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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Behind School Operations: Lived Experiences of Administrative Officers II in Managing Administrative Responsibilities

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Abstract

Administrative Officers II perform essential but often less visible functions that sustain the daily operations of public schools. Their responsibilities involve personnel documentation, records management, reports, financial and property-related transactions, coordination, compliance with government requirements, and other administrative services that enable school heads and teachers to concentrate more effectively on instructional responsibilities. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Administrative Officers II in managing administrative responsibilities in the District of Lamut, Ifugao. Specifically, it examined the nature of their administrative work, the challenges they encountered, the strategies they employed in managing multiple responsibilities, their interactions with school personnel and external offices, and the meanings they attached to their roles as non-teaching personnel. Participants were purposively selected Administrative Officers II who had sufficient experience performing school- and district-related administrative functions. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using phenomenological procedures involving significant statements, meaning units, thematic clustering, textural and structural descriptions, and synthesis of the essence of the experience. Six interconnected themes emerged: (1) Keeping the School Moving: Administrative Work as the Backbone of Daily Operations; (2) Wearing Many Hats: Managing Multiple and Overlapping Responsibilities; (3) Racing Against Deadlines: Working Under Time, Compliance, and Reporting Pressures; (4) Doing More With Limited Resources: Resourcefulness Amid Operational Constraints; (5) No Office Works Alone: Coordination, Communication, and Shared Responsibility; and (6) Beyond Paperwork: Finding Purpose, Professional Growth, and Commitment in Administrative Service. The findings revealed that Administrative Officers II experienced their work as demanding, multifaceted, relational, and service-oriented. Their effectiveness depended on technical competence, organization, adaptability, interpersonal coordination, ethical accountability, and commitment to public service. The study highlights the need for clearer workload distribution, continuing professional development, adequate staffing, digital systems support, recognition of administrative contributions, and stronger institutional support for school-based non-teaching personnel.

Keywords: Administrative Officer II, school operations, non-teaching personnel, administrative responsibilities, public school administration, phenomenology, Lamut, Ifugao

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I. Introduction

The effectiveness of a public school depends not only on teaching and instructional leadership but also on the administrative systems that support everyday school operations. Personnel records must be maintained, reports must be submitted, financial and property documents must be processed, correspondence must be managed, attendance and leave records must be monitored, supplies must be accounted for, and numerous institutional requirements must be completed accurately and on time. While teachers and school heads are the more visible actors in the education system, non-teaching personnel perform many of the administrative functions necessary for schools to operate efficiently.

Republic Act No. 9155, or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, formally recognizes this division of responsibility. The law identifies the school as the heart of the formal education system and provides that a core of non-teaching personnel shall handle administrative, fiscal, and auxiliary services while school heads perform instructional and administrative leadership functions. This framework demonstrates that non-teaching personnel are not peripheral to school operations; rather, their work is an integral component of educational governance.

Within this structure, Administrative Officers II occupy a particularly important position. They may be assigned responsibilities related to personnel records, attendance, leave administration, preparation and consolidation of reports, property and supply documentation, communication, record keeping, procurement-related documents, financial support processes, and coordination with school heads, district offices, and Schools Division Offices. Although their exact assignments may vary depending on school size and local staffing arrangements, their work consistently involves ensuring that administrative processes are completed correctly, promptly, and in accordance with government regulations.

The Department of Education has increasingly recognized the importance of administrative personnel in reducing the non-instructional burden carried by teachers. In 2025, DepEd announced the continued hiring of more than 7,000 school-based Administrative Support Staff, explicitly stating that administrative personnel were intended to handle clerical and support functions so that teachers could devote more time to teaching and learner engagement. This policy direction demonstrates the growing institutional recognition that administrative work requires dedicated personnel and that strengthening school support systems contributes indirectly to the quality of teaching and learning.

Administrative work in public education, however, extends beyond routine clerical tasks. Hernandez and Canoy (2025), in their study of DepEd administrative staff, found that employees understood efficiency through several dimensions: rapid output delivery, accuracy and compliance, responsible resource management, coordinated teamwork, and ethical and purposeful public service. Their findings demonstrated that effective administration involves more than completing documents quickly; it requires balancing timeliness with accuracy, accountability, stewardship, teamwork, and public-service values.

