An Evaluation of Non-Teaching Personnel Roles in DepEd's Service Delivery: A Policy Perspective

Frederick C. Libria
Department of Education, Camarines Norte, Philippines
Corresponding Author email: *fredericklibria@gmail.com*

Abstract

Aim: This study examines the roles and contributions of non-teaching staff in the Department of Education through a policy perspective to determine their impact on service delivery in terms of efficiency and effectiveness for learning.

Methodology: This study employed a qualitative descriptive design, utilizing policy analysis and reviewing secondary data, including statutory requirements, DepEd Orders, and government publications. The analysis was guided by administrative theory, particularly specialization and bureaucratic efficiency, and thematic analysis was conducted.

Results: The findings indicate that non-teaching personnel are vital to DepEd's operational capacity; however, shortages necessitate teachers assuming administrative duties. While reforms such as DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024, introduce measures to strengthen this capacity, staffing levels, and professional development opportunities remain insufficient. Emerging policy directions, however, highlight the growing institutional recognition of non-teaching staff as integral to education governance.

Conclusion: Sustained policy attention to the staffing levels and capacity development of non-teaching personnel is essential for efficient, learner-centered service delivery. Clarifying their support roles will help reduce teachers' administrative workload and allow them to focus more on curriculum and instruction.

Keywords: *administrative burden, service delivery, school governance, policy evaluation, bureaucratic efficiency*

INTRODUCTION

Globally, education support personnel are considered critical to the provision of quality education and the effective functioning of schools, yet they often receive inadequate recognition (Butler, 2019). In the Philippines, the Department of Education's (DepEd) mission states: "Administrators and staff, as stewards of the institution, ensure that the right enabling and supporting environment would provide for effective learning to happen". This emphasizes that a myriad of administrative and supporting functions must also take place outside the classroom for effective teaching to occur. Broadly defined, non-teaching personnel, in the basic education context, are all those employees, such as administrative officers, administrative assistants, administrative aides, school clerks, registrars, librarians, nurses, accountants, supply and records officers, janitors, security force, and other staff in all levels of an educational bureaucracy (school, division, regional, and central office). The range of functions and duties performed by non-teaching personnel can be as complex as managing school finances and keeping records, maintaining learning spaces, procuring school supplies, providing student services, including health, guidance, and library, and coordinating overall administrative tasks. In essence, non-teaching personnel enable the bureaucracy of education that allows teachers to teach and students to learn in an organized, well-supported environment.

Education policy in the Philippines has recognized the necessity of establishing clear distinctions between non-teaching personnel. The Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, otherwise known as the Republic Act No. 9155, explicitly states that "every school shall have a core of non-teaching staff to provide the school's administrative, fiscal, and auxiliary services." This put the concept of administrative support into the governance framework of basic education. The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 9155 define non-teaching personnel as those "not actually doing classroom teaching but indirectly and indispensably contributing to the delivery of our services to those whom we provide education," covering various administrative and support functions

at all levels of governance. DepEd Order No. 36, s. 2013, which promulgated DepEd's vision and mission, acknowledges that teachers deliver learning, while administrators and other personnel provide the environment to support the learning process. Clearly, the Philippine education bureaucracy is envisioned as a collective effort of teaching and non-teaching personnel. Theoretically, this delineation of roles conforms to classical administrative principles of division of labor and specialization, whereby support staff carry out ancillary functions so that the "operating core," which is the teachers, perform their primary function of instruction. From a public administration perspective, such specialization should create greater efficiency and productivity, as tasks are carried out by those best positioned and trained for them.

However, despite these policy aspirations, DepEd has already experienced ongoing challenges in fully implementing these ideals into practice. Public school teachers have endured a series of non-teaching and administrative roles in addition to a teaching load. Teachers have reported spending a substantial amount of time on clerical duties, organizational duties, and other responsibilities unrelated to teaching; these tasks take away time and effort from teaching.

Research Gap and Significance

While existing educational research tends to emphasize teachers and pedagogy, much less attention has been devoted to the institutional and functional roles of non-teaching personnel in educational service delivery. This study aims to remedy that gap by examining the contribution of non-teaching personnel to basic education service delivery from a public policy and administrative perspective. By situating the issue in relation to administrative theory and providing a critique of recent DepEd policies and procedures, the study offers an important lens of educational governance in the Philippines. The outcome of the study aims to offer some refinement to policy addressing teacher workload through effective utilization of non-teaching personnel, thereby enhancing governance and impact on quality in education.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Non-teaching or support staff play important roles in education systems globally. Research internationally shows that support staff contribute positively to school effectiveness and student well-being, even if their work is often "invisible" in the context of the classroom. For instance, in some Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, spending on non-teaching staff accounts for around 20% of total education staff expenditure, and for some countries, such as the United States, Chile, and Argentina, it is more than 30%, indicating that there is considerable spending on the administrative side of education in addition to teaching. High-performing systems invest in all aspects of the education workforce, including administration and support staff, to provide a functioning learning environment, but some lower-income countries start with under-investment in these types of staff. A recent study in Tanzania noted that most schools do not have sufficient non-teaching personnel. There was also a perception from school leaders that these staff were not real players, and, therefore, very little training was provided. This experience mirrors what we see in the Philippines, where non-teaching personnel have, in the past, been undervalued and underprovided.

