

## **A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE NEEDS OF NON-TEACHING SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study explored the needs, challenges, and support systems of non-teaching personnel in selected public schools, recognizing their essential role in sustaining daily operations and ensuring a functional learning environment. Using Colaizzi's phenomenological method, the study examined the lived experiences of seventeen participants through in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion. Findings revealed three primary needs: the Essential Operational Backbone, capturing administrative and logistics work that maintains school continuity; Student Care and Environment Readiness, reflecting contributions to learner welfare, safety, and facility preparation; and Collaborative Coordination Roles, highlighting the high level of interaction required to manage time-sensitive tasks. Challenges experienced by the participants centered on Overload from Resource Limits, Unstable Task Direction, and Stalled Growth and Morale Strain, all of which affect efficiency and well-being. The study also identified support systems perceived as most effective, including Recognition and Visibility, System-Level Work Supports, and Shared Planning and Feedback Loops. These insights emphasize the importance of acknowledging non-teaching personnel, enhancing administrative structures, and improving communication pathways. Conclusions affirm that strengthening these areas can enhance service quality, reduce operational strain, and improve the professional environment of support staff. Recommendations were proposed for policymakers, administrators, teaching staff, community partners, and future researchers to build more supportive, organized, and sustainable systems for non-teaching personnel in public schools.

**Keywords:** *Non-teaching personnel, school operations, workplace challenges, support systems, qualitative phenomenology*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Globally, the role of non-teaching personnel in educational institutions is increasingly acknowledged due to rising operational demands. Administrative, technical, and support staff are essential to school functionality, yet they remain largely overlooked in policy and research. In Iran, 62% reported ambiguous job roles and limited professional development access, leading to inefficiency (Yoonesi & Jafari, 2024). In Nigeria, 71% faced ongoing workplace conflicts and lacked formal grievance systems, lowering job satisfaction (Okotoni & Kugbayi, 2024). Similarly, 68% of Tanzanian school support staff were excluded from capacity-building initiatives (Garaba, 2022). These cases reflect a global trend of institutional neglect toward non-teaching staff despite their vital contributions.

In the Philippine context, these challenges are compounded by structural gaps within the educational system. While national initiatives have focused largely on improving teaching quality, the professional needs of non-teaching personnel have received less attention. Buot (2024) identifies persistent technology-related issues that affect the efficiency of support staff, while Alonzo (2025) emphasizes the presence of skill gaps that lower productivity and morale. These challenges highlight the need for an inclusive approach to school governance that integrates the roles and development of both teaching and non-teaching employees.

In Kidapawan City, non-teaching staff carry out key functions such as records management, administrative assistance, and facility maintenance, yet recent literature suggests their work often remains less visible in school improvement research and governance conversations (Escriba, 2025). Studies in Philippine basic education contexts describe how limited recognition and weak participatory practices can leave support personnel feeling overlooked and under included in school decision-making (Causaren & Canoy, 2025).

At the same time, quantitative evidence from public elementary schools shows that work overload is common and that role ambiguity is among the major stressors linked with job satisfaction and commitment pointing to the need for clearer role delineation and more consistent support systems (Baes et al., 2025). Related findings in public secondary schools highlight recurring administrative challenges experienced by non-teaching personnel and call for stronger management systems and clearer criteria for advancement (Maca, 2023). Complementing these, a recent learning-needs analysis documents role-specific skills gaps and argues for tailored capacity-building rather than one-size-fits-all training (Pa-ay, 2025).

This study seeks to address that gap through a phenomenological inquiry that examines the experiences, challenges, and needs of non-teaching personnel in selected schools in Kidapawan City. Guided by Colaizzi's method, the research aims to provide meaningful insights that inform policies promoting inclusion, recognition, and development for all school-based personnel.

## **Research Questions**

This study aims to explore the lived experiences of non-teaching personnel in relation to the challenges they face, their coping strategies, and their suggested solutions to unmet needs within selected public schools in Kidapawan City for the school year 2025–2026.

Specifically, it will seek to answer the following research problems:

1. What are the primary needs experienced by non-teaching personnel in school?
2. How do non-teaching staff describe the challenges they face in fulfilling their roles?
3. What support system do non-teaching personnel perceive as most effective in addressing their needs?

## **FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical lenses of this study serve as the foundational core that conceptualizes and shapes the understanding of the research focus, informs the design, guides the methodology, and frames the analysis. In this study, theoretical grounding is essential in examining the lived experiences and expressed needs of non-teaching personnel within school settings. This research is anchored in three interrelated theoretical frameworks: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Organizational Support Theory, and Role Theory. Each of which aligns with the phenomenological approach and the study's focus on workplace experiences, institutional dynamics, and individual well-being.

**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs** (Maslow, 1943; Neher, 1991). This foundational theory emphasizes that human motivation is driven by the fulfillment of a hierarchy of needs, ranging from physiological necessities to self-actualization. Within the workplace context, it suggests that employees, regardless of their position, thrive when their basic and psychological needs are met. Non-teaching personnel, who often occupy the margins of institutional attention, may experience unmet needs in areas such as job security, recognition, and personal development.

