Challenges Encountered by the Administrative Officers of the Department of Education in Lower Apayao

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ABSTRACT

Administrative officers face many challenges and find ways to cope and keep their workload manageable and their responsibilities fulfilled. This study explored the challenges encountered by the administrative officers in the Department of Education (DepEd) Lower Apayao Division. Using a mixed-method research design, the study examined their challenges and identified their coping strategies. Data were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions. Findings revealed that administrative officers face difficulties such as work overload, limited resources, lack of training opportunities, and communication barriers. Moreover, evolving policy demands and technological advancements intensified these challenges. Despite these obstacles, administrative officers demonstrated resilience and resourcefulness, often employing innovative strategies to manage their workload and maintain service quality. The study recommends regular capacity-building activities, improved resource allocation, and stronger institutional support to enhance administrative efficiency. These highlight the critical role administrative officers play in educational management and emphasize the need for systemic reforms to better support them in their duties.

Keywords: Administrative Officers, Challenges, Coping Strategies, DepEd, Apayao

1. INTRODUCTION

Across the world, administrative officers are the quiet force behind the smooth running of schools. They manage records, budgets, compliance, and daily operations which free teachers to focus on teaching. As more responsibilities shift to them, their role becomes even more vital. Yet, they often work behind the scenes with limited resources, heavy workloads, and little support. Despite these challenges, they continue to strive and carry out their tasks with dedication.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) supervises all elementary and secondary education institutions, including alternative learning systems, both public and private; and provides for the establishment and maintenance of a complete, adequate, and integrated system of basic education relevant to the goals of national development [1]. The Department of Education (DepEd) believes that the core of quality basic education is a vibrant and quality teaching workforce. Under the MATATAG Agenda, the Department is committed to enhancing the delivery of quality basic education while promoting teacher quality and teacher welfare. In this regard, the Department hereby issues the enclosed guidelines on the Immediate Reduction of Ancillary Tasks and Moratorium on the Creation or Assignment of Non-Teaching Tasks to Public School Teachers and to implement the objective of

unloading public school teachers from non-teaching tasks [2].

During the 2022 Presidential campaign, it can be recalled that President Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos Jr. noted that many teachers were performing tasks that were unrelated to their job which resulted in fatigue and burn-out that affected their quality of teaching. He said reducing the non-teaching load of teachers will help maintain a high quality of education in public schools and will help protect their mental health [3]. The said item was deployed to the different Schools Division Office (SDO) which empowers schools and Learning Centers (LC) and engages partners and communities in the delivery of quality basic education that is accessible to all [4]. One of the beneficiaries of this non-teaching item is Flora District.

Administrative officers play a crucial role in the functioning and success of any organization [5]. They are responsible for managing the administrative tasks and ensuring the smooth operation of the organization. To enhance efficiency and effectiveness, it is important to have a comprehensive understanding of the roles and responsibilities of administrative officers and to know what are the challenges they encounter that hinders them to fully deliver their responsibilities as Administrative Officer II. Administrative officers are also responsible for maintaining and managing records and documents. These include organizing and storing important documents, such as contracts, reports, and financial records. They must ensure that these documents are easily accessible and properly maintained to avoid any discrepancies or legal issues. This requires strong organizational skills and attention to detail. In addition, administrative officers are responsible for assisting the school heads in terms of office budget and expenses. They must work with the Administrative Assistant (ADAS) to keep track of expenditures, create budgets, and analyze financial data to identify areas for cost savings. This not only helps in maintaining financial stability but also enables the organization to allocate resources effectively. They also assist in the recruitment and onboarding process, ensuring that the organization has a strong workforce. Another important role of administrative officers is to handle administrative tasks related to legal and regulatory compliance. They must stay updated on the laws and regulations that affect the organization and ensure that the organization complies with them. This includes managing licenses and permits like BIR, GSIS, PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG CSC etc., as well as ensuring that the organization follows proper procedures and protocols. Moreover, administrative officers are responsible for maintaining the physical office space and equipment. This includes managing office supplies, coordinating repairs and maintenance, and ensuring that the office is a safe and comfortable environment for employees.

However, the role of administrative officers often comes with numerous challenges that can impede their ability to perform optimally. This study, titled "Challenges Encountered by the Administrative Officers of the Department of Education in Lower Apayao" seeks to identify and analyze these challenges, providing a foundation for developing targeted interventions to enhance Administrative Efficiency and Effectiveness.

According to Dulog (2024) [6], the educational administration landscape in the Philippines faces various challenges, including poor conditions of school facilities, inadequate supply of teachers, and lack of resources. While the field is evolving into a profession, with the academic graduate programs improved yet there is still some lack of legal regulations and ethical standards. Increasing demands on administrators need leaders who are able to adapt to changes in society and new technologies. Such institutions face less development because there is a lack of required qualified faculty and also less finance support. Additionally, poor research facilities and incentives lead to the poor quality of research.

All these problems need the government and institutions to raise investment in faculty development and also enhance research infrastructure with clear regulation along with ethical standards. The quality of educational administration in the Philippines will be improved with qualified faculty, course offerings, and research incentives.