Mojica and Canoy (2025) similarly examined how DepEd non-teaching administrative personnel understood government service delivery. They identified five conceptions: rule compliance, efficiency and timeliness, facilitation of educational access, collaborative governance, and public empowerment and ethical stewardship. These findings suggest that administrative work can evolve from a task-oriented understanding toward a broader recognition of its contribution to educational access, organizational functioning, and public service.

Another relevant perspective is provided by Balayan and Canoy (2025), who examined civic duty among DepEd administrative workers. Participants conceptualized civic duty through following institutional directives, maintaining commitment to work, supporting public education, engaging collaboratively with communities, and accepting ethical responsibility as government employees. These findings reinforce the idea that non-teaching personnel often perceive administrative work not merely as employment but as a form of public service.

The increasing use of digital tools has further transformed administrative responsibilities in schools. The Schools Division of Ifugao currently utilizes multiple digital systems for records, forms, equipment monitoring, document tracking, leave applications, activity and fund monitoring, and other administrative processes. This demonstrates how administrative personnel increasingly work within both traditional documentary systems and technology-mediated workflows. Their ability to adapt to digital platforms, troubleshoot administrative systems, and maintain accurate electronic records has consequently become part of contemporary administrative competence.

The organizational context of Lamut, Ifugao provides a meaningful setting for investigating these experiences. The official Schools Division of Ifugao recognizes Lamut as one of its district offices and identifies a Public Schools District Supervisor assigned to the Lamut District Office. The division's organizational and digital reporting systems illustrate the interconnected nature of school-, district-, and division-level administration.

For Administrative Officers II, this interconnectedness creates a work environment characterized by competing priorities. They may receive requirements simultaneously from school heads, district offices, division units, and external government processes. Deadlines may overlap, supporting documents may be incomplete, internet connectivity or equipment may be unreliable, and urgent concerns may interrupt planned tasks. Administrative personnel must therefore continuously

prioritize work, verify information, communicate with multiple offices, and maintain accountability for documents that may have financial, personnel, or institutional consequences.

Administrative work can also be less visible than instructional work. A properly processed leave application, accurate inventory record, completed payroll-related document, submitted attendance summary, or correctly consolidated report may appear routine once completed. However, each output may require repeated follow-up, document checking, data encoding, coordination, correction, and compliance with regulatory requirements. This invisibility may contribute to insufficient appreciation of the complexity and responsibility attached to non-teaching roles.

Existing research has provided important insights into DepEd administrative personnel's conceptions of efficiency, public service, civic responsibility, and bureaucratic service delivery. Nevertheless, fewer studies have examined phenomenologically how school-based Administrative Officers II themselves experience the day-to-day realities of managing administrative responsibilities, particularly within a rural district context such as Lamut, Ifugao.

This gap provided the basis for the present study. Rather than measuring job performance or administrative efficiency quantitatively, the study explored how Administrative Officers II experienced their responsibilities, understood their roles, responded to operational challenges, developed coping and organizational strategies, coordinated with others, and constructed meaning from administrative service.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to explore the lived experiences of Administrative Officers II in managing administrative responsibilities in the District of Lamut, Ifugao.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How did Administrative Officers II describe their day-to-day administrative responsibilities?
2. What challenges did they encounter in managing multiple administrative tasks?
3. How did they manage deadlines, compliance requirements, and competing priorities?
4. What strategies did they employ when resources, staffing, time, or information were limited?
5. How did communication and coordination with school heads, teachers, district personnel, and division offices influence their work?
6. How did their administrative experiences contribute to professional growth and resilience?
7. What meanings did Administrative Officers II attach to their roles in supporting school operations?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Administrative Support in Educational Governance

Administrative support is an essential component of school governance. Republic Act No. 9155 provides that public schools operate through the combined work of instructional leaders, teachers, and non-teaching staff. Non-teaching personnel are specifically expected to support administrative, fiscal, and auxiliary functions. This organizational arrangement acknowledges that effective learning environments require systems that manage personnel, records, facilities, resources, and institutional requirements.

DepEd Order No. 52, s. 2015 further rationalized the organizational structures of the Central, Regional, and Schools Division Offices and reinforced the decentralization and accountability principles established under RA 9155. Although school-level staffing varies, administrative support remains indispensable because schools continually interact with district, division, regional, and central-office systems.

Administrative personnel therefore occupy an intermediary role. They convert policies and procedural requirements into everyday administrative actions. They ensure that records are available, reports are accurate, documents move through appropriate channels, and school operations comply with DepEd and other government requirements.