Various local research and reports illustrate the effect of a lack of non-teaching personnel in schools in the Philippines. The EDCOM II Year 1 Report (2024) has stated that public school teachers perform approximately 50 non-teaching tasks on top of teaching, which undermines the teaching-learning process. Moreover, surveys conducted by teacher organizations suggest that many teachers are working well over their typical 40-hour workweek due to increased clerical work. These reports show there is a relationship between teachers' workload and burnout, and support staff. In fact, it is expected that instructional delivery will be improved if teachers are freed from non-teaching responsibilities (Tumala, 2019), and early reports were positive from DepEd's pilot project to remove administrative tasks from teachers.

Newer literature recognizes the important contributions that well-trained non-teaching staff can achieve. Knowledge management systems and a strong culture of organizational learning of non-teaching staff are positively associated with aspects of service quality such as reliability and responsiveness (Vacalares & Manigo, 2022). In one study of DepEd division offices, division offices with well-trained non-teaching staff and a culture of staff professional development had higher client satisfaction ratings for their services (Benosa, 2024). This shows that when you elevate non-teaching staff with job skill training and professional development, they perform their job roles and responsibilities better and indirectly improve the teaching-learning process for students, as well as reduce the friction related to service provision. On the other hand, any shortages in non-teaching personnel and their capacity can hinder school operations and governance related to school finance. For instance, in a case study on school finance

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management, the authors found that many principals handling financial responsibilities struggled due in part to a "lack of adequate skilled manpower" in school finance officer positions (Gaspar et al., 2022). This further emphasizes that hiring and retaining highly skilled non-teaching support personnel is not just a human resource issue, but a governance issue related to being effective in non-teaching staff roles or financial officers that can ensure the school's use of educational resources is efficient, accountable, and compliant.

Worldwide, there is an increasing need to support the non-teaching personnel. Education International (2024), the federation of teachers' unions, has called on governments to invest in sufficient numbers of trained, qualified support staff with decent working conditions and pathways for careers, and to recognize them as part of the education community. In the United States, for example, there have been widespread media reports signaling that schools have had a hard time hiring non-teaching school personnel over the last few years. 83% of U.S. public schools reported difficulty filling non-teaching jobs for the SY 2023-2024 (NCES, 2023). Thus, the area of non-teaching staff shortages is not unique to the Philippines. Nevertheless, these responses need to be contextualized in each situation. The Philippines is beginning to address these shortcomings in policy initiatives through the development of new administrative positions and the removal of non-teaching activities from teachers. The literature supports such practices: both the local and international evidence suggests that the non-teaching workforce, when sufficiently staffed and developed, can lead to schools that run smoothly, more satisfied teachers, and perhaps student outcomes that improve. This study extends the above knowledge base by documenting present policies and then proposing avenues to institutionalize non-teaching supports as policy to address the findings from previous research of an implementation gap.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This research is rooted in public administration and organizational theories that provide insight into the significance of role specialization and support structures in effective service delivery. Specifically, the classical theory of division of labor by Henri Fayol, coupled with Max Weber's argument for the rational bureaucracy, creates a conceptual foundation; that by offloading ancillary and administrative duties onto support staff, the organization allows its core workers (teachers) to devote more attention to their primary duty: providing instruction, which supports effectiveness and efficiency. Further, the organizational structure model by Henry Mintzberg outlines the support staff as one of 5 parts of an organization, the others being the strategic apex, the middle line, the technostructure, and the operating core. In the case of DepEd, the non-teaching personnel represent the support staff and indirectly are servicing the operating core (teachers). This provides an outline and indication that a disruption, for example, in the support staff through lack of resources, will overload the operating core and diminish effectiveness. Lipsky's (1980) theory of street-level bureaucracy is relevant here, as teachers and even mid-level administrators take on additional work to simply keep the school going. This creates inconsistencies in service delivery and is one of the main reasons why clearly supported policy and re-sourcing non-teaching roles are important to avoid the over-reliance on front-line improvisation.

Good governance principles and New Public Management (NPM) reforms represent another part of the theoretical lens. NPM encourages "leaner but smarter" bureaucracy, with a focus on efficiency, accountability, and outcomes. In theory, one could potentially see hiring more support staff in schools as contradicting the "lean" idea; NPM approaches argue for getting the best people in positions to produce better transactional outcomes. Education bureaucracy employing more administrative staff can also be more efficient, for example, having one administrative officer working with multiple teachers could produce better returns in student learning, as each teacher takes some of their time to undertake clerical work. Therefore, from the governance lens, employing non-teaching personnel is consistent with producing better outcomes in service delivery and accountability. Non-teaching, competent staff to handle financial transactions, for instance, provide more transparency and compliance, as Gaspar et al. (2022) mention in their results on school financial management.

The conceptual framework for this study (Figure 1) connects the various ideas together. DepEd's policy frameworks, like laws, orders, and guidelines, define the intended roles and deployment of non-teaching personnel. The implementation of these policies in terms of actual staffing levels, role execution, and capacity of non-teaching staff directly influences education service delivery outcomes such as efficiency of operations, instructional time available for teaching, and quality of support services. Administrative theories (specialization, bureaucracy, street-level bureaucracy, and NPM) provide a framework to analyze the connections provided in policy and practice as scaling practice in support staffing and specialization roles (workforce element) that should lead to education services for efficiency and effectiveness. On the contrary, when there is misalignment (policy is not at the site, or