Furthermore, school administrators carry the burden making a strategic decision to survive the competition in the long run while meeting the expectations of parents, funders, and donors. Also, recruiting capable and qualified teachers to teach to a whole population of students is also another highlighted issue faced by the school administrators. They also have hard time understanding the students' behaviors as the modern-day students are raised in a completely different world. Attendance also present a huge problem since absenteeism keeps on increasing within the limits of which the school administration has no control over. Administrators face staff retention challenges given smaller class sizes, whereas parental involvement is at an all-time low because of very busy schedules. They even want a higher rate in student achievement, as it is a driving factor to attract more students. But the uncertainty in the outcome of student achievement is an uncontrollable issue. Last but not the least challenge is re-creating the school curriculum to suits to prepare students for life and work in the modern society. Such challenges constitute evidence of the dynamic and demanding role of the school administrators in the 21st century. [7]

In the context of this study, challenges refer to the setbacks or problems that the administrative officers face while working. Factors include scarce resources, overloads of work with ambiguity in expectations, and lack of support that would make the administration officers incapable of executing the work successfully. All these call for challenges to be overcome for the promotion of better administrative environment for the administrators.

Additionally, efficiency refers to the ability to accomplish tasks in a timely and cost-effective manner. In the context of administrative officers, this means being able to handle multiple tasks and responsibilities efficiently without compromising the quality of work. They also have a good understanding of the organization's processes and systems, which allows them to complete tasks quickly and accurately. On the other hand, effectiveness refers to accomplishing tasks and achieving goals. An effective administrative officer understands the organization's goals and objectives and works towards achieving them. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are committed to delivering results. They are proactive innovators of processes and procedures for better results.

Given these matters, the research aims to offer insight that can inform strategies and interventions geared toward better support and resource allocation to administrative officers in Lower Apayao.

2. Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges encountered by the administrative officers of the Department of Education in Lower Apayao which could be a basis in crafting strategies to improve operations in DepEd – Lower Apayao.

Specifically, the researcher sought to give light on the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:

- age,
- sex,
- position, and
- years in service?

2. **What are the challenges encountered by the administrative officers of the Department of Education in Lower Apayao in:**
- managing resources;
- keeping up with the changing landscape of education;
- addressing unique needs of students and the community;
- managing student behavior;
- promoting student success;
- work relationship in the district; and
- relationship with stakeholders?

3. **What are the proposed strategies to address the challenges encountered by the administrative officers in:**
- managing resources;
- keeping up with the changing landscape of education;
- addressing unique needs of students and the community;
- managing student behavior;
- promoting student success;
- work relationship in the district; and
- relationship with stakeholders?

3. Conceptual Framework

The Input-Process-Output (IPO) framework of the research study provides a structured approach to studying the challenges of administrative officers in Lower Apayao. The input section includes the profile variables of respondents such as age, sex, position, and years in service along with the challenges they face in managing resources, keeping up with changes in education, addressing unique needs of students and the community, managing student behavior, promoting student success, work relationships in the district, and relationship with stakeholders.

In addition, the process outlines the steps in conducting the study, starting with securing approval from the Division Superintendent and obtaining informed consent from respondents. The next step involves distributing questionnaires via Google Forms and conducting Focus Group Discussion to collect data efficiently. Statistical tools are then used to analyze the challenges, compare differences across districts, and identify strategies used by administrative officers. Lastly, findings are summarized, and proposed solutions are formulated.

The output presents the study's findings, including the identified challenges faced by administrative officers and any significant differences between districts. It also includes proposed strategies to address these challenges. The study further provides recommendations for program development based on the analysis. The framework also ensures a systematic approach to understanding and addressing administrative challenges in the province particularly in Lower Apayao.
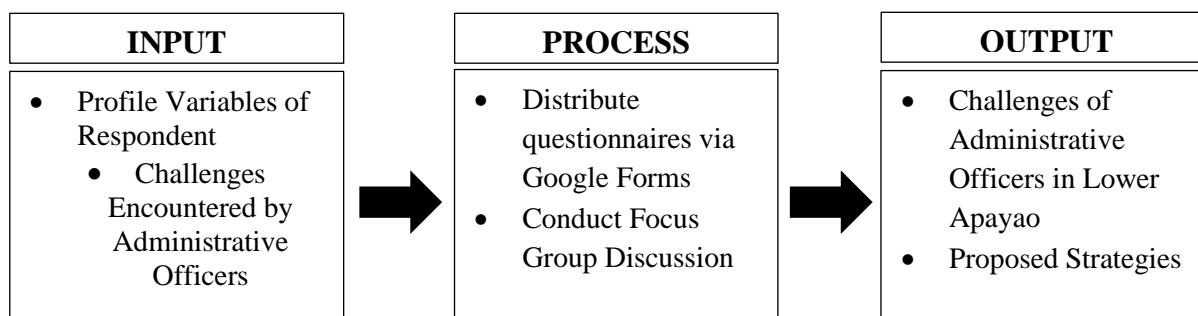
4. Research Paradigm

Figure 1. The Input – Process – Output or IPO Model of the Research

5. Hypothesis

Administrative officers in the Department of Education in Lower Apayao face challenges across various aspects of their roles, and identifying these challenges serves as a basis for proposed strategies.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to the following:

Department of Education. The findings of this study could provide valuable insights for policymakers and education leaders to design targeted interventions, training programs, and policy reforms that directly address the administrative challenges identified in the study.