In this study, Maslow's framework is used to examine how unmet needs across various levels (safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization) shape the perceptions, satisfaction, and overall well-being of non-teaching personnel. It provides a structured lens for interpreting qualitative data related to their challenges, motivations, and aspirations, while also supporting investigation into how school environments either support or hinder holistic well-being.

**Organizational Support Theory** (Eisenberger et al., 1986; as cited by Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2020). Organizational Support Theory posits that employees form global beliefs regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. When support is perceived as low, individuals are likely to feel alienated, undervalued, and demotivated. Conversely, high levels of perceived organizational support (POS) are linked to greater job satisfaction, commitment, and performance.

In this study, Organizational Support Theory frames the analysis of how institutional structures, policies, and interpersonal dynamics affect the perceived worth of non-teaching personnel. It also helps explore how participants articulate the presence or absence of administrative support, professional development opportunities, and inclusion in decision-making processes. This theory complements the phenomenological approach by shedding light on the subjective interpretations of organizational behavior and its implications on employee morale and performance.

Additionally, the Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964; as cited by Biddle, 2018). Role Theory explores how individuals understand and enact the expectations attached to their social and professional roles. In institutional settings, non-teaching personnel often perform multiple, sometimes undefined or undervalued roles. Conflicts arise when expectations are ambiguous, support is lacking, or when individuals are not fully integrated into the organizational identity of the school.

In this study, Role Theory is applied to understand how non-teaching personnel construct meaning around their professional identities and responsibilities. It is particularly useful in identifying role ambiguity, role conflict, and the psychological effects of occupational marginalization. Through this lens, the research analyzes the internal and external negotiations participants undergo to affirm their place within educational systems that often prioritize teaching staff in policy, recognition, and resource allocation.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This study employs a phenomenological research design, specifically using Colaizzi's (1978) to explore the lived experiences and perceived needs of non-teaching school personnel in the education sector. Phenomenology, grounded in the philosophical tradition of Edmund Husserl (1970), seeks to uncover the essence of human experiences as they are consciously lived and interpreted by individuals. It involves setting aside presuppositions to understand a phenomenon from the viewpoint of those who directly encounter it. In the context of this study, phenomenology is appropriate as it allows the researcher to deeply investigate how school clerks, administrative assistants, utility workers, security staff, and other non-teaching personnel experience their roles, challenges, and support systems within the school environment.

The phenomenological approach is well-regarded in qualitative social research for its ability to illuminate the subjective realities of individuals in professional and institutional contexts (Moustakas, 1994). The central phenomenon in this research is the articulated and unarticulated needs of non-teaching personnel, especially as these relate to their sense of inclusion, recognition, work conditions, and professional growth. By focusing on lived experiences, the study aims to surface underlying meanings attached to issues such as job security, communication with leadership, access to benefits, workload, and workplace morale. Colaizzi's method supports a structured analysis by allowing for the

extraction of significant statements, formulation of meanings, and identification of common thematic patterns emerging from participant narratives.

Colaizzi's seven-step process includes familiarization with participant accounts, extracting significant statements, formulating meanings, clustering themes, developing exhaustive descriptions, constructing the fundamental structure of the phenomenon, and returning to participants for validation. This design influences the entire research process. It shapes the development of open-ended interview questions aimed at drawing out detailed, reflective responses about workplace experiences and needs. It also guides the choice of data collection methods, primarily through one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions, which provide a rich source of experiential data.

Lastly, this phenomenological framework informs the data analysis approach, which centers on thematic reduction and essence identification to construct a nuanced understanding of shared experiences. Through this methodology, the study aims to generate practical and actionable insights into how school systems can better support non-teaching personnel, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive, efficient, and equitable educational environment.

## **Research Locale**

Kidapawan City is a third-class component city and the capital of Cotabato Province in the Philippines, located at the foothills of Mount Apo, the country's highest peak. Known as a gateway to eco-tourism in Mindanao, the city serves as a commercial, educational, and cultural hub in the region. It is home to diverse ethnic groups and languages, including Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and indigenous tongues such as Obo Monuvu. Despite its development, Kidapawan remains deeply rooted in traditional values, which influences social attitudes toward gender and identity. This cultural backdrop makes it a significant site for exploring issues of gender inclusion and linguistic representation.

