2.5 The basic characteristics and the study guideline**

Each program has its own characteristics and teaching context. The basic characteristic of each program should be effective, tied to student needs and should to achieves the desired goals and objectives. According to Newman (2001, p. 299). Strong instructional program flows from the use of a “common instructional framework guides curriculum, teaching, assessment, and learning climate. The framework combines specific expectations for student learning with specific





strategies and materials to guide teaching and assessment. The basic features and the most distinguishing characteristics of the current study can be summarized and concluded in the following steps as follows:

**A:** The researcher used closed ended questions in the questionnaire. **b.** used appropriate methods of investigation and data processing. **c.** defined clear learning objectives based on the study need. **d.** encouraged students to express their views independently & freely. **e.** focused on the logical discussion and a certain plan to guide the researcher to conduct this study. The plan includes forum discussion, different research findings in the same area and other procedures. **f.** The study is not only designed to collect views from respondents, it is also based on sharing solutions about disadvantages of schools holidays and giving suggestion and recommendation for this weakness. **3.Rationale for the current study**

Review of Educational Research Vol. 66, No. 3 (Autumn, 1996), pp. 227-268 (42 pages) Published By: American Educational Research Association indicated that achievement test scores decline over summer vacation. The effect of summer break was more detrimental for math than for reading and most detrimental for math computation and spelling. Also, there were no moderating effects for student gender or race, but the negative effect of summer did increase with increases in students' grade levels.

A current Research (post 1975) In a study conducted by the New York Board of Regents in 1978, it was reported that students forgot much of what they learned in schools while on summer vacation. (Weaver, 1992). It was found that advantaged students learn an average of one year and three months "worth of knowledge" during the school year and an average of one month's growth over the summer for a total of one year and four months' growth. A disadvantaged student learns an average of one year and one month's growth and then loses





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three to four months during the summer, for a net growth of seven to eight months. The National Institute of Education addressed the issue of summer loss in the context of Compensatory Education (CE) students. This address was presented to Congress in 1978 and included a sample of 3,000 first and third graders. Upon examining the effects of summer on reading and math scores, an overall conclusion determined that CE students showed a greater change in scoring than 11 non-CE students. (Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996). A study of Canadian students in grades one, three and five, also using the 12 MAT, concluded that summer vacation provided gains in raw achievement in word knowledge, reading and math concepts.

### **3.1 The content of the current study**

Referring back to the investigation of the impact of whether students having multiple short vacation, long vacation or short vacation at schools on the productivity of learning and studying, we notice that these points have given the researcher the opportunity to evaluate these views from different angles. The current study content is planned as follows:

- The researcher has chosen the questionnaire as data gathering tools to investigate learners' views.
- Respondents divided into three groups; teachers, students and administrators.
- The study focus was on finding relation between school vacation and its effect on the academic achievement.
- Used closed ended questionnaire questions

### **3.2. Identifying learner's need**

Learners needs are varying and renewal, so identifying their needs is so important for every study. The basic task for every teacher is to discover, validate, and classify the learning needs. (Noessel, 2003). Each learner is unique, and brings to the learning situation his or her own different learning



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style, knowledge set, pool of past experiences, and motivation. In learner-centered instruction, it is important for instructors to consider the level of knowledge and skill development attained by the learners prior to instruction (Dick, & Carey, 2004). The needs of learners should be considered within the contexts of:

- their current physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development.

- a wider knowledge, needs, and physical activity patterns of learners.
- the classroom and school environment

- the special nature of their communities

The best way to get the information is by investigating learner's views. For determining the readiness of participants for learning, the teacher should decide how to collect and use data on learner needs. There is no single best way to gather information about learner's needs, but instructors can anticipate learner needs based on their prior knowledge about their skills, content they will need to achieve and the instructions that they can use. Based on mentioned above, the researcher used the questionnaire to investigate learner's needs towards school vacation.