2.2 Administrative Efficiency and Public Service

Hernandez and Canoy (2025) investigated how DepEd administrative staff conceptualized efficiency within public education support systems. Their study involved 18 administrative employees and identified five categories of understanding: fast output delivery, task accuracy and compliance, responsible resource management, coordinated team

functioning, and ethical and purposeful public service.

This multidimensional understanding of efficiency is particularly relevant to Administrative Officers II. Completing a document quickly cannot be considered effective if information is inaccurate or required procedures are disregarded. Conversely, overly cautious processing that consistently prevents timely service may also negatively affect school operations. Administrative personnel must therefore negotiate the tension among speed, accuracy, compliance, and responsiveness.

Mojica and Canoy (2025) similarly found that DepEd administrative employees understood government service through increasingly complex perspectives ranging from basic rule compliance to ethical stewardship and public empowerment. Administrative service therefore involves not only completing institutional requirements but also understanding how administrative decisions affect people and educational access.

2.3 Civic Duty and Administrative Commitment

Balayan and Canoy (2025) examined the lived meanings of civic duty among DepEd administrative personnel and found that administrative workers associated public service with compliance, work commitment, supporting education, community engagement, collaboration, and ethical responsibility.

Such findings suggest that motivation among Administrative Officers may extend beyond salary or task completion. Administrative personnel may perceive their role as contributing indirectly to learner welfare because effective school administration creates conditions that allow teachers and school heads to focus on education.

Public Service Motivation Theory similarly proposes that government workers may be motivated by commitment to public values, compassion, civic responsibility, and service to society. Within education, these values can become particularly salient because administrative outputs ultimately contribute to an institution serving children, families, and communities.

2.4 Multiple Responsibilities and Workload

Administrative work is characterized by task interdependence and frequent interruptions. Administrative personnel may manage personnel documents, attendance, reports, records, correspondence, property, supplies, financial support documents, and other assigned duties. These responsibilities often involve deadlines imposed by multiple organizational units.

The burden becomes greater when administrative staffing is limited. The Department of Education's decision to continue hiring thousands of administrative support personnel in 2025 reflects recognition that non-instructional work requires sufficient human resources and should not be transferred excessively to teaching personnel.

Administrative workload also involves invisible cognitive demands: remembering schedules, tracking unresolved transactions, checking compliance requirements, coordinating signatures, following up documents, verifying data, and ensuring that submissions are received. These responsibilities demand organization and sustained attention even when the visible output appears to be a single document.

2.5 Digitalization of School Administration

Technology has become increasingly central to public-school administration. Digital platforms now support document submission, communication, personnel processes, records management, equipment monitoring, financial processes, and reporting.

The Schools Division of Ifugao currently maintains online systems for document tracking, transmitted documents, client satisfaction, forms, leave applications, equipment information, activities and fund monitoring, and other operational requirements. These digital systems can increase efficiency but can also produce new challenges involving connectivity, digital literacy, system errors, access permissions, and the need to maintain both electronic and documentary evidence.

Research on digital tools and administrative efficiency in basic education has also increasingly emphasized technology-driven optimization of administrative work. Digital competence has consequently become part of contemporary administrative professionalism.

2.6 Collaboration in Administrative Work

Administrative tasks are rarely completed by one person independently. An Administrative Officer may prepare documentation, but information could originate from teachers; approval may come from a school head; verification may occur at the district or division level; and final processing may involve another government unit.

Hernandez and Canoy (2025) identified coordinated teamwork as a significant conception of administrative efficiency, while Mojica and Canoy (2025) identified collaborative governance as an advanced understanding of public service delivery.

These findings indicate that administrative effectiveness is fundamentally relational. Communication, professional courtesy, timely follow-up, clarification, and willingness to assist others are therefore as important as technical skills.

3. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The study was anchored primarily in Role Theory, complemented by Public Service Motivation Theory and perspectives on organizational support and administrative resilience.

Role Theory explains how individuals perform responsibilities shaped by institutional expectations, formal duties, relationships, and situational demands. Administrative Officers II may experience role expansion, role ambiguity, or role overload when multiple expectations occur simultaneously or when functions extend beyond clearly defined assignments. Public Service Motivation Theory provided another relevant perspective because Administrative Officers work within a government institution serving the public. Their willingness to complete demanding tasks, respond to stakeholders, and uphold accountability may reflect values related to civic duty, commitment to public interest, and service.

