

Original Article

Three-Term School Calendar of the Department of Education (DepEd): What Lies Beneath the Reorganization?

Carie Justine Estrellado ^{1,*}

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Abstract

The Philippine basic education system is caught in a recursive search for structural development to fix its systemic deficiencies. This study interrogates the Department of Education's formal adoption of a three-term school calendar for School Year (SY) 2026–2027 (DepEd Order No. 009, s. 2026). While administrative discourse frames this shift as a pursuit of instructional optimization and teacher welfare, it is not a mere chronological adjustment. It is an exercise in cultural hegemony that redefines the parameters of educational reform to manufacture consent. In systemic proviso, framing the calendar as the primary lever for educational recovery deliberately redirects the national gaze away from crushing material crises. Analyzed through a Gramscian vista, this report posits that the reform functions as a top-down structural adjustment designed to preserve the status quo by prioritizing bureaucratic efficiency over material reform.

¹ University of the Philippines Open University, Philippines
* cpestrellado@up.edu.ph

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1. Introduction

Education remains the most potent tool for national development, yet it is perpetually caught in the gravitational pull of political decision-making. In the Philippine context, the school calendar is more than just a schedule; it is a perceived manifestation of how power holders—often detached from the classroom's ground zero—attempt to steer a massive bureaucracy through structural shifts. While the ideal of "learning without interruption" is a pedagogical pursuit, it frequently collides with

the material reality of the Filipino teacher's life. The modern educator is no longer just a purveyor of knowledge but a weary coordinator of administrative tasks, catch-up programs, and community duties that could diminish the very sense of their profession. Consequently, the "protection of teaching time" becomes less of a policy argument and more of a hard, unyielding fact: the quality of instruction cannot improve if the teacher is buried under a mountain of non-teaching workloads (Gumarang & Gumarang, 2021).

Undeniably, the current crisis in education is a compounded failure, with student performance continuing to lag behind global benchmarks, hampered by systemic factors (Levy, 2022). As noted by Dr. Karol Yee, the toll of frequent class suspensions due to environmental and social factors has fragmented the school year, leading to a desperate search for lost instructional days (Second Congressional Commission on Education, 2026).

The systemic repositioning of institutional timelines underscores a fundamental reality: structural mutation is an unavoidable consequence of a changing state apparatus. Rather than operating as isolated, chronological adjustments, these shifting baselines reflect a broader bureaucratic momentum aimed at aligning institutional policy with long-term national mandates; besides, one must think politics cannot be separated from that of the educational mandates (Peters, 1996). The education sector operates under a rigid imperative to operationalize state directives, driving institutional agendas that prioritize structural adaptation over systemic stability. Within this scope of inevitable policy evolution, the Department of Education seeks to anchor its long-term vision through targeted structural milestones, specifically tracking the systemic targets outlined in the Quality Basic Education Development Plan (Q-BEDP) 2025 to 2035. While educational policy revision remains an inherently constructive endeavor for modernizing bureaucratic systems, Cohen and Mehta (2017) emphasize that its actual success is strictly contingent upon sustained, systemic infrastructure rather than isolated mandates. Consequently, progressive structural changes can only improve instructional outcomes as long as they are implemented within modernized, responsive institutional networks.

1.1 Mechanism of Structural Tinkering?

The proposed three-term calendar for SY 2026-2027, formalized under DepEd Order No. 9, series of 2026, introduces a framework that divides the 201-day school year into three distinct terms. Each term is further subdivided into three phases: the Opening Block, the Instructional Block, and the End-of-Term Block. The tripartite structure of the terms is designed to solve the "fragmentation" of the traditional four-quarter system. The Opening Block (5 days in Term 1) is dedicated to learner profiling and readiness assessments. The Instructional Block represents the core of the teaching period and is intended to be uninterrupted by administrative distractions (DepEd Order No. 009, s. 2026). Finally, the End-of-Term Block is reserved for lesson

consolidation, academic intervention through the ARAL program, and professional development.

While this is not a trimester system in the university sense—maintaining the same subjects and curriculum—it represents a significant administrative shift by reducing the frequency of grading cycles. The goal is to reduce reporting peaks that overwhelm teachers with the simultaneous demands of grading and instruction. Education Secretary Sonny Angara has stated that the recent shift to a three-term system is a reorganization of the calendar rather than the curriculum itself (ABS-CBN News, 2026). However, from a pedagogical standpoint, the shift raises questions about whether simply changing assessment timing can overcome the reality that teachers often have over 50 students in a single classroom.