Administrative Officers. By voicing the common struggles encountered in their roles, this research may empower administrative personnel and contribute to initiatives aimed at improving working conditions and job satisfaction.

Future Researchers. This study serves as a reference for future studies that wish to explore similar topics in other contexts, particularly in identifying best practices and innovative solutions to administrative challenges in education.

Community and Stakeholders. Since efficient administrative work contributes to the overall effectiveness of educational institutions, the results of this study indirectly benefit students, parents, and the broader community by promoting improved service delivery within schools.

6. Definition of Terms

The following are defined operationally based on the context of the study:

Administrative Officers – Non-teaching staff in DepEd Lower Apayao who handle office work like record-keeping, budgeting, filing, and supporting school operations.

Challenges – Problems or difficulties that make it hard for administrative officers to do their jobs well, such as too much work, lack of resources, or unclear duties.

Non-Teaching Tasks – Office duties not related to teaching, such as paperwork, reports, and managing school supplies or finances.

Department of Education (DepEd) – The government agency in charge of all public and private basic education in the Philippines.

Strategies – Simple ways or solutions used by administrative officers to deal with problems and improve how they work.

7. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design to examine the challenges faced by administrative officers in the Department of Education in Lower Apayao. The quantitative part involves the use of a structured questionnaire with close-ended questions allowed respondents to select challenges they encounter. The qualitative component includes open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide insights into their strategies and interventions for addressing these challenges. Additionally, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted to facilitate an exploration of shared experiences, perceptions, and best practices among administrative officers which helped gain qualitative findings.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in Lower Apayao, a province in the Cordillera Administrative Region. Lower Apayao comprises several districts, including Flora, Sta. Marcela, Luna, and Pudtol, which operate under the Department of Education (DepEd).
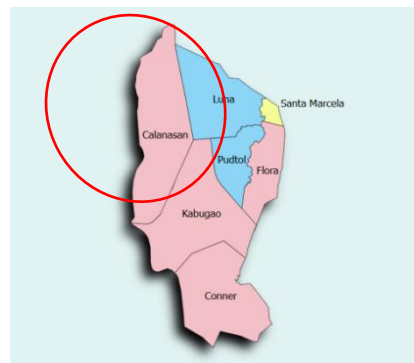

Figure 2. Research Setting

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study comprised 40 administrative officers (AOs) from schools in Lower Apayao, specifically from the districts of Flora, Sta. Marcela, Luna, and Pudtol**.** These AOs were selected using purposive sampling as they were the most relevant participants due to their direct knowledge and experience on administrative challenges across districts. The table below presents the distribution of respondents by district.

District	Male	Female	Respondents
Flora	2	7	9
Sta. Marcela	3	4	7
Luna	1	12	13
Pudtol	1	10	11
Total	**7**	**33**	**40**

Figure 3. Respondents of the Study by District

Research Instrument

The study employed a semi-structured questionnaire which is a combination of closed-ended questions for quantitative analysis and open-ended questions to gather qualitative answers. Part I gathered the

respondents' demographic profiles, Part II identified the challenges encountered by administrative officers, and Part III explored the strategies and intervention they employ to address these challenges.

The instrument was adapted from the study of Maca (2023) titled "Problems of Educational Administration: Challenges, Coping Mechanisms, and Innovative Strategies of Non-Teaching Personnel to Improve the Administrative Management System", and revised based on the recommendations of the panelists.

Research Procedure

Research plays a vital role in advancing knowledge and addressing various challenges. However, the success of research is dependent upon the implementation of appropriate procedure.

Primarily, ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Division Superintendent of Apayao to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines and protocols. Upon approval, informed consent was secured from all participants. This included their voluntary participation and guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Following this, the questionnaire was then administered electronically via Google Forms, providing participants with greater accessibility and flexibility while minimizing disruptions to their professional responsibilities. The FGD was also scheduled at a convenient time for the participants. After the data collection, responses were carefully reviewed and analyzed to identify recurring patterns, challenges, and the strategies employed by administrative officers.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in this study to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize and interpret the data, providing a clear overview of the distribution of responses. Additionally, qualitative data from open-ended survey responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, themes, and categories related to the strategies and interventions employed by the administrative officers.

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the study's findings based on the collected data. It analyzes and interprets the results in relation to the research objectives which highlight the challenges faced and coping strategies by the administrative officers of the Department of Education in Lower Apayao.