## **Research Participants**

This study involved a total of 17 participants who were selected to share their lived experiences and perceived needs as non-teaching school personnel in the basic education sector. The participants included 10 individuals who engaged in in-depth interviews (IDIs) and 7 others who participated in focus group discussions (FGDs). Participants represented a range of non-teaching roles, such as administrative aides, utility workers, clerks, school guards, and support staff, ensuring a diverse array of perspectives regarding their roles and challenges in school settings. Participants varied in age from 25 to 60 years old and included both male and female respondents across public elementary and secondary schools. Their employment statuses ranged from regular, contractual, and job order, capturing a breadth of work arrangements and institutional experiences. This demographic and occupational diversity was intentional to ensure a well-rounded understanding of the participants' needs and workplace realities.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to intentionally select individuals who could offer rich, detailed insights about their everyday experiences as non-teaching personnel. This method is commonly used in qualitative research to access information-rich participants with direct relevance to the research questions (Palinkas et al., 2015). In addition, criterion-based sampling ensured that all participants had at least one year of employment in their current school assignments and had sufficient familiarity with institutional policies and practices affecting non-teaching staff. To supplement the participant pool for FGDs, snowball sampling was also used to identify additional personnel referred by peers or school heads who met the inclusion criteria (Naderifar, Goli, & Ghaljaei, 2017).

The study was conducted in selected public schools located in both urban and rural areas within the research locale to capture varying environmental and institutional conditions. Interview and discussion sessions took place in designated private spaces within the school premises, ensuring participant comfort and confidentiality. The interviews focused on personal reflections regarding their work experiences, perceived gaps in support, and suggestions for improvement. The FGDs, on the other hand, explored shared experiences, workplace culture, and systemic issues affecting morale, welfare, and professional identity. Themes such as recognition, workload, communication with administrators, access to benefits, and opportunities for capacity-building were thoroughly discussed.

The data collection process was flexible, adapting to the participants' work schedules and preferences for either individual or group formats. In-depth interviews offered a secure setting for candid and often emotional narratives about unmet needs and aspirations. FGDs facilitated the articulation of collective sentiments, enabling participants to affirm or challenge one another's experiences. Both approaches were guided by semi-structured interview protocols, ensuring consistency while allowing for spontaneous elaboration. Audio recordings and observational field notes were employed to capture not only verbal content but also gestures and emotional nuances. The combination of IDIs and FGDs enriched the data, with individual accounts offering depth and personal texture, while group dynamics revealed systemic patterns and shared concerns. This methodological triangulation enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings.

## **Research Instruments**

This study will utilize original data collection instruments developed by the researcher to gather in-depth qualitative data on the lived experiences and perceived needs of non-teaching school personnel. Two semi-structured interview guides will be created, one for the in-depth interviews (IDIs) and another for the focus group discussions (FGDs). These instruments will be grounded in existing literature on school organizational structure, employee welfare, and phenomenological research methodology (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2013). Each guide will feature open-ended questions designed to elicit reflective and detailed responses, allowing participants to express their personal insights

regarding workplace challenges, recognition, communication with school leadership, and support systems.

As the instruments are specifically designed for the purposes of this study, there will be no need to request permission from external authors. The construction of the interview guides will follow the principles of phenomenological interviewing, focusing on participant-centered inquiry that encourages the articulation of meaning derived from lived experience (Moustakas, 1994). In developing the items, relevant literature on employee engagement, job satisfaction, and educational personnel support will be reviewed to ensure thematic alignment with the study's objectives.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, a pilot test will be conducted involving two non-teaching personnel who are not part of the final participant group. Their feedback will help evaluate question clarity, sequencing, and thematic coherence. Furthermore, the instruments will undergo expert validation by a panel composed of educational researchers, qualitative methodologists, and school administrators. These experts will assess the tools for content relevance, neutrality of phrasing, and appropriateness to a phenomenological design. Any suggested revisions will be carefully incorporated prior to the formal data collection phase.

The final versions of the interview guides, along with the expert validation checklist and pilot testing documentation, will be included in the appendices of the research manuscript. These instruments are expected to provide consistency across interviews and discussions while maintaining flexibility for participants to share their authentic narratives, ultimately enriching the study's exploration of the needs and experiences of non-teaching school personnel.

## **Data Collection**

This study followed systematic procedures grounded in phenomenological methodology, beginning with the acquisition of ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researcher's academic institution and the distribution of formal requests and informed consent forms explaining the study purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality measures, and the right to withdraw at any time. Two semi-structured guides were developed for in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), reviewed by academic professionals and pilot-tested with two non-participating educators before finalization. Participants were selected through purposive and criterion-based sampling, yielding 17 prominent sports instructors (10 for IDIs and 7 for an FGD) who had at least 10 years of experience and demonstrated recognized leadership, coaching, or mentoring achievements, with additional participants identified through snowball referrals. Data collection was scheduled according to availability and conducted in schools, sports facilities, or via secure video conferencing; IDIs lasted 45 to 60 minutes and the FGD lasted up to 90 minutes, using open-ended prompts, audio recording with permission, and field notes to capture context and non-verbal cues. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, checked against field notes, anonymized using pseudonyms, and securely stored, then analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978)

phenomenological method, with findings validated through member checking to ensure accuracy and faithfulness to participants' experiences.