Table 1. The three-term structure breakdown for SY 2026-2027.

Term	Period	Instructional Days	Key Activities
Term 1	June 8 - Sept 15	54 Days	Opening block; continuous instruction.
Term 2	Sept 16 - Dec 18	55 Days	Instructional period; end-of-term assessment.
Term 3	Jan 4 - April 8	61 Days	Longest instructional period.

Recalling the snippet, the history of the Philippine academic calendar is not a big deal from the past, although it is a record of frequent, often politically motivated, shifts.

1.2 From June to August and Back: The 2013-2024 Cycle

In 2013, a significant shift moved the start of the school year from June to August for many higher education institutions, a move that eventually trickled down to the basic education discourse. This was framed as an effort toward "ASEAN Integration" and "global competitiveness," aiming to align the Philippine calendar with international standards to facilitate student mobility. However, this move largely ignored the local climatological reality where students and teachers were forced to endure the peak of the sweltering heat in April and May (Garcia, 2024).

Table 2. Chronology of Philippine school calendar actions.

Period	Calendar Start	Structure	Stated Rationale
Pre-2013	June	4 Quarters	Traditional alignment with rainy season.
2013-2014	August	4 Quarters	International alignment/ASEAN integration.
2020-2023	Varied cases	4 Quarters	Pandemic response and emergency lockdowns. Transitioning gradually to blended learning classes
2024-2025	Gradual June	4 Quarters	Climate adaptation; response to classroom heat.
2026-2027	June 8*	3 Terms	Instructional optimization; teacher wellness.

**Private schools have leeway on the start of classes; thus, they are not yet required to adopt.*

By 2024, public outcry over extreme heat in classrooms during the summer months led to a consensus in favor of a gradual return to the old June-to-March calendar. DepEd, navigating this demand, initially proposed a five-year transition, then compressed it to a two-year timeline to appease public sentiment. The 2026 shift to a

three-term system is the latest iteration of this cycle, changing the school year's internal structure while maintaining the June start date.

1.3 The Paradox of Enrichment and Labor Colonization

An insight into this structure reveals "labor colonization." Through scheduling interventions like the ARAL Program, professional development and other cocurricular activities during "breaks," the state redefines "rest" as a period for "recovery" or "remediation." This policy blurs the line between instructional time and the rest periods both teachers and students need. When the system uses these breaks to catch up on the systemic failures of the instructional block—failures stemming from the loss of 53 school days to weather—the "wellness" interval becomes a hollow promise. Nevertheless, this approach intensifies the teacher's labor under the guise of growth (Palmero & Baguio, 2026).

2. Methodology

To analyze the shift in the Philippine school calendar, one must move beyond technocratic evaluations and engage with the political nature of educational policy. This paper adopts a Gramscian theoretical design as its primary methodology, deliberately eschewing the traditional reliance on empirical data collection in favor of a rigorous philosophical interrogation of educational policy (Breakfast, 2025; McNally & Schwarzmantel, 2009). This study utilizes a qualitative critical document analysis bounded by the policy shifts of 2024–2026. Data selection was strictly purposive, targeting state directives to map elite narratives, alongside media reports and labor metrics to capture public counter-discourse.

The Gramscian lens is suited for this inquiry because it moves beyond surface-level administrative critique to expose the school calendar shift as an exercise in cultural hegemony—specifically, a "Passive Revolution" in which the state uses "common sense" narratives of efficiency and wellness to mask systemic material decay (Mayo, 2014). While conventional research designs focus on quantifiable outcomes, the Gramscian framework allows for a critical examination of the "War of Position," revealing how top-down structural tinkering serves to manufacture consent and preserve existing power dynamics, without addressing the subaltern realities of teacher labor and infrastructure shortages (Küçük, 2025). Through grounding the methodology in the dialectic between the hegemonic "View" of the Department of Education and the material "Vision" of the classroom, this paper serves as a conceptual audit of the political architecture of Philippine education, arguing that a change in the school clock is a hollow victory if it does not dismantle the structural inequities inherent in the system.

To anchor this framework and ensure clarity for the reader, this methodology establishes a conceptual toolkit. The following core Gramscian terms clarify how the paper evaluates the structural adjustments of the state:

Table 3. Gramscian terms.

