

Perspective on the Impact of A Four-Day Class Schedule: A Retrospective Case Study of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College

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Abstract

This study retrospectively examined the implementation of the four-day class schedule at the College of Business Management and Entrepreneurship of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPCS), Santa Maria Campus. Anchored on Educational Innovation Theory and Stakeholder Theory, the study aimed to evaluate stakeholder perceptions, instructional implications, acceptability, implementation challenges, and the overall viability of the compressed academic schedule. A descriptive-survey research design using a retrospective case study approach was employed. Data were collected through an adapted survey questionnaire administered to 217 respondents, comprising 127 students, 84 parents, and 6 faculty members. Descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that students, parents, and faculty members generally viewed the four-day class schedule positively. Respondents reported benefits such as increased academic flexibility, reduced educational expenses, greater family engagement, improved instructional delivery, and enhanced institutional efficiency. Faculty members indicated improved classroom instruction and the ability to cover more instructional materials, while students and parents preferred the compressed schedule because it provided additional time for academic, family, and personal responsibilities. The level of acceptability was high across all stakeholder groups, and the ANOVA results indicated no significant differences in their perceptions, demonstrating broad stakeholder consensus. Despite these favorable outcomes, respondents identified challenges related to communication, scheduling conflicts, student participation in institutional activities, and instructional preparation, emphasizing the need for clear institutional policies and effective implementation strategies. The study concludes that the four-day class schedule is a viable educational innovation that can enhance instructional effectiveness, stakeholder satisfaction, and institutional efficiency when supported by appropriate planning, communication, and stakeholder involvement. It recommends conducting feasibility studies, strengthening institutional policies and orientation programs, aligning instructional practices with compressed schedules, continuously monitoring implementation outcomes, and undertaking further studies on the long-term educational, economic, and student well-being effects of compressed academic schedules. This study supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production by promoting flexible, efficient, and learner-centered educational practices. Its findings contribute to educational, institutional, socio-economic, and policy sustainability by providing localized evidence that can guide higher education institutions in implementing innovative and sustainable academic scheduling strategies.

Keywords: Acceptability, Educational Innovation, Four-Day Class Schedule, Higher Education, Stakeholder Perceptions, Sustainability

1. Introduction

Higher education institutions continuously face challenges related to operational costs, changing student demographics, evolving pedagogical approaches, and the need to maintain educational quality while improving institutional efficiency. These challenges have encouraged institutions to explore flexible academic scheduling models, including the four-day class schedule. This compressed academic week aims to maintain required instructional hours while enhancing institutional efficiency, stakeholder well-being, and educational flexibility. Although international studies report both benefits and challenges associated with compressed schedules, evidence from Philippine higher education remains limited. This study retrospectively examines the implementation of a four-day class schedule at the College of Business Management and Entrepreneurship of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Santa Maria Campus, focusing on stakeholder perceptions, instructional implications, institutional outcomes, and implementation challenges to contribute localized evidence for educational planning and policy.

1.1 Background of the Study

The four-day class schedule has emerged as an alternative academic scheduling approach that compresses instructional activities into four days while maintaining required contact hours and intended learning outcomes. Initially adopted to reduce operational and transportation costs, it has evolved into an educational innovation that promotes institutional flexibility, faculty productivity, and student well-being. However, studies present mixed findings regarding its effectiveness. While some report improvements in attendance, teacher morale, operational efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction, others identify concerns related to instructional time, learner fatigue, and academic achievement. The effectiveness of the model therefore depends on implementation strategies, institutional culture, curriculum design, and stakeholder support. The COVID-19 pandemic further emphasized the importance of adaptive scheduling models that balance academic requirements with student welfare and institutional sustainability. Despite extensive international literature, studies on compressed academic schedules within Philippine higher education remain scarce, highlighting the need for localized evidence to guide institutional decision-making.

