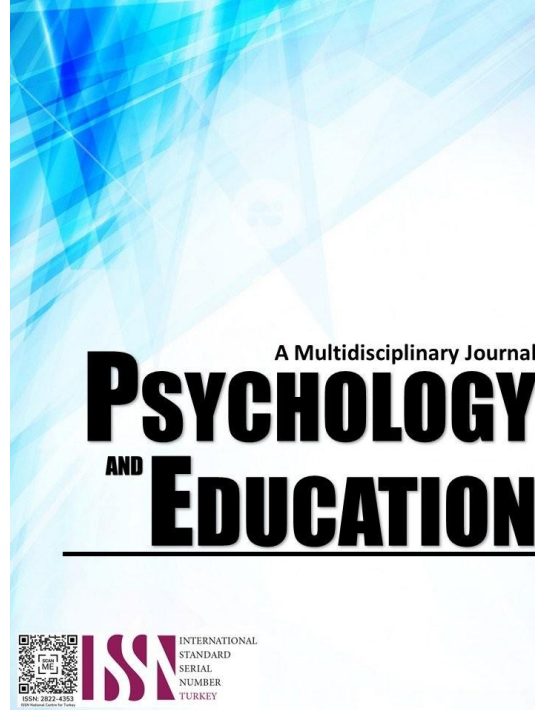


FROM OFFICE TO FIELD: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS IN THE SCHOOLS DIVISION OF KORONADAL CITY



PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

Volume: 51

Issue 3

Pages: 377-395

Document ID: 2025PEMJ4963

DOI: 10.70838/pemj.510307

Manuscript Accepted: 12-08-2025

From Office to Field: Lived Experiences of Administrative Officers in the Schools Division of Koronadal City

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Abstract

Employees often experience career transitions, such as moving from office-based to field-based roles. While such shifts can be stressful, adequate preparation and understanding can significantly ease the process. This study examined the lived experiences of Administrative Officers II as they transitioned from office-based to field-based roles within the Department of Education in the Koronadal City Division. Anchored in a qualitative research design, the study employed transcendental phenomenology, guided by Moustakas' framework, to examine the lived experiences of 10 Administrative Officers. Through thematic analysis, the study identified six emerging lived experiences that shaped participants' perceptions and behaviors: resource stewardship, efficiency orientation, holistic caregiver identity, collaborative interdependence, adaptive resilience, and pragmatic knowledge application. Five contextual themes were identified that influenced these lived experiences, namely, organizational culture, commute impact, family relationships, professional development, and coping strategies. These contexts highlighted the complex nature of field deployment, personal, and professional spheres. The study revealed participants' future self-perceptions in four forms: career advancement aspirations, external mobility intentions, organizational retention intentions, and entrepreneurship aspirations. These findings provide meaningful insights into how Administrative Officers manage transitions and responsibilities, and how they envision their professional trajectories. The results offer practical implications for policy development, capacity building, and support systems tailored for administrative personnel in public education.

Keywords: *administrative officers, deployment, field-based roles, lived experiences, phenomenology, qualitative research, Department of Education*

Introduction

Employees experience career changes, such as moving from one role to another. This shift can be stressful, but getting ready for it can make the deployment smoother.

Work deployment is a change or event that an employee experiences during their working life. Deployments include key stages of a career, such as starting work, changing jobs, retirement, and transitions in work that surround life events like having children (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). Constant deployment and worker insecurity are hallmarks of virtually every industry across the country (Labor Network for Sustainability, 2021). In this regard, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and its constituents, for instance, are committed to addressing climate challenges, emphasizing a just deployment. The ILO reaffirms its leadership role in promoting environmentally sustainable deployments, taking into account the social and economic dimensions, and actively advocates for guidelines in relevant forums (ILO, 2023).

In the ASEAN region, the transition from office-based to field-based work is influenced by several factors, including economic development, technological advancements, and evolving industry demands. The rapid adoption of digital tools and mobile technologies across ASEAN, particularly in more developed countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, has enabled workers in logistics, consulting, and technical services to transition from office-based to mobile or field-based roles (ASEAN, 2021). However, the nature of this transition varies across the region: developed economies adopt

In the Philippines, concerns about job displacement, skill mismatch, and lower wages persist, as the pandemic triggered a massive reallocation of jobs across sectors (Statista Research Department, 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. The demand for administrative flexibility and a broader skill set has prompted a redefinition of roles, often leading to the incorporation of field-based responsibilities.

In DepEd Region XII, Regional Memorandum Administrative Division No. 50, s. In 2022, the deployment of Administrative Officer II (AO II) to schools provided administrative support and eased teachers' non-teaching tasks. This aligns with DepEd Order No. 2, s. 2024, which emphasizes removing administrative load from teachers so they can focus on instruction.

Guided by DepEd Memorandum No. 235, s. In 2020, AOs are tasked with human resource management, records, property, and general administrative support. However, many still handle office-oriented functions such as consolidating reports and assisting in payroll, which are not aligned with their school-based mandate. DepEd policy further prohibits assigning AOs to non-school duties or tasks outside their job description, considering it a serious violation.

While this deployment is essential for organizational agility, there is a lack of research that comprehensively explores the lived

experiences of administrative officers in this context. Researchers have rarely compared the experiences or outcomes of people whose deployments vary by a single attribute (George et al., 2022). Additionally, there is limited research that critically examines potential challenges and opportunities, how administrative officers balance their professional and personal lives, and the adaptive strategies they employ to overcome challenges arising from deployment.

This study aims to explore the experiences, the context of these experiences, and the views of Administrative Officers II during their deployment from office to field work in the Koronadal City Division. Understanding the lived experiences of individuals undergoing such deployments is crucial for organizations aiming to support and optimize this process.

This study is grounded in Organizational Socialization Theory, as proposed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979), which posits that individuals internalize organizational norms, values, and behaviors through a process of role adaptation. This theory is particularly relevant in understanding how Administrative Officers adjust to the professional culture and operational demands of school-based environments.

Additionally, Role Theory, as explained by Biddle (1986), suggests that individuals assume and reconcile multiple roles in different social contexts. In this study, officers not only enact administrative functions but also integrate caregiving responsibilities, reflecting a blended professional identity shaped by role expectations at both work and home.

Another theory that supported this study was Resilience Theory. As articulated by Richardson (2002), this theory provided a framework for understanding how Administrative Officers maintain well-being and performance despite challenges such as long commutes and limited resources. The emergence of adaptive resilience among participants reflects their ability to re-integrate and grow under stress.

Similarly, Goal-Setting Theory, as proposed by Locke and Latham (2019), underpins the theme of efficiency orientation, wherein officers develop purposeful routines, effective time management strategies, and multitasking behaviors to meet the demands of field assignments. These behaviors reflect intrinsic motivation and a clear understanding of performance goals.