Concept	Definition
Hegemony	The process by which the state injects the spontaneous consent of the masses, securing compliance through cultural, moral, and ideological leadership rather than direct physical force. In this study, hegemony occurs when the public accepts a re-synchronized calendar as the natural, logical solution for academic recovery.
Passive Revolution	A top-down, state-led modernization or structural adjustment designed to appease public discontent and preserve the status quo without altering the underlying distribution of wealth or power.
War of Position	A protracted, ideological, and cultural struggle waged within civil society to capture and control the dominant narrative. By flooding the media and legislative spaces with debates over school start dates or term lengths, the state engages in a War of Position that captures public attention and controls the boundaries of educational reform.
War of Maneuver	A direct, frontal assault against the material or institutional infrastructure of power. This paper views urgency, unyielding confrontation, actions continually deferred by administrative distractions.
Subaltern	Social groups are completely excluded from the exercise of institutional power and decision-making. Within this critique, the teacher-laborers and students occupy the subaltern position, thus portrayed as frontline actors expected to absorb the stress of systemic breakdowns while remaining on the periphery of policy formulation.
Common Sense	The fragmented, uncritical, and traditionally accepted beliefs of the public are easily guided by state rhetoric.

Note. These theoretical terms must not be interpreted literally or extracted for absolute political definitions outside the boundaries of this text. Instead, they function strictly within the localized scope and critical stance of this specific issue, serving as analytical tools to unpack the administrative dynamics of the Philippine school calendar shift.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Manufacturing Consent: The Politics of Diversion

Gramsci’s theory of hegemony highlights how the state uses "intellectuals"—in this case, DepEd officials and technocrats—to organize the consent of the masses. The rollout of the three-term calendar has been accompanied by a robust communication strategy emphasizing "exhaustive consultations" at all levels. However, DepEd claims that the shift was a result of multi-level consultations with teachers, parents, and learners. Also, the "orientation cascade" from the central office down to the division level suggests a top-down implementation rather than a bottom-up consensus. By inviting stakeholders to discuss the mechanics of the three-term shift, the state preemptively shuts down discussion of whether the shift is the best use of administrative energy compared to other pressing needs, questioning governance (Mendoza et al., 2025). This is the "Illusion of Choice": the public is invited to debate *when* school happens, but they are never invited to debate *how* it is funded or why procurement processes are chronically delayed (Zompetti,1997).

The legislative focus on the calendar shift acted as a diversion from more uncomfortable data points. While the House discussed the calendar in February 2026, the department was grappling with the aftermath of a ₱12 billion budget cut for 2025.

The reform provides a visible topic for media engagement, creating an appearance of active improvement while the material decay of the classroom—exemplified by a 9:1 student-to-computer ratio—remains unaddressed.

The Gramscian "War of Position" is tested by the material realities of the classroom. While the three-term calendar seeks to optimize the "flow" of instruction, that flow is frequently blocked by physical and financial obstacles. These can be interpreted as the budgetary transition from former Education Secretary Sara Duterte to Secretary Sonny Angara in mid-2024, providing a clear view of the shifting tactics of the state.

Duterte's leadership saw budget allocations increase from ₱660 billion in 2022 to ₱715.2 billion in 2024. However, this period was characterized by low fund utilization. COA reports revealed that only ₱2.075 billion out of the ₱11.36 billion allocated for the 2023 ICT budget was actually spent. Thousands of laptops (12,022 for teaching and 7,558 for non-teaching) remained in warehouses, undelivered to schools (Commission on Audit [COA], 2024).

Meanwhile, Angara faced a ₱12 billion reduction in the proposed 2025 budget, largely due to the previous administration's "negligence" in spending its allocation. His response has been the quintessential technocratic "Passive Revolution": a shift toward "accountability," "transparency," and "efficiency". He proposed involving Local Government Units (LGUs) in classroom construction to bypass DPWH bottlenecks. Despite a proposed 18.9% budget increase to ₱928.52 billion for Fiscal Year 2026, the Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department report exposes deep systemic failures and fiscal mismanagement within the Department of Education. DepEd's unused appropriations skyrocketed by 47% to ₱57.05 billion in 2024—with 99.3% trapped idling in the Office of the Secretary—while its critical infrastructure program suffered a near-total collapse, completing a meager 797 classrooms between 2022 and 2024 due to an abysmal 25.4% disbursement rate.