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undervaluation of non-teaching roles to practice), the consequence manifests itself as overloaded teachers and administrative bottlenecks, adversely affecting the delivery of quality educational services.
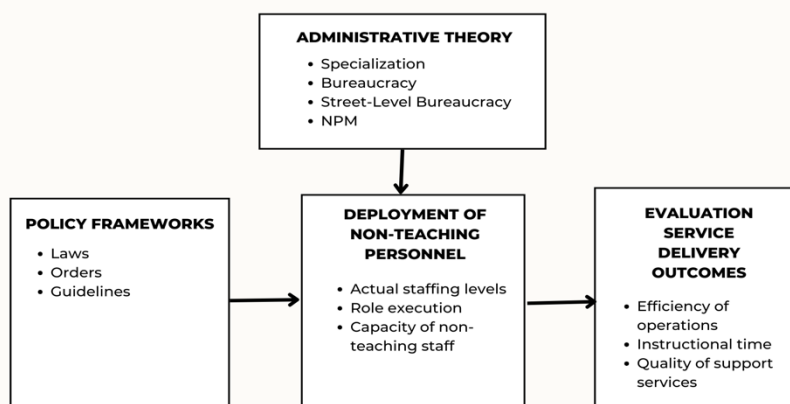

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework illustrating how policy frameworks and administrative theory inform the deployment of non-teaching personnel, which in turn affects education service delivery outcomes. Ensuring the "right people in the right job" (specialization) and adequate support staffing is theorized to improve efficiency and quality of service delivery, while misalignment leads to teacher overload and service gaps.

Statement of the Problem

The Philippine basic education system faces a misalignment between policy and implementation regarding non-teaching personnel. The bureaucracy has failed to provide sufficient human resources in the support staff category required for school operations. This could be viewed as a breach of the principle of specialization, as the teacher's role as the operating core is doing tasks outside their specialization of teaching, thereby decreasing their effectiveness. The issue compromises the anticipated efficiency gains from division of labor and is divergent from the policy aspiration of teachers as learning facilitators, enabled by a competent administration. The issue is pressing and important: if not solved, it will continue to undermine the effective provision of educational services and the welfare of teachers. This study was conducted to examine this issue from a policy perspective, exploring the role of non-teaching personnel in DepEd's service delivery, and identifying areas for improvement so that what is aspired to occur in policy happens in practice.

Objectives

This study aims to evaluate the roles and contributions of non-teaching personnel in DepEd's service delivery from a policy and administrative perspective. It seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:
1. To identify the roles and responsibilities of non-teaching staff, as outlined in DepEd policies and administrative provisions.
2. To examine the existing DepEd policies and guidelines regarding non-teaching staff deployment and functions.
3. To assess the challenges or gaps that hinder the effectiveness of non-teaching staff in service delivery.
4. To analyze policy or administrative reforms that address the role of non-teaching staff and their alignment with principles of public administration and good governance.

METHODS

Research Design

This research study utilized a qualitative, descriptive research design with a policy analysis focus. Instead of collecting original data from respondents, this research analyzed documentary data from relevant public policies, official reports, and scholarly literature. The design is, by definition, desk mode research or content analysis to examine non-teaching personnel roles, considering existing policy frameworks and administrative theory, and

through a secondary document research approach. Review of documents like public policy documentary data, laws, DepEd orders, memoranda, and related secondary research for a richer picture of how non-teaching personnel are utilized in DepEd and how this has changed or been contested over time. This analysis is evaluative and exploratory. It is evaluative in that it examines the sufficiency and effectiveness of current policies. It is exploratory in that it integrates concepts from administrative theory, or principles of bureaucracy, organizational roles, and frameworks for service delivery to illuminate the findings and offer recommendations for improved performance. There is no hypothesis testing, but instead, the research questions are approached through narrative synthesis of evidence.

Sources of Data and Sampling

There were no human respondents in this investigation. Rather, the subjects of analysis were policy and data documents, including the legal mandates and issuances by DepEd. In choosing sources for analysis, the researcher sought authenticity and relevance. The official documents that were used to determine the legal mandates were found in DepEd and government websites, and were, when possible, the final signed versions of the policies. The academic and evaluation studies were in a limited number of credible publications or referenced databases, such as peer-reviewed journal articles or recognized research repositories. Statistics for analysis from staff and education outcomes were in national or provincial government databases or credible news reports with quotes from officials, where required. Because the researcher was able to source multiple sources for analysis, there was triangulation of the information and increased reliability of conclusions.

Instruments

As the study did not engage in surveys or interviews, there was no standard questionnaire or interview schedule. Instead, the research instrument was a documentary data analysis guide, which had been devised by the researcher. Importantly, its purpose was to detail key themes and variables that the researcher intended to extract from all documents. The guide was essentially a checklist and a matrix that were used during the content analysis of documents. In addition, the researcher used an evaluation framework, grounded within policy analysis, to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of service delivery through non-teaching personnel. While not a formalized instrument, these criteria assisted in the extraction of insights. Equity was engaged in the context of whether all learners have access to equitable amounts of non-teaching support or whether certain learners at certain schools, urban and rural, large and small, are disadvantaged by not having non-teaching personnel.