About this, Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory (1990) offers insights into how career aspirations evolve through stages of exploration, establishment, and advancement. The study's findings on career progression and entrepreneurial ambitions are consistent with this developmental perspective.

Lastly, Organizational Commitment Theory, as proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991), helps explain retention intentions by showing how emotional attachment, perceived costs of living, and normative obligation influence Administrative Officers' decisions to remain in their roles.

The study on the experiences of Administrative Officers II during their deployment from office to fieldwork in the Koronadal City Division during the 2023–2024 school year is significant, as it provides valuable insights for multiple stakeholders. For administrative officers, it highlights how field deployment can enhance competencies, problem-solving skills, and practical understanding of operations, supporting career growth and effective performance. For the Department of Education, the findings can guide policy development, training programs, and support mechanisms for administrators undergoing similar transitions. For school administration, understanding these experiences can inform leadership models that address the challenges and opportunities of role shifts, ultimately improving the quality of educational leadership. Additionally, the study can serve as a reference for future researchers, encouraging further exploration of administrative deployments and leadership practices in education.

Research Questions

This study examined the lived experiences of administrative officers during deployment from office to field work in the Koronadal City Division during the 2023-2024 school year. It answered the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of the Administrative Officers on their deployment from office-based to field-based roles?
2. What are the coping mechanisms used by Administrative Officers to adapt to their new work environment?
3. What are the insights of Administrative Officers that can be shared with others?

Literature Review

The Work Transition

A field-based employee operates outside the traditional office, moving to various locations for projects lasting days to months. While they periodically report to the main office, they maintain a limited daily presence, which allows for greater flexibility in handling personal responsibilities and achieving a healthier work-life balance, especially with the option to work from home. Returning to the office may disrupt this balance, increasing travel time and reducing flexibility for personal commitments (Nadella, 2021). However, employees experience multiple transitions as they progress through their working lives. A key transition is moving from one job to another in a new industry or field. The changes associated with a work transition can be stressful, but careful preparation can help make the transition to a new role or way of working smooth (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023).

Events can affect individual and group behaviors, aspects of work, and subsequent events. They can also originate from outside or

within an organization and constitute observable actions or circumstances (Morgeson et al., 2015). Events frequently exhibit discontinuity because they involve a significant change in circumstances (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Events have a beginning (onset), a transition period between the introduction of the event and a post-transition period, and they are bounded by space and time (Morgeson et al., 2015).

According to Kim and Yeo (2019), the transition of newly graduated nurses to nursing practice is a considerable challenge. It can lead to transition shock, a term used to describe the difficulty newly graduated nurses experience during the transition from student to nurse. Moreover, hybrid work was perceived as providing the best of both worlds, combining remote and office work, as employees and managers develop new skills and competencies to adapt to new ways of working. To achieve the expected individual and organizational benefits of hybrid work, employers are expected to provide support and flexibility and re-design the physical and digital workplaces to fit the new and diverse needs of employees (Babapour et al., 2022)

Work-from-anywhere, an evolving remote work model, offers employees geographic flexibility, enabling them to choose their preferred location. The shift from working from home to working from anywhere resulted in a 4.4% increase in employee output, without a corresponding rise in rework. Additionally, there was an increase in employee effort post-transition, providing qualitative evidence of the individual benefits of geographic flexibility (Choudhury et al., 2021). In addition, central to concerns about transitioning from face-to-face education to online delivery are the teaching practices and administrative support required to sustain meaningful student engagement (Wingo et al., 2017).

Challenges During and After Transition

Transitions vary in complexity and intensity in response to change; the more frequent or dramatic the change, the more complex the transition process will be. However, leaders and organizations often ignore or minimize the human aspect of change (Center for Creative Leadership, 2020). Work transitions, especially those involving a shift from office-based to field-based roles, often pose a host of challenges that can affect individuals both personally and professionally. One prominent challenge identified in the literature is adjusting to a new work environment. During this period, individuals often experience disorientation and stress as they strive to find their footing in the new context. A recent study by Baharum et al. (2024) on newly employed nurses in Malaysia found that successful adaptation to a new workplace depends on multiple factors, including workplace organization, institutional support, and individual traits, all of which influence how effectively employees integrate into their new environment.

Moving from a setting where face-to-face interactions are predominant to roles requiring increased virtual or remote communication can lead to misunderstandings and reduced team cohesion (Tushman, Newman, & Romanelli, 2020). Another significant aspect of the skill set is required for success during and after work transitions. Individuals may need to acquire new skills or enhance existing ones to excel in their new roles. This could involve technical skills for specific field-based tasks, as well as adaptive skills such as problem-solving, flexibility, and resilience (Bridges, 2016; Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2016).

Individuals often experience a range of emotions, from excitement about new opportunities to anxiety about the unknown. Managing these emotional responses is critical for a successful transition, and organizations play a vital role in providing support systems and resources (Ashford et al., 2018; DeRue, Workman, & Stroh, 2018). Studies (Bridges, 2016; Cable & Judge, 2019) highlight the importance of clear communication from organizational leadership, the provision of resources for skill development, and the establishment of support networks to facilitate adjustment. Organizations that actively promote a positive transition experience contribute to increased job satisfaction, retention, and overall success for individuals undergoing such changes.

Navigating the shift from office-based to field-based roles presents a myriad of challenges that have been extensively examined in the literature. Anderson and Thomas (2018) and Cable and Judge (2019) highlight the complexities associated with adjusting to new physical environments and establishing effective work routines in unfamiliar territories. Additionally, the literature reveals the pivotal role of effective communication during such transitions, as emphasized by Tushman, Newman, and Romanelli (2020). This involves addressing communication gaps to prevent misunderstandings and maintaining team cohesion, especially when transitioning from in-person to virtual collaboration. Wanberg, Kanfer, and Banas (2016) and Bridges (2016) emphasize the need for individuals to develop new skill sets, including technical competencies and adaptive skills, to succeed in their new roles.

The emotional and psychological impact of work transitions is a recurrent theme in the literature. Ashford et al. (2018) and DeRue, Workman, and Stroh (2018) highlight the diverse range of emotions individuals experience, encompassing everything from excitement about new opportunities to anxiety about the unknown. Managing these emotional responses is crucial for both individual well-being and organizational productivity. Furthermore, organizational support emerges as a critical factor in successful transitions, involving clear communication from leadership, resources for skill development (Cable & Judge, 2019), and the establishment of support networks.