1.2 Four-Day Class Schedule and Stakeholder Perspectives

Educational scheduling has traditionally followed a five-day instructional week, but changing educational demands have encouraged institutions to adopt alternative scheduling models such as block scheduling, year-round education, hybrid learning, modular instruction, and compressed academic calendars. Educational innovation supports adapting organizational practices to improve learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness (Michael Fullan, 2020), while learner-centered educational systems require continuous organizational adaptation (Tony Wagner, 2021). Research on four-day schedules indicates generally positive student perceptions, including greater flexibility, improved attendance, enhanced family engagement, and increased opportunities for independent learning. However, evidence regarding academic performance remains inconclusive, with outcomes largely influenced by implementation quality and instructional effectiveness rather than instructional days alone (Dam, 2006; Griffith, 2011; Anderson and Walker, 2015; Thompson, 2021; Morton, 2022; Heyward, Cannon, and Sarin, 2023). Faculty members also play a critical role in successful implementation. Longer instructional periods may support deeper discussions, experiential learning, and project-based instruction while providing additional time for lesson preparation, research, collaboration, and professional development. Nevertheless, longer class periods may also increase instructional fatigue, requiring careful alignment between pedagogy and scheduling (Hewitt and Denny, 2011; OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2023). Flexible scheduling may likewise strengthen family engagement, improve work-life balance, reduce student stress, and promote social development through additional opportunities for family interaction and independent learning (Epstein, 2018; UNESCO, 2023; Morton, 2022). Economic considerations further support compressed schedules, with institutions reporting reductions in transportation, utility, facility maintenance, and operational expenses while contributing to more sustainable resource utilization (Griffith, 2011; RAND Corporation, 2024; OECD, 2023).

1.3 Philippine Higher Education Context of Four-Day Class Scheduling

Although compressed academic schedules have been extensively examined in North America and Europe, research within Philippine higher education remains limited. Existing local studies primarily focus on basic education, blended learning, and flexible learning modalities rather than four-day academic schedules. Consequently, empirical evidence on stakeholder perceptions, instructional effectiveness, institutional outcomes, and implementation challenges in Philippine colleges and universities is insufficient. This study addresses this gap by retrospectively examining the implementation of a four-day class schedule at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, providing localized evidence that supports educational innovation and policy development within the Philippine higher education sector.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Basis of the Four-Day Class Schedule

This study is anchored on Educational Innovation Theory and Stakeholder Theory. Educational Innovation Theory explains that institutions continuously modify organizational structures and practices to improve institutional effectiveness and respond to emerging challenges. Within this framework, the four-day class schedule represents an institutional innovation intended to improve instructional delivery, operational efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction. Stakeholder Theory emphasizes that institutional policies should consider the perspectives of those directly affected. Accordingly, students, parents, and faculty members serve as the primary stakeholders whose experiences and perceptions determine the acceptance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the four-day class schedule through its influence on instructional practices, family engagement, academic responsibilities, and resource utilization.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale

Despite increasing international evidence on compressed academic schedules, there remains limited research examining their implementation within Philippine higher education institutions. Existing literature offers inconsistent findings regarding academic outcomes while providing little understanding of stakeholder experiences within the local educational context. This study addresses these gaps by conducting a retrospective analysis of stakeholder perceptions regarding the effectiveness, acceptability, instructional implications, benefits, and implementation challenges of the four-day class

schedule at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College. The findings are expected to contribute evidence supporting future educational planning, policy formulation, and implementation of flexible academic scheduling.

1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns primarily with SDG 4 – Quality Education by examining an innovative academic scheduling approach that seeks to enhance instructional effectiveness, educational accessibility, stakeholder well-being, and institutional efficiency. It also supports SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth through its examination of faculty productivity and efficient institutional resource utilization, and SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production by considering the potential reduction of operational costs, energy consumption, and resource use associated with compressed academic schedules.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

