



TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES' EXPERIENCES AS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: BASES FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of Teacher Education graduates working as Administrative Officers (AOs) in the Department of Education (DepEd). It focused on their roles in managing administrative functions, coordinating with various stakeholders, and handling multiple responsibilities within schools and division offices. The research highlighted key challenges faced by AOs, including heavy workloads, limited resources, time pressures, and the demands of implementing complex policies and programs. It also examined the coping strategies they employ to manage these challenges, such as effective time management, systematic organization, clear communication, collaborative teamwork, and continuous professional development. This study provided valuable insights into their contributions to the efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of administrative operations in DepEd institutions. The findings are intended to guide policy recommendations aimed at enhancing administrative support, building capacity, and improving overall performance and well-being among administrative officers.

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Keywords: *Teacher Education Graduates, Administrative Officer, Experiences, Policy Recommendations*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines is responsible for delivering quality basic education to learners nationwide. The effectiveness of this delivery relies not only on teachers and instructional staff but also on administrative officers who handle the operational and management functions that ensure schools and DepEd offices run efficiently. Administrative officers handle services involving personnel management, information and record-keeping, correspondence handling, maintenance of buildings, supplies, and equipment, financial transactions, security, and custodial duties, all of which support the Department's mission and organizational goals (Department of Education, 2024a).

In January 2024, the Department of Education issued Department Order No. 002, s. 2024, mandating the immediate transfer of administrative duties away from public school teachers. The order specifies that tasks such as personnel management, property custodianship, general administrative support, financial oversight, and records management should be carried out by administrative support staff instead of teachers (Department of Education, 2024b). This policy shift highlights the growing recognition of administrative officers' critical role in supporting teachers and ensuring that educators can focus on instruction and learner engagement (Department of Education, 2025).

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The roles of administrative officers are tiered based on position level. For instance, school-based Administrative Officer II positions are tasked with hands-on operational duties such as supply management and general office support, while higher-level positions (Administrative Officer III–V) undertake more specialized and supervisory functions, including data analysis, policy implementation, and oversight of administrative units (Quetua, 2024). This structure demonstrates the increasing complexity and importance of administrative work in maintaining efficient educational operations.

Despite these policy reforms, challenges remain. Reports indicate that staffing shortages continue to affect the capacity of administrative officers to fully assume responsibilities previously handled by teachers. This shortage potentially undermines the efficiency gains expected from the reassignment of administrative tasks, highlighting the need for additional recruitment and professional development for administrative personnel (Quetua, 2024).

Collectively, these developments illustrate the evolving and essential role of administrative officers in the Philippine basic education system. Their work underpins effective school management, supports teachers in focusing on classroom instruction, and ultimately contributes to improving learning outcomes across the country (Department of Education, 2024a; Department of Education, 2025; Quetua, 2024).

The researcher observes that most of the administrative officers hired in the Department of Education are graduates of teacher education programs; thus, their basic

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knowledge and professional experiences differ from the actual duties performed by administrative officers in the field. The short orientation provided to them is insufficient to equip them with the necessary competencies for improved job performance. Consequently, some administrative officers rely on information obtained from colleagues, yet they are often uncertain whether such information is accurate or applicable to their specific school contexts.

These administrative officers have numerous experiences to share regarding the challenges they encounter in the field and the strategies they employ to cope with these challenges. The insights generated from their narratives may serve as bases for possible policy recommendations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology, including the research design, study participants, data collection procedures, research instruments, and data analysis employed in this study. The study aimed to examine the experiences of administrative officers in performing their duties within the Department of Education, serving as a basis for policy recommendations in one of the municipalities in the First Congressional District of Iloilo during the 2025–2026 school year.

Research Method

The research method utilized in this study was descriptive method under qualitative research using in-depth interview.

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The descriptive research method focuses on systematically describing a phenomenon as it exists in its natural setting, without manipulating variables. According to Elliott (2025), it aims to provide an accurate portrayal of current conditions, practices, or relationships within educational settings, enabling researchers to understand trends, patterns, and implications for practice. This approach is particularly useful in educational studies that seek to document and analyze real-world events, behaviors, or perceptions without altering the environment in which they occur (Elliott, 2025).

During the interviews, the interviewer and interviewee were seated while the interviewer considered a series of questions on a specific issue. The purpose was to gather the key or necessary perspectives of the participants on a particular topic within a social context through their responses.

Research Design

The study employed a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to conducting qualitative research, aiming to understand how individuals perceive the world and how their perspectives may differ from commonly held views by focusing on personal, subjective interpretations of their experiences. This approach is typically conducted through interviews to capture participants' impressions and is widely used in fields such as psychology, sociology, and social work.

Phenomenology centers on studying the structures of consciousness from a first-person perspective. Its primary goal is to investigate and describe phenomena as they are

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consciously experienced, without relying on causal explanations or being influenced by unexamined assumptions (Biemel & Spiegelberg, 2024).

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were sixteen (16) purposely selected administrative officers working with the Department of Education, Schools Division of Iloilo.

These participants were assigned in the different elementary schools in one Municipality and must have a regular permanent appointment for at least six (6) months prior to conduct of this study.

All of these 16 administrative officers doing administrative tasks were education graduates and willing to be interviewed by sharing their experiences in the Department of Education.

Sampling Design

The study employed a purposive sampling design. According to Nikolopoulou (2023), purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which participants are deliberately selected because they possess specific characteristics needed for the study. In other words, units are chosen "on purpose." Also known as judgmental sampling, this method relies on the researcher's judgment to identify and select individuals, cases, or events that can provide the most relevant information to achieve the study's objectives.