Building on the challenges, Shockley et al. (2017) highlight the impact of work transitions on work-life balance, acknowledging the potential disruption to established equilibrium. The importance of considering diversity and inclusion aspects is also significant during transitions, as emphasized by Kulik et al. (2014). Work-family interconnections seem particularly demanding for employees with children; however, single and childless workers are not immune to the negative consequences of such altered working conditions. As a result, they may be at the most significant risk of loneliness, a felt lack of purpose, and associated adverse effects on well-being

(Achor et al., 2018).

Adaptations on Organizational Change

According to the Indeed Editorial Team (2023), change is an inevitable and often positive aspect of working with others, and the ability to adapt can reduce stress and even increase productivity. Adapting to change can be challenging, but learning effective strategies for handling it can help you stay positive. Van de Heuvel's (2020) study provides insights into the significant relationships among various factors during organizational change. It highlights the significance of work engagement in shaping both short-term and long-term outcomes related to employee adaptation and performance.

Forbes (2020) suggests that clear communication of the vision for change can increase readiness for change. Being transparent about what is changing and why, proactively soliciting feedback and listening to employees, explaining the benefits of the change, and providing support, such as career development and training, can also help employees adjust to workplace change. On the other hand, Indeed Editorial Team (2021) recommends six ways to adapt to workplace change: accepting the change, staying positive, gaining a fresh perspective, focusing on what you can control, setting new goals, and maintaining connections with coworkers.

The structural and contextual factors are significant predictors of adjustment. Contrary to previous research, trust in peers and supervisors does not support adjustment to remote work (van Zoonen, 2021). Moreover, adaptability was associated broadly with more positive reactions across multiple indicators. Support was also found for an indirect-associations model, in which personality traits were associated with specific reactions through their association with adaptability (Beser et al., 2022). Although practices may be implemented to alleviate perceptions of misfit arising from abrupt changes in the social fabric of the work environment, they may also leave participants feeling unsatisfied as they yearn for the social interactions they had previously (Fetters, 2020).

Methodology

Research Design

The chosen qualitative research approach for this study was the Transcendental Phenomenological Method, which was specifically tailored to explore the essence and significance of individuals' lived experiences. This method focused on understanding both what participants encountered and how they encountered it (Neubauer et al., 2019). By adopting this approach, the research aimed to gain a profound understanding of the distinct experiences of Administrative Officers II during their transition from office-based to field-based roles. Rooted in the philosophical principles of phenomenology, this method emphasized the examination of individuals' real-world encounters without imposing preconceived theories or interpretations.

Numerous studies have employed the transcendental-phenomenological design to explore lived experiences across varied contexts. For instance, MacTaggart and Lynham (2019) used this design to examine the essence of a responsible leadership experience, offering insights into middle school teachers' perspectives. Similarly, Cahapay (2020) applied transcendental phenomenology to investigate how parents ascribed meaning to their involvement in remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In another context, Grey (2019) used this approach to comprehend private high school educators' perceptions of implementing a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program. Additionally, Hawes and Nelson (2021) explored the lived experiences of rural middle school teachers using the same approach. Becker and Schad (2022) also adopted transcendental phenomenology to uncover the lived experiences of online learners, contributing a framework for phenomenological inquiry in distance education.

Participants

The participants in this study were ten (10) Administrative Officers II in the Koronadal City Division during the school year 2023–2024, selected based on rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria. They were chosen for their actual involvement in the transition from office-based to field-based roles. This approach ensured that the insights gathered provided a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The participant group included seven females and three males, aged 29 to 51 years. Regarding professional experience, 9 participants had served in the Department of Education (DepEd) for 5 to 10 years, while 1 participant had served for over 20 years. Their current school assignments also varied; three were deployed in central elementary schools, three in medium-sized elementary schools, and the remaining four in small elementary schools. This variation provided a broad view of the field-based administrative landscape across different school contexts.

The inclusion criteria for participation in this study required that individuals were currently holding Administrative Officer II positions within the Department of Education, specifically in the Koronadal City Division. Secondly, participants must have undergone a transition from traditional office-based roles to field-based responsibilities within the specified timeframe, including those currently experiencing or who have recently completed the transition. Additionally, participants had to be affiliated with the Department of Education for at least 1 year to ensure contextual relevance. Willingness to participate in in-depth interviews and to respond to open-ended inquiries was also considered essential for active, voluntary engagement in the study.

Conversely, individuals in non-administrative roles, such as teaching personnel or non-administrative support staff, were excluded.

Those who had not undergone the transition from office to field roles within the specified timeframe were also excluded to maintain focus. Individuals who were not affiliated with the Department of Education for at least one year, even if they held administrative roles in other sectors, were excluded to ensure the educational context remained consistent. Furthermore, individuals unwilling or unable to participate in in-depth interviews and open-ended inquiries were excluded to ensure the collection of comprehensive, voluntary responses from Administrative Officers directly engaged in, or having recently experienced, transitions within the Department of Education.

This study has employed purposeful sampling. The adoption of purposeful sampling in this study is rooted in methodological rigor and alignment with the research objectives. As Arikunto (2010) explains, purposive sampling is a deliberate approach that goes beyond traditional demographic considerations. Instead, it focuses on selecting participants based on specific criteria that serve the study's purpose.

By employing purposive sampling, the study ensured that participants possessed a depth of knowledge and experience relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. Cresswell and Plano Clark (2011) emphasized that purposive sampling facilitates the identification and selection of individuals who are particularly well-informed or experienced in the subject matter. Furthermore, purposive sampling enabled the researcher to target participants most likely to provide rich, comprehensive insights into the research topic.

Instrument

The primary data collection instrument in this study was the semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to gather rich, in-depth information from participants, enabling exploration of their personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs regarding the topic of interest (De Junckheere et al., 2019).

To ensure the quality and relevance of the interview questions, content validity was rigorously applied. The researcher meticulously drafted the interview questions, taking into account the specific context of Administrative Officers II. The initial draft was then scrutinized and evaluated by the researcher's adviser to ensure clarity and appropriateness.

Following the adviser's review, a panel of validators was carefully selected to further assess the pertinence and suitability of the interview questions. The panel consisted of four (4) experts, all of whom possessed either a master's or a doctorate. This inclusion criterion ensured that the validators had extensive knowledge and expertise in the field, making them highly qualified to evaluate the questions.

The use of semi-structured interviews and the rigorous validation process for the interview guide enhanced the robustness of the study, ensuring that the data collected provided comprehensive insights into the lived experiences of Administrative Officers II. This approach facilitated a deep understanding of their professional transitions and contributed valuable knowledge to the field of educational administration and public service.