PROFILE VARIABLES OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
25 – 29	8	20
30 – 34	14	35
35 – 39	9	22.50
40 – 44	4	10
45 – 50	5	12.50
TOTAL	**40**	**100**
Sex	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	7	17.50

Female	33	82.50
TOTAL	**40**	**100**
Years in Service	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1 – 3	17	42.50
4 – 6	9	22.50
7 – 9	7	17.50
10 – 12	5	12.50
13 &above	2	5.00
TOTAL	**40**	**100**

The table reveals the profile of the respondents based on age, sex, and years in service. In terms of age, the majority of respondents belong to the 30–34 age groups, comprising 14 individuals (35%). This indicates that the sample is primarily composed of individuals in their early thirties. The next largest group is the 35–39 age range, with 9 respondents (22.50%). This implies that a significant portion of the respondents are in their mid to late thirties. The 25–29 age group consisted of 8 respondents (20%), showing that younger adults are moderately represented. Respondents aged 40–44 and 45–50 are less represented, with 5 (12.50%) and 4 respondents (10%), respectively. The age distribution shows a pattern where most of the respondents are clustered between 30 and 39 years old. This further indicates that the sample is skewed toward individuals in their early to late thirties. Also, it shows that representation decreases for older age groups, suggesting that the sample is more reflective of younger to middle-aged adults.

Regarding sex, the sample is predominantly female, with 33 respondents (82.5%), while only 7 respondents (17.5%) are male. This indicates that the sample is dominated by female participants. The big difference between male and female respondents implies that the sample is predominantly female, which may influence the overall findings and interpretations depending on the context of the study.

In terms of years in service, it reveals that the largest group consists of respondents with 1–3 years of service, having 17 respondents (42.5%). This suggests that a significant portion of the workforce is relatively new to their roles. The second-largest group includes those with 4–6 years of service, with 9 respondents (22.50%). This indicates a steady retention of staff beyond the initial years of employment. Further observation of the data revealed that respondents with 7–9 years of service with 7 respondents (17.50%), showing a decline in retention as tenure increases. Also, those with 10–12 years of service represent 5 respondents (12.50%) while only 2 respondents (5%) have served for 13 years and above, which highlights a smaller proportion of long-term employees.

9. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Table 2. Challenges Encountered by AOs

Challenges	Flora (f)	Luna (f)	Sta. Marcela (f)	Pudtol (f)	Total	Rank
Managing Resources						

1. Insufficient Funds	8	12	7	11	38	1
2. Lack of resources (materials, equipment)	9	12	6	10	37	2
3. Poor infrastructure	5	6	3	4	18	3
Keeping with the Changing Landscapes of Education						
1. Limited professional development opportunities	10	12	7	10	39	1
2. Difficulty integrating technology	3	10	3	6	22	2
3. Resistance to new teaching methodologies	5	4	4	5	18	3
Addressing Unique Needs of Students and the Community						
1. Diverse student backgrounds	9	13	6	11	39	1
2. Lack community support	5	11	4	8	28	2
3. Language barriers	1	1	2	4	8	3
Managing Student Behavior						
1. Discipline issues	8	13	7	10	38	1
2. Lack of support from parents	5	10	6	9	30	3
3. Insufficient training for behavior management	9	11	6	11	37	2
Promoting Student Success						
1. Low student motivation	8	12	5	11	36	1
2. Poor academic performance	8	11	5	9	33	2
3. Limited access to learning resource	6	7	4	9	26	3
Work Relationship in the District						
1. Lack of communication	4	11	2	4	21	2
2. Conflicts between staff	3	6	1	4	14	3
3. Heavy workload	8	12	7	10	37	1
Relationship with Stakeholders						
1. Lack of engagement from parents/community	9	13	7	10	39	1
2. Misalignment of goals with external partners	2	8	3	5	18	3
3. Limited resources for collaboration	4	7	4	10	25	2

Managing Resources

In managing resources, the Insufficient Funds was ranked as the biggest challenge across districts, with a total count of 38. This shows that money problems are a major issue in most of the areas. Lack of

materials and equipment was also a common problem, ranking first in Flora, and second in the other municipalities. This suggests that not having enough funds leads to not having enough tools and supplies. Poor infrastructure was ranked third in all four municipalities, meaning it is a concern, but not as urgent as funding and resources. Overall, the data shows that these areas need more financial support and basic resources to improve their services.

This suggests that financial constraints are the root issue in resource management across the four municipalities. With insufficient funding, it becomes difficult to procure necessary materials and improve infrastructure, which in turn affects service delivery and institutional performance. The consistent ranking of lack of materials/equipment as the second major concern highlights how limited funds translate directly to a shortage of educational and administrative tools. Moreover, the third-ranking of poor infrastructure across all municipalities implies that although infrastructure is acknowledged as a challenge, stakeholders may prioritize immediate operational needs on funding and resources over long-term facility improvement. These findings are consistent with the study by Caingcoy (2021) [8], which found that in many rural areas in the Philippines, limited financial resources lead to shortages in school facilities, instructional materials, and maintenance efforts which affects both administrators and students.