4. Methodology

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of Administrative Officers II in managing administrative responsibilities in the District of Lamut, Ifugao. Phenomenology was appropriate because the study sought to understand how participants experienced and interpreted their daily administrative work rather than quantify workload or evaluate performance numerically. Following Moustakas (1994), the inquiry focused on significant statements, formulated meanings, thematic clusters, textural descriptions, structural descriptions, and synthesis of the essence of the phenomenon. Participants were selected through purposive criterion sampling and consisted of Administrative Officers II who were assigned within schools or administrative settings in the District of Lamut and had sufficient experience handling personnel documentation, reports, records, communication, property or supply-related requirements, and other school administrative functions. Variation in school assignment, length of service, workload, and administrative exposure was considered to capture diverse experiences. Data were gathered through semi-structured individual interviews that explored participants' regular duties, workload, deadlines, coordination practices, challenges, use of technology, resource limitations, coping strategies, relationships with personnel, professional learning, and understanding of public service. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent and transcribed verbatim.

Data were analyzed using phenomenological procedures. Interview transcripts were read repeatedly to develop familiarity with participants' experiences. Significant statements were identified and transformed into meaning units and initial codes. Related meanings were grouped into thematic clusters, and patterns across participants were compared. Textural descriptions were developed to explain what Administrative Officers experienced, while structural descriptions examined the organizational, interpersonal, technological, and contextual conditions shaping those experiences. These descriptions were synthesized to determine the shared essence of managing administrative responsibilities. Trustworthiness was established through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) principles of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was supported through sustained engagement with the data, participant clarification, and peer review of emerging interpretations; dependability was strengthened through an audit trail of research decisions; confirmability was addressed through reflexive documentation and traceability between findings and interview data; and transferability was enhanced through detailed description of the setting and participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate research ethics authority, and permission to conduct the study was secured from relevant DepEd offices. Participants provided written informed consent, and confidentiality was protected through participant codes such as P1, P2, and P3.

5. Findings

Phenomenological analysis generated six interconnected themes describing the experiences of Administrative Officers II in managing administrative responsibilities in the District of Lamut, Ifugao: (1) Keeping the School Moving: Administrative Work as the Backbone of Daily Operations; (2) Wearing Many Hats: Managing Multiple and Overlapping Responsibilities; (3) Racing Against Deadlines: Working Under Time, Compliance, and Reporting Pressures; (4) Doing More With Limited Resources: Resourcefulness Amid Operational Constraints; (5) No Office Works Alone: Coordination, Communication, and Shared Responsibility; and (6) Beyond Paperwork: Finding Purpose, Professional Growth, and Commitment in Administrative Service.

Theme 1. Keeping the School Moving: Administrative Work as the Backbone of Daily Operations

The first theme revealed that participants perceived their work as essential to the uninterrupted functioning of schools. Although many of their responsibilities occurred behind the scenes, Administrative Officers explained that school

operations depended on the completion of numerous administrative processes.

Participants described preparing reports, managing records, processing personnel documents, coordinating correspondence, updating information, monitoring requirements, and providing administrative assistance to school heads and teachers. They emphasized that delays in their work could create consequences for other personnel and offices.

Participant Responses

P1: "Sometimes people only see the final document, but before it reaches that point there are many things that we need to check, prepare, encode, and follow up."

P3: "Our work is behind the scenes, but if the reports, records, and documents are not prepared, many school activities will also be delayed."

P6: "I see my role as helping the school operate smoothly. Teachers have their classes, and the school head has many responsibilities, so we handle the administrative side as much as possible."

The theme emphasized the structural importance of administrative personnel in school governance. RA 9155 explicitly provides that non-teaching personnel should handle administrative, fiscal, and auxiliary school services. Administrative Officers therefore support the division of labor necessary for teaching personnel to focus on instruction.

Hernandez and Canoy (2025) similarly found that DepEd administrative employees associated efficiency with accurate task completion, compliance, responsible resource management, coordinated work, and public service. The findings of the present study extend this interpretation by demonstrating how these responsibilities were experienced as interconnected functions necessary to keep schools operational.

Mojica and Canoy (2025) also found that administrative personnel increasingly understood government service as contributing to educational access and organizational functioning rather than merely complying with rules. Participants' descriptions therefore positioned administrative work as part of the educational mission rather than as peripheral paperwork.