Procedure

In this transcendental-phenomenological study, data were systematically collected through semi-structured interviews to explore the meaning of participants' experiences. Before data collection, the researcher secured necessary approvals from the Dean of the Sultan Kudarat State University Graduate School and the Schools Division Superintendent of the Koronadal City Division, and coordinated with the targeted Administrative Officers, who provided informed consent. Participants were selected from the personnel list based on inclusion criteria. They were oriented to the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and their rights before interviews, which were conducted at their assigned field stations at mutually convenient times. Open-ended questions encouraged deep reflection, and responses were audio-recorded and translated into English as needed. Recordings were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically, following transcendental phenomenological principles, to capture participants' lived experiences, the contexts shaping them, and their envisioned professional futures, with bracketing used to minimize researcher bias. To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher employed member checking to validate emerging themes and peer debriefing with colleagues and experts to review interpretations, thereby authentically representing the participants' experiences, perspectives, and insights.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process in this study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework for thematic analysis. First, the researcher familiarized themselves with the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content and to begin noticing patterns. During this phase, all interviews were transcribed to facilitate thorough engagement with the data. Second, the researcher generated initial codes based on participants' lived experiences, the context of those experiences, and future self-perceptions by identifying and labeling recurring ideas and concepts. This involved data reduction, which entailed collapsing large amounts of qualitative input into manageable codes, and data complication, in which inferences were made about the potential meanings of the coded segments. In the third phase, the researcher identified themes by clustering related codes on lived experiences, experience contexts, and future self-perceptions into overarching categories that meaningfully captured the essence of participants' responses. At this stage, the researcher also noted data that did not fit neatly into existing themes and documented elements that appeared to be missing or underrepresented in the analysis. The fourth phase involved reviewing themes to ensure they accurately reflected the data set and aligned with the overarching theoretical framework. When necessary, adjustments were made to improve



coherence and completeness. Fifth, as the data analyst, the researcher defined and named the themes, clearly articulating what each theme captured and why it was significant. This step included identifying the unique contributions of each theme to the overall understanding of the phenomenon. Finally, the sixth phase entailed producing the report. The researcher identified the most salient themes that provided meaningful insights into the participants' lived experiences. Member checking was conducted at this stage by returning to selected participants to validate whether the interpretations and thematic representations were accurate and reflective of their experiences.

Ethical Considerations

Before the commencement of the study, a formal permission letter from the researcher, duly noted by the research adviser, was obtained. Participants were required to submit a signed consent form or waiver before data collection began. To ensure the privacy and anonymity of all participants, aliases were used in all documentation and reporting. Participants were informed of their right to participate voluntarily, including the option to withdraw from the study at any stage or to decline answering any questions that caused discomfort. The study was designed and conducted in accordance with the ethical principles established by Sultan Kudarat State University. The researcher deliberately sought to build trust with the participants by ensuring confidentiality and maintaining anonymity within the bounds of applicable legal and institutional policies. Furthermore, both verbal and written informed consent were obtained from each participant before data collection began, ensuring that participants fully understood the nature, purpose, and scope of the study.

Results

The results of the study are presented in this section. The presentation that follows discusses the experiences, context of these experiences, and views of Administrative Officers who transition from office to field work in the Koronadal City Division. Identifying significant statements, generating preliminary themes, clustering related themes, and finally discerning emerging themes are all steps in the Thematic Analysis process.

Emerging Themes on the Lived Experiences of Administrative Officers on their Deployment from Office-Based Roles to Field-Based

This section refers to the overall perspective or the set of beliefs, values, and attitudes of an administrative officer during their deployment from office to field. The thorough process of data analysis and interpretation revealed twenty (20) clustered themes used to formulate the six (6) emerging themes. It showed that resource stewardship, efficiency orientation, holistic caregiver identity, collaborative interdependence, adaptive resilience, and pragmatic knowledge application were the key components of Administrative Officers' lived experience as they transitioned from office-based to field-based roles.

Table 1. *Emerging Themes on the Lived Experiences of Administrative Officers on their Deployment from Office-Based Roles to Field-Based*

<i>Emerging Themes</i>	<i>Clustered Themes</i>	<i>Codes</i>
Resource stewardship	- managing school finances -budgeting feeding programs -planning resource utilization -procuring supplies	managing funds; budgeting; planning; procuring
Efficiency orientation	- optimizing time management - conducting multitasking	time management; multitasking; early rising
Holistic caregiver identity	- integrating parental and professional roles - balancing eldercare responsibilities - fulfilling sibling caregiving roles - communicating with leadership - collaborating with teachers	applying home skills; eldercare; sibling care
Collaborative interdependence	- liaising with division personnel - interacting with suppliers - engaging with community members - checking in with colleagues - commuting long distances	seeking guidance; reporting; supplier interaction
Adaptive resilience	- navigating unpaved roads - incurring travel expenses	long commute; poor roads; transport cost
Pragmatic knowledge application	- applying academic learning to AO role - applying budgeting knowledge at home - applying financial management skills personally	"apply what I studied now that I'm an AO"

Resource Stewardship

The theme refers to a mindset or guiding philosophy in which administrative officers perceive their role not merely as implementers of government policies but as responsible caretakers of public resources, including finances. Resource stewardship is characterized by four (4) clustered themes: managing school finances, budgeting feeding programs, planning resource utilization, and procuring

supplies.

Administrative Officers describe their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based as resource stewardship when they said:

“Part of my role in school is managing the MOOE, City Assistance Fund, Kabugwason, Canteen, and other school funds.” –Participant 2

“I learned how to budget the menu and what food to serve the children.” –Participant 1

“In terms of planning, sir, planning must be correct, planning must be accurate so that the government’s effort and funds don’t go to waste. That’s what I experienced, sir.” –Participant 7

“I do the market shopping for food supplies and other things for the house, just like in the feeding program.” –Participant 8

Efficiency Orientation

Efficiency orientation refers to administrative officers’ value on time management and multitasking. They often need to manage multiple tasks simultaneously and adjust their daily routines to keep pace with their responsibilities. Two (2) clustered themes characterize this theme. This includes optimizing time management and conducting multitasking.

Administrative Officers describe their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based as an efficiency orientation when they said:

“Ahh... so, as an AO, I can say that time management is something I’ve developed because of the many tasks and responsibilities.” –Participant 1

“That’s really why time management is needed, sir.” –Participant 3; “wake up as early as 4:30 AM, and I leave home by 6:30.” –Participant 10

“I was able to do things simultaneously—cooking while having coffee, and doing the laundry—because of the amount of work.” –Participant 1

“Multitasking, sir. Because of the many tasks given to us. Not just one or two, but more than 13” –Participant 5

Holistic Caregiver Identity

It can be viewed that Administrative Officers see their work role as closely connected to their roles at home. Their responsibilities as parents, elder caregivers, or sibling supporters influence how they manage and perform their work duties. This theme is characterized by three (3) clustered themes: integrating parental and professional roles, balancing eldercare responsibilities, and fulfilling sibling caregiving roles.