Data Collection

This research employed a document-based approach to data collection, which was suitable for the qualitative and policy nature of the research. The researcher did not collect primary data through surveys or interviews but instead used secondary sources for a broad depiction of the role and function of non-teaching personnel within the Department of Education (DepEd) from May to July 2024. The data collection process was guided by a thematic content analysis. A document review matrix will facilitate a systematic extraction and coding of the content identified by themes consistent with the purpose of the study. The focus of data collection allowed the use of publicly available information; confidential internal DepEd documents were not accessed for ethical reasons. The researcher kept an organized log of excerpts and notes during this phase. By the end of the collection, qualitative data capturing the complex perspective of non-teaching personnel in DepEd, including legal basis, organizational charts, and personal perspectives within news articles, were gathered for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data that was collected (document excerpts and notes) were all examined utilizing thematic content analysis. Several steps were involved. To start, all materials were read and reread to familiarize with the content. Initial coding was done using the research questions: pieces of information were coded as role/responsibilities, policy/guidelines, challenge/gaps, or reforms/initiatives. To analyze the breadth of these categories, sub-themes were identified (e.g., for challenges: understaffing, gaps in training, heavy teacher workloads, budgetary constraints; for reforms: new hiring, technology initiatives, directives). Once the data were coded under each theme, synthesis and comparison of the coded data followed. There was also evaluative consideration when interpreting policy documentation. When reviewing policy documents, the researcher also interpreted: a) whether there were any accompanying mechanisms to support the policy to be realized, and b) based on other reported outcomes, indicated whether there was success or remained gaps. Administrative theory was used as a critical lens throughout the

analysis. Checks on coding consistency were also conducted for rigor. Following this analysis, statements of significance and understanding were synthesized for each research question to produce the Results and Discussion. It is important to note that the analysis did not simply enumerate findings, but it triangulated the evidence. The analytic process involved synthesizing descriptive content analysis and theory-driven interpretation to create well-grounded answers to the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

As this research relied on secondary documents and publicly available documents, there appeared to be little to no immediate ethical risks compared to research involving human subjects. This study nonetheless complies with baseline ethical standards with respect to academic integrity, intellectual honesty, and proper use of information. All sources and materials used to support the study were cited and acknowledged, and it was considered a reasonable expectation that the work of the original authors would be properly respected and represented truthfully. Moreover, the research excluded unverifiable claims to maintain the study's credibility. Since no personal information or data is offered, formal consent processes or raising issues of data privacy under human research ethics do not pertain and were not included. The researcher was cognizant of following appropriate ethics in reporting; for example, not using derogatory language or berating an institution for its shortcomings, while discussing issues with policy and the systems surrounding those policies, versus disparaging individual actors. The completion of this research was guided by the principle of not harm; the findings intend to add positively to policy, and all information has been in the public domain and does not call into question any breach of confidentiality.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Roles and Responsibilities of Non-Teaching Personnel in DepEd

Non-teaching personnel in DepEd perform a variety of supportive functions that are critical to the education system's operations. At the school level, non-teaching personnel's roles include administrative and clerical functions such as processing student enrollment, maintaining school records, report writing, financing matters such as handling school funds, budget planning, and monitoring disbursements, property and procurement matters such as maintaining the physical plant, inventorying supplies, ensuring classrooms and equipment are made available to students. They also encompass student service matters such as administering health and nutrition programs as provided by nurses or meal coordinators, library matters provided by librarians, and guidance and counselling through coordinators. Non-teaching personnel run the school's "front office" and physical operations so that teachers can focus on instruction. The DepEd policy provides a clear delineation of the functions of non-teaching personnel. For example, the IRR of RA 9155 categorizes Administrative Officers, Supply Officers, Records Officers, Bookkeepers, Disbursing Officers, and other position designations of support staff within different levels of organization as non-teaching personnel. Similarly, in an update recruitment and staffing guidelines in DepEd Order No. 007, s.2023, it also indicates that "non-teaching personnel is distinguished from Teaching Personnel and is any person occupying a Non-Teaching position, whose primary duties and responsibilities relate to the delivery of basic education services and on achieving agency targets or outcomes, but does not involve, and does not support any of the delivery of actual teaching or instruction.

Benosa (2024) provides a concrete delineation in a case study from Tabaco City: "Teachers, of course, are to teach. These are the roles of the non-teaching personnel: they must carry on office work like clerical, supervisory, administrative, medical, custodial, and security." This delineation demonstrates that, in a large secondary school, teachers and non-teaching personnel will have specific descriptions of roles. The non-teaching personnel are responsible for taking care of the school office and operations, office paperwork, and logistics. This allows teachers to plan their lessons and deliver their instruction. Henry Mintzberg's idea of support staff is clear here: non-teaching staff provide indirect services that facilitate the core work (teaching). If every member of the school organization performs their respective role, the school runs efficiently, and "the whole organization is moving in the same direction towards effectiveness."

It is important to acknowledge that non-teaching personnel operate not solely in the schools but also at other administrative levels of the organization. Consider non-teaching personnel working at the Schools Division, Regional, and Central Offices. Some of the common roles would include planning officers, human resource personnel, accountants, education program specialists, and other personnel handling related work. These non-teaching roles receive, monitor, and perform tasks such as policy implementation, data management, budgeting, and legal support, ensuring that full compliance occurs. In such instances, the work performed in these roles ensures the legitimacy of

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policy enactment and oversight. Non-teaching personnel are present at each level of the organization, which glues the organization together. When organizations do not provide adequate non-teaching staff, inefficiencies develop, late reports, unguided funds, unfettered program activities, and loose organizational structure can develop. Non-teaching personnel assumed responsibility for maintaining school operations and delivering educational service programs. And when their roles are unfilled, teachers and principals are often expected to provide substitute action; and, when non-teaching roles have been fulfilled and performed well, they become largely "invisible", everything runs smoothly, and stakeholders may not notice their behind-the-scenes contributions.