Theme 2. Wearing Many Hats: Managing Multiple and Overlapping Responsibilities

The second theme captured the multiplicity of responsibilities participants handled. Administrative Officers II described performing several tasks within the same workday, often moving from personnel documents to reports, records, property concerns, correspondence, data encoding, and requests from school personnel.

Participants experienced their role as requiring constant adjustment because urgent concerns could emerge unexpectedly. Planned tasks were sometimes interrupted by new instructions, missing documents, technical issues, or requests requiring immediate action.

Participant Responses

P2: "You can start the day planning to finish one report, but before you complete it, someone needs a certification, another document needs checking, and another deadline is announced."

P4: "As Administrative Officer II, you really need to know different kinds of work. You cannot say that you will only do one particular task because school operations are interconnected."

P7: "There are times when I feel that I am handling many roles at once. You need to know which one is urgent and which one can wait."

The experiences reflected role multiplicity and role overload. Administrative Officers were expected to perform a wide range of interconnected functions while remaining responsive to emerging needs. Role Theory explains that overload may occur when institutional expectations exceed the time or resources available to fulfill responsibilities effectively.

DepEd's continued effort to employ additional administrative support staff demonstrates institutional recognition that administrative workload requires dedicated personnel. The 2025 announcement concerning more than 7,000 administrative support staff specifically linked administrative staffing to reducing the non-teaching burden placed on teachers.

The finding also complements Hernandez and Canoy's (2025) work because administrative efficiency cannot be understood independently of workload complexity. Timeliness and accuracy become more difficult when one employee simultaneously manages multiple functions. Thus, effective administrative performance depends partly on organizational workload distribution and adequate staffing.

Theme 3. Racing Against Deadlines: Working Under Time, Compliance, and Reporting Pressures

The third theme revealed the persistent pressure created by deadlines and compliance requirements. Participants described receiving reports and requests that required completion within prescribed periods. Some requirements occurred regularly, while others arrived unexpectedly or overlapped with previously scheduled tasks.

Administrative Officers explained that deadlines were particularly challenging when required data depended on other

personnel. They sometimes had to repeatedly follow up incomplete information while simultaneously preparing other reports.

Participant Responses

P1: "The difficult part is when several reports have the same deadline. You need to prioritize, but all of them are considered important."

P5: "Sometimes the information does not come directly from us. We still have to wait for other people to submit their data, but we are the ones expected to consolidate and submit the final report."

P8: "I learned not to wait until the deadline. If I can prepare part of the report early, I already do it because there may be another urgent requirement later."

The theme demonstrated that administrative efficiency depended heavily on time management, anticipatory planning, and interdependent compliance. Hernandez and Canoy (2025) identified timeliness as one dimension of efficiency but also emphasized accuracy and compliance. Participants experienced the challenge of maintaining all three simultaneously.

Mojica and Canoy (2025) likewise identified efficiency and timeliness alongside rule compliance as important conceptions of government service delivery. The present findings suggest that Administrative Officers did not experience these as separate ideas. Rather, they constantly negotiated among deadlines, completeness, procedural correctness, and the availability of information.

Participants' strategy of preparing documents in advance represented anticipatory coping. Their experiences indicated that effective school administration required not only responding to current tasks but anticipating future requirements and possible delays.

Theme 4. Doing More With Limited Resources: Resourcefulness Amid Operational Constraints

The fourth theme captured participants' experiences of completing administrative requirements despite constraints involving staffing, equipment, internet connectivity, time, information, or material resources. Administrative Officers explained that technological systems could improve work when functioning properly but could also become sources of delay when connectivity or access problems occurred.

Participants responded by developing alternative strategies, seeking help from colleagues, preparing offline copies, maintaining backup files, adjusting work schedules, or identifying other ways to complete urgent requirements.

Participant Responses

P3: "Technology helps us a lot, but if the internet is slow and the submission is online, you really have to find another way because the deadline will not adjust for you."

P6: "We learned to always have backups. I keep copies because if something happens to the computer or the file, it is difficult to reconstruct everything."

P9: "Sometimes there are limited people available, so you simply have to be resourceful and find a way to finish the work."

The theme demonstrated adaptive administrative resilience. Participants relied on improvisation, backup practices, peer assistance, and flexible work strategies when ideal resources were unavailable.

