

Views of BS Information Technology Students on Academic Calendar Shift

Rommel L. Verecio*

Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City, Philippines;
rlverecio@lnu.edu.ph

Abstract

Objectives: The matter of changing the academic calendar is a relevant and timely issue among Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines. Legislators, academic managers, student representatives and various stakeholders expressed their opinions and concerned about the issue. This study is conducted to determine the views of the BS Information Technology students on the educational calendar shift of Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City. **Methods:** Survey questionnaires and google form used to obtain the data. One hundred sixty-two (162) students served as a sample of the study. **Findings:** The data revealed that most of the students expressed favorably on academic calendar shift from June to August with (80.20%, n = 130). Shifting of classes in the tertiary level is a courageous move of the university, because of its effects after the implementation or even during the transition period. **Applications/Improvements:** This move is inevitable and recommended based on the current situation of the paradigm shift of educational system in the Philippines, impact of climate change, globalization impact, competitions and synchronization of activities in the region and the world.

Keywords: Academic Calendar Shift, BS Information Technology Students, BSIT Views

1. Introduction

The growing force of globalization has required many countries to adapt and stay competitive. It is a process that has influenced many aspects ranging from economy, politics and education. It imposes many hurdles that demand people adapt to the changing of times regarding foreign relations, labor force, business, trade but most importantly of all in education. In the International arena, top universities leaped and shifted their academic calendar from June to August particularly the ASEAN countries with the hopes of riding this wave of globalization to become more unified with the International standards and improving the academic standing and reputation with foreign universities. More and more universities

continue to make a change as it has provided them with the benefits that globalization has to offer. It even raises the academic competitiveness of the students with those of the foreign neighbors as well as academic standing and reputation of the educational institutions.

Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines started their classes in June and usually end by March. Republic Act 7797, Section 3 which states that academic institutions may start classes on the first Monday of June or not later than the last day of August. However, due to the demand of time various point of views exists about the need to change the school calendar of respective institutions across levels.

This issue becomes significant and worth considering due to some tertiary academic institutions in the

*Author for correspondence

country have already moved its opening of classes to August. This calendar shift is within the bounds of the law of Republic Act 7722 which gives discretions among Higher Education Institutions to set their opening days to encourage innovations and to exercise academic freedom among institutions of higher learning.

In the country, some educational institutions would like to synchronize their academic calendar following those of neighboring Southeast Asian countries. Several issues raised for its infeasibility, a legislative attempt has been made by Congress both the upper and lower house for the synchronization of the change of academic calendar to all educational institutions in the country.

The proposed legislation did not materialize¹. Some universities, like University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University and University of Santo Tomas, decided to implement a new academic calendar primarily aimed to enable a more flexible participation to student exchange programs and be at par in the global competition among universities in the ASEAN region and the world. While the academic calendar shifting adheres with the existing act governing the country's educational calendar (i.e. R.A. No. 7797) and various forms of consultation and careful analyses have been done by those universities to consider the potential impacts of shifting their academic calendar.

The Philippines is a signatory which on the other hand created the ASEAN Economic Cooperation of 2015 (AEC, 2015). This AEC 2015 objectively proposed to have both an economic integration and educational synchronization. This is part of the regional association whose thrust for its member nations is to connect with it in different aspects, including those in the educational sector. It will give the opportunity to faculty and students to take part in exchange programs in other universities in the ASEAN and around the world.

The Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City, Philippines a recognized institutions of higher learning and categorized as state university in the country, on the other hand, has not been giving its position whether it will also adapt and adjust its academic calendar in 2018 as it has to consult with the different stakeholders of the

university specifically the students. Thus, it is on this reason that the researcher wanted to address the views of the BS Information Technology students towards academic calendar shift starting SY 2018–2019.

2. Theoretical Framework

This university-wide study anchored on the following social theories:

The Theory of Change provides vital information about the processes of how and why the desired change is expected to happen in a particular² context. The opinion focused on mapping out what change initiative, activities or interventions will be adopted to achieve the desired goals. Another approach used in this study is the Complexity Theory, this theory has been used to have a more comprehensive understanding on how organizations respond to the environments on the changing times and the coping mechanism to address uncertainty. The stated theories are very much vital on how Leyte Normal University as an organization will respond to the complexity vis-a-vis to the demand of changing times in crafting a framework, policy measures of the new educational calendar.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study determines the views of the BS Information Technology students towards academic calendar shift of Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City, Philippines.

Specifically, this answers the following questions:

- What is the respondent's profile of the following:
- Age;
- Gender;
- Year level?
- What are the views of the students towards academic calendar shift?

- What recommendations can be deduced based on the findings of the study?

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted the use of a descriptive method of research to involved a questionnaire in determining the views of the BS Information Technology students towards academic calendar shift.