The study contributes to educational sustainability by providing evidence that supports informed decisions regarding flexible instructional delivery while maintaining educational quality. It promotes institutional sustainability through the evaluation of efficient resource utilization and operational effectiveness, socio-economic sustainability by examining the effects of scheduling innovations on students, families, faculty, and institutional operations, and policy sustainability by generating localized evidence that can guide higher education institutions in developing responsive and sustainable academic scheduling policies.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-survey research design to systematically describe the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of stakeholders regarding the implementation of the four-day class schedule without manipulating any variables. Descriptive survey research is appropriate for obtaining information on participants' opinions and experiences concerning a particular phenomenon (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). A retrospective case study approach was likewise adopted by re-examining institutional data collected during the implementation of the four-day class schedule at the College of Business Management and Entrepreneurship of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC), Santa Maria Campus. This approach enabled the historical data to be analyzed using contemporary educational perspectives.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the College of Business Management and Entrepreneurship of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC), Santa Maria Campus, located in Santa Maria, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. During the implementation period, the college adopted a four-day class schedule as an innovative academic strategy aimed at improving scheduling efficiency, reducing operational costs, and maintaining instructional quality.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of stakeholders directly affected by the implementation of the four-day class schedule. The study involved a total of 217 respondents, comprising 127 students, 84 parents, and 6 faculty members from the College of Business Management and Entrepreneurship of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study included the entire population of stakeholders directly involved in the implementation of the four-day class schedule. Since all identified students, parents, and faculty members participated in the survey, no sampling technique was employed, and the total population of 217 respondents served as the study participants.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a survey questionnaire adapted from Donis-Keller and Silvernail (2009), which assessed stakeholder perceptions of the implementation of a four-day school week. The instrument was modified to suit the local context and the objectives of the study. It consisted of four sections covering the perceived effects of the four-day class schedule, faculty institutional practices, stakeholder acceptability and scheduling preferences, and the problems encountered along with recommendations.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate institutional authorities before data collection. The survey questionnaires were administered to students, parents, and faculty members during the implementation of the four-day class schedule. Participants were informed of the study's purpose and assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used exclusively for research purposes. Completed questionnaires were collected, organized, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency and percentage were used to determine the number and distribution of responses. Mean was computed to describe the level of acceptability and preference regarding the four-day class schedule. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine significant differences in the perceptions of the three stakeholder groups, with the level of significance set at 0.05.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Stakeholder Perceptions of the Four-Day Class Schedule

3.1.1 Perceived Effects of the Four-Day Class Schedule

The findings indicate that most students (58.86%) expressed a favorable perception of the four-day class schedule, while parents likewise reported that their children performed well under the compressed schedule. Only a small proportion preferred the traditional five-day schedule or required additional time to adjust. Overall, the responses demonstrate generally positive stakeholder perceptions of the four-day class schedule. The positive perceptions suggest that the four-day class schedule provided greater flexibility, reduced transportation expenses, and improved opportunities to balance academic and family responsibilities. These findings support Thompson (2021), who reported that students participating in compressed schedules often demonstrate higher levels of satisfaction and perceived autonomy in managing their academic activities. Likewise, the favorable responses from parents indicate stronger family engagement, which Epstein (2018) identified as an important factor in promoting student success.

3.1.2 Activities Undertaken During Fridays

The results show that helping with household chores was the most common Friday activity among both students and parents, followed by completing schoolwork and assignments. Other reported activities included sports participation, sleeping, spending time with friends, using digital media, and earning extra income. These findings indicate that respondents generally used the additional non-class day for productive family and academic activities rather than recreation alone. The findings reflect the strong family-oriented culture among Filipino households, where students actively participate in household responsibilities while continuing their academic obligations. The substantial number of respondents who devoted Fridays to completing school requirements further suggests responsible time management and independent learning. This observation supports Morton (2022), who reported that compressed schedules encourage greater student responsibility and self-directed learning.

3.1.3 Reasons for Preferring the Four-Day Class Schedule

Students primarily preferred the four-day class schedule because it provided additional time to complete homework, spend time with family, and reduce educational expenses. Parents likewise cited increased family interaction and lower financial costs as important reasons for supporting the compressed schedule. Overall, respondents valued the flexibility and practical benefits associated with the additional non-class day. The findings demonstrate that stakeholders viewed the four-day schedule as beneficial not only academically but also economically and socially. Reduced transportation expenses and increased opportunities for family interaction contributed to stakeholder satisfaction. These results are consistent with Griffith (2011), who identified economic savings as a major advantage of compressed schedules, and with UNESCO (2023), which emphasized that educational systems should support students' academic, social, and family development.