Administrative Officers describe their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based as a holistic caregiver identity when they said:

“You learn to apply it at home. Not only as a mother, but almost everything—you learn how to manage.” –Participant 1

“In my life as a mother, I have many obligations, so I do a lot of multitasking. Same with being an AO” –Participant 10

“Thank you, sir. The part related to me being an AO is that I am a daughter. I have responsibilities at work, and I also have responsibilities to my parents, especially my mother, who is already 88 years old.” –Participant 4

“In our family, sir, I’m the eldest; we don’t have a mother anymore, and I have younger siblings. It’s like even when I was young, I already had the responsibility to manage them and provide their needs.” –Participant 9

Collaborative Interdependence

This means that administrative officers place importance on communication and coordination. They often collaborate with school heads, teachers, suppliers, division staff, and community members to fulfill their tasks and address concerns.

This theme is characterized by six (6) clustered themes: communicating with leadership, collaborating with teachers, liaising with division personnel, interacting with suppliers, engaging with community members, and checking in with colleagues.

Administrative Officers describe their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based as collaborative interdependence when they said:

“I go to her for assistance with my tasks, especially when I can’t handle something, or I’m unsure, I seek her guidance.” –Participant 1

“I assist them with leaves, benefits, promotions, like ERF, retirement, and other HR-related concerns—they come to me.” –Participant



2

“The principal and teachers, sir. I interact with them every day, sir.” –Participant 8

“We submit reports from time to time, and when we need something, we approach them.” –Participant 1

“I go to them to have my liquidation checked.” –Participant 3

“As a canvasser, that interaction doesn’t go away because we see each other almost monthly” –Participant 1

“Some parents even tell me that sometimes they don’t have rice. So through SBFP, they can survive lunch.” –Participant 5

“My work at the division is in an office setting. In the field, there’s time to check in with each other, and there are school activities and programs that promote collaborative work.” –Participant 6

Adaptive Resilience

This theme emphasizes that administrative officers recognize the need to adapt to difficult working conditions. This includes commuting long distances, dealing with poor road conditions, and incurring transportation expenses to fulfill their job requirements. Three (3) clustered themes characterize this theme. This includes commuting long distances, navigating unpaved roads, and incurring travel expenses.

Administrative Officers describe their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based as adaptive resilience when they said:

“I have to travel for 30 to 40 minutes every day. And when I go to my other school, the road going there isn’t even paved.” –Participant 2

“It takes almost 30 to 50 minutes of travel time.” –Participant 10

“The road going there isn’t even paved.” –Participant 2

“And it’s a big expense for me, sir, because I spend 150 pesos daily on fare.” –Participant 3

This means that administrative officers apply what they have learned from academic and personal experiences to their job. Budgeting and financial skills, for instance, are used both in their AO role and in their personal lives.

Pragmatic knowledge application

Three (3) clustered themes characterize this theme. It includes applying academic learning to an AO role, applying budgeting knowledge at home, and applying financial management skills personally.

Administrative Officers describe their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based as adaptive resilience when they said:

“You know, sir, as a Human Resource Development and Management graduate, I’m now able to apply what I studied now that I’m an AO.” –Participant 6

“I was able to apply what we learned in school about budgeting—same at home, you get to apply it.” –Participant 1

“I also learned how to manage my finances responsibly. And I also apply that to my finances.” –Participant 2

The Coping Mechanisms of Administrative Officers on Their Deployment from Office-Based to Field-Based Roles

The contexts of the lived experiences of Administrative Officers on their deployment from office-based to field-based roles refer to the various environmental, institutional, and personal factors that shape how they perceive, respond to, and interpret this transition. These contexts influence whether the deployment is seen as an opportunity, a challenge, or both. Five (5) emerging themes were derived from fourteen (14) clustered themes following data analysis and interpretation.

It was revealed that organizational culture, commute impact, family relationships, professional development, and coping strategies are emerging themes in the coping mechanisms of administrative officers as they transition from office-based to field-based roles.

Table 2. *Emerging Themes on the Contexts of the Lived experiences of Administrative Officers on their Deployment from Office-Based to Field-Based Roles*

<i>Emerging Themes</i>	<i>Clustered Themes</i>	<i>Codes</i>
Organizational culture	- experiencing field environment - navigating new norms - extended travel routines	"air-conditioned"; "no air-conditioning"; "culture of unity"; "professionalism"; "they really value time"; "they're punctual"
Commute impact	- navigating remote locations - scheduling around travel	"takes 30 to 40 minutes"; "road going there isn't even paved"; "wake up as early as 4:30 AM."



Family relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reducing bonding time - fulfilling caregiver responsibilities - receiving family support 	"less time to talk"; "lost time with my children"; "take care of our mother"; "look for finances for her hospitalization"; "life partner is proud"; "mother is supportive."
Professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - skill enhancement - engaging in reflective learning 	"apply what I studied"; "skills got sharpened"; "knowledge expanded"; "learned to talk in front of many people"; "learned to study DepEd orders."
Coping strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - applying time management - prioritizing tasks - seeking assistance - displaying assertiveness 	"to-do list"; "prioritizing tasks"; "ask assistance from fellow AOs"; "take one work at a time"; "be assertive."

Organizational Culture

This theme reflects that Administrative Officers experienced new working environments and expectations. They observe changes in workplace norms such as professionalism, time consciousness, and group cooperation.

Two (2) clustered themes characterized this theme. This includes experiencing the field environment and navigating new norms. Administrative Officers describe the context of their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based as organizational culture when they said:

“The office was air-conditioned, in the field, we do not even have air-conditioning in the school office.” –Participant 4

“When I got to the field, I observed that there is a culture of unity; they maintain professionalism.” –Participant 2

“They value time here. They are punctual.” –Participant 10.”

Commute Impact

This means that the time and effort required to travel to school sites affect Administrative Officers' routines. They often deal with long travel times, remote work locations, and early morning schedules. Three (3) clustered themes characterize this theme. This includes extended travel routines, navigating remote locations, and scheduling around travel.

Administrative Officers describe the context of their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based, as commute impact, when they said:

“It takes 30 to 40 minutes every day, I have to leave the house by 6:30 AM to avoid being late.” –Participant 3

“The road going there is not even paved.” –Participant 2

“Wake up as early as 4:30 AM, and I leave home by 6:30.” –Participant 10

Family Relationships

This means that the Administrative Officers’ role influences their home life. Balancing work, caregiving duties, and time for family members is a daily challenge for many AOs. Three (3) clustered themes characterize family relationships. This includes reducing bonding time, fulfilling caregiver responsibilities, and receiving family support.