4.2 Research Procedure

The researcher sent a letter of permission to the University President of the Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City for his intention in the conduct of the study and the determination of respondents as well as appropriate procedures in the distribution of questionnaires.

4.3 Respondents of the Study

A total of 162 students or 50.15% of the total population of the BS Information Technology of Leyte Normal University enrolled during the second semester of the academic year 2017-2018. This group of students has been

considered to be the respondents and not another group of students in the different programs of the university due to ethical issues, logistics, unknown target population size and time restrictions.

4.4 Data Gathering Instruments

The researcher used surveyed questionnaires with the aid of google form. Data collections were done and administered in the computer laboratory and respondents had sufficient time to answer the instrument.

4.5 Statistical Treatment of Data

Responses were analyzed using google analytics.

5. Result and Discussion

Respondents profile and the views of the BS Information Technology students towards academic calendar shift are in this section.

Figure 1 “Age Profile”. The data were 19-20 years old (52.50%; $n = 85$); 21-22 years old (18.50%, $n = 30$); 17-18 years old (13%, $n = 21$), then 25 and above years old has the smallest portion of the sample (6.20%, $n = 10$). In Figure 2 “Gender Profile”. Both male and female have

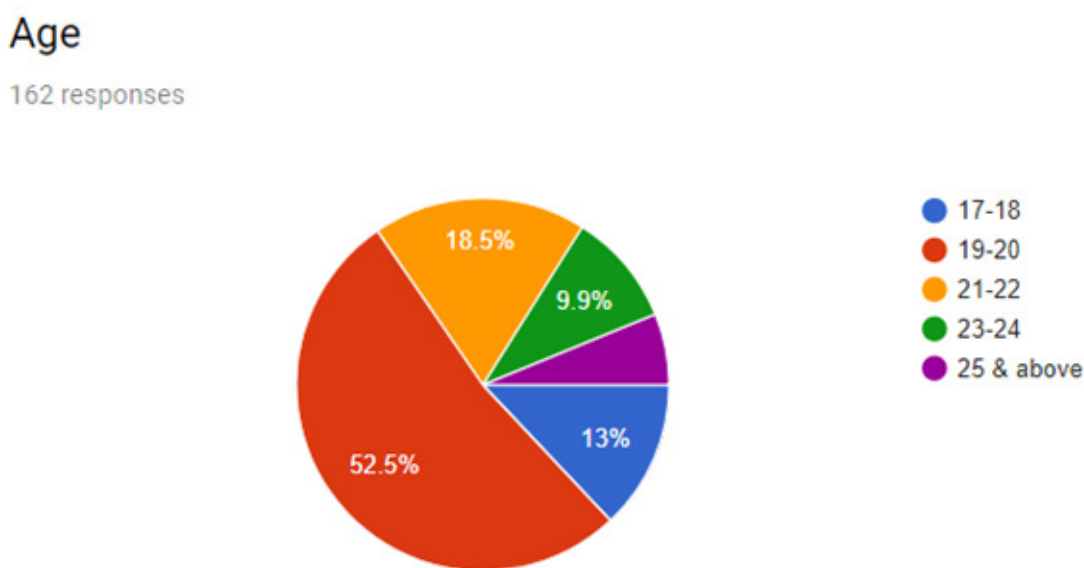


Figure 1. Age profile.

Gender

162 responses

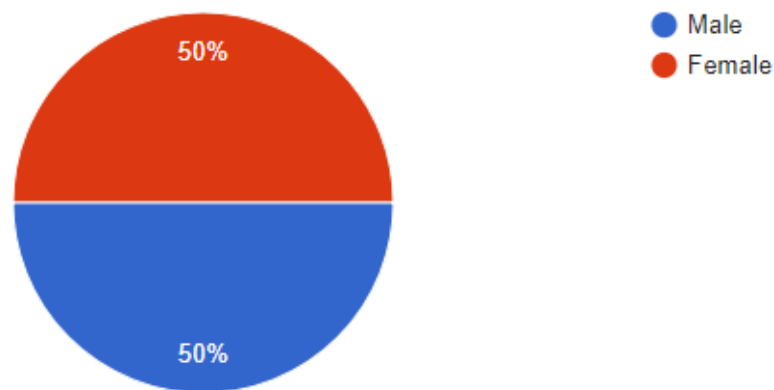


Figure 2. Gender profile.

equal distribution were female (50.00%; $n = 81$) and male (50.00%; $n = 81$) respectively.

While in Figure 3 “Year Level Profile”. Third year level having (46.30%; $n = 75$), fourth year level (27.80%; $n = 45$), first-year level (13.60%; $n = 22$) while second year level (12.30%; $n = 20$) has the smallest percentage. The

“age profile,” “gender profile” and “year level profile” serves only a description of the sample and has no direct impact and bearing with the objectives of the study.