#### **4.Data analysis and discussion**

Understanding problems and exploring the way of analyzing facts, figures, and interpreting them into meaningful ways is so important for well understanding of the research data. As for an investigation of this study, all data were analyzed and interpreted into meaningful words. The general population of this study were 90 respondents. 34students, 36 teachers and 30 administrators. The samples were taken randomly from Nijran university and other universities. In this study, the data have been analyzed and interpreted through tables and figures. The researcher used graphical representation, data explanation and statistical methods. This part represents assessment of questionnaire findings with regards to the biographical data and statistical analysis of the

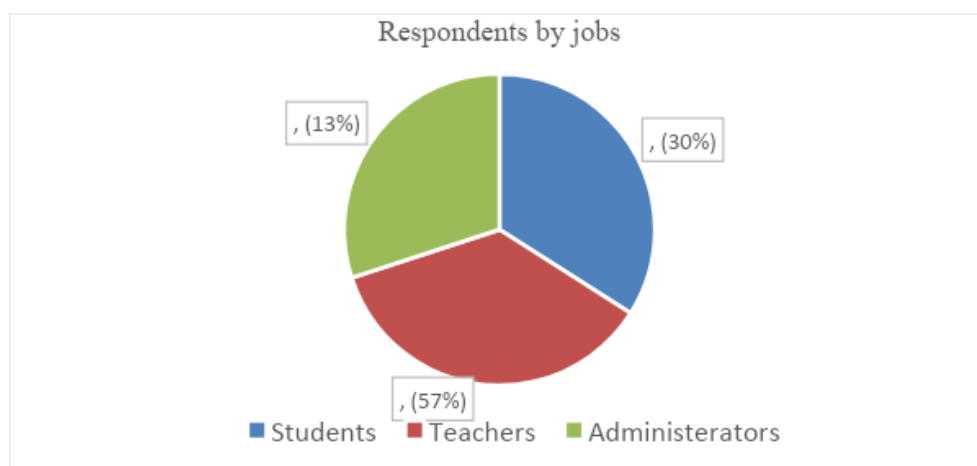
questionnaire's questions.

**4.1: Interpreting & discussing of respondents' questionnaire result** In the current study, the students', teachers' and administrators' questionnaire consists of two parts. Part one includes the respondents' biographical data such as age and jobs. Part two includes three basic questions about whether students should be given multiple short vacation, long vacation or short vacation at schools.

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage of respondents by their jobs**

Subject	Respondents by their jobs			Percentage(%)and the total
	(Students)	(Teachers)	(Administrators)	
Frequency	34	36	30	90
Percent	(30%)	(57%)	(13%)	100%

**Figure1: Frequency and percentage of respondents by their jobs**



### Interpretation of Data

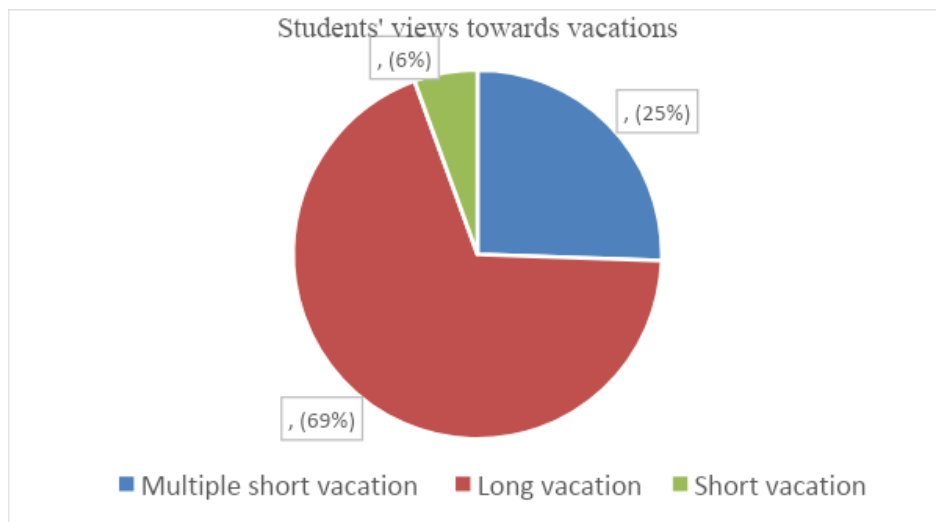
The graph above (table 1 and figure 1) represent respondents by their jobs. The total number of respondents was 90. It is noticeable that 34(30%) of respondents were students, 36(57%) teachers and 30(13%) administrators. There were no big differences between the variables because they were taken from the same field and based of the study need.