Administrative Officers describe the context of their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based as family relationships, when they said:

“We now have less time to talk, I lost time with my children.” –Participant 1

“I take care of our mother, who is a senior and a widow.” –Participant 2

“My mother was confined in the hospital, I had to take care of her and look for finances, but I could not easily leave the school.” –Participant 5

“My life partner is proud that I became an AO.” –Participant 6

Professional Development

This theme suggests that the skills of Administrative Officers grow through on-the-job experiences. They develop abilities in communication, decision-making, and understanding of education policies.

Two (2) clustered themes characterize Professional Development. This includes skill enhancement and engaging in reflective learning.

Administrative Officers describe the context of their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based as professional development when they said:

“I am now able to apply what I studied, now that I am an AO.” –Participant 6



“My skills got sharpened, because of the many roles assigned to me.” –Participant 3

“I learned how to talk in front of many people, you lose your shyness.” –Participant 1

“I learned to study DepEd orders, all our work is really for the learners.” –Participant 3

Coping Strategies

Coping strategies are the methods individuals or groups use to manage stress, challenges, and environmental changes. In the context of Administrative Officers, they rely on techniques such as daily task planning, seeking help when needed, and standing their ground to manage job stress and demands. Four (4) clustered themes characterize this theme. This includes effective time management, task prioritization, seeking assistance when needed, and assertiveness.

Administrative Officers describe the context of their lived experience in their deployment from office-based to field-based as coping strategies when they said:

“I already have a to-do list—every single day. I record everything so I have a guide.” –Participant 1

“What I focus on is time management, prioritizing tasks, and commitment to work.” –Participant 6

“I ask for assistance from my fellow AOs. My school head is my number one go-to.” –Participant 1

“I just do what I can. If you cannot handle it, resign.” –Participant 8

“I take the work one at a time.” –Participant 9

“be assertive and firm in dealing with people like that.” –Participant 10

Insights of Administrative Officers

Insights refer to how administrative officers envision their future roles, capabilities, identity, and career paths within the public service. These perceptions are influenced by their current experiences, professional development opportunities, personal aspirations, and the challenges they face in their roles.

After data analysis and interpretation, four (4) emerging themes were identified, derived from ten (10) clustered themes. It was revealed that career advancement aspirations, external mobility intentions, organizational retention intentions, and entrepreneurship aspirations describe Administrative Officers' future self-perception.

Table 3. *Emerging Themes on the Future Views of Administrative Officers*

<i>Emerging Theme</i>	<i>Clustered Themes</i>	<i>Codes</i>
Career Advancement Aspirations	- seeking promotion - aspiring to higher positions - pursuing self-improvement	promotion; higher position; self-improvement
External Mobility Intentions	- planning resignation - exploring opportunities abroad - seeking agency transfer - comparing workloads	resign; abroad; transfer; better jobs
Organizational Retention Intentions	- resisting change - remaining in current role - conditional retention based on improvements	stay; stay; concerns addressed
Entrepreneurship Aspirations	- planning business startup	start a business

Career Advancement Aspiration

This refers to Administrative Officers' hope of advancing to higher positions and enhancing their skills. They express interest in promotions and long-term professional growth. Three (3) clustered themes characterize the theme. This includes seeking promotion, aspiring to higher positions, and pursuing self-improvement.

Administrative Officers describe their future self-perception as career advancement aspiration when they said:

“I still want to be promoted somehow, sir.” – Participant 4

“I feel like I could reach a higher position in DepEd—or even in another office.” – Participant 2

“I feel I have made some self-improvement. That is why I see myself staying in DepEd but in a different, higher position.” – Participant 4

External Mobility Intentions

This refers to a plan by the Administrative Officers to leave their current posts. They explore opportunities abroad, in other agencies,

or roles with lighter workloads. Three (3) clustered themes characterize the theme. This includes planning resignation, exploring opportunities abroad, seeking agency transfer, and comparing workloads.

Administrative Officers describe their future self-perception as external mobility intention when they said:

“Maybe after 5 to 6 years, I will resign from DepEd...” – Participant 3

“and look for opportunities abroad.” – Participant 3

“I see myself no longer in DepEd in two years—maybe in another agency.” – Participant 5

“Even if the salary grade is the same, the workload is not as heavy.” – Participant 7

Organizational Retention Intentions

This theme refers to an employee's conscious and deliberate intention to remain employed within a specific organization for the foreseeable future. Other Administrative Officers want to stay in their position, either because they feel settled or because they hope their work concerns will eventually be addressed. Three (3) clustered themes characterize the theme. This includes: resisting change, remaining in the current role, and conditional retention based on improvements.

Administrative Officers describe their future self-perception as organizational retention intentions when they said:

“I just see myself staying in this job as is... so I will just stay as an AO.” – Participant 1

“I think I do not have much of a future transferring to other agencies. I will stay here as an AO.” – Participant 8

“I can see myself staying in DepEd... as long as the concerns of AOs like us are addressed.” – Participant 9

Entrepreneurship Aspirations

Entrepreneurship aspirations refer to an Administrative Officer's desire, motivation, and long-term goal to start, own, or grow a business venture. This was seen as a practical goal for the future, outside of public service. The theme is characterized by one (1) clustered theme: planning a business startup. Hence, it is considered unique.

Administrative Officer described a future self-perception as entrepreneurship aspirations when they said:

“I also want to start a business in the future.” – Participant 8

Discussion

This section presents a comprehensive interpretation of the findings on the Lived experiences and shifting lived experiences of Administrative Officers II as they transitioned from office-based to field-based roles. Drawing from thematic analysis, the discussion explores how their perceptions were shaped by direct engagement with school operations, community interactions, and personal adaptations.

The emergent themes were analyzed in light of existing theories and recent empirical literature, revealing how field deployment not only transformed their professional identities but also influenced their coping strategies, decision-making, and aspirations. Each theme is situated within broader organizational and socio-cultural contexts to better understand the complex realities these officers manage and the evolving narratives they construct about their roles and futures.

Emerging Themes on the Lived Experiences of Administrative Officers on their Deployment from Office to Field

Resource Stewardship

The theme reflects the Administrative Officers' deepened commitment to the responsible, ethical, and efficient management of public resources, especially in the field. Once deployed, these officers are often tasked with managing school funds, budgeting for programs like school feeding initiatives, and ensuring the proper procurement and distribution of supplies. This direct exposure to community-level resource utilization transforms their perception of their roles, from passive office administrators to proactive fiscal stewards.

This lived experience aligns with Suárez and Esparza (2020), who found that local government workers given financial management responsibilities developed a stronger sense of accountability and public trust. Similarly, Guerra-López and Hutchinson (2021) noted that education officers who are actively involved in financial decision-making processes demonstrate increased transparency, ownership, and performance-oriented behaviors. For Administrative Officers, field deployment catalyzes a shift from compliance-focused administration to stewardship grounded in community impact.