3.1.4 Faculty Instructional Practices under the Four-Day Class Schedule

Most faculty members reported that classroom instruction improved under the four-day schedule, while none perceived instructional quality to have declined. The majority also indicated that they covered more instructional materials during the semester, whereas lesson preparation requirements generally remained unchanged despite some variations among respondents. These findings suggest positive faculty experiences with the compressed schedule. The results indicate that longer instructional periods may have enhanced instructional efficiency by allowing more comprehensive discussions, practical activities, collaborative learning, and uninterrupted classroom instruction. The additional non-class day also appears to have provided time for lesson preparation, assessment, curriculum planning, and other professional responsibilities. These findings agree with UNESCO (2023), Hewitt and Denny (2011), and OECD (2023), which emphasize that effective instructional organization and educator support contribute significantly to teaching quality under flexible scheduling arrangements. Nevertheless, careful workload management remains essential to sustain instructional effectiveness during extended class sessions.

3.1.5 Preference for the Four-Day Class Schedule

The findings reveal that the majority of stakeholders preferred the four-day class schedule over the traditional five-day arrangement. Among students, 76.38% favored the four-day schedule, while only 23.62% preferred the five-day schedule. Similarly, 72.62% of parents and 83.33% of faculty members expressed preference for the compressed schedule. Virtually no respondents supported a six-day class schedule, indicating strong stakeholder endorsement of the four-day academic arrangement. The strong preference across all respondent groups suggests that stakeholders perceived the advantages of the four-day schedule to outweigh its limitations. Respondents valued the additional day for family responsibilities, academic preparation, household activities, and personal development. These findings are consistent with Thompson (2021), who identified stakeholder satisfaction as a key determinant of successful compressed scheduling, and Morton (2022), who reported that flexible scheduling enables students and families to better balance educational, social, and personal commitments. From an institutional perspective, the results also support Fullan (2020), who emphasized that stakeholder acceptance is essential for sustaining educational innovations and organizational change.

3.1.6 Acceptability of the Four-Day Class Schedule

The results indicate high levels of stakeholder acceptance of the four-day class schedule. Nearly half of the students and parents rated the scheduling arrangement as "Very Much Accepted," while most faculty members rated it as "Much Accepted." Only a small proportion of respondents expressed lower levels of acceptance, demonstrating broad support for the compressed academic schedule across all stakeholder groups. The findings suggest that respondents considered the four-day schedule appropriate and beneficial within the institutional setting. According to Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory, innovations are more likely to be adopted when users perceive them as advantageous, compatible with their needs, and practical to implement. The favorable perceptions observed in this study indicate that the scheduling arrangement satisfied these characteristics. Likewise, the findings support Heyward, Cannon, and Sarin (2023), who concluded that stakeholder acceptance is a critical factor in the successful implementation of compressed scheduling models.

3.1.7 Level of Acceptability of the Four-Day Class Schedule

The overall weighted mean ratings indicate that students and faculty members rated the four-day class schedule as "Much Accepted," while parents rated it as "Accepted." Respondents gave particularly high ratings to indicators related to reduced educational expenses, increased family time, lesson preparation, and preference for the four-day schedule over the traditional five-day arrangement. These results demonstrate that stakeholders generally viewed the compressed schedule as beneficial academically, economically, and socially. The high ratings for reduced educational expenses reflect the financial benefits associated with fewer commuting days, including savings on transportation, meals, and daily allowances. Likewise, increased family interaction highlights the importance of family support within the Philippine educational context. These findings are consistent with Epstein's (2018) framework on family engagement, which emphasizes the positive influence of strong family relationships on student development. They also support UNESCO (2023), which advocates educational practices that balance academic requirements with learner well-being and family responsibilities. Overall, the four-day class schedule appears to promote educational effectiveness while supporting economic efficiency, family engagement, and student well-being.