**Table2: Frequency and percentage of respondents' views toward the**

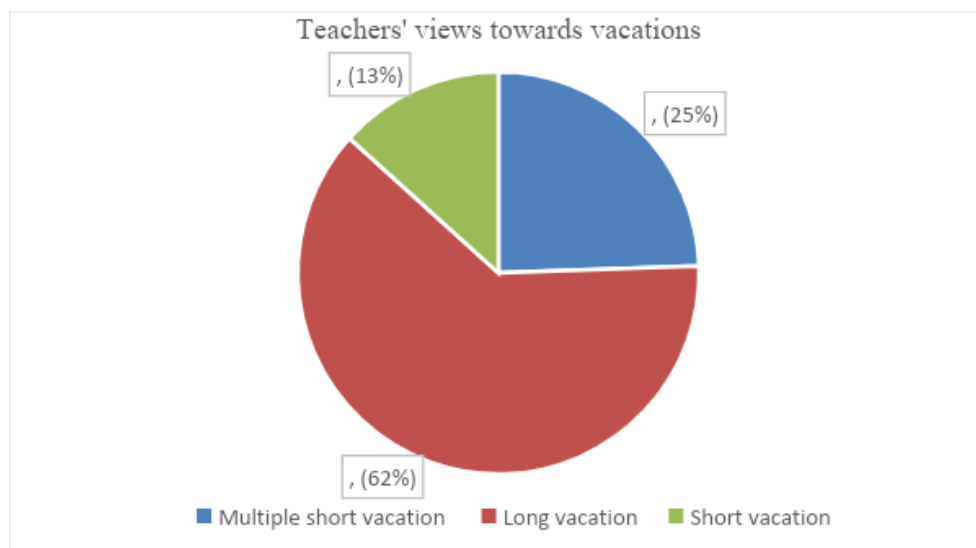
**questionnaire questions 1,2 and 3**

Questions	Problem rate	Multiple short vacation - Long vacation- Short vacation			Percentage (%) and the total
1.What type of vacation is better for learners?	Frequency & percent	Students 23(26%) Teachers 22(25%) Administrators32(36%)	Students 62(69%) Teachers 56(62%) Admins.44(49%)	Students 5(6%) Teachers 12(13%) Admins.14(15%)	90  100%
<b>Question</b>	Problem rate	Break from the usual routine, studies and opportunity to enjoy some time with their family members	Beneficial for student's mental health, physical health, wellness and allow them get time for relaxing.	Allow students to shift their focus and complete other important tasks that they are not normally able to address during the school year	Percentage (%) and the total
2.What are the advantages of taking long or short multiple holidays?	Frequency & percent	Students31(34%) Teachers 25 (28%) Administrators23(26%)	Students33 (37%) Teachers 29 (32%) Admins.36(40%)	Students26 (29%) Teachers36 (40%) Admins. 31(34%)	90  100%
<b>Question</b>	Problem rate	Stressful and disturbing periods for students.	Have negative affect on students' academic achievement	Loss and reverse for the progress students made	Percentage (%) and the total
3. What are the disadvantages of taking long or short multiple holidays?	Frequency & percent	Students11(12%) Teachers 16 (18%) Administrators 17(19%)	Students 39(43%) Teachers 36 (40%) Admins.36(40%)	Students40(45%) Teachers 38 (42%) Admins.s37(41%)	90  100%