Existing Policies and Guidelines on Non-Teaching Staff Deployment

Multiple DepEd and government policies define the roles and functions of school non-teaching staff. At the root of these policies remains Republic Act No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001), which states that schools should have a core of non-teaching staff. The law and its IRR not only highlight the existence of non-teaching roles but also illustrate their roles in governance and accountability. Following RA 9155, Republic Act No. 4670 (Magna Carta for Public School Teachers of 1966) indirectly relates to non-teaching staff in relation to teachers' roles and responsibilities by attempting to limit teachers from performing additional duties, suggesting that non-teaching staff would take on these auxiliary duties. The more recent DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2023 expanded recruitment and staffing guidelines that clearly distinguished the non-teaching from the teaching positions and the qualifications and selection process for each. This order stipulates that the non-teaching personnel are any employee in a non-classroom position that contributes to education service delivery.

DepEd Order 002, s. 2024, or the Removal of Administrative Tasks from Teachers, explicitly lists various tasks that are to be transferred from teachers to non-teaching personnel or school heads. Included in these job duties are personnel administration (HR form processing, leave requests), property custodianship and maintenance, clerical work (encoding and filing), financial record-keeping, and coordination of select school programs (e.g., feeding programs and disaster preparedness drills). The order makes clear that these are non-teaching responsibilities and clarifies that teachers are not to perform these tasks. These tasks are solely to be performed by the school head and existing non-teaching staff; where applicable, school clusters can either share non-teaching employees or hire paraprofessionals on a contract basis. This policy ultimately puts into action previously envisioned plans to relieve teachers of other activities by redistributing workloads. DO 002, s. 2024 clarifies roles and responsibilities: if it is administrative, it is not a teacher's responsibility.

Challenges and Gaps in the Effective Utilization of Non-Teaching Staff

The largest challenge identified here represents an overall understaffing of non-teaching staff in the country's primary and secondary schools. The data overwhelmingly provides evidence of an understaffing issue. As already mentioned, in 2017, there were approximately 38,000 non-teaching staff, while there were 687,000 teachers. By 2024, the report showed there were 46,703 vacant positions, while only about 19,700 were non-teaching. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) approved the creation of 5,000 new Administrative Officer II positions for DepEd. The National Expenditure Program for 2025 had ₱3.43 billion for non-teaching positions, which includes the provision of 10,000 administrative officers. However, DepEd had anticipated needing more than double what the DBM had provided; over 20,000 non-teaching personnel to fully meet all the non-teaching needs of schools, at an anticipated cost of ₱7.9 billion. The number of vacant posts implies that many schools did not have the full complement of administrative support envisioned in staffing plans. The reason these positions remain vacant is number-related issues, such as constrained budgets and slow hiring processes. The bureaucracy for creating and filling government positions is lengthy, and despite identified needs, approval for new positions often comes gradually.

The short-term effect of too few support staff is that teachers and principals take on the workload. Both the ACT and the EDCOM II report note teachers' ancillary task load as an ongoing, persistent issue. One public school teacher expressed frustration over having to work, in the absence of the clerical staff, "like tireless machines", performing both teaching and clerical duties, and for a low salary. Although the response was anecdotal, it is a morale issue; job satisfaction may come into question as a teacher or non-teaching staff member feels role overload. The lack of enough support staff can contribute to teacher burnout and attrition, which is reflected in local survey data and international observations. While there are no precise data on turnover rates due to burnout among teachers in the Philippines, it can glean some insight from two out of three public school teachers reporting having work weeks beyond 40 hours (often 56 hours or more).

Another issue is role confusion and misallocation of responsibilities. Where policies have not been implemented consistently, it has frequently been unclear who was responsible for what role. Before the implementation of DO 002, s. 2024, some of the administrative duties would, in effect, fall to whoever could do them at the time. For example, the teacher who was the most technologically savvy would, in some cases, take on the encoding work of the school, or the teacher who had the lightest teaching load would assume the responsibility of the school's property custodian. Unplanned arrangements can lead to inconsistency, as activities may not occur if no one "owns" the role (i.e., data wasn't submitted because there was no one responsible for submitting data). The DepEd initiative to cluster non-teaching positions or hire temporary contractual employees, as stated in DO 002, s. 2024 is intended to mitigate gaps in roles. However, as demonstrated in this study, this approach creates issues as well: This is a limited solution because the staff will presumably work without long-term job security, and they may change employment frequently, potentially contributing to less invested work by staff. They will only be employed if the budget allows. COS staff are an interim or limited way to meet school administrative needs.

While the DepEd has adopted competency frameworks like the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), there is no common competency framework for non-teaching staff. DepEd does not have a competency framework for non-teaching and non-academic staff, which defines the competencies expected of them. And to be used as a basis for an evaluation and review of an individual's performance. Capacity and competency gaps are another area of challenge. Even where a non-teaching job is filled, the competency question is to what extent staff are appropriately trained to complete the more complex functions? For example, an Administrative Officer in a school today may also need to support the IT systems (learner information systems, the procurement system, etc.), and this is beyond the traditional clerical skills often found in a clerical-type position. The need for continuous capacity building is now a necessary part of the discussion. The research conducted by Vacalares and Manigo (2022) mentioned earlier showed how schools/offices dedicated time and resources to train non-teaching staff, which led to improved outcomes in service quality. At the same time, several non-teaching staff reported dissatisfaction with the amount of training they receive, particularly with the ongoing introduction of new technologies and processes in DepEd. As mentioned earlier, there is no standardized competency framework in place, as the training is random. Some divisions with adequate resources and/or external supports have organized ongoing capacity-building opportunities, while others do not. As a result, there is an inequity that exists concerning the capacity of support staff in schools that receive ongoing training and those that do not.

