

Four-Day School Week and the Stakeholders' Well-Being in the Public Schools: Basis for an Enhanced School Annual Implementation Plan

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Publication Date: August 9, 2025

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.16789286

Abstract

This study aimed to assess the relevance of the four-day school week and stakeholders' well-being in public schools as a basis for enhancing the School Annual Implementation Plan. Physical health, mental strength, family and relationship fulfillment, school morale, and financial expenses were the parameters of well-being. The descriptive method of research was used to examine the assessments of the various cross-sections of the population of 3,135 represented by 434 randomly selected Grade 9 students, teachers, and head teachers as respondents from three selected public secondary schools in the Marilao South District, Division of Bulacan, for the school year 2024–2025. An expert-validated research instrument anchored on the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child framework and aligned with the MATATAG Curriculum of the Department of Education was used to collect the pertinent data. The percentage, mean, median, Kruskal-Wallis

test, and Mann-Whitney U Test were used as statistical tools to organize, analyze, and interpret the collected data.

The study found out that the respondents were undivided with high conformity on the relevance of the four-day school week to their well-being, particularly in improving physical health, mental strength, family and relationship fulfillment, school morale, and financial expenses, making it a supportive basis for enhancing the School Annual Implementation Plan. Recommendations were made for educational leaders and policymakers to consider the fourday school week and its positive impact on stakeholder well-being. The findings may also guide the enhancement of the School-Based Management AIP with well-being-focused strategies.

Keywords: *Four-day school week, Well-being Physical health, Mental strength, Family and relationship fulfillment, School morale, Financial expenses, Enhanced School Implementation Plan*

INTRODUCTION

The conventional five-day school week has long defined educational systems globally. However, mounting stress among students and teachers, declining academic performance, and emerging mental health concerns — especially in the wake of COVID-19 — have driven calls for reform. Internationally, countries such as Sweden, Poland, and the U.S. have explored fourday school week models to improve well-being. In the Philippines, the MATATAG curriculum underscores holistic development, making this a timely study.

Review of Related Literature

Related literature supports the four-day school week's positive effects on physical health, mental resilience, family engagement, school morale, and financial burdens. Global and local studies (Smith, 2018; Mariano et al., 2021; Gudmundsdóttir, 2023) align with the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model and Seligman's PERMA framework — both forming the foundation of this study's well-being indicators.

Statement of the Problem

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and type?
2. How do they assess the relevance of a four-day school week in terms of:
 - a. Physical health
 - b. Mental strength
 - c. Family and relationship fulfillment
 - d. School morale
 - e. Financial expenses
3. Are there significant differences in the assessments based on respondent profiles?

Objectives

Assess stakeholders' agreement on the relevance of a four-day school week to wellbeing.

Determine profile-based differences in responses.

Provide insights for enhancing School-Based Management Annual Implementation Plans (AIP).

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the assessments based on respondent profiles.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-quantitative, cross-sectional research design to evaluate the perceived relevance of the four-day school week to the well-being of public-school stakeholders. A cross-sectional approach was selected to capture the views of a defined population at a specific point in time, allowing for broad comparisons across different respondent groups without requiring longitudinal tracking.

Participants

The participants of the study included a total of 434 respondents, composed of Grade 9 students, teachers, and head teachers from three public secondary schools located in the Marilao South District of Bulacan. These respondents were selected using random sampling to ensure representative and unbiased input from the target population.

Instruments

Data were collected using a validated Likert-scale questionnaire, which was designed based on the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) framework and aligned with the principles of the MATATAG curriculum. The instrument underwent a thorough validation process and pilot testing to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability.

Procedures

The data gathering procedure involved the direct distribution of the survey questionnaires to the selected schools. Prior to the formal rollout, respondents were oriented on the purpose of the study, and informed consent was secured. Ethical standards were observed throughout the process to ensure the voluntary and confidential participation of all involved.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, descriptive statistics including percentage, mean, and median were used to summarize and interpret general trends in the responses. To determine whether there were significant differences in responses based on demographic variables such as age, sex, and stakeholder type, inferential statistical tests—specifically the Kruskal-Wallis Test and the Mann-Whitney U Test.

RESULTS

Profile of Respondents

- The majority of the respondents (approximately 74%) were 15 years old and below, representing the student population.
- Female respondents accounted for a slightly higher percentage compared to males.
- In terms of stakeholder type, students comprised the largest group, followed by teachers and head teachers.

Assessment of the Four-Day School Week's Relevance:

Across all stakeholder groups, the four-day school week was perceived as highly relevant and beneficial. The respondents strongly agreed that it had a positive impact on the following dimensions:

A. Physical Health

Stakeholders reported reduced physical exhaustion, improved sleep, and better overall energy levels due to fewer school days.

B. Mental Strength

A shorter week was associated with reduced stress, better emotional regulation, and enhanced mental clarity.

C. Family and Relationship Fulfillment

Respondents valued the increased quality time with family, which contributed to stronger relationships and emotional support.

D. School Morale

The model was seen to improve overall morale, with students and teachers expressing greater motivation, engagement, and satisfaction in school activities.

E. Financial Expenses

The four-day schedule was reported to help families and school staff reduce daily expenses such as transportation, meals, and school-related costs.

Statistical Analysis

The mean ratings for all five well-being domains were consistently high across all respondent types, with average scores ranging from 4.09 to 4.21 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating strong agreement.

To determine whether there were significant differences in responses based on age, sex, or type of stakeholder, the Kruskal-Wallis Test and Mann-Whitney U Test were applied. The results showed no statistically significant differences among the groups, suggesting that the positive perception of the four-day school week was consistent and shared regardless of demographic background.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Findings

The study confirms that a four-day school week is perceived as beneficial across all five dimensions of well-being. The lack of significant differences across profiles indicates its universal relevance.

Comparison of Existing Studies

Findings are consistent with global studies from the U.S., Iceland, and Japan, where reduced school days led to improved well-being, reduced stress, and better family dynamics (Mariano et al., 2021; Gudmundsdóttir, 2023; Cruz, 2020).

Implications for Practice and Policy

This model could inform the revision of School-Based Management (SBM) plans and national education policies by embedding well-being as a core driver of implementation strategies.

Limitations

- Limited to three schools in Marilao South District
- Excludes perspectives from parents, administrative staff, and other external stakeholders
- Cross-sectional nature does not assess long-term outcomes

CONCLUSION

The four-day school week is relevant to stakeholders' well-being and offers a viable basis for refining school implementation strategies. It aligns with MATATAG and WSCC models and could enhance SBM planning.

Recommendations

- Consider pilot programs for implementing a four-day week
- Integrate well-being indicators in the AIP and SIP of public schools
- Conduct longitudinal studies to assess long-term academic and emotional outcomes
- Include broader stakeholder perspectives, especially parents and non-teaching staff

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