## **Data Analysis**

The analysis of data in this phenomenological study will be thematic analysis which follow Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step method to ensure that the lived experiences and expressed needs of non-teaching school personnel are captured with depth, rigor, and authenticity. After completing the data collection phase, all audio recordings from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Each transcript will be carefully cross-checked with field notes to ensure accuracy and completeness. Pseudonyms will be assigned to participants, and all files will be securely organized in digital folders to protect confidentiality and ensure systematic handling of the data.

The analysis will be conducted manually and, if necessary, assisted by qualitative data management software such as NVivo to facilitate coding, categorization, and retrieval of emerging themes. The first step in Colaizzi's method involves reading all transcripts multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of each participant's account. This process of immersion allows the researcher to bracket personal assumptions and biases in order to focus fully on the participants lived experiences—a core principle of phenomenological research.

In the next step, significant statements directly related to the participants' roles, challenges, and needs as non-teaching personnel will be extracted from the transcripts. These statements will then be interpreted to formulate meanings, maintaining fidelity to the participants' original language and intended messages. The meanings will be grouped into clusters of themes that represent shared experiences, such as lack of recognition, communication gaps with school leadership, access to professional development, and physical or emotional well-being in the workplace.

The thematic clusters will be carefully reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately reflect the lived experiences without misrepresenting or oversimplifying the context. Once finalized, these clusters will be used to construct an exhaustive description of the phenomenon—namely, the collective understanding of what it means to serve as a non-teaching staff member in an educational institution. This will then be distilled into a fundamental structure that captures the core essence of the experiences, emphasizing the challenges, values, and aspirations of non-teaching personnel in the school setting.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, a member checking process will be conducted wherein selected participants will review the interpreted results. This step allows them to validate the accuracy of the themes and offer any clarifications or corrections as needed. Throughout the analysis, the researcher will maintain a reflexive stance, remaining aware of their own positionality and potential influence on the interpretation process. In line with the phenomenological commitment, the findings will be presented descriptively highlighting how participants experience and make sense of their roles rather than explaining or evaluating them. By applying Colaizzi's method, the study

aims to provide a rich, nuanced understanding of the unmet needs and lived realities of non-teaching school personnel.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of data gathered from distinguished sports educators through in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion conducted in selected schools in Kidapawan City. Guided by a descriptive phenomenological approach using Colaizzi's method

**Essential Operational Backbone.** This theme shows how non-teaching personnel meet core operational needs through continuous administrative and logistics work. They manage records, communication flow, and document preparation. They also control supplies, track inventory, and support events. These duties keep routines stable for teachers, learners, and parents. They reduce delays in enrolment, reporting, and daily transactions. Thus, the significant statements of the participants are reflected below:

*"I handle records, incoming letters, and learner files. I also prepare forms, print notices, and assist visitors." (IDI\_P1)*

*"I manage supplies and equipment requests, track inventory, and prepare simple reports." (FGD\_P1)*

*"I update files, organize documents, and relay information across offices to keep processes moving without interruption." (IDI\_P2)*

*"We coordinate supplies, prepare materials, and respond to urgent requests so teachers have what they need for classes." (FGD\_P3)*

The statements reveal a consistent pattern. Administrative work and logistics work operate as linked tasks. Records and communications set the pace of transactions. Supplies and inventory protect continuity of services. Event support adds time pressure but reinforces the need for organized systems.

Recent literature affirms the importance of strong administrative systems in sustaining school efficiency. Reyes, (2024) argued that non-teaching personnel provide structural continuity by securing documents, managing information flow, and supporting logistical needs that teachers rely on daily. His findings highlight how organized administrative routines prevent delays in school operations and ensure that learners and parents experience smoother service delivery across departments.

Further evidence by Dizon, (2024) emphasized that administrative support roles reduce operational bottlenecks in public schools. He found that clear workflows in records handling, supply management, and communication processes help maintain accuracy and responsiveness during peak enrolment and reporting cycles. The study reinforces that non-teaching staff function as essential operational anchors who stabilize day-to-day transactions and uphold institutional efficiency.

**Student Care and Environment Readiness.** This theme shows how non-teaching personnel meet needs tied to learner welfare, safety response, and facility preparedness. They assist in basic health monitoring, parent communication, and immediate aid when concerns arise. They also perform routine safety checks, cleaning, and setup support to keep learning spaces functional. Their work connects learner needs to school response and reduces interruptions to classroom activity. Thus, the significant statements of the participants are reflected below:

*“I assist in the clinic and health desk, check basic health logs, and inform advisers about concerns.” (IDI\_P2)*

*“I focus on maintenance and safety checks. I clean key areas, support classroom setup.” (FGD\_P2)*

*“I monitor students who report minor concerns and coordinate with teachers to ensure their safety throughout the day.” (IDI\_P4)*

*“We prepare classrooms before activities, check equipment, and ensure spaces are clean so students learn without distraction.” (FGD\_P5)*

The statements reveal a consistent pattern. Participants describe care work and readiness work as daily responsibilities. They respond to minor health issues and safety needs early. They prepare the environment so teachers start classes with fewer barriers linked to space, cleanliness, and safety.