Compounding this stagnation, the 2026 proposal introduces aggressive, unaligned funding slashes, gutting the Indigenous Peoples Education budget by 51.6% and cutting allocations for Learners with Special Needs by 18.6% despite a 10.9% surge in special needs enrollment. Furthermore, the budget completely fails to designate a dedicated fund for the newly enacted Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program Act (RA 12028), simultaneously enforcing deep geographical inequities, such as granting the newly established Negros Island Region and its 1.1 million students just ₱10.14 billion—nearly half the ₱19.54 billion handed to the Cordillera Administrative Region, which serves less than a third of that student population. These severe operational and structural bottlenecks directly aggravate a devastating domestic baseline, where functional literacy among male youth sits at just 69.8% and youth suicide ideation has peaked drastically at 31.2% for females and 23% for males (House of Representatives, 2025).

Another fraught layer is functional literacy. According to the 2024 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (2024), the literacy profile of Filipino youth aged 10 to 24 reveals

a significant educational deficit, with the national functional literacy rate sitting at just 72.6%, meaning nearly 27.4% of young Filipinos still cannot fully read, write, compute, and comprehend everyday tasks. Whereas a vast majority of the youth population achieves basic literacy at 93.9%—denoting the capacity to read and write with basic understanding and calculation skills—a critical sub-segment remains heavily marginalized, with 3.5% classified as low literate (capable only of reading and writing) and 2.6% remaining completely illiterate. This baseline of learning poverty underscores the immense structural pressure placed on national education budgets and highlights the urgency for targeted academic recovery interventions.

In a primordial sense, the "subaltern" groups are those excluded from meaningful power. Philippine teachers, despite being the "frontliners" of the system, often find themselves in this position. While DepEd claims "exhaustive consultations," the 80% opposition from teachers' groups reveal a significant "Crisis of Authority". Teachers argue that the three-term system does nothing to reduce their actual workload or increase their salaries, which remain stagnant even as the cost of living rises. It can be argued, through Plato's stance, that teachers perceive the shift not as a "wellness" initiative but as a way to squeeze more productivity out of "remediation blocks," the state's hegemonic project faces a significant challenge (Marren & Marren, 2020).

Yet, despite the administrative pivot toward efficiency, the stark material deficiencies of the school system remain the undeniable elephant in the room. Beneath the rhetoric of calendar optimization lies a reality plagued by substandard instructional materials, chronic teacher shortages in critical regions, severe classroom deficits, and a suffocating mountain of clerical paperwork that buries educators daily (Constantino & Antonio, 2025). Although structural changes create a decorative illusion of order, they cannot fix a broken baseline. The critical question shifts from its theoretical value to its operational reality: will the system religiously protect the integrity of the designated instructional blocks? Given a history where administrative interruptions and reactive damage control routinely hijack class days, the structural promise of uninterrupted learning risks fracturing against the same unaddressed infrastructural crises that have always dictated life at the classroom level.

3.2 Looking at the Southeast Asian Stance

A quick look at Southeast Asian academic calendars reveals a diversity of structures that reflect local conditions rather than a single "best practice."

3.2.1 Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia

Vietnam adheres to a stable two-semester system starting on September 5, ensuring 35 weeks of study and aligning with the coolest months for student comfort (Rolleston & Krutikova, 2014). Thailand's public schools typically start in May, concurrently their international and private schools often adopt a three-term system

(August to June) to align with Western standards. Indonesia follows a four-term system starting in July, providing frequent short breaks to manage student fatigue.

A move to a three-term system for public schools is an unusual hybrid. It attempts to achieve the "instructional flow" of elite private institutions while maintaining the June start date necessitated by local heat concerns. From a Gramscian perspective, this is an attempt to "import" the prestige of elite educational structures to bolster the state's legitimacy, even if the material conditions remain vastly different.

Table 4. Southeast Asian calendar comparison.

Country	Start Month	Structure
Philippines (2026)	June	3 Terms (Blocks)
Vietnam	September	2 Semesters
Thailand (Public)	May	2 Semesters
Thailand (Private)	August	3 Terms
Indonesia	July	4 Terms (Quarters)

The comparison above highlights that the calendar is not a universal constant, but a regional variable tuned to specific environmental and political needs. However, the mere alignment of dates and terms is an insufficient metric for educational success. This paper acknowledges that these Southeast Asian neighbors do not simply reorganize their time; they synchronize that time with robust instructional support. For instance, the two-semester stability in Vietnam and the four-term rhythm in Indonesia are backed by high-quality, state-subsidized instructional materials and a consistent focus on core competencies.

In these contexts, the calendar serves the curriculum. In the Philippine "hybrid" model, there is a risk that the calendar is being asked to *serve as the curriculum*—*becoming* a decorative structural change that lacks the substantive instructional infrastructure, such as ICT integration and updated textbooks, found in our regional counterparts.