Figure 4 disclosed that respondents are favorable on academic calendar shifting to August with the following reasons:

Year Level

162 responses

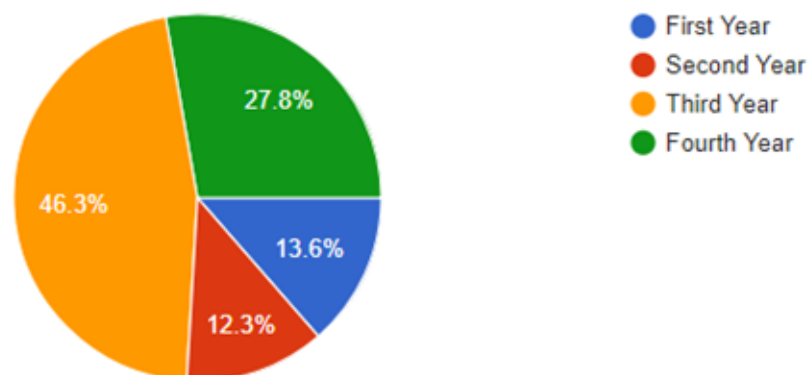


Figure 3. Year level profile.

133 responses

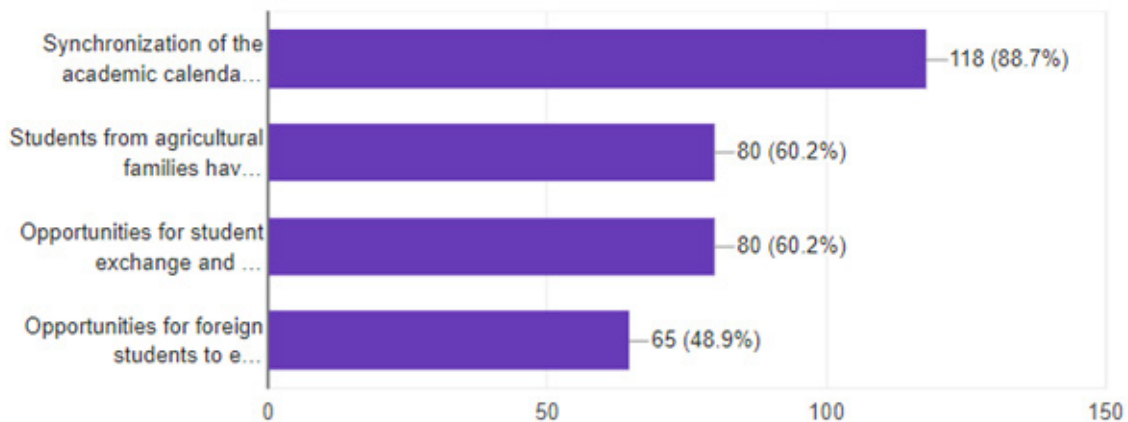


Figure 4. Views of the respondents on academic calendar shift to August.

46 responses

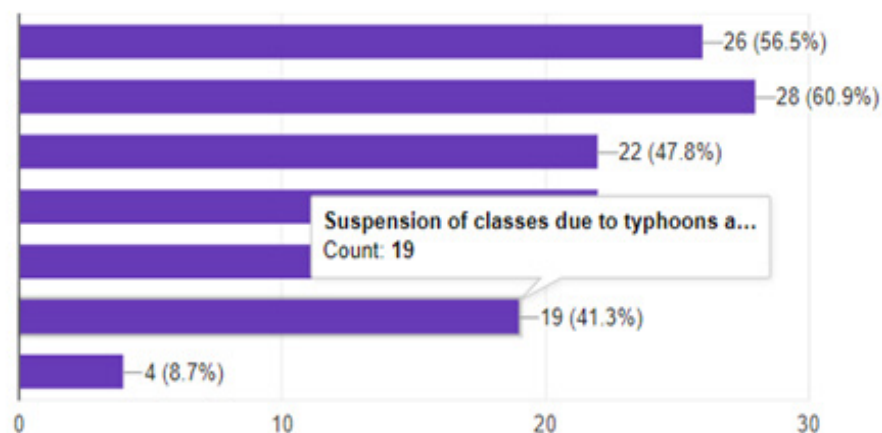


Figure 5. Views of the respondents on their opposition towards academic calendar shift to August.