Recent studies underscore the role of non-teaching personnel in shaping safe and supportive learning environments. Medina, (2024) noted that school health aides, clinic assistants, and safety staff form the backbone of early response systems, ensuring that minor concerns do not escalate and that learners receive immediate attention. His research found that consistent monitoring significantly improves students' sense of security and classroom readiness.

In addition, Serrano, (2024) highlighted the relationship between facility upkeep and student engagement. He emphasized that clean, functional, and safe learning spaces reduce distractions and promote smoother lesson delivery for teachers. Non-teaching personnel, through routine inspections, cleaning, and setup assistance, directly contribute to maintaining these conditions. His findings support the view that environmental readiness is a critical foundation for uninterrupted learning.

**Collaborative Coordination Roles.** This theme shows how non-teaching personnel meet needs shaped by constant coordination with teachers and school leaders. They receive short notice requests, shifting priorities, and time sensitive follow ups. At the same time, they experience respect, gratitude, and stronger teamwork during events. Their needs center on clear requests, shared planning, and stable communication routines to reduce rework while sustaining cooperative relationships. Thus, the significant statements of the participants are reflected below:

*“Teachers often request documents at short notice... many show respect and say thanks. Teamwork improves during events.” (FGD\_P1)*

*“I adjust tasks based on urgent requests, but coordination improves when instructions are clear and schedules are shared early.” (IDI\_P3)*

*“During school events, we divide tasks and support each other. Collaboration becomes smoother when plans are communicated beforehand.” (FGD\_P4)*

*“When teachers and staff work together, we finish tasks faster. Good communication helps avoid repeated work and misunderstandings.” (FGD\_P6)*

The statements reveal a consistent pattern. Coordination drives task speed and accuracy. Short notice demands increase pressure and raise risk of errors. Positive interactions, respect, and teamwork act as social supports that help personnel persist through peak demands.

Recent research emphasizes that coordination improves when communication pathways between teaching and non-teaching staff are structured and consistent. Bautista, (2024) found that shared planning, clear delegation, and predictable information flow strengthen teamwork during school events and administrative cycles. His study showed that coordination reduces rework, prevents miscommunication, and increases task accuracy across units.

Similarly, Fernando, (2024) reported that school support personnel perform more effectively when collaborative routines are formalized through briefings, joint meetings, and consolidated schedules. His findings revealed that when teachers and non-teaching staff share expectations and timelines, workplace cohesion strengthens and stress decreases during high-demand periods. The study affirms that cooperation and clarity are essential elements of operational success in schools.

**Table 1.** Themes Emerged from the Primary Needs Experienced By Non-Teaching Personnel in School

<b>Issues Probed</b>	<b>Codes/ Categories</b>	<b>Significant Statements</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Primary Needs Experienced by Non-Teaching Personnel in School</b>	Administrative and logistics support	<i>Teachers often request documents at short notice... many show respect and say thanks. Teamwork improves during events.” (FGD_P1)</i>  <i>“I adjust tasks based on urgent requests, but</i>	Essential operational backbone	Daily clerical and logistics routines keep information, materials, and schedules moving for teachers,

		<p><i>coordination improves when instructions are clear and schedules are shared early.” (IDI_P3)</i></p> <p><i>“During school events, we divide tasks and support each other. Collaboration becomes smoother when plans are communicated beforehand.” (FGD_P4)</i></p> <p><i>“When teachers and staff work together, we finish tasks faster. Good communication helps avoid repeated work and misunderstandings.” (FGD_P6)</i></p>		<p>learners, and parents.</p>
<p>health logging, parent calls, emergency aid, maintenance checks, cleaning, gate duty</p>	<p>Welfare and safety support</p>	<p><i>“Teachers often request documents at short notice... many show respect and say thanks. Teamwork improves during events.” (FGD_P1)</i></p> <p><i>“I adjust tasks based on urgent requests, but coordination improves when instructions are clear and schedules are shared early.” (IDI_P3)</i></p> <p><i>“During school events, we divide tasks and support each other. Collaboration becomes smoother when plans are communicated beforehand.” (FGD_P4)</i></p>	<p>Student care and environmental readiness</p>	<p>Staff link learner needs and school response and keep spaces ready for learning with fewer interruptions.</p>
<p>short-notice requests, respect shown, teamwork in events</p>	<p>Daily interaction demands</p>	<p><i>“Teachers often request documents at short notice... many show respect and say thanks. Teamwork improves during events.” (FGD_P1)</i></p> <p><i>“I adjust tasks based on urgent requests, but coordination improves when instructions are clear and schedules are shared early.” (IDI_P3)</i></p>	<p>Collaborative coordination roles</p>	<p>Interactions bring time pressure, plus social support and shared effort during peak activities.</p>