Efficiency Orientation

The deployment process introduces a set of unpredictable, high-demand tasks that force Administrative Officers to recalibrate how they manage time and execute responsibilities. The theme of efficiency orientation captures this response, particularly the development of skills in multitasking, time prioritization, and logistical coordination. The transition from the predictability of office-based work to

the dynamic nature of school-based deployment requires officers to rise earlier, manage multiple tasks simultaneously, and maintain high performance under pressure.

This aligns with Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 2019), which posits that individuals perform better when they set specific, challenging goals and are intrinsically motivated to achieve them. The need to perform multiple functions efficiently encourages Administrative Officers to become more outcome-oriented and resourceful. Brennan et al. (2021) identified multitasking and time management as essential competencies in decentralized education systems with limited administrative support. Delgado-Gutierrez et al. (2020) also observed that administrative professionals in remote schools optimized their routines to sustain productivity amid resource constraints. Thus, efficiency is not just a survival mechanism, but a key professional value in field settings.

Holistic Caregiver Identity

The theme emerges as Administrative Officers balance professional duties with personal caregiving roles, such as parenting, eldercare, or sibling support. Unlike in office-based environments, where work and home life are often compartmentalized, field assignments often blur these boundaries. The officers' identities evolve into multidimensional caregivers who apply domestic problem-solving skills, empathy, and relational thinking to their administrative roles.

This aligns with Role Theory (Biddle, 1986), which argues that individuals strive to create coherence between their work and family identities rather than keeping them separate. In addition, Lo and Lui (2021) found that among public sector workers, particularly women, caregiving responsibilities significantly influence how they approach professional challenges. Pangcatan (2022) further supported this in the Philippine context, noting that individuals often carry familial values into their workplace behaviors, thereby fostering a caregiving orientation in administrative leadership. Administrative Officers' self-concept is thus enriched and humanized through their parallel roles at home and at work.

Collaborative Interdependence

In field settings, Administrative Officers II no longer work in isolation; instead, they rely on networks that involve school heads, teaching staff, division personnel, suppliers, and community members. The theme of collaborative interdependence reflects this shift toward relational engagement, teamwork, and shared decision-making. The effectiveness of their role hinges on communication, coordination, and mutual support.

This lived experience aligns with Anderson and Sun (2020), who found that public servants embedded in strong organizational networks are more adaptive and effective. Relatively, Gomez and Reyes (2019) emphasized that collaboration among administrative officers and school stakeholders leads to more responsive and localized education policies. For Administrative Officers II, collaborative interdependence becomes essential to meeting field-based goals and sustaining morale.

Adaptive Resilience

Field deployment often entails commuting to remote areas, navigating unpaved roads, and incurring personal expenses. The theme of adaptive resilience captures the officers' capacity to maintain performance and well-being despite these difficulties. Resilience here is not just about enduring hardship but about creatively adjusting, managing emotions, and finding renewed purpose through challenges.

This aligns with Resilience Theory (Richardson, 2002), which views resilience as a process of reintegration that strengthens individuals after experiencing disruption. McAllister et al. (2021) studied public sector employees and concluded that exposure to persistent stressors can result in greater adaptability, provided there is institutional and peer support. Castro and Valenzuela (2020) similarly observed that Filipino field workers develop personal routines and mental strategies to cope with rugged terrain, extended hours, and logistical uncertainties. For Administrative Officers, adaptive resilience becomes a foundational trait that sustains their motivation and job satisfaction.

Pragmatic Knowledge Application

This theme concerns how Administrative Officers actively draw on their academic backgrounds, prior work experience, and personal budgeting knowledge to solve field-based problems. Unlike in office roles, where theoretical understanding may remain abstract, field assignments require the direct application of skills in budgeting, planning, and procurement.

This theme aligns with De Guzman and Uy (2019), who documented that LGU staff in the Philippines frequently rely on experiential learning to manage limited training environments. Nguyen et al. (2021) also emphasized the importance of applied knowledge for public servants in adaptive service environments. For Administrative Officers, the opportunity to put book knowledge into practice deepens their competence and confidence.

Emerging Themes on the Coping Mechanisms of Administrative Officers on their Deployment from Office-Based to Field-Based Roles

Organizational Culture

The shift from office-based to school-based environments exposes Administrative Officers II to new organizational cultures defined

by differing professional norms, resource limitations, and interpersonal dynamics. These include physical adjustments, such as working in schools without air conditioning, as well as deeper cultural adaptations, such as punctuality, unity, and community professionalism. These new norms challenge officers to recalibrate their professional behavior, encouraging collaboration, mutual support, and shared responsibility.

This context supports the lived experience of collaborative interdependence, where officers perceive their effectiveness as dependent on coordination with principals, teachers, suppliers, and community partners. This finding aligns with the Organizational Socialization Theory (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), which explains how individuals internalize workplace norms through exposure and interaction. Giauque et al. (2021) emphasize that public service workers who engage with local teams and adopt shared values show greater collaboration and adaptive leadership. Similarly, Gomez & Reyes (2019) documented that strong school-based cultures in the Philippines foster productive partnerships among education stakeholders. Through immersion in these cultures, officers develop a lived experience centered on teamwork and relational governance.

Commute Impact

Daily long commutes, rough roads, and early work hours characterize the logistical context faced by Administrative Officers in field settings. These physical and environmental stressors create persistent demands that officers must manage, often with limited institutional support. The commute's impact on context contributes to fatigue and reduced efficiency, yet it also becomes a source of endurance and adaptation. This implies that Administrative Officers must adapt to dynamic work environments, balancing desk-based administrative duties with on-site operational responsibilities. It can enhance their situational awareness, responsiveness, and relationship-building with field personnel, but also requires careful time management, resource allocation, and physical readiness to sustain productivity and well-being across varied locations.

This directly supports the lived experience of adaptive resilience, in which officers learn to cope with adversity, maintain composure, and fulfill their duties despite challenges. This aligns with Resilience Theory (Richardson, 2002), which posits that officers often develop new coping mechanisms after experiencing adversity. Additionally, McAllister et al. (2021) found that public employees exposed to harsh work environments developed greater resilience and long-term commitment. Moreover, Castro and Valenzuela (2020) noted that field-based government workers in the Philippines adapted through routinized responses and acceptance. The taxing commute, while burdensome, helps promote a resilient identity and outlook.

Family Relationships

Deployment disrupts family routines, reducing time spent with spouses, children, and elderly dependents. At the same time, many officers continue to fulfill caregiving responsibilities while working in the field, blending their personal and professional roles. Despite these tensions, officers often draw strength from family members who understand and affirm their service.