Impact on Education Quality and Service Delivery

Tumala's (2019) study of work motivation and service delivery has suggested that when non-teaching staff are effective and motivated in fulfilling their roles, this may have an indirect impact on overall school performance, presumably by minimizing the stress of teachers so that they can focus on teaching. Releasing teachers from ancillary duties, one should expect a change for the better in instruction. This is, in fact, one of the rationales DepEd provided in policy: "enabling teachers to maximize time in actual classroom teaching, focus on the teaching and learning process, and become effective facilitators of learning." International research indicates that teacher effectiveness can improve when there is administrative support.

Executive Order No. 366 s. 2004, directing the government's rationalization, aimed to review existing agencies and reorganize them so personnel are matched to appropriate functions and to do "more with less." In the case of DepEd, the Rationalization Plan created thousands of non-teaching positions in the regional and division offices following the normal reclassification of many roles to maintain a public base level job, so that they could professionalize these support services, and they could have a more consistent work with the functions of staff in the division and regional offices' support services. This was a solid reform, but the number of new non-teaching items at the school level remained small, and they are currently pushing for more.

Non-teaching personnel, especially those dealing with resources and information, support accountability and transparency. With capable administrative officers and bookkeepers within schools, there is greater adherence to auditing regulations, financial reporting requirements, and documentation of use, thus reducing waste and other fund leakage. Gaspar et al. (2022) highlight a lack of "skilled manpower" in schools when considering the issue of principals holding too much responsibility and too many duties within the administration of school financial management. The key takeaway from the report was that problems arose for principals (as school financial managers) and their finance staff in relation to policy-related processes, budget releases being too late, and, most notably, also a "lack of adequate skilled manpower needed for effective budget utilization," in addition to the principals having various other duties. The significance of this finding suggests hiring, training, and retaining well-

trained support personnel is an area for governance consideration: to promote accountability, and that it is reasonable to expect public money provided to fund education is managed effectively and utilized reasonably.

Looking at higher-level indicators, it seems plausible to make claims, for instance, divisions with a high ratio of non-teaching staff to teachers may perform better on administrative indicators, such as the on-time submission of reports, and perhaps on student outcomes if the teachers are less distracted. Though quantitative analysis is beyond the scope of this study, international assessments have frequently highlighted how the highest-performing education systems invest not only in teachers but in the entire education support infrastructure. The Philippines, with its large class sizes and low administrative support, must contend with large gaps, forcing an uphill trajectory to achieve the same level of efficiency. The reforms, hiring more staff, taking advantage of ICT to take away manual tasks, etc., are attempts to improve this part of the system's overall performance.

Policy and Administrative Reforms to Optimize Non-Teaching Staff Contribution

In recent years, there has been a noteworthy change in policy attention directed to enhancing the role of non-teaching personnel in DepEd service delivery. The lead reform, as referenced earlier, is DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024, which is an extraordinary step recognizing that teachers' overload is a systemic issue that cannot be bettered without reassigning tasks. This reform is based on principles of public administration, that if teachers are going to be effective, that is, provide quality learning, the organization must be structured so that administrative tasks are carried out by those hired/ trained for the job. With appropriate administrative support, teacher effectiveness will be improved.

Another key direction for reform is the establishment of new non-teaching positions, of which the initial allocation of 5,000 Administrative Officer II positions for 2024, and proposed at least an additional 10,000 in 2025, represents some beginnings. Hiring of 10,000 administrative officers would mean only about 25% of schools would hold the designation; after all, there are over 40,000 public schools in the country. Additional budget advocacy is still needed in future years. The final target articulated is for ultimately 100% of schools to have administrative support, which, by design, will ultimately be allocated from each school-sized area. Although realizing this final goal may again require sustained increases in funding over several budget cycles, the goal does articulate a directional shift into a long-term proposal rooted in rightsizing the bureaucracy.

DepEd has been adaptable in its policy use by hiring staff on a contract basis and partnering with local agencies to respond to immediate needs. Some LGUs have funded hiring school administrative assistants on a contract basis. While clearly not a long-term solution, it represents responsiveness to the local situation: rather than waiting many years for plantilla positions to become available, schools are allowed to hire locally funded COS (contract of service) staff, or schools are funded for COS staff. This is an example of some degree of decentralization and response to community needs, with some LGUs, especially if they have substantial Special Education Fund resources, voluntarily funding administrative, support, and non-teaching staff at the local school level. In wealthier municipalities, having an LGU-hired clerk or aide for each school has increased efficiency and teacher satisfaction as reported in those schools. Although these examples are not universal across the country, they serve as a model for national policy to potentially promote through a matching program or recognition of the LGU that funds the education support staff.

From an administrative theory perspective, these reforms suggest a movement towards what Weber might consider a more rational-legal bureaucratic organization. Responsibilities, a feature of bureaucratic thinking, are being divided clearly; people are being hired on merit into the specific job they are going to do, and even authority is being delegated. For example, school principals are explicitly being provided the authority to allocate admin tasks to non-teaching staff. This effectively rebalances the organization toward a more classical bureaucratic approach to each role fulfilling its specified duty, thus creating predictability and accountability. It also aligns with New Public Management by focusing on results. If the desired result is improved learning outcomes and client (stakeholder) satisfaction, then it makes sense to employ administrative aides to do paperwork, allowing teachers to focus on their teaching responsibilities. A focus on results is an example of a results-oriented bureaucratic approach to reform. Evidence of client satisfaction can already be observed where non-teaching staff perform their jobs well.