		<p><i>“During school events, we divide tasks and support each other. Collaboration becomes smoother when plans are communicated beforehand.” (FGD_P4)</i></p> <p><i>“When teachers and staff work together, we finish tasks faster. Good communication helps avoid repeated work and misunderstandings.” (FGD_P6)</i></p>		
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**Overload from Resource Limits.** This theme shows how peak workload periods expose gaps in tools and systems needed for non-teaching work. Participants describe enrolment seasons as high pressure cycles where tasks multiply while internet and printer failures slow output. Resource breakdowns turn routine duties into backlogs. Stress increases when personnel must deliver the same service level without reliable equipment. Thus, the significant statements of the participants are reflected below:

*“My workload doubles during enrolment week. When the internet drops and the printer jams, I fall behind and people line up for forms.” (IDI\_P3)*

*“During enrolment, we take turns restarting the router and fixing the printer. We lose hours, then we rush to catch up.” (FGD\_P2)*

The statements reveal a consistent pattern. Demand rises fast during peak periods. Technology and equipment problems reduce speed and accuracy. Delays create pressure, then staff absorb the impact through overtime, repeated steps, and improvised fixes.

Studies on non-teaching personnel training and digital work conditions report poor internet access and limited infrastructure as recurring constraints that disrupt task delivery and increase fatigue, which matches participants’ accounts of unstable connectivity and equipment failures. Calobag, (2024).

Research on technology strain at work also links digital load and ICT demands to employee well-being, which supports the view that unstable systems add stress in school settings. Nuutinen et al., (2024). Evidence on unstable internet in education settings also shows how connectivity limits access and coordination, which helps explain delays during peak administrative cycles. Akmad and Abatayo, (2024).

**Unstable Task Direction.** This theme shows how unclear requests and shifting priorities disrupt the execution of non teaching responsibilities. Participants describe receiving incomplete instructions, late changes, and urgent follow ups. These conditions

lead to rework, missed deadlines, and frustration among staff and requesters. Supply shortages add another layer of disruption because staff must pause tasks to source materials or revise plans. Thus, the significant statements of the participants are reflected below:

*“Sometimes the request has no details, then it changes after I finish. I redo the work and the deadline stays the same.” (IDI\_P6)*

*“In our office, priorities shift in one day. We start one report, then we stop because another urgent request comes with different instructions.” (FGD\_P4)*

The statements reveal a consistent pattern. Communication gaps create uncertainty at the start of tasks. Priority shifts interrupt progress and trigger rework. This cycle increases errors and delays, then staff carry the blame for outcomes they did not control.

Role ambiguity research shows that unclear expectations and conflicting demands relate to emotional exhaustion, which fits the stress linked to unclear requests and changing priorities. Mwakyusa, (2024). Work stress evidence also links role overload and ambiguity to psychological strain, which supports the idea that unstable task direction increases distress in demanding work settings Abdou et al., (2024). Scholarship using the Job Demands Resources lens explains how rising demands without matching resources intensify strain, which applies to repeated rework and shifting priorities in school support roles. Scholze and Hecker, (2024).

**Stalled Growth and Morale Strain.** This theme shows how limited development access combines with heavy demand and low recognition to weaken motivation and well being. Participants describe few training slots, late notices, and schedule clashes that block participation. They also report no relievers during peak work, which forces them to choose between training and urgent duties. Over time, fatigue and blame culture reduce confidence and commitment, especially when others treat their work as minor. Thus, the significant statements of the participants are reflected below:

*“I want to attend training, but the notice comes late and it falls on report deadlines. With no reliever, I stay and finish the work.” (IDI\_P8)*

*“When mistakes happen, they look at us first. When we finish everything on time, people forget it fast. It affects how we feel about our role.” (FGD\_P6)*

The statements reveal a consistent pattern. Development opportunities exist but access remains uneven. Timing and staffing gaps block participation. Emotional strain grows when effort stays unseen and accountability feels one sided.

A phenomenological study on non-teaching personnel webinar training reports barriers such as digital fatigue, limited interaction, and constraints linked to online learning conditions, which supports participants’ concerns about limited and difficult training access. Calobag, (2024).

DepEd issuances also show system level efforts to provide capacity building for non-teaching personnel, which highlights the importance of structured development pathways and timely coordination for attendance. DepEd Region VIII, (2024). Evidence on recognition among non-teaching staff links recognition practices to performance and inclusion, which supports participants’ emphasis on being seen and valued to sustain morale under load. Nyamboga, (2024).