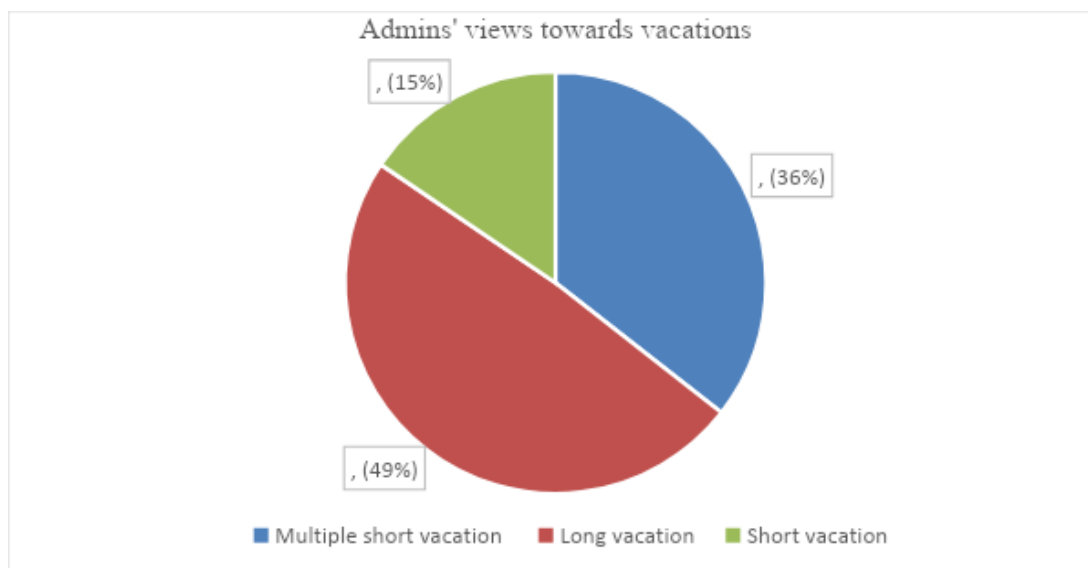
**Figur2: Frequency and percentage of students' views towards question one. (What type of vacation is better for learners?).**



**Figur3: Frequency and percentage of teachers' views towards question one. (What type of vacation is better for learners?).**



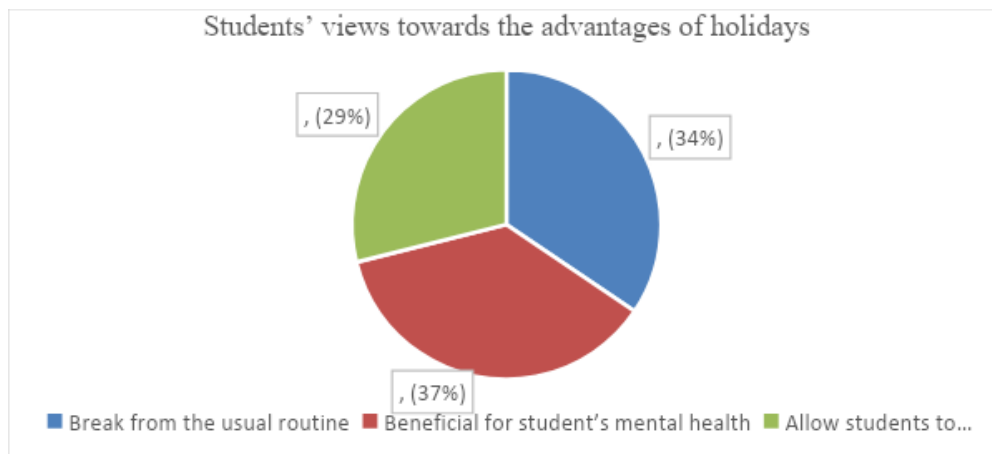
**Figur4: Frequency and percentage of administrators' views towards question one. (What type of vacation is better for learners?).**