“Synchronization of the academic calendar with the International Community; Top Universities in the Philippines and Neighboring Universities in the Region” which has (88.70%, $n = 118$). Came next was the statements “Students from agricultural families have more time to help farming activities from May to July is the planting season in the region” where (60.20%, $n = 80$)

and “Opportunities for student exchange and practicum abroad” with (60.20%, $n = 80$) respectively. While “Opportunities for foreign students to enroll in the university” has (48.90%, $n = 65$). This implies that respondents are favorable and wanted that the start of classes changed to August based on the reasons they cited. This reason can also be supported with the recent report

162 responses

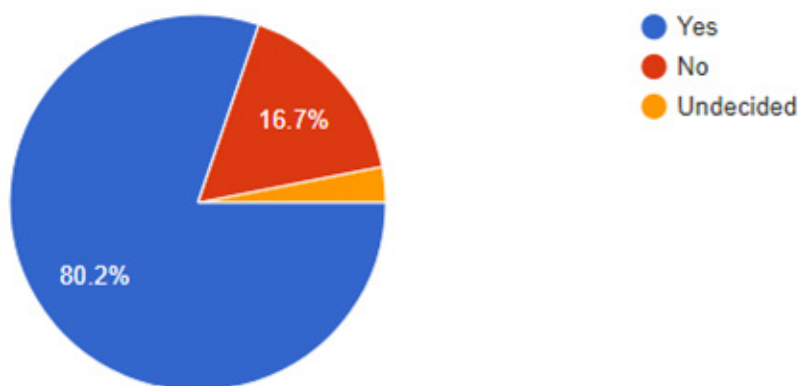


Figure 6. Respondents academic calendar shift to August.

from Rappler Philippines; the Senate Chair on Education Committee filed Senate Bill 1432, seeking to mandate that all public and private schools must start their school year on the second Monday of August but not later than the second Monday of September³. Positive feedback on school calendar shifting revealed that issues of school dropouts had dropped since shifting to the new school calendar⁴. However, the downside to this move will cause an influx of foreign or international students because of same school calendar in the international community and consider a very affordable low-cost education due to the value of peso as compared with other foreign monetary values without jeopardy to the standards or quality of education. In turn, this will lead to education tourism and the possibility of privatization of public institution.

The data as shown in Figure 5 reveals the opposition of the students towards academic calendar shift to August with the following reasons:

“Semestral breaks will fall during Christmas season” where (60.90%, n = 28). The statement “No more “summer” now called term break” which has (56.60%, n = 26). The statements “Classes will coincide with the hot season and not all classrooms are well ventilated” with (47.80%,

n = 22) and “Overlap with the most town and barangay fiestas, holy week and other holidays, thus may affect attendance” with (47.80%, n = 22) respectively. Further, the statement “Suspension of classes due to typhoons and heavy rains tend to spike from September towards December. Thus, shifting the start of the academic calendar from June to August would not make much of a difference⁵” has (41.30%, n = 19). While the statement “Students from farming communities would have difficulty with an August school opening because agricultural cycles cause them to run out of financial resources” with (39.10%, n = 18). However, there are also other reasons which respondents did not disclose and leave it with their own opinion which takes (8.70%, n = 4). The results merely imply the importance of the opening of classes in June based on their views and reason cited. Henceforth, Leyte Normal University’s a leading university in education in the region, it is a must to synchronize with the Department of Education calendar for easy deployment of practicum teachers in the area. Further, the month of April and May in the Philippines is considered to be harvest season and students are needed by their parents during this time and the majority of the students in the university came from agricultural family. Students helped

their parents on their farm in harvesting during this season.

The data as shown in Figure 6 that most respondents were favorable on the plight of changing the academic calendar to August were (80.20%, $n = 130$) while the opposition is (16.70%, $n = 27$) and undecided has (3.10%, $n = 5$). It implies that students are inclined to move the opening of classes to August instead of June. Calendar shifting in the tertiary level is a courageous move of a university, because of its effects after the implementation or even during the transition period.

This move is inevitable and recommended based on the current situation of the paradigm shift of educational system in the Philippines, impact of climate change, globalization impact, competitions and synchronization.

6. Conclusions

Based on the findings emerging from this study, it could be concluded that the BS Information Technology students agree on the move of an academic calendar shift based on their views and opinions cited. Shifting of school calendar entails much consideration like synchronization with the stakeholders, the ASEAN Region, school activities and even personal. Finally, this study does not mean conclusive because the decision is still on the hands of the Board of Regents of the University being the governing body.

7. Recommendations

Leyte Normal University administrators and board of regents should welcome the idea of academic calendar

shift and propose a comprehensive study on a university-wide scale. Students and faculty across colleges and other stakeholders of the university must be aware of the pros and cons towards this move. The LNU administrators should study how the classroom environment could be improved to address the summer heat problem if the educational calendar shifts push through.

The Board of Regents should also consider that the downside to this move will cause an influx of foreign or international students in the university because of the same school calendar in the international community. Another consideration is the very affordable low-cost education due to the value of peso as compared with other foreign monetary values without jeopardy to the standards or quality of education. In turn, this will lead to education tourism and the possibility of privatization of public institution.

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