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## TEACHER APPLICANTS' EXPERIENCES ON THEIR APPLICATIONS IN TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER POSITIONS: BASES FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

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### ABSTRACT

The research sought to explore how teacher applicants navigated the process of applying for both instructional and administrative roles, with the aim of informing policy directions in the 4th Congressional District of Iloilo for the academic year 2025–2026. A qualitative design guided the inquiry. Five teacher applicants who later became administrative officers participated. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, recorded using a digital audio-video device. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the findings. Results revealed that the application journey was marked by competitiveness, excitement, and anxiety. Key obstacles included the absence of available Plantilla teaching positions and limited time. Applicants coped by sustaining optimism and demonstrating adaptability. Transitioning into administrative roles was described as both a fresh career avenue and a demanding yet motivating experience. Challenges in this new capacity involved insufficient training and scarce resources. To address these, participants relied on mentorship and engaged in continuous capacity-building activities.

**Keywords:** *Teacher Applicants' Experiences, Application in Teaching, Administrative Officer*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Philippine Basic Education System is undergoing a significant transformation with the implementation of the Department of Education’s Curriculum. The reform is a direct response to persistent, structural challenges arising from the shift of teacher applicants into administrative officer positions.

Teaching is regarded as a vocation. For some educators, remaining in the classroom until retirement represents the ultimate goal, while for others, transitioning from classroom instruction to administrative roles is considered a viable career path. Whether you have a personal goal to become an administrative officer or you have been identified as a teacher leader with a future in administration, advancing from teacher applicant to an administrative position is a significant feat (Epstein, 2023).

The poor performance on International assessments like PISA, and a mismatch between current learning outcomes and future workforce needs (Diquito, 2025). The DepEd new program itself encapsulates the curriculum’s ambitious four-pillar strategy: make the curriculum relevant, accelerate delivery, take good care of learners, and support teachers (Villaver et al., 2024). However, shifting to an administrative officer position often requires strong organizational, communication, and software skills to ensure compliant workflows (Murphy, 2020).

The integration of these new competencies, however, depends entirely on the preparedness and systemic support provided to the educators implementing them at the grassroots level. Their new job position has consistently highlighted challenges for teachers

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as administrative officers, including confusion over inconsistent policy delivery, a pervasive lack of material resources, and a sense of marginalization in the policy-making process (Bongco & David, 2020).

Administrative Officers often experience career transitions, such as moving from office-based roles. While such shifts can be stressful, adequate preparation and understanding can significantly ease the process (Editorial Team, 2021). Constant deployment and worker insecurity are hallmarks of virtually every industry across the country (Labor Network for Sustainability, 2021).

In the Philippines, concerns about job displacement, skill mismatch, and lower wages persist, as the pandemic triggered reallocation of jobs across sectors (Statista Research Development, 2023). Moreover, in a modern workplace, the role of administrative officers has evolved significantly, requiring adaptability to changing organizational demands. The traditional image of administrative officers confined to office settings has undergone a paradigm shift, aligning with the changing needs of modern organizations.

On the other hand, the best career change for a teacher applicant to an administrative officer depends on their personal aspirations and strengths, but most likely they entered teaching to do something rewarding, meaningful, and that makes a difference, while offering job security and reliable hours (Flynn, 2020).

The researcher observed that teacher applicants often find it difficult to enter the profession due to intense competition for limited positions, a demanding and lengthy application process, significant emotional struggles, and various systemic challenges.

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It is along this line that the researcher will explore the experiences and challenges encountered by teacher applicants who shifted to administrative officer positions in different school districts in the 4th Congressional District of Iloilo during the school year 2025-2026.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants of the study, sampling design, data-gathering procedures, research instrument, and data analysis used in the study. The purpose of this study was to identify the experiences of teacher applicants in their applications for teaching and administrative officer positions, as a basis for policy recommendations in the 4th Congressional District of Iloilo during the school year 2025-2026, using an interview guide.

### Research Method

This study used a qualitative research design using in-depth interviews.

According to Boyce and Neale (2020), an in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that involves interviewing a small number of participants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, progress, or situation.