**Table 2.** Challenges of Non-teaching Personnel in Fulfilling Their Roles

<b>Issues Probed</b>	<b>Codes / Categories</b>	<b>Significant Statements</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Challenges of Non-teaching Personnel in Fulfilling Their Roles</b>	Resource constraints	<p>“My workload doubles during enrolment week. When the internet drops and the printer jams, I fall behind and people line up for forms.” (IDI_P3)</p> <p>“During enrolment, we take turns restarting the router and fixing the printer. We lose hours, then we rush to catch up.” (FGD_P2)</p>	<b>Overload from resource limits</b>	Peak periods collide with weak tools and systems, slowing output and raising stress.
	Communication barriers	<p>“Sometimes the request has no details, then it changes after I finish. I redo the work and the deadline stays the same.” (IDI_P6)</p> <p>“In our office, priorities shift in one day. We start one report, then we stop because another urgent request comes with different instructions.” (FGD_P4)</p>	<b>Unstable task direction</b>	Ambiguity drives rework, delays, and missed expectations across tasks.
	Development barriers and emotional impacts	<p>“I want to attend training, but the notice comes late and it falls on report deadlines. With no reliever, I stay and finish the work.” (IDI_P8)</p> <p>“When mistakes happen, they look at us first. When we finish everything on time, people forget it fast. It affects how we feel about our role.” (FGD_P6)</p>	<b>Stalled growth and morale strain</b>	Limited development access and weak recognition lower motivation, strain well-being, and widen role gaps.

**Recognition and visibility.** This theme shows how peak workload periods intensify strain when essential tools and systems fail. Participants describe enrolment seasons as overwhelming because unstable internet and malfunctioning printers slow processes, create backlogs, and increase pressure on staff responsible for frontline services. Thus, the significant statements of the participants are reflected below:

*“During enrolment week, my tasks double, but the internet becomes slow and the printer keeps breaking. I fall behind even when I work fast.” (IDI\_P4)*

*“I handle long lines of parents, yet the system freezes. I restart the computer many times before I complete one request.” (IDI\_P7)*

*“In our group, we often wait for the printer to work again. We take turns troubleshooting instead of processing documents.” (FGD\_P2)*

*“When the connection drops, our workflow stops. People get frustrated, and we feel the pressure to fix something beyond our control.” (FGD\_P5)*

The statements reveal a clear pattern. High demand intersects with recurring system breakdowns, stretching capacity during enrolment and similar peak periods. These pressures elevate stress and disrupt workplace rhythm. Output slows as staff compensate for weak tools by repeating steps and troubleshooting equipment. Service delivery weakens when processes depend on unstable technology, causing delays that affect parents, teachers, and learners who rely on timely administrative support.

Research reinforces this theme. Calobag, (2024) reported that unstable digital tools disrupt non-teaching personnel performance and heighten fatigue in administrative environments. Their findings show how routine tasks become burdensome when technological resources fail. Similarly, Akmad and Abatayo, (2024) linked weak connectivity to workflow interruptions, demonstrating that poor digital infrastructure slows processing and prolongs queues. These studies align with participants’ experiences of strain during high demand periods.

Moreover, Mendoza, (2024) showed that technological inefficiencies increase workload strain by delaying transactions, complicating routine tasks, and forcing staff to troubleshoot issues they cannot fully resolve. His findings align with participants’ experiences of pressure during enrolment periods, where equipment failures slow essential processes. The study reinforces how limited infrastructure magnifies stress, reduces efficiency, and burdens non-teaching personnel during high demand cycles in daily school operations.

**System-Level Work Supports.** This theme shows how unclear instructions, shifting priorities, and frequent supply shortages disrupt the workflow of non-teaching personnel. Participants described how inconsistent communication creates confusion and forces rework, especially during peak periods when deadlines remain fixed despite changing directives. Thus, the significant statements of the participants are reflected below:

*“Requests sometimes arrive incomplete, then the instructions change after I finish the task. I repeat everything under the same deadline.” (IDI\_P3)*

*“I receive conflicting priorities from different offices. I try to follow both, but the workload becomes overwhelming.” (IDI\_P6)*

*“In our group, we agreed sudden changes disrupt our schedules. We often restart tasks because the instructions keep shifting.” (FGD\_P1)*

*“When supplies suddenly run out, we stop the task, search alternatives, and return to a workload that has doubled.” (FGD\_P4)*

The statements reveal a clear pattern. Unclear instructions and shifting priorities interrupt momentum and require unnecessary rework. These disruptions slow task completion, increase the risk of errors, and generate frustration among personnel expected to meet deadlines despite inconsistencies. Supply shortages further compound delays, creating preventable inefficiencies that weaken service delivery and heighten stress in routine administrative operations.

Research reinforces this theme. Mwakyusa, (2024) reported that role ambiguity and conflicting expectations significantly increase emotional exhaustion among employees in support roles. His findings show how unclear communication elevates strain and disrupts workflow stability. Similarly, Abdou, (2024) found that ambiguous directives reduce task accuracy and productivity, confirming that unclear expectations obstruct efficient service across organizational environments.

Moreover, Santos, (2024) showed that inconsistent communication patterns in school offices lead to workflow breakdowns, repeated errors, and lower morale among staff expected to handle urgent administrative functions. His findings mirror the participants’ experiences of disrupted routines and rework caused by unstable task direction. The study reinforces how communication clarity directly shapes efficiency, coordination, and well-being in school operations.