Keeping with the Changing Landscapes of Education

Limited professional development opportunities was ranked as the first issue by all four municipalities. This indicates that many administrators feel they lack access to adequate training or upskilling opportunities which are essential for effectively managing schools in a rapidly changing educational environment. Difficulty integrating technology was the second most common challenge which suggests that while there is a push for digital transformation in schools, administrators are struggling with implementation which is possibly due to limited resources, skills, or support. Meanwhile, resistance to new teaching methodologies ranked third across districts. This indicates that encouraging teachers to adopt innovative practices remains a concern, likely due to a lack of training or mindset shifts needed to embrace change.

These findings imply that school administrators are at the frontline of educational reform but may not be fully equipped to lead such changes. Without continuous and relevant professional development, administrators may find it difficult to make informed decisions, support their teachers, or implement new policies effectively. Their challenges in technology integration also point to a broader issue, when school leaders themselves are not confident in digital tools, it becomes harder to foster a culture of innovation within the school. Furthermore, the observed resistance to new teaching methods may reflect deeper issues, such as lack of motivation, fear of the unknown, or inadequate guidance from leadership.

These concerns are supported by research from Hammad and Norris (2020) [9], who found that school leaders in under-resourced areas often lack opportunities for sustained professional development, which limits their capacity to lead change effectively. Similarly, Bush (2020) [10] emphasizes that the success of school reforms, particularly in the areas of technology and pedagogy, depends heavily on how well school administrators are prepared and supported in their roles. Without this foundation, efforts to modernize schools may face continued resistance and slow progress.

Addressing Unique Needs of Students and the Community

Across all four municipalities, the top concern is diverse student backgrounds with 39 counts. This diversity affects how students learn and how administrators plan programs and services. The second common challenge is lack of community support, which means there is limited involvement from parents, local organizations, and other stakeholders. This makes it harder to implement school activities

and reach educational goals. The third challenge, language barriers, also creates difficulties, especially in areas where learners speak different dialects or indigenous languages that may not be used in classroom instruction.

These findings show that administrative officers must work hard to be inclusive, build stronger community ties, and address communication gaps. Without enough support from the community and with students coming from many different backgrounds, it becomes more difficult to manage schools effectively and provide equal learning opportunities. This aligns with Gay (2010) [11], who emphasized that school leaders must be culturally responsive to help all students succeed.

Managing Student Behavior

The most common issue is discipline issues which indicate that behavior problems are widespread and require immediate attention. Second in line is the insufficient training for behavior management which suggests that many school staff and even administrators may lack the proper knowledge and strategies to handle discipline problems effectively. Another challenge is the lack of support from parents, which was ranked consistently as the third. When parents do not actively help reinforce discipline at home, it becomes harder for schools to manage student behavior successfully.

These results imply that school administrators face difficulties not only because of student misconduct but also due to limited training and weak school-home collaboration. Without proper training, administrators and teachers may struggle to apply consistent and effective behavior management strategies. Moreover, when parents are not involved, students receive mixed signals between home and school which makes discipline less effective. This is supported by Simonsen et al. (2014) [12], who stress that administrators must be equipped with evidence-based training in behavior management to ensure positive school environments.

Promoting Student Success

Low student motivation was the top concern in all four municipalities as it has 36 counts. This suggests that many students are not fully engaged in their studies, which can affect their learning and future outcomes. Poor academic performance also ranked high, appearing as either the first or second challenge in every municipality. This reflects how lack of interest and weak foundational skills often lead to lower grades and learning gaps. Limited access to learning resources was ranked third in most areas which show that students still face barriers to getting the tools they need for effective learning.

These findings imply that student success is affected by both internal and external factors. When learners are not motivated and lack proper academic support, their performance naturally suffers. Furthermore, limited access to learning materials especially in remote or underfunded areas makes it harder for students to catch up or improve. For administrative officers, this means focusing not only on academic interventions but also on strategies that spark student interest and ensure learning tools are available. These challenges are reflected in the findings of Schunk et al. (2014) [13], who emphasized that motivation is a key driver of student achievement. Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) [14] stressed that equitable access to learning resources is essential for improving educational outcomes, especially in disadvantaged communities.

Work Relationship in the District

Heavy workload ranked first in all municipalities which shows that administrative staff are often overwhelmed with tasks, which can lead to stress, delays, and reduced productivity. Lack of communication ranked second in all areas, indicating that important messages or updates may not always be clearly shared among staff, leading to misunderstandings or inefficiencies. Conflicts between

staff consistently ranked third which suggests that while disagreements happen, they may be less urgent but still affect teamwork and morale.

These results imply that improving work relationships depends on managing workloads and strengthening communication. When administrative officers are overloaded, they have less time for coordination, feedback, or resolving issues. Poor communication also contributes to conflict, especially when staff members are unclear about their roles or expectations. For district offices to function smoothly, there needs to be a balance between task demands and strong professional relationships. This is supported by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) [15] who found that excessive workload and poor relationships contribute to burnout and job dissatisfaction among school personnel.

Relationship with Stakeholders

The most pressing issue is the lack of engagement from parents and the community which ranked first in each district. This shows that many schools struggle to get consistent support or involvement from families and local groups, which can affect school activities and student outcomes. The second one is limited resources for collaboration, such as funding or time to conduct joint projects. This was ranked either second or tied for first in most areas. The third concern is misalignment of goals with external partners, which refers to differences in priorities between schools and outside organizations.