Furthermore, a closer look at the common curricular activities in these states reveals a deeper investment in the "substance" of school time rather than just its "scheduling." In Thailand and Vietnam, curriculum delivery is often shielded by significant state investment in classroom climate control and teacher-led learning resources, ensuring that "instructional time" is a high-utility reality rather than a bureaucratic aspiration. These countries prioritize curricular activities that emphasize local relevance and digital literacy, supported by a student-to-computer ratio and classroom environment that the Philippines has yet to achieve. Examining these states, it becomes clear that their success lies not in the "when" of their schooling but in the "what" and "how." Without the accompanying material support, the Philippine shift remains, categorically, a localized reorganization—a rhythmic change in a system that is still catching up to the basic instructional standards of its neighbors.

This regional divergence proves that a school calendar is never a neutral template; rather, it reflects how a state chooses to allocate its material wealth to defend its curriculum. Vietnam exemplifies this reality by refusing to treat time as a substitute

for substance. Instead of constantly shifting dates, the Vietnamese state focuses its administrative energy on deep resource allocation and curriculum enrichment, ensuring that their stable two-semester structure is paired with high-quality, state-subsidized learning materials (Vu, 2022). By heavily investing in teacher training and localized, high-utility instructional resources, Vietnam guarantees that every school day delivers maximum pedagogical value (Phan, 2024). This focused approach allows them to address core competencies directly, proving that educational success stems from a well-supported curriculum rather than a shifting administrative clock.

Similarly, Thailand demonstrates a systemic resilience that places its educational standards far beyond the reactionary adjustments seen in the Philippines. The Thai educational framework remains deeply rooted in a culturally bound curriculum that balances national identity with global competitiveness (UNESCO, 2016). Because the state shields its schools through significant investments in classroom climate control and teacher-led infrastructure, the system easily absorbs external environmental or economic shocks (Phaisamran & Phaisamran, 2024). This deep material insulation ensures that whether public schools open in May or private institutions opt for a three-term model, the underlying quality of instruction remains uncompromised. Thailand's stability proves that a resilient infrastructure, not a rewritten schedule, serves as the true anchor for academic standards (Lertvorapreecha & Swindell, 2024).

Finally, Indonesia offers a compelling look at how strict, institutional discipline can produce exceptional educational outcomes even within a tame macrostructure. Despite its massive geographic fragmentation, Indonesia implements a rigorous four-term system that functions as a highly synchronized, bespoke model designed to manage student fatigue through consistent, structured intervals and religious moderation (Mukhibat et al., 2024). The state pairs these strict chronological measures with rigid quality controls and aggressive state subsidies for instructional resources. Indonesia ensures that its rhythmic breaks serve a highly stable and well-funded curriculum. This structural discipline highlights the vulnerability of the Philippine hybrid model: without Indonesia's strict enforcement of resource distribution, changing the school clock remains nothing more than a superficial gesture.

Reyes's (2015) research establishes a critical historical foundation for understanding the political architecture of Philippine education, specifically through an examination of schools as sites of ideological contest. Reyes posits that educational structures never maintain neutrality; instead, they serve as instruments of social and cultural manipulation designed to manufacture consent for specific governing orders. Analyzing the intersection of American colonial education and Filipino values reveals how institutional "reforms" often align the subaltern consciousness with the interests of power holders. This perspective becomes essential when evaluating contemporary systemic adjustments, as it highlights a persistent historical pattern where administrative changes masquerade as "modernizing" or "beneficial" efforts to mask deeper political objectives (Thomas & Comparative and International Education Society, 1983). This paper explicitly exposes the institutional friction that stalls progress—challenging the state's narrative while diagnosing exactly where the reform

stands. Current policy analyses remain frustratingly narrow and are unhinged from their implementation (Ignacio et al., 2022). They map a landscape trapped in a gridlock of political calculations and bureaucratic inertia, but they stumble by attributing this resistance to a generalized institutional paralysis (Saaka, 2024).

Also, the educational system can be argued to be rarely a straightforward march toward modernization, but rather depends on how policy parameters define progress. When actual cognitive skills—captured by the learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS) metric—are used to measure human capital, rather than mere years of classroom attendance, it serves as a significantly stronger and more robust predictor of a nation's long-term economic growth (Altinok & Diebolt, 2024).