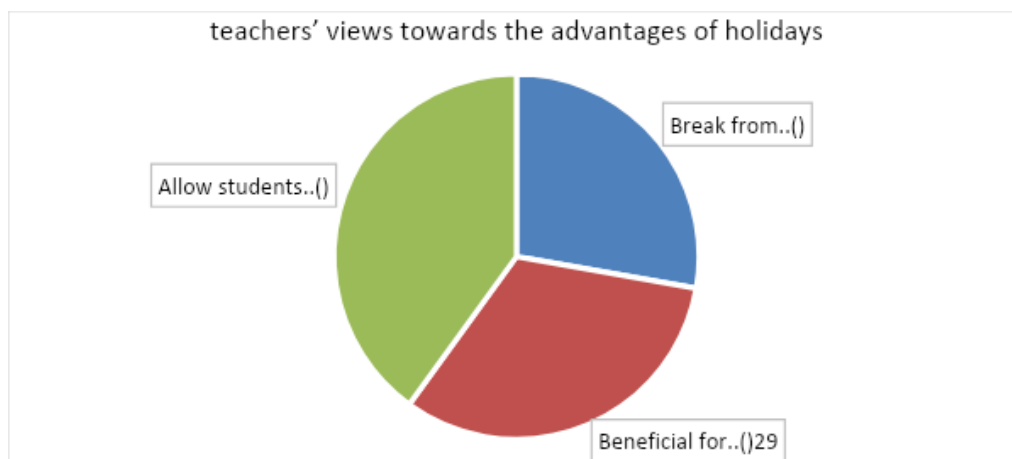
### Interpretation of Data

The table 2 and figures 2,3 and 4 above represent respondents' views toward the questionnaire questions 1 (What type of vacation is better for learners?). It is noticeable that from students' answers, 62(69%) of the students prefer long vacation, 23(26%) prefer multiple short vacation and only 5(6%) prefer short vacation. As for the teachers' views, 56(62%) of the teachers prefer long vacation, 22(25%) prefer multiple short vacation and only 12(13%) prefer short vacation. In reference to administrators, 44(49%) of the admins prefer long vacation, 32(36%) prefer multiple short vacation and only 14(15%) prefer short vacation. To conclude, it is noticeable that from the discussion above, most respondents prefer long vacations and multiple short vacation at schools and the least prefer short vacation.