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Research Instrument

The research instrument used in the study was a researcher-made interview schedule. In research methodology, an interview schedule is a written list of pre-planned questions—structured, semi-structured, or open-ended—designed to guide the interviewer in consistently collecting information from participants. It serves as a standardized data collection tool, ensuring that the same topics and questions are addressed across all interviews to allow for systematic comparison and analysis. The interviewer used the schedule during face-to-face, telephone, or electronic interviews, asking each participant the predetermined questions and recording their responses (Socio.health, 2024).

The interview schedule had three (3) major questions focusing on the experiences of administrative officers on their performance of duties in the Department of Education, the challenges encountered by them on their performance of duties, and the coping strategies made by them on the challenges encountered in their performance of duties in the Department of Education.

Voice and video recorders were also used to collect and document data, depending on the participants' consent.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Before establishing the validity of the researcher-made interview schedule, the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, and a panel of jurors—selected for their expertise in research, testing and assessment, and English—were asked to review and validate each question for possible revisions.

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Validity refers to the extent to which a study's findings, interpretations, and conclusions accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately represent the concept being investigated. It ensures that the research instrument effectively measures what it is intended to measure and that the results credibly reflect reality. To establish content validity, the questions and structure of the instrument must align with the study's defined variables and objectives, ensuring that each item accurately represents the construct under examination. This process often involves expert review to determine whether the items are relevant, clear, and representative of the concepts being studied. By ensuring that the content and structure of the instrument are consistent with the study's framework, researchers enhance the accuracy and usefulness of the data collected in relation to the research objective (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The comments, corrections, and suggestions provided by the panel of validators on the interview schedule were taken into account, following the guidelines outlined by Good and Scates (1972) as cited by Soqueña (2021).

Data Gathering Procedures

Permissions were obtained from the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, the Office of the District Supervisors, school heads, and the individual participants to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally visited the schools or other locations convenient for the participants to carry out the interviews.

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Participants were first asked to sign a consent form or waiver regarding their participation in the study. During the in-depth interviews, voice and video recorders were used to accurately capture the participants' responses. After completing the series of interviews, the researcher consolidated all the collected data.

Data Analysis

The data was collected through the interview schedule that will be analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method designed to identify, interpret, and report recurring patterns or themes within narrative data. This approach enables the researcher to uncover meaningful insights into the responses of the participants regarding their experiences on their performance of duties in the Department of Education, the challenges they encountered, and the coping strategies made by them on the challenges encountered in their performance of duties in the Department of Education.

In this study, the transcribed interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2023), which is effective for identifying, examining, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data. The analysis followed the standard six-phase procedure which include familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study examined the experiences of administrative officers in performing their duties within the Department of Education in a municipality of the First Congressional District of Iloilo during the 2025–2026 school year, with the goal of informing policy recommendations.

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A qualitative phenomenological design was employed, and data were collected using a researcher-made interview schedule, supported by voice and video recordings with the participants' consent.

The participants of this study were sixteen (16) purposely selected administrative officers working with the Department of Education, Schools Division of Iloilo.

These participants were assigned in the different elementary schools in one Municipality and must have a regular permanent appointment for at least six (6) months prior to conduct of this study.

The interview instrument was content-validated by a panel of experts using the criteria of Good and Scates (1972), as cited by Soqueña (2021), and revisions were made based on their feedback.

Necessary permits were secured from the adviser, Graduate School Dean, Schools Division Superintendent, school heads, and participants. Interviews were conducted at locations convenient for participants, and the collected data were consolidated, analyzed, and interpreted thematically to identify key patterns and insights.

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

The experiences of administrative officers reveal that their roles are dynamic and multifaceted, requiring them to navigate complex responsibilities while continuously adapting and acquiring new skills. Their work involves not only handling routine tasks but also responding to diverse demands, collaborating with others, and finding ways to grow

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professionally through daily experiences.

Administrative officers operate in a demanding environment where pressures from workload, resource limitations, and unclear guidance can complicate task completion. Navigating these challenges requires adaptability, careful prioritization, and problem-solving to maintain effectiveness and meet the expectations of various stakeholders.

Administrative officers actively adopt practical and proactive approaches to navigate workplace challenges. By leveraging skills, collaborative efforts, and continuous learning, they can maintain efficiency, adapt to changing demands, and sustain both personal well-being and organizational performance.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights arrived in this study, the following recommendations are highlighted:

The Department of Education should provide structured support and development opportunities that enable administrative officers to manage diverse responsibilities effectively. Offering targeted training, mentorship, and access to practical tools can help them enhance efficiency, strengthen collaboration, and continue growing professionally in their roles.

The Department of Education should implement policies and support systems that help administrative officers manage high demands and resource constraints. Providing clear guidelines, adequate resources, and structured assistance can enable them to perform their duties efficiently while meeting stakeholder expectations.

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The Department of Education should foster a supportive work environment that encourages skill development, teamwork, and ongoing professional growth. Providing access to training programs, collaborative platforms, and wellness initiatives can help administrative officers sustain high performance while promoting personal and organizational resilience.

To effectively implement these policy recommendations as an output of the study, it is recommended that the Department of Education assign clear responsibilities, provide necessary resources, and establish structured timelines for each initiative. Pilot programs should be tested in select schools, while regular monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms are put in place to track progress, measure outcomes, and adjust. Embedding these policies into annual operational planning, supported by ongoing training, resource allocation, and staff engagement, will ensure their sustained impact and adaptability to evolving administrative challenges.

Future researchers are encouraged to build on these findings by exploring the experiences of administrative officers across different regions and educational levels to identify context-specific challenges and best practices. Investigating the long-term impact of professional development, resource support, and coping strategies on administrative performance can provide deeper insights and inform evidence-based policies.

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