These findings suggest that administrative officers face difficulty in forming strong, united efforts with stakeholders due to low involvement, limited support, and differing objectives. When parents and community groups are not actively engaged, schools miss out on valuable input and shared responsibility. Misaligned goals with external partners may also cause confusion or lack of progress in joint initiatives. Research by Epstein (2011) [16] supports these findings stating that meaningful school-community partnerships require active collaboration, shared goals, and continuous communication. Without these, efforts often become disconnected or ineffective.

10. STRATEGIES PROPOSED TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Table 3. Ranking of Strategies in Addressing the Challenges

Managing Resources	f	Rank
Training Staff in Effective Resource Management	10	1
Planning and Prioritizing Resources Based on Needs	9	2
Infrastructure Improvement and Resource Utilization	5	3
Budgeting, Funding, and Financial Planning	4	4
Strengthening Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement	3	5.5
Monitoring and Technology Integration	3	5.5
Keeping up with the Changing Landscape of Education	**f**	**Rank**
Ongoing Professional Development for Teachers	10	1
Collaboration with Education Experts	6	3
Training on New Strategies, Techniques, and ICT Integration	6	3
Curriculum Development and Adaptation	6	3
Adaptability to Change and Continuous Learning	5	5
Addressing Unique Needs of Students and the Community	**f**	**Rank**

	f	Rank
Promotion of Inclusive Education	11	1
Individualized Support for Students with Special Needs	7	2.5
Community Engagement and Collaboration	7	2.5
Addressing Students' Basic and External Needs	5	4
Counseling and Guidance Support	4	5
Managing Student Behavior	**f**	**Rank**
Implementation of Positive Discipline and Rewards	10	1
Role Modeling and Character Development	8	2
Parental Involvement in Discipline	6	3
Behavioral Training and Management	4	4.5
Communication and Understanding Student Behavior	4	4.5
Promoting Student Success	**f**	**Rank**
Academic Support and Performance Enhancement	10	1
Career Guidance and Development	7	2
Motivation and Recognition	6	3.5
Extracurricular Engagement	6	3.5
Communication and Parental Involvement	4	5
Work Relationship in the District	**f**	**Rank**
Communication and Conflict Resolution	10	1
Team-Building and Strengthening Bonds	9	2
Recognition and Motivation	5	3.5
Meetings and Time Management	5	3.5
Ethical Behavior and Professionalism	4	5
Personnel and Organizational Support	2	6
Relationship with Stakeholders	**f**	**Rank**
Stakeholder Involvement in Decision-Making	10	1
Transparent Communication and Transactions	9	2
Collaboration and Partnerships	7	3
Meetings and Regular Updates	6	4

The table reveals the ranking of the proposed strategies in addressing the different challenges of the administrative officers. In terms of managing resources, Training Staff in Effective Resource Management ranks highest with a frequency of 10, suggesting that a strong focus on human capital development is a foundation of resource efficiency. It was followed by Planning and Prioritizing Resources Based on Needs with a frequency of 9, reflecting the recognition that well-organized resource distribution improves overall effectiveness and performance. Third in rank is the Infrastructure Improvement and Resource Utilization with a frequency of 5, implying that enhancing physical and operational infrastructure have moderate impact, but not as urgent as staff training or planning. Budgeting, Funding, and Financial Planning with a frequency of 4, showing that while financial management seems important, it was given less priority compared to training and strategic planning. Lastly, Strengthening Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement and Monitoring and Technology Integration are tied at rank 5.5 with a frequency of 3 each. This recommends that while collaboration

and technological advancement revealed its importance, they are viewed with lesser priority compared to internal capacity building and strategic resource allocation. Moreover, the data shows that human resource development and strategic planning were the top priorities in managing resources, reflecting an emphasis on improving internal efficiency before focusing on financial and technological aspects. Lower prioritization of partnerships and technology integration suggests that these areas may need more attention to achieve balanced and comprehensive resource management.

In Keeping up with the Changing Landscape of Education, Ongoing Professional Development for Teachers ranked highest with a frequency of 10, implying that continuous training and skill enhancement for teachers is the most crucial factor in keeping pace with educational changes. This reflects a strong emphasis on equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and tools to handle evolving educational demands effectively. Secondly, Collaboration with Education Experts, Training on New Strategies, Techniques, and ICT Integration, and Curriculum Development and Adaptation were tied at rank 3 with a frequency of 6 each. This reflects a balanced recognition that working with experts, updating teaching methods, integrating technology, and adapting the curriculum are equally important for maintaining relevance and improving educational outcomes. Lastly, Adaptability to Change and Continuous Learning ranked fifth with a frequency of 5, showing that while fostering a culture of adaptability and lifelong learning is valued, it is considered slightly less important than professional development and technical or curriculum-based improvements. The data highlight that empowering teachers through professional development is the top priority in adapting to educational changes. Collaboration, strategy updates, and curriculum adaptation are also highly valued, emphasizing a well-rounded approach to educational improvement. However, the data imply that enhancing adaptability and promoting a mindset of continuous learning may need more focus to support long-term resilience in the educational landscape.