Furthermore, the work of Reyes (2023) extends into the realm of leadership and the ethics of reform, arguing that the imposition of foreign or elite educational models creates friction between top-down mandates and the material reality of Filipino values. This "contest" exposes a leadership framework in the Philippine educational sector that often operates through manipulation, steering public "common sense" toward accepting structural shifts that fail to address local crises. Citing Reyes moves the discussion from a mere critique of policy to a broader interrogation of the "War of Position" within the Department of Education. It suggests that contemporary reforms, such as the reorganization of the school calendar, represent not isolated administrative events but a century-long continuum of using the school system to preserve hegemony and manage the "vision" of the nation. This makes Gramscian lens appropriate for analyzing the new DepEd school calendar because it exposes the shift as a "Passive Revolution"—a top-down structural adjustment that uses the "common sense" of administrative efficiency to manufacture consent while leaving the underlying power dynamics and material crises untouched.

By framing the calendar change as a solution for "wellness" and "optimization," the state performs a "War of Position," capturing the narrative to preserve its own legitimacy without addressing the actual "War of Maneuver" needed to fix the crumbling infrastructure and chronic underfunding. What is lacking in the current educational paradigm, and where Gramsci's philosophy strikes hardest, is a refusal to acknowledge that structural tinkering is a metronome in a vacuum; it ignores the subaltern reality of the teacher-as-laborer and the student-as-output, choosing to reorganize the calendar rather than redistributing the resources necessary for genuine liberation from learning poverty is the main argument here.

3.3 Is This Really the Solution?

The singular focus on temporal reorganization serves as a convenient anesthetic for a system in a state of physical decay. While the administration calibrates the school calendar to achieve a theoretical flow, the material reality remains a staggering elephant in the room: students continue to swelter in overcrowded, non-ventilated cubicles, and the promised digital frontier remains a graveyard of undelivered ICT infrastructure and empty library shelves (Mancenido-Bolaños, 2016). In this

environment, teacher conformity is rebranded as professionalism, yet it is a normality born of exhaustion rather than conviction.

One finds oneself, too often, in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous, and Diverse (VUCAD) educational landscape where good reform premises are met with deep skepticism—and rightly so. The "Strengthening" of teachers' time and the push for "Deeper Learning" are attractive labels, yet they must be scrutinized against the backdrop of ₱12 billion budget cuts and a 9:1 student-to-computer ratio. As politics continues to reshape the boundaries of the classroom, we must ask whether these changes address the root causes of learning poverty or merely provide a new "View" to mask a failing "Vision". In a system where 12,022 laptops sit in warehouses while students swelter in overcrowded rooms, the intersection of politics and education is not just a study in policy, but a study in survival, to say the least.

4. Conclusion

The shift to a three-term school calendar in the Philippines is a top-down change that promises better schedules and rest for teachers and students, but it actually hides the deeper decay of our school system. Arguably, by focusing public attention entirely on the calendar, the government distracts everyone from the real crisis: basic literacy instead of a high functional literacy rate, learning poverty, and classroom shortages. Reorganizing the school year reveals a much larger problem where the education sector is stretched to its absolute limit. Top-down changes leave local principals, teachers, and students to survive and handle the breakdown on their own, without real support from the state. Adjusting the calendar without investing in actual classrooms is ineffective. Shifting dates cannot make up for the 53 school days lost to typhoons and extreme heat. Recovery requires weather-resilient buildings and actual computers for learning. A real educational solution must fight budget neglect and shipping delays, not just rewrite the school schedule. True reform will only happen when the government stops focusing on the surface issues and starts fixing the roots: classroom conditions, instructional materials, and teacher workloads. A new timetable is just political theater if schools still lack the basic resources to back it up.

5. Limitations of the Study

This paper primarily functions as a conceptual audit and a deliberate provocation, and it also limits its analytical lens to a Gramscian framework. While borrowing these Western political ideals exposes the hegemonic structures of Philippine education, it necessarily sidelines other valuable theoretical perspectives—such as postcolonial theory or structural functionalism—which might yield different interpretations of the calendar shift. This paper intentionally eschews traditional empirical data collection, such as tracking student performance metrics or standardized test scores across different calendar systems. It relies instead on philosophical interrogation to expose

systemic dynamics; hence, these limitations do not weaken the paper's thesis, instead, they define its purpose. This study does not aim to provide a final, definitive answer, but to instigate critical argument, challenge the boundaries of the learning scope, and champion a deeper systemic skepticism in Philippine educational discourse.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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