The qualitative research approach was successful in gathering detailed data regarding the beliefs, attitudes, actions, experiences, and social settings of specific groups. On the other hand, an in-depth interview is a kind of interview with a person that seeks to get specific information beyond preliminary, cursory responses. In rigorous adherence to several health

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guidelines, the researcher conducted an in-person interview. Their vivid answers to the questions were intended to gather their opinions and experiences.

### Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological approach within the qualitative technique as its design. In order to comprehend a participant's "lived" experiences of an event, phenomenology is the study of the shared meanings among participants who encounter the same phenomenon. According to (Creswell as referenced by Merriam, 2020), phenomenology is the study of experience, especially as it is lived and organized by consciousness.

In this study, the researcher has identified that the phenomenon experienced by the participants and the challenges they have encountered with this phenomenon are the essence she wishes to investigate. Through studying the common experiences, challenges, and coping strategies of the participants, a deep understanding, valuable for policy recommendations, can be achieved (Smith, 2023).

### Participants of the Study

The participants in the study are the five (5) selected teacher applicants hired as administrative officers in the different school districts in the 4th Congressional District of Iloilo during the school year 2025-2026.

These participants are applicants who were not hired for teaching positions and subsequently applied for Administrative Officer (AO) positions, as their experiences provide valuable insights into alternative pathways within the hiring process. Eligible participants include those who completed at least one full application cycle, such as document submission,

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interviews, ranking processes, and demonstration teaching for teacher applicants, or administrative assessments for AO applicants.

Based on the inclusion criteria, the participants were well-suited for the study.

### Sampling Design

The study employed a purposive sampling technique for data collection.

According to Nikolopoulou (2022), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling procedure in which units are selected based on traits the researcher requires in the sample. In this sampling approach, the researcher uses their judgment to choose people, cases, or events that can give the most useful information for the study's goals.

### Research Instrument

An interview guide created by the researcher served as the study's research tool. The interview guide created by the researcher was confirmed by a panel of qualified professionals. All feedback and recommendations about the tool's validation were taken into account.

Interviews were place in person. All of the events throughout the in-depth interview.

### Validity of the Research Instrument

Expert jurors verified the researcher-made interview guide using Good and Scates' Eight-Point Scale Criteria for Content Validation (as described in Oducado, 2020).

A panel of subject-matter experts has content-validated the study's instrument. The degree to which a measure captures every aspect of a certain construct is known as content validity.

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To establish the instrument's validity, since it was constructed by the researcher herself, jury validation was used.

## Data Gathering Procedures

Following the selection of study participants, the researcher obtained their voluntary involvement by having them sign a consent form.

The teacher candidates who met the requirements to be interviewed were first personally chosen by the researcher. Following the selection of these teaching candidates, the researcher was given a letter, their profile, and a consent form to sign in order to record the interview.

Interviews with each participant began once the formal consent papers for the study were obtained. Face-to-face interviews were completed at a time that worked for each participant. Three interview formats were used: semi-structured, open-ended, and structured interviews, the latter of which focused on the interview questions.

To get the respondents' opinions on the study, a thorough interview was initially carried out. To capture the thoughts of each respondent, this is essential. To fully capture the interviewee's words, a recording of the entire conversation was made available. Following a series of interviews, the researcher used a thematic method to compile all the information gathered.

After the interviews, videos were recorded. The transcripts, in both their original and translated forms, were broken down into smaller meaning units and analyzed by themes.

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## Data Analyses

The gathered information was examined through a thematic approach.

The qualitative analysis method was utilized to identify themes in the journeys of teacher-applicants who shifted to administrative roles as a basis for a wellness program in the 4th Congressional District of Iloilo.

Thematic analysis is the procedure of categorizing patterns or themes within qualitative data. According to Maguire & Delahunt (2020), a thematic analysis aimed to identify the themes, such as patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This involved summarizing, examining, and interpreting the collected data, and making sense of it.