In Addressing Unique Needs of Students and the Community, the table reveals that Promotion of Inclusive Education ranks highest with a frequency of 11, which gives focus on ensuring all students, regardless of background or ability, have equal access to quality education that also viewed as the most critical approach. This idea recommends a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and fostering an inclusive learning environment. Second in rank was Individualized Support for Students with Special Needs and Community Engagement and Collaboration having a frequency of 7 each. This shows a balanced focus on providing targeted support to students with special needs and actively involving the community in educational efforts, recognizing that both internal and external factors contribute to student success. Addressing Students' Basic and External Needs ranks fourth with a frequency of 5, pointing out that while meeting students' fundamental needs (e.g., nutrition, safety) is important, it is considered slightly less urgent than academic and social inclusion strategies. Lastly, Counseling and Guidance Support ranks fifth with a frequency of 4, revealing that less focus was given to this area even though emotional and psychological support is valued. The data further reflects a clear prioritization of inclusive education and targeted support for students with special needs, considering active community involvement. However, these seem to appear to be secondary to broader systemic strategies for ensuring equity and inclusion.

The table also shows that Implementation of Positive Discipline and Rewards ranks highest with a frequency of 10, which implies that emphasizing good behavior through positive reinforcement and reward systems is considered the most effective approach in managing student behavior. This also reflects a need for a motivation-based discipline rather than punishment-based discipline. Role Modeling

and Character Development ranks second with a frequency of 8, indicating the importance of teachers and school staff serving as positive role models and fostering moral and ethical growth among students. Third in rank is Parental Involvement in Discipline with a frequency of 6, showing that collaboration with parents in reinforcing school-based behavioral expectations is valued as a key factor in managing student conduct. Lastly, Behavioral Training and Management and Communication and Understanding Student Behavior are tied at rank 4.5 with a frequency of 4 each. This shows that while structured training and open communication about behavior are recognized as important, they are viewed as less crucial than direct positive reinforcement and parental involvement. The data emphasize the relevance of positive discipline and rewards as the most effective strategy for managing student behavior, followed closely by character development and parental involvement. Also, the focus of managing student behavior becomes more on fostering positive behavior through motivation and collaborative support systems rather than on behavioral training and open communication.

In terms of promoting student success, Academic Support and Performance Enhancement ranks highest with a frequency of 10, revealing that providing direct academic assistance and strategies to improve student performance is the most critical factor in ensuring student success, putting a strong emphasis on strengthening core academic competencies. Career Guidance and Development ranks second with a frequency of 7, emphasizing that helping students explore career options and prepare for future opportunities is important in shaping long-term success. The third in rank are Motivation and Recognition and Extracurricular Engagement with a frequency of 6 each. This suggests that motivating students through acknowledgment and encouraging participation in extracurricular activities are seen as equally important in fostering a well-rounded educational experience. Lastly, Communication and Parental Involvement ranks fifth with a frequency of 4, showing that engaging parents and maintaining open communication are perceived to provide less impact than direct academic and career-focused support. The table also reflects a clear focus on enhancing academic performance and career preparedness as the primary drivers of student success. Motivation, recognition, and extracurricular involvement are also considered for promoting holistic development, while parental involvement and communication, appeared to be of secondary priorities.

In terms of Work Relationship in the District, Communication and Conflict Resolution ranks highest with a frequency of 10, which imply that maintaining clear communication and effectively addressing conflicts are the most critical elements in fostering strong work relationships. This geared towards the importance of open dialogue and conflict management in ensuring a harmonious work environment. Second in rank was Team-Building and Strengthening Bonds having a frequency of 9, highlighting the value placed on fostering collaboration and building strong interpersonal relationships among staff members. Recognition and Motivation and Meetings and Time Management are tied at rank 3.5 with a frequency of 5 each. This recommended acknowledging staff efforts and ensuring efficient use of time through well-organized meetings are considered equally important for maintaining positive work dynamics. Ethical Behavior and Professionalism ranks fifth with a frequency of 4, indicating that communication and team cohesion were given more attention compared to maintaining professional integrity and ethical conduct. Lastly, Personnel and Organizational Support ranks 6 with a frequency of 2, revealing that interpersonal and operational factors were given more consideration as compared to organizational backing although both are recognized as beneficial. The table exemplifies the critical role of effective communication, conflict resolution, and team cohesion in maintaining positive work relationships. Motivation, time management, and professionalism are also valued but considered

secondary to interpersonal and operational harmony. Organizational support appears to be the least prioritized aspect of work relationships in the district.