**Figur5: Frequency and percentage of students' views towards question two. (What are the advantages of holidays?).**

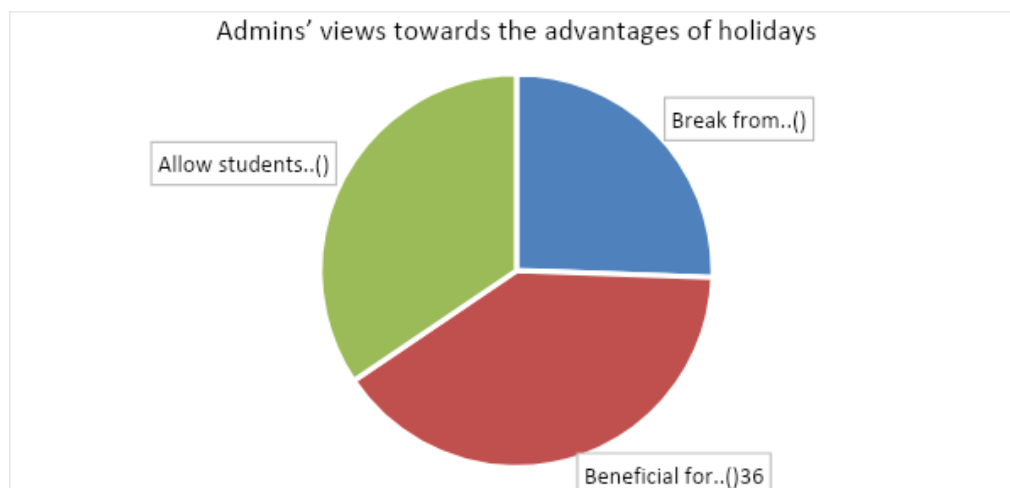


**Figur6: Frequency and percentage of teachers' views towards question two. (What are the advantages of holidays?).**



**Figur7: Frequency and percentage of admins' views towards question two. (What are the advantages of holidays?).**





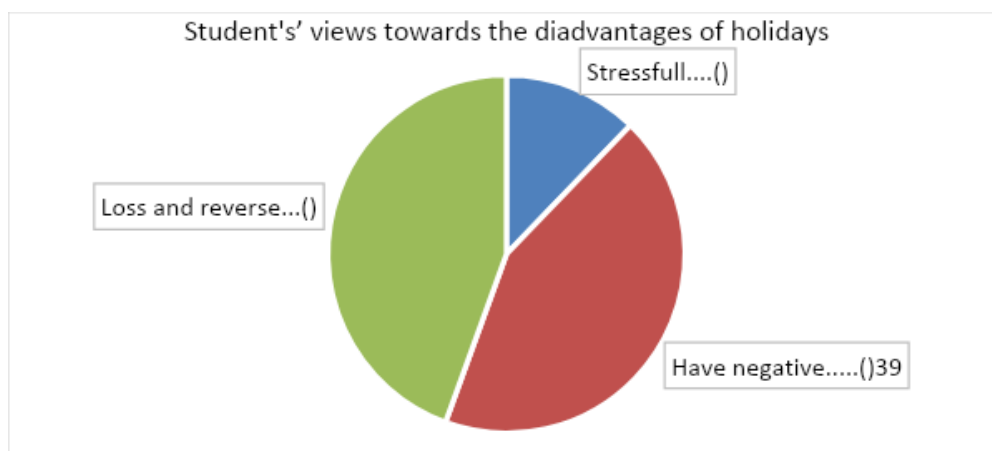
### Interpretation of Data

The table 2 and figures 5,6 and7 above represent respondents' views toward the questionnaire questions 2 (What are the advantages of holidays?). It is noticeable that from students' answers, 33(37%) of the students think that vacation is beneficial for student's mental health, physical health, wellness and allow them get time for relaxing,31(34%) believe it is break from the usual routine, studies and opportunity to enjoy some time with their family members. 26(29%)of students believe that vacation helps students to shift their focus and complete other important tasks that they are not normally able to address during the school year. As for the teachers' views toward the advantages of the vacation, 29(32%) of the teachers think that vacations are beneficial for student's mental health, physical health, wellness and allow them get time for relaxing,36(40%) think it allows students to shift their focus and complete other important tasks that they are not normally able to address during the school year and 25(28%) think it is break from the usual routine, studies and opportunity to enjoy some time with their family members.

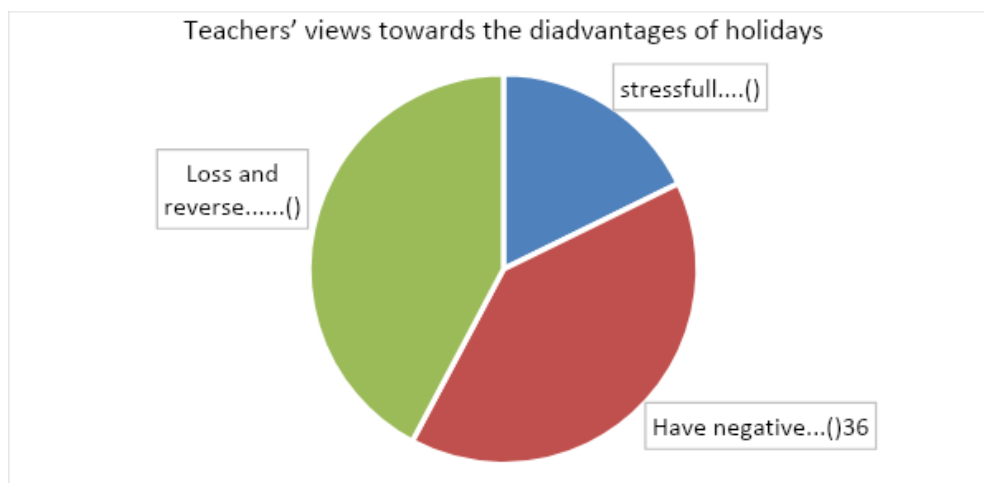
In reference to administrators, 36(40%) think vacations are beneficial for student's mental health, physical health, wellness and allow them get time for

relaxing,31(34%) think vacations can allow students to shift their focus and complete other important tasks that they are not normally able to address during the school year and 23(26%) think it is a break from the usual routine, studies and opportunity to enjoy some time with their family members.