The digitalization of the Schools Division of Ifugao illustrates the growing importance of electronic systems in contemporary administration. Online systems now support documents, forms, equipment monitoring, leave processing, and other administrative requirements. Although digitalization can increase efficiency, successful implementation depends on infrastructure, user competence, and system reliability.

The theme also complements public-service literature emphasizing resource stewardship. Hernandez and Canoy (2025) identified responsible resource management as one dimension of administrative efficiency. In the present study, stewardship extended beyond financial resources to include time, equipment, information, digital files, and human support.

Theme 5. No Office Works Alone: Coordination, Communication, and Shared Responsibility

The fifth theme revealed that administrative work was fundamentally collaborative. Participants depended on school heads, teachers, fellow non-teaching personnel, district staff, and division-office units for information, approvals, clarifications, and completion of transactions.

Administrative Officers emphasized that delays or misunderstandings often resulted from communication gaps. They therefore learned the importance of clear instructions, respectful follow-up, documentation, and maintaining constructive relationships.

Participant Responses

P2: "You cannot finish everything alone because many documents require information or approval from other people."

P5: "Good communication makes the work easier. If people understand what you need and why you need it, they usually

submit the requirement more quickly."
P7: "You have to know how to follow up respectfully. Sometimes people are also busy, so instead of becoming angry, you remind them and explain the deadline."
This theme reflected collaborative administration. Hernandez and Canoy (2025) identified coordinated team functioning as a major conception of efficiency, while Mojica and Canoy (2025) described collaborative governance as a more developed understanding of government service delivery.
These studies support the present finding that administrative efficiency cannot be achieved by technical competence alone. Administrative personnel work within networks of interdependence. Communication and relationship management therefore become central administrative competencies.
Participants' emphasis on respectful follow-up also highlighted emotional and interpersonal labor. Administrative Officers had to secure compliance while preserving professional relationships. Such relational competence may not always appear in formal job descriptions but substantially influences administrative effectiveness.

Theme 6. Beyond Paperwork: Finding Purpose, Professional Growth, and Commitment in Administrative Service
The final theme revealed that participants gradually developed a broader understanding of their administrative roles. Although paperwork constituted a substantial part of their responsibilities, Administrative Officers described their work as contributing to school effectiveness and public education.
They also reported professional growth through experience. Challenges taught them to become more organized, patient, resourceful, technologically competent, and confident in communicating with others.
Participant Responses
P4: "At first, I thought administrative work was mostly preparing documents, but later I realized that every document is connected with a person or a school concern."
P6: "The work can be tiring, but when everything is completed and the school operation becomes smoother, there is satisfaction because you know you helped."
P8: "I learned many things through experience. I became more organized, more careful, and more confident in dealing with different offices."
The finding showed that administrative service developed into a form of **professional identity and public-service commitment**. Mojica and Canoy (2025) found that some DepEd administrative workers understood government service through ethical stewardship and public empowerment, while Balayan and Canoy (2025) identified commitment, educational support, collaboration, and ethical responsibility as meanings of civic duty among DepEd administrative workers.
The participants' experiences similarly moved beyond a purely task-based interpretation of their roles. Administrative documents became meaningful because they supported teachers, school heads, personnel, and institutional processes.
Public Service Motivation Theory helps explain this shift. Government work can acquire meaning when employees connect everyday responsibilities with broader public outcomes. Participants' commitment therefore appeared to be sustained not only by institutional obligation but also by recognition that effective administration ultimately supported education.

6. Discussion
The study revealed that the work of Administrative Officers II in the District of Lamut was multifaceted, demanding, and strongly interconnected with the functioning of schools. Their experiences challenged the perception of administrative work as routine clerical activity.
The first theme, **Keeping the School Moving**, demonstrated that Administrative Officers considered their work part of the operational foundation of schools. This interpretation is consistent with RA 9155, which explicitly places administrative, fiscal, and auxiliary responsibilities within the functions of non-teaching personnel.
Wearing Many Hats demonstrated that administrative work involved significant role multiplicity. Participants frequently shifted among reports, personnel documents, correspondence, data management, property concerns, and urgent requests. These experiences suggest that job descriptions may not fully capture the dynamic nature of school-level administrative responsibilities.
Racing Against Deadlines showed that workload was intensified by simultaneous reporting and compliance requirements. Participants developed anticipatory strategies, but deadlines remained stressful because many tasks depended on information from others. This reinforces Hernandez and Canoy's (2025) finding that efficiency requires simultaneous attention to speed, accuracy, compliance, and collaboration.
Doing More With Limited Resources demonstrated considerable administrative resilience. Participants adapted to technological difficulties, limited staffing, and resource constraints. Digitalization offered efficiencies but also required

backup practices, technical competence, and reliable infrastructure.