For building strong relationships , the table reveals that Stakeholder Involvement in Decision-Making ranks highest with a frequency of 10, putting emphasis that actively engaging stakeholders in decision-making processes is the most effective strategy. This further suggests that stakeholders value having a voice and influence in organizational decisions. Second in rank was Transparent Communication and Transactions having a frequency of 9, which highlights the importance of openness and honesty in dealings with stakeholders. It focused on the idea that clear and transparent communication helps build trust and ensures accountability. Collaboration and Partnerships ranks third with a frequency of 7, dealing with the value placed on working together with stakeholders to achieve shared goals. This further emphasizes the importance of cooperative efforts in strengthening relationships. Lastly, Meetings and Regular Updates ranks fourth with a frequency of 6, which indicates that direct involvement and transparency was given more importance than keeping stakeholders informed through regular meetings and updates. The table reveals that stakeholder engagement in decision-making and maintaining transparency were the most valued strategies for strengthening relationships with stakeholders. It further views that driving factors in fostering stakeholder trust and cooperation was supported by collaboration and regular updates.

11. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations based on the presentation and discussion of the data.

SUMMARY

This study determined the challenges encountered by administrative officers of the Department of Education in Lower Apayao and the strategies they employ to address these difficulties. Specifically, it aimed to identify the challenges in managing resources, adapting to changes in education, addressing the needs of students and communities, managing student behavior, promoting student success, maintaining work relationships within the district, and engaging stakeholders. It also explored whether these challenges significantly differ across districts and presented recommended strategies and interventions.

A total of 40 administrative officers from the districts of Flora, Luna, Sta. Marcela, and Pudtol participated in the study. Using a mixed-methods research design, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured questionnaires and focus group discussions. Descriptive statistics were used to present the profile and common challenges of the respondents.

In terms of demographic profile, the majority of the respondents were aged 30–34 (35%) and 35–39 (22.5%), indicating that most participants were in their early to late thirties. Respondents aged 25–29 accounted for 20%, while those aged 40–44 and 45–50 comprised smaller proportions, at 12.5% and 10%, respectively. This suggests that the sample is generally composed of younger to middle-aged adults. In terms of sex, the sample was predominantly female, with 82.5% (33 respondents), while males accounted for only 17.5% (7 respondents), indicating a gender imbalance that may influence perspectives shared in the study. Regarding years in service, the largest group (42.5%) had 1–3 years of experience, followed by those with 4–6 years (22.5%), 7–9 years (17.5%), 10–12 years (12.5%), and only 5% with 13 years or more, showing a workforce that is relatively new to their administrative roles.

The findings revealed that the most common challenges experienced by administrative officers across all districts include insufficient funds, limited professional development, difficulty integrating technology,

discipline issues among students, low student motivation, lack of engagement from parents or community and heavy workload. This indicates that such challenges are generally shared and systemic. Moreover, the study explored several strategies and interventions proposed by the respondents, including professional development, inclusive education practices, stakeholder engagement, positive behavior reinforcement, academic support, and improved communication. These reflect the efforts of administrative officers to maintain efficiency and effectiveness despite limited resources.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The respondents were predominantly female and relatively young, with the majority falling within the 30–34 age bracket and most had between 1 to 3 years of service. Respondents were fairly distributed across the four districts, with the highest number from Pudtol. This profile indicates a workforce that is mostly early-career and female.

2. Administrative officers across all districts identified a consistent set of challenges across various aspects of their roles. In managing resources, the top concern was insufficient funds. In keeping up with the changing landscape of education, limited opportunities for professional development emerged as the most pressing issue. When addressing the unique needs of students and the community, the greatest challenge stemmed from the diverse backgrounds of students. In terms of managing student behavior, persistent discipline issues were cited as the primary concern. Promoting student success was equally difficult, with low student motivation identified as the top obstacle. Maintaining positive work relationships within districts was most affected by a lack of effective communication. Lastly, the leading challenge in managing relationships with stakeholders was the lack of engagement from parents and community members.

3. Administrative officers shared top strategies to address the respective challenges which include: training staff in effective resource management; continuous professional development; inclusive education practices; implementation of positive discipline and rewards; academic support and performance enhancement programs; communication and conflict resolution; and stakeholder involvement in decision-making. These suggest that administrative officers value experience-based solutions focused on capacity-building, collaboration, and inclusivity. They highlight the need for continuous training, stronger communication, teamwork, and stakeholder involvement to effectively address the challenges in their work environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the conclusions derived from the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Since the workforce is composed largely of early-career administrative officers, the Schools Division of Apayao should offer training and mentorship programs to support professional growth, build leadership skills, and plan long-term careers.

2. To help administrative officers overcome common challenges, schools should provide further training in managing budgets and resources. Regular training on technology and new teaching methods is also important. Promoting inclusive education and involving the community can help meet students' diverse needs. For student behavior, schools should use positive discipline and involve parents more. To support student success, they can offer tutorials, career guidance, and

extracurricular activities. Better teamwork and communication among staff should be encouraged, and workloads should be managed fairly. Lastly, schools should work closely with parents and other partners through clear communication and shared goals.

3. The Division Office should take the lead in crafting standardized yet adaptable intervention frameworks that address systemic administrative challenges across all districts. Resources and support should be distributed equitably, while allowing for district-level customization based on specific contexts.

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