Another reform area relates to capacity building and professionalization. While, as indicated, there is still no formal competency framework for non-teaching personnel, DepEd has reportedly been thinking about creating one. This report strongly supports that consideration. A competency framework (like the PPST for teaching staff) for roles such as Administrative Officers, Registrars, etc., would help establish uniformity for hiring criteria, curriculum design for training, and metrics used for evaluating performance of the non-teaching cohort. The competency framework would also professionalize the staff, clarifying professional paths within the institution. The rationale is that if you can

increase the non-teaching staff retention and motivation, then the system will be able to maintain experienced people in those roles, leading to further stability and competency in delivering services.

Reforms in technology also impact the role of non-teaching staff. As previously mentioned, moving processes online, such as procurement, human resources, and finance, can be a mixed blessing. For the reforms to be beneficial, the training must be in place, along with potentially added positions such as IT support staff, to ensure that the outcomes reduce rather than increase the burden on staff to complete non-instructional responsibilities. To provide a positive example here, while the Learner Information System (LIS) from DepEd was initially burdensome for teachers to encode data on students, when schools had a clerk or an ICT coordinator to handle the data entry, it freed the teachers to focus on instruction. Overall, the acceptance of each school or cluster having an ICT coordinator, often a teacher given an extra duty to take responsibility for tech-related matters, reflects a positive example of reform that has already taken place. As DepEd moves more "functions" online, it will be important to ensure that each cluster of schools has a non-teaching ICT support position in place. The findings of the study supported this notion, as many of the participants interviewed cited ICT support as a new area in need of individuals to help with related tasks and responsibilities.

In terms of governance inclusion, there is a push for including non-teaching staff representation on decision-making bodies such as School Governing Councils or School Improvement Plan committees in keeping with participatory governance principles. While this is still not common practice, a few schools/divisions have started to invite their administrative staff to the table to discuss school operation improvements, acknowledging they have valuable insights into workflow that teachers or parents may overlook. Based on our analysis, there seems to be a way to elevate the voice of the "silent workforce" (Baes et al. 2025) and to include their voice in school planning processes by formalizing their involvement.

The programs being implemented can be characterized as systemic changes made to align the DepEd system with its policy objectives and the established norms of administrative theory. By clarifying roles and responsibilities, increasing the number of support positions, and building staff capacity, DepEd is moving toward an organizational model where support staff will be enabled to help the front line (teachers) do their work well, precisely how a large public service organization is supposed to work. Moreover, culture change in DepEd is an element of reform. Traditionally, teaching has been valued as primary, which it should be for student learning outcomes, but there is an increasing institutional recognition that the non-teaching work of non-teaching professionals is as important for that evaluation and learning to occur. The development of new posts and policy also frames the narrative that non-teaching staff are "an integral part of education governance," which is a cultural change from how they were being treated in earlier arrangements, which viewed non-teaching as ancillary or disposable. It is critical to have this culture change happen for the reforms to take hold, as it will shape budgets and institutional management over time.

Each of these policy changes adds up to an overall framework that is broadly consistent with some of the principles of good public administration: having clarity of roles (specialization); accountability (a responsible role for each task); efficiency (better overall use of staff leading to better use of resources); responsiveness (responding to the front-line needs of teachers and students). It is clear from the study that, if these changes are implemented, DepEd should increase its operational capacity and service, realizing the policy vision that teachers teach and effective non-teaching staff handle the rest, for the benefit of the learners.

Conclusions

DepEd has contextually and legally acknowledged that non-teaching staff perform important functions required for delivering educational services. While RA 9155 does not speak in absolute terms about support staff, there is policy recognition of a support staff 'core' component, and the DepEd vision/mission statement reflects that administrators and staff are stewards of the learning environment. The description of roles and functions in the most recent iterations of DO 002, s. 2024 describes who, specifically, does what, clarifying whether a particular role and function are appropriate for them and minimizing role ambiguity. This alignment policy with the principle of specialization conveys that teachers and support staff have different, but related, responsibilities.

Nonetheless, despite these policies, there has been an ongoing implementation gap, as we see schools are still under-resourced, and teachers are performing non-teaching duties. For decades, underinvestment in non-teaching positions left the schools under-resourced in administrative manpower, forcing teachers to perform non-teaching duties. This gap has had important implications for the quality and efficiency of teaching, which was verified from the workload studies, and as discussed in the EDCOM II report. The silver lining is that this is now firmly on the policy agenda. The degree of buy-in is evident, whether it be legislators, education secretaries, or school heads, who

recognize and support relieving teachers' workloads by using support staff roles. The decision to create new posts to hire additional staff, including hiring short-term contractual staff to fill non-teaching roles, is a tangible step forward. More strategically, however, the longer-term discussions to fill additional non-teaching roles are also being activated. As discussed above, it is felt that it needs to be 'real long-term solutions' and an ongoing budgetary plan is put in place to support and grow these endeavors in the years to come.