This context reinforces the lived experience of a holistic caregiver identity, in which Administrative Officers embrace both professional and familial responsibilities. Role Theory (Biddle, 1986) posits that individuals strive to harmonize, rather than separate, work and family roles. This also aligns with Pangcatan (2022), who found that public workers, especially in collectivist cultures like the Philippines, tend to apply home-based caregiving values to workplace roles, fostering empathy and multitasking skills. The family thus becomes both a constraint and a source of motivation, shaping a lived experience grounded in interconnectedness and a sense of duty across various domains.

Professional Development

Field deployment accelerates professional development, providing Administrative Officers with opportunities to enhance their communication, budgeting, procurement, and policy implementation skills. Many officers report applying what they learned in college or through prior work experience in practical field situations, such as studying DepEd orders or leading community engagement efforts.

This context supports the lived experience of pragmatic knowledge application, where officers value learning through doing and adapt existing knowledge to meet current demands. This aligns with De Guzman and Uy (2019), who documented that Filipino education staff relied heavily on learned knowledge in the absence of formal training. Through reflective learning, officers develop a practical, solution-focused lived experience. In the same vein, Guerra-López and Hutchinson (2021) found that field-based education officers became more effective when they engaged in performance-based tasks that required real-time learning and strategic application of knowledge.

Coping Strategies

The complexity and pressure of field assignments compel officers to adopt a range of coping strategies, including time management, task prioritization, assertiveness, and collaboration. These strategies are not just responses to stress; they are proactive tools for maintaining productivity and psychological balance. Officers often describe becoming more systematic and focused as a result of these routines.

These behaviors reinforce the lived experience of an efficiency orientation, in which officers internalize discipline, time consciousness, and performance focus. This aligns with Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 2019), which emphasizes that clear goals and effective

planning strategies enhance work outcomes. Additionally, it aligns with Brennan et al. (2021), who observed that multitasking and time management are crucial in complex educational systems, particularly when administrative manpower is stretched thin. Additionally, Castro and Valenzuela (2020) found that coping behaviors, such as assertiveness and checklist-making, were common among resilient local officers. Thus, coping strategies serve as the behavioral scaffolding for a lived experience anchored in structure, purpose, and measurable progress.

Emerging Themes on the Insights of Administrative Officers

Career Advancement Aspirations

The theme of career advancement aspirations reflects the desire of Administrative Officers for upward mobility within the Department of Education (DepEd) or related government agencies. Many officers envision themselves seeking promotion, assuming higher positions, or pursuing professional growth through training and further education. This vision aligns with a future-oriented, achievement-driven self-perception, shaped by exposure to field-level challenges that have enhanced their competence and visibility.

This aspiration is best explained by Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory (Super, 1990), which emphasizes that career development is a dynamic process influenced by self-concept and unfolds across stages such as exploration, establishment, and advancement. Beynon et al. (2020) support this, noting that public sector workers who undergo significant role changes often develop renewed clarity about their career goals and trajectories. In the Philippine context, Domingo (2022) found that many DepEd administrative personnel view field deployment as a stepping stone toward leadership roles, especially when accompanied by skill enhancement and network expansion. This highlights how future career aspirations are tied to a sense of growth and professional legitimacy.

External Mobility Intentions

Some Administrative Officers, however, express external mobility intentions, which include plans to resign, apply for overseas opportunities, or transfer to other government agencies. These intentions stem from perceived disparities in workload, inadequate compensation, lack of recognition, or limited career progression. Officers often compare their current realities with perceived better options elsewhere.

This aligns with Ng and Feldman (2020), who found that dissatisfaction with organizational support and work-life balance are strong predictors of turnover intentions among mid-career public employees. Similarly, Lazaro and Tarrayo (2021) observed that administrative staff in the Philippines often contemplate inter-agency or overseas mobility when workplace demands outweigh perceived benefits. Thus, this theme reflects a future-self-perception rooted in seeking fulfillment and equity, even outside the current institutional framework.

Organizational Retention Intentions

Conversely, some Administrative Officers demonstrate organizational retention intentions, showing willingness to stay in their roles, though often conditionally. Officers who express this sentiment usually cite job security, commitment to public service, or satisfaction with their current work environment. However, retention is often contingent upon the organization addressing concerns such as workload, staffing, and professional development opportunities.

This retention-oriented mindset is supported by Organizational Commitment Theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991), particularly the continuance and affective commitment dimensions. Officers may stay due to emotional attachment, alignment with the agency's mission, or recognition of the practical benefits of public service employment. Al-Hussaini et al. (2020) concluded that retention in the public sector is strongly tied to perceived organizational justice and support. In the Philippine context, Reyes and Santos (2021) found that administrative employees were more likely to remain if they saw improvements in working conditions or were provided with professional support. Thus, this theme reflects a conditionally loyal future-self perspective, shaped by hope for institutional responsiveness.

Entrepreneurship Aspirations

A smaller but significant group of Administrative Officers expresses entrepreneurial aspirations, envisioning a future in which they leave public service to establish their own businesses. Motivations include financial independence, flexible schedules, and a desire for creative or personal fulfillment. This indicates a shift in self-perception from a structured public employee role to that of an autonomous, self-directed business owner. This aligns with Liñán and Fayolle (2019), who highlighted that entrepreneurial intention often rises among professionals in bureaucratic roles who seek autonomy and income diversification. In the Philippine context, Villanueva and Cruz (2021) found that public servants, particularly those in mid-career, often pursue small businesses as an exit strategy or post-retirement plan. This entrepreneurial outlook signals a future self-perception centered on agency, innovation, and personal freedom.

Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that the transition of Administrative Officers from office-based to field-based roles represents a shift from routine administrative tasks to a more dynamic, integrated, and community-responsive form of service. These experiences, shaped by environmental, social, and institutional contexts, align with the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. According to

Organizational Socialization Theory (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), officers internalize organizational norms, values, and operational expectations, effectively adapting to the professional culture of school-based environments. Role Theory (Biddle, 1986) is reflected in the officers' ability to balance multiple responsibilities, including administrative functions and personal roles, forming a blended professional identity. The emergence of adaptive strategies demonstrates Resilience Theory (Richardson, 2002), while purposeful routines, time management, and multitasking behaviors underscore Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 2019). Career aspirations and entrepreneurial initiatives resonate with Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory (1990), and retention intentions are explained by Organizational Commitment Theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Department of Education – Koronadal City Division implement capacity-building programs to reinforce adaptive skills, establish context-sensitive support mechanisms addressing organizational and personal challenges, and provide structured career development opportunities, mentorship, and entrepreneurial training to empower officers and mitigate attrition risks. Furthermore, future research using mixed-methods or longitudinal designs is encouraged to examine the long-term effects of field-based deployment on career progression, job satisfaction, and retention, thereby informing evidence-based policies and workforce development strategies.

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