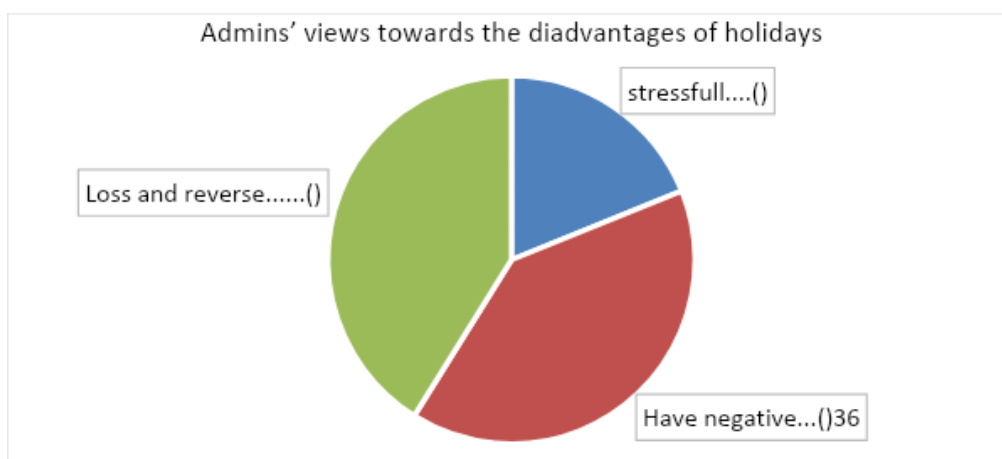
**Figur8: Frequency and percentage of students' views towards question three. (What are the disadvantages of holidays?)**



**Figur9: Frequency and percentage of teachers' views towards question three. (What are the disadvantages of holidays?).**



**Figur10: Frequency and percentage of administrators' views towards question three. (What are the disadvantages of holidays?)**



### Interpretation of Data

The table 2 and figures 8,9 and10 above represent respondents' views toward the questionnaire questions 3 (What are the disadvantages of taking long, short or short multiple holidays? It is noticeable that from students' answers, the majority 40(45%) of the students think that vacation is loss and reverse for the progress students made,39(43%) believe it has negative affect on students' academic achievement and only11(12%)of students believe that vacation is stressful and disturbing periods for students. As for the teachers' views toward the disadvantages of the vacation, 38(42%) of the teachers think that vacations



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are loss and reverse for the progress students made,36(40%) think it has negative affect on students' academic achievement and only 16(18%) think it is stressful and disturbing periods for students.

In reference to administrators, 37(41%) think vacations are loss and reverse for the progress students made,36(40%) think vacations have negative affect on students' academic achievement and 17(19%) think it is stressful and disturbing periods for students.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Based on the discussion of the questionnaire above, we can conclude that the data collected from the questionnaire results are logical in comparison to other research results and there were no big differences. This results of the current study congruence with many researches results conducted by many researchers. For example, (Golding, 2018). 'Taking a holiday provides many health benefits such as reduce stress, increase creativity, boosts emotional stability, makes



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confidences soar, improve intelligence, improves low moods, fights colds and infections, strengthens relationships etc.’ (Helena, 2016). Vacation, the time without any interruption from working, is the perfect healer that helps people to regain their well-being and freedom after being obligated to work. As for the disadvantages of long, short or multiple short holidays, there are a few studies suggested that vacation can provide only a weak positive effects on human health and well-being. (De Bloom et al., 2009). (Gillian, 2015). A long study break is more likely to cause students to forget what they have been learning. To conclude, school vacations effects on learners’ achievement are varying from country to another and there are different factors that can influence school vacations periods. Further, if learners make good use for vacations, students will be more successful. As a result, this study recommends that similar further researches are needed and should be conducted to different group of learners regarding other factors. Therefore, we can strongly believe that, the study can be good step to other research in the area.

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