The number of non-teaching personnel still does not match the requirements of the system, and so it will take several years of recruitment for the system to come close to the benchmarks of having one admin officer per school, or a certain number of students. Retaining non-teaching staff continues to be an issue; this will require developing career pathways and deem their role as "non-teaching". Both the research and anecdotal evidence suggest that it would probably be a good idea to consider an "Integrated Magna Carta" or other policies to ensure that non-teaching staff have benefits, security of work, and even a pathway to career advancement in the same way that teachers do. With this, the organization will be able to attract and retain greater talent in these positions and thus lessen the level of turnover and increase experience in the system.

Future research might find ways to conduct action research or surveys of teachers and principals to quantify time saved because of added support staff, or might be used to investigate the association of types of non-teaching roles with measured or scaled indicators, such as student attendance or community engagement. This type of feedback loop can be used to improve policy, such as what if one support role leverages different outcomes than another, or some kinds of training are a good enough win.

However, there is another emerging critical dimension located at the field level, which is the increasing stress of non-teaching personnel themselves. It is no secret that with the new policies, such as DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024, when that basically relieved teachers of administrative duties and moved them to administrative officers, the one non-teaching personnel person in most schools has now been further burdened by acting in multiple administrative roles. Most small to medium-sized schools have only one administrative officer whose job description includes managing human resources, budget, procurement, managing records, correspondence, program coordination, and, in many instances, data encoding or technology support. When a non-teaching officer has too little manpower and cannot delegate tasks, they become limited in their ability to perform the duties of their job. Therefore, delays in reporting commitments, burnout, and improvident work are inevitable. This pressure raises the question of whether we are simply distributing the burden of work across a team of support staff, as opposed to having one person hold the burden, and how quickly we can add additional non-teaching personnel to meet realistic workload demands. This increasing burden on the non-teaching staff warrants attention so that we do not merely transfer the burden of administrative duties from one set of personnel (the teachers) to another (the support staff). Schools cannot function effectively when they only have one administrative officer who must meet the responsibilities for administrative work for the entire school.

An adequately supported education bureaucracy, which values and supports its non-teaching staff, is an important component of quality, accessible, and equitable basic education. While non-teaching staff are not the ones in front of a class, they are the force behind each class's success. DepEd can vastly improve how it delivers its services by building policy around the non-teaching role, addressing resource and capability gaps to utilize non-teaching roles, and aligning actions with good administrative practices. The ongoing policy reforms are positive; if the will is there, the ideal of teachers teaching and effective non-teaching personnel handling the rest can be achieved. In doing so, the promise of shared governance in education will be fulfilled, and all stakeholders, administrators, non-teaching personnel, and teachers will be working together in a coordinated effort, within their strengths, to develop the Filipino learner. The result will be a more productive education system, happier and more engaged educators, thrilled parents and students, and ultimately, improved educational results that contribute to national development.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this research, several suggestions are presented with the end view of improving the role of non-teaching personnel in the DepEd service delivery system. The recommendations consider the existing personnel shortfall, the administration's progression of efficient sharing of work responsibilities, and the necessary support services structure, all for the sake of sustainable education governance.

1. **Expediting Recruitment and Deployment of Non-Teaching Personnel:** There is a need to immediately expedite the recruitment and deployment of non-teaching personnel. This study documented the grave gap between teachers and support staff available to public schools, where many schools had no administrative officer at all. Filling tens of thousands of vacant non-teaching positions and creating new

positions needed should be a priority. DepEd should also streamline its recruitment processes to ensure approved positions are filled without undue delay.

2. **Implementing Professional Development and Capacity-Building Programs:** Specifically, non-teaching staff should have professional development training modules in financial management practices, ICT skills training, records management, customer service training, and ethics in public service. Although they build technical capacity, it is their professional identity development and their professional morale that are most important.

3. **Career Development and Policy Integration:** DepEd could develop a career progression framework for non-teaching staff. This framework may provide a competency-based standard that may be developed to parallel the framework that the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) adopted for the hiring, promotion, and evaluation of teachers outside of their technical role. In addition, the policymakers ought to consider the development of an Integrated Magna Carta that would include all teaching and non-teaching staff, which would address equity in benefits, tenure, promotions, etc.

4. **Enhancing Planning and Governance Processes:** School Improvement Plans (SIPs) must include targets for the effective planning of administrative work, and effective school heads must encourage collaboration between teaching and non-teaching staff. Identifying and including the contributions of non-teaching personnel in annual school performance reports can also further help alter institutional stances toward shared accountabilities. Effective school leadership must encourage teamwork between teaching and non-teaching staff, and principals should be trained to manage and empower support staff, not just teachers.

5. **Strengthening Institutional Accountability for Workload Distribution:** The Bureau of Human Resource and Organizational Development (BHROD) at the central office should monitor the delegation of administrative responsibilities to ensure that responsibilities are not delegated back to teachers. Every initiative or program introduced by DepEd should specify who is responsible for what tasks and should include appropriate staffing and support.

6. **Future Research and Data-Driven Adjustments:** Research should be carried out should assess the quantifiable effect non-teaching staff have on educational outcomes. Large-scale action research on a division or regional basis could measure the amount of time the teacher saves due to added non-teaching staff or begin an analysis into how different non-teaching roles have an impact on student engagement, administrative work, or even parental satisfaction. This will provide some evidence as an 'ongoing feedback loop' to support thoughtful and considered ongoing policy decisions.

The recommendations above show a governance-based approach to educational reform, in a way that approaches all staff as part of the education mission, therefore enhancing the contribution of all staff to the provision of quality public education. Making a concerted effort to invest in and provide for non-teaching personnel also leverages DepEd's organizational capacity to best fulfill its mandate to provide equitable, appropriate, and effective education for all learners.

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