3.2 Differences in Stakeholder Perceptions of the Four-Day Class Schedule

3.2.1 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Acceptability

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed that the computed F-value (0.0863) was lower than the critical F-value (2.69) at the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that no statistically significant differences existed among the perceptions of students, parents, and faculty members regarding the acceptability of the four-day class schedule. The findings demonstrate a high level of agreement among the three stakeholder groups concerning the effectiveness and value of the compressed academic schedule. The absence of significant differences indicates a broad consensus among stakeholders regarding the benefits of the four-day class schedule. Such agreement strengthens the institutional feasibility of adopting compressed academic schedules because educational innovations are generally more sustainable when supported by all major stakeholder groups. Consistent with Stakeholder Theory, the findings suggest that shared understanding and acceptance among students, parents, and faculty members enhance the likelihood of successful implementation and long-term sustainability of institutional reforms.

3.3 Challenges Encountered During the Implementation of the Four-Day Class Schedule

The respondents identified several implementation challenges despite the generally positive perceptions of the four-day class schedule. Students reported misunderstandings with parents regarding Friday academic activities, reduced allowances, scheduling conflicts, occasional declines in learning motivation due to longer intervals between classes, and inconsistencies when Friday activities or Saturday classes were still required. Faculty members likewise reported difficulties in ensuring student participation during Friday institutional activities and expressed concerns regarding the increased preparation required for extended instructional sessions. These findings indicate that successful implementation of compressed academic schedules requires effective communication, careful planning, and clear institutional policies.

Stakeholders must have a common understanding of academic expectations and institutional activities to minimize confusion and scheduling conflicts. The identified challenges are consistent with Heyward et al. (2023), who emphasized that the success of four-day schedules depends largely on effective stakeholder communication, adequate orientation, and proper alignment between institutional policies and academic requirements. Although the four-day class schedule offers substantial educational, economic, and social benefits, addressing these implementation concerns is essential to ensure its long-term effectiveness and sustainability.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings indicate that the four-day class schedule was positively perceived by students, parents, and faculty members and was generally accepted across all stakeholder groups. The compressed schedule provided benefits in terms of academic flexibility, family engagement, instructional effectiveness, and reduced educational expenses. Faculty members reported improved instructional delivery, while students and parents appreciated the additional time for academic, family, and personal responsibilities. The absence of significant differences in stakeholder perceptions further demonstrates broad consensus regarding the effectiveness and suitability of the scheduling arrangement. Overall, the study concludes that the four-day class schedule is a viable educational innovation that can enhance institutional efficiency, stakeholder satisfaction, and educational quality when strategically implemented and adequately supported.

Higher education institutions considering the implementation of a four-day class schedule should first conduct feasibility studies to assess institutional readiness and stakeholder support. Clear institutional policies, stakeholder orientation, and consultation activities should be established to ensure a common understanding of scheduling arrangements. Academic departments should align instructional strategies, workload distribution, and assessment practices with the compressed schedule while continuously monitoring stakeholder satisfaction, student engagement, academic performance, and operational outcomes. Institutions should also evaluate the economic benefits of the scheduling arrangement, integrate technology-enhanced learning during non-class days, promote flexible scheduling as part of educational innovation initiatives, and encourage further studies on the long-term educational, economic, and student well-being outcomes of compressed academic schedules.

The study was limited to a retrospective analysis of the implementation of a four-day class schedule at the College of Business Management and Entrepreneurship of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC), Santa Maria Campus. It focused solely on the perceptions of students, parents, and faculty members using previously collected institutional data and examined the acceptability, instructional implications, perceived benefits, and challenges of the scheduling arrangement within the specific institutional context. Consequently, the findings are limited to the scope, respondents, and setting of the study.

Compliance with ethical standards

The author declares no conflict of interest, and this study received no external funding. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate institutional authorities, and the authors acknowledge the participation of the students, parents, and faculty members of the College of Business Management and Entrepreneurship, Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC), Santa Maria Campus. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data were collected using a non-invasive survey questionnaire. All responses were treated confidentially, and no personally identifying information was collected, disclosed, or reported.

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