No Office Works Alone emphasized the deeply relational character of administrative work. This aligned with Hernandez and Canoy's (2025) conception of coordinated team functioning and Mojica and Canoy's (2025) description of collaborative governance.

Finally, **Beyond Paperwork** showed that participants developed professional meaning through public service. Their understanding of administrative work expanded from document completion to facilitating school operations and supporting education. This finding corresponds with Balayan and Canoy's (2025) findings concerning civic duty among DepEd administrative workers.

The study demonstrated that effective administrative work required a combination of technical competence, organizational ability, digital skills, interpersonal coordination, ethical accountability, adaptability and service orientation.

7. Implications for School Administration

The findings have several implications for school and district administration.

First, workload distribution should be regularly reviewed. Administrative Officers II who simultaneously manage numerous unrelated responsibilities may experience role overload, which can affect accuracy, timeliness, and employee well-being.

Second, administrative staffing should reflect actual workload rather than relying solely on school classification or historical staffing arrangements.

Third, professional development for Administrative Officers should include records management, personnel processes, property and supply systems, financial-document preparation, digital platforms, data privacy, communication, time management, public-service ethics, and stress management.

Fourth, digitalization should be accompanied by appropriate infrastructure, user training, technical assistance, and backup procedures.

Fifth, school heads should establish clear internal processes for submission, approval, and follow-up of administrative requirements so that Administrative Officers are not solely responsible for repeatedly obtaining missing information.

Sixth, peer networks among Administrative Officers within the district may facilitate sharing of templates, procedural updates, problem-solving strategies, and technical assistance.

Finally, recognition systems should acknowledge the contribution of non-teaching personnel to school effectiveness. Administrative support is frequently less visible than instruction but remains essential to institutional performance.

8. Conclusion

The study found that Administrative Officers II in the District of Lamut, Ifugao experienced administrative work as demanding, multidimensional, relational, and service-oriented. Their responsibilities extended far beyond simple paperwork and involved maintaining the systems that allowed schools to function effectively.

The six themes Keeping the School Moving; Wearing Many Hats; Racing Against Deadlines; Doing More With Limited Resources; No Office Works Alone; and Beyond Paperwork revealed how participants continuously balanced multiple responsibilities, reporting pressures, resource constraints, technology, interoffice coordination, and accountability.

Their experiences demonstrated that effective school administration depended not only on knowledge of procedures but also on organization, anticipation, adaptability, communication, resourcefulness, accuracy, and ethical judgment.

The study further revealed that Administrative Officers gradually developed a deeper sense of professional purpose. Documents and reports were not viewed simply as paperwork; they represented services affecting school heads, teachers, employees, learners, and the wider education system.

The essence of their experience was therefore making the school work from behind the scenes. Their contributions may have been less visible than classroom instruction, yet they formed an essential operational foundation upon which effective education depended.

Strengthening the capacity and working conditions of Administrative Officers II should therefore be viewed not simply as an administrative concern but as an investment in more efficient, accountable, and responsive school governance.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were advanced:

1. The Schools Division Office may periodically assess the actual administrative workload of Administrative Officers II and identify schools or clusters requiring additional staffing support.

2. Continuous professional-development programs may be provided in personnel administration, records management, property and supply procedures, government reporting systems, digital platforms, data management, public-service ethics, and workplace communication.
3. District-based communities of practice for Administrative Officers may be established to facilitate procedural clarification, peer mentoring, resource sharing, and collaborative problem-solving.
4. School heads may institutionalize clearer internal deadlines and responsibility matrices to minimize last-minute submissions and clarify accountability for administrative requirements.
5. Adequate computers, internet access, secure storage systems, printers, software, and technical support should be made available to personnel responsible for administrative reporting.
6. Recognition mechanisms may include non-teaching employees whose contributions significantly strengthen school operations and public service.
7. Future research may investigate work-life balance, administrative burnout, digital competencies, organizational support, and job satisfaction among school-based Administrative Officers.
8. Comparative studies may examine differences in administrative experiences across rural and urban districts, elementary and secondary schools, and different levels of Administrative Officer positions.

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