Further, Braun and Clark (2023) discussed that thematic analysis involves six steps to find patterns in qualitative data: 1) familiarization (reading data thoroughly); 2) generating initial codes (labeling interesting features); 3) searching for themes (grouping codes into potential themes); 4) reviewing themes (checking themes against data); 5) defining & naming themes (clarifying theme meaning); and 6) writing up the analysis, creating a coherent narrative.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study was conducted to determine the teacher applicants' experiences with their applications for teaching and administrative positions, as a basis for policy recommendations in the 4th Congressional District of Iloilo during the school year 2025-2026, using an interview guide.

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A qualitative approach was used as the research method for this study.

The participants in the study are the five (5) selected teacher applicants hired as administrative officers. The participants were selected because the aim is to achieve 'depth' rather than 'breadth' among the teacher applicants hired as administrative officers in the 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Iloilo.

Semi-structured interviews were selected for this research study. The study used a purposeful sample technique and encouraged voluntary involvement. The interview guide created by the researcher was utilized as an instrument. The interview guide was validated by a panel of expert jurors in the field of reading and research, who evaluated its content using the 8-point criteria.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze and interpret data.

In this study, an in-depth interview was utilized within a qualitative research design. During the interview, the researcher was given the opportunity to sit and ask a number of questions about specific concerns. Digital voice or video recorders were used to collect the data needed for the study. The aim was to get the main idea or concept.

Based on the results of the study, the teachers' experiences in teaching positions were characterized by high competition, excitement, and nervousness. As to their challenges, the lack of a teacher item Plantilla and time constraints. For coping strategies: maintaining a positive mindset, flexibility, and adaptability.

Based on the results of the study, the administrative positions were new career paths that were challenging and motivating. As to their challenges, there is a lack of training and

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limited resources. For coping strategies, seek guidance from others and engage in regular capacity-building activities.

## CONCLUSION

The study's results led to the following conclusions:

Teachers' experiences in administrative roles have significantly altered their life and shaped them into intelligent, well-respected individuals who can aid in both their personal and intellectual development. Their career is immensely fulfilling. Today, there is a great demand for qualified teachers, yet becoming a full-fledged teacher requires a wide range of abilities.

Some educators choose to become teachers because they enjoyed their time in school and want to share that with others. Others, on the other hand, feel disappointed by unemployment and search for better opportunities outside of their area of expertise.

Many challenges have marked Teacher applicants' experiences in their administrative positions, and they have found ways to cope and keep their workloads manageable while fulfilling their responsibilities. They are essential to any organization's operation and success. They are in charge of overseeing the administrative duties and making sure the company runs smoothly. It is crucial to have a thorough awareness of administrative officers' tasks and responsibilities as well as the difficulties they face in carrying out their duties as Administrative Officer II in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Teacher opportunities include career advancement into administration, curriculum development, instructional coaching, and specialized roles such as clerical work.

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While teaching includes a variety of skills that enable educators to organize, deliver, and evaluate material in ways that engage and instruct students, it also involves comprehending the needs of students, fostering a supportive learning environment, putting effective teaching techniques into practice, and using feedback to support student achievement. Due to limited items, the ability to design structured, educational, and goal-oriented instruction changed to the other side of the world - administrative functions.

The following suggestions were made in light of the study's findings and insights:

The Department of Education shall create more Plantilla items for incoming teachers to address the shortage of teachers in other parts of the country.

The government shall place greater emphasis on addressing issues related to job displacement, skill mismatch, and the persistence of lower wages across sectors.

Moreover, in a modern workplace, the role of administrative officers has evolved significantly, requiring adaptability to changing organizational demands. It shall be considered as one of the areas for capacity building.

The school shall provide opportunities for administrative officers to teach, provided they are qualified teacher applicants.

Those involved in this study shall be recognized, appreciated, and awarded to sustainably encourage other teacher applicants who failed to make it in the teaching profession.

In the future, a comparable study ought to be conducted. To ascertain the degree of DepEd program implementation and teacher applicants' acceptance into the actual teaching

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profession, take into account all variables that were neither employed nor addressed in the study. If at all possible, do quantitative research.

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