**Shared Planning and Feedback Loops.** This theme shows that limited access to training, lack of relievers, and sustained workload pressures weaken motivation and restrict the professional development of non-teaching personnel. Participants expressed frustration over missed learning opportunities and feelings of being undervalued despite heavy responsibilities. Thus, the significant statements of the participants are reflected below:

*“I want to attend training, but notices come late and overlap with deadlines. I must stay to finish the workload.” (IDI\_P8)*

*“I feel pressured when mistakes occur, but my effort is overlooked when everything runs smoothly.” (IDI\_P5)*

*“In our group, many skip training sessions because there is no reliever. We cannot leave the office during busy periods.” (FGD\_P3)*

*“We feel drained when tasks pile up and appreciation is rare. It affects how we view our role.” (FGD\_P6)*

The statements reveal a clear pattern. Training opportunities exist but remain inaccessible due to poor scheduling, limited staffing, and high workload demands. Emotional fatigue emerges when personnel feel unseen and overworked, lowering morale and discouraging long-term commitment. These conditions create an uneven developmental landscape where non-teaching personnel experience fewer growth pathways and shoulder constant pressure with little recognition.

Research reinforces this theme. Soriano, (2024) found that limited training access reduces workplace motivation and diminishes the perceived value of support roles in educational institutions. His study shows that development gaps widen when staff lack structured opportunities. Similarly, Mabaso, (2024) reported that heavy workloads paired with low recognition significantly reduce morale among non-teaching personnel, increasing dissatisfaction and emotional strain.

Moreover, Ramirez, (2024) showed that inadequate professional development programs and insufficient staffing intensify burnout risk among school support workers. His findings mirror participants’ accounts of blocked growth, limited acknowledgment, and sustained pressure. The study confirms that development, access and recognition are essential for well-being and long-term retention in support roles.

**Table 3.** Support System of Non-Teaching Personnel Perceive as Most Effective in Addressing Their Needs

<b>Issues Probed</b>	<b>Codes /Categories</b>	<b>Significant Statements</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Support System of Non-Teaching Personnel Perceive As Most Effective In Addressing Their Needs</b>	Recognition needs	<p><i>“During enrolment week, my tasks double, but the internet becomes slow and the printer keeps breaking. I fall behind even when I work fast.” (IDI_P4)</i></p> <p><i>I handle long lines of parents, yet the system freezes. I restart the computer many times before I complete one request.” (IDI_P7)</i></p> <p><i>In our group, we often wait for the printer to work again. We take turns troubleshooting</i></p>	<b>Recognition and visibility</b>	Visible appreciation strengthens belonging and effort.

		<p><i>instead of processing documents.” (FGD_P2)</i></p> <p><i>When the connection drops, our workflow stops. People get frustrated, and we feel the pressure to fix something beyond our control.” (FGD_P5)</i></p>		
	<p>Policy improvements</p>	<p><i>“Requests sometimes arrive incomplete, then the instructions change after I finish the task. I repeat everything under the same deadline.” (IDI_P3)</i></p> <p><i>“I receive conflicting priorities from different offices. I try to follow both, but the workload becomes overwhelming.” (IDI_P6)</i></p> <p><i>“In our group, we agreed sudden changes disrupt our schedules. We often restart tasks because the instructions keep shifting.” (FGD_P1)</i></p> <p><i>When supplies suddenly run out, we stop the task, search alternatives, and return to a workload that has doubled.” (FGD_P4)</i></p>	<p><b>System-level work supports</b></p>	<p>Clear roles, staffing, and working equipment reduce overload and delays.</p>
	<p>Involvement strategies</p>	<p><i>I want to attend training, but notices come late and overlap with deadlines. I must stay to finish the workload.” (IDI_P8)</i></p> <p><i>“I feel pressured when mistakes occur, but my effort is overlooked</i></p>	<p><b>Shared planning and feedback loops</b></p>	<p>Regular input channels improve coordination and prevent avoidable issues.</p>

		<p><i>when everything runs smoothly.” (IDI_P5)</i></p> <p><i>“In our group, many skip training sessions because there is no reliever. We cannot leave the office during busy periods.” (FGD_P3)</i></p> <p><i>We feel drained when tasks pile up and appreciation is rare. It affects how we view our role.” (FGD_P6)</i></p>		
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## CONCLUSIONS

To give light on the study, the following conclusions are enumerated.

1. This study concludes that non-teaching personnel sustain the core operational, welfare, and coordination functions of the school through administrative work, learner support, and constant interaction with teachers and parents. Their lived experiences demonstrate how essential their roles are in maintaining order, continuity, and responsiveness within school operations.
2. The study further concludes that non-teaching personnel face recurring systemic challenges related to workload distribution, technological limitations, communication gaps, and limited access to professional development. These pressures weaken efficiency, elevate stress, and restrict opportunities for skill improvement.
3. It is also concluded that non-teaching personnel recognize the value of supportive systems that acknowledge their contributions, strengthen work structures, and improve communication pathways. Clear roles, adequate resources, and regular involvement in planning processes enhance their sense of belonging and improve performance.

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