

Public school teachers as poll workers during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin Abra

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Abstract

This study examined the roles and responsibilities of public school teachers as poll workers during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra, as well as the challenges and risks they encounter in fulfilling these duties. Using a descriptive–correlational research design, data were gathered to assess teachers’ performance in terms of election duties and functions, ethical and legal responsibilities, and compliance with guidelines issued by the Commission on Elections and the Department of Education. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a high level of awareness, competence, and commitment in performing their roles, particularly in maintaining order, ensuring transparency, and upholding neutrality during elections. However, results also showed that teachers highly experienced political pressure, safety and security concerns, and physical, emotional, and professional stress while serving as poll workers. Correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between the level of teachers’ roles and responsibilities and the degree of challenges and risks encountered, suggesting that greater engagement and strict adherence to election duties increase exposure to pressure, risks, and stress. Based on these findings, the study proposes a policy-oriented program focused on capacity building, ethical guidance, legal protection, security support, and welfare services for teachers. Strengthening institutional support mechanisms is essential to safeguard teachers’ well-being and sustain the integrity, credibility, and effectiveness of the electoral process.

Keywords: public school teachers, poll workers, election duties, challenges and risks, policy-oriented program

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1. Introduction

Globally, teachers are recognized not only as facilitators of learning but also as public servants entrusted with upholding democratic principles, ethical conduct, and social responsibility. Beyond their instructional roles, teachers are often called upon to support democratic processes, particularly during election periods. In many countries, public school teachers serve as election or poll workers, tasked with ensuring orderly, transparent, and credible electoral processes. International organizations emphasize that the political neutrality and integrity of public servants are fundamental to sustaining public trust in elections, especially during periods marked by heightened political competition and social tension. UNESCO (2017) underscores that teachers contribute to democratic stability by modeling ethical behavior, civic responsibility, and impartiality in public service.

Despite their critical role, global studies indicate that teachers who serve as poll workers face distinct challenges and risks during elections. These include exposure to political pressure, intimidation, and ethical dilemmas arising from competing demands between professional obligations and personal or community relationships. In some contexts, teachers are subjected to subtle or overt influence by political actors seeking electoral advantage, given their authority, credibility, and visibility within communities. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2019) highlights that teachers and other frontline public servants involved in election administration are particularly vulnerable to political interference due to their strategic position in the electoral process. In developing countries, including those in Southeast Asia, the involvement of teachers in election-related duties remains a persistent governance concern. Research reveals that weak enforcement of election laws, entrenched political patronage, and limited institutional protection heighten the risks faced by teachers serving as poll workers. Although legal frameworks exist to safeguard electoral integrity, many teachers report uncertainty regarding their rights, responsibilities, and available support when confronted with election-related pressures. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020) notes that fragile governance systems and localized power dynamics increase the exposure of public servants to undue political influence during elections.

In the Philippine context, public school teachers are legally classified as civil servants and are governed by Civil Service Commission rules, Department of Education (DepEd) policies, and Commission on Elections (COMELEC) regulations. During national and local elections, teachers are routinely designated as members of the Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs), placing them at the forefront of election administration. As poll workers, they are responsible for overseeing voting procedures, safeguarding election materials, ensuring compliance with election laws, and maintaining peace and order in polling precincts. At the same time, teachers are strictly prohibited from engaging in partisan political activities and are expected to uphold political neutrality. These responsibilities and restrictions are clearly articulated in COMELEC Resolution No. 10730 (2022). However, national reports and studies reveal that Filipino teachers serving as poll workers often face significant risks during elections. These include political pressure from candidates or their supporters, threats to personal safety, fear of retaliation, logistical challenges, and physical and emotional stress associated with long working hours and high-stakes decision-making. Some teachers have reported being pressured to favor certain candidates, manipulate election procedures, or allow unauthorized use of school facilities. Others fear professional consequences, such as reassignment or strained relationships with local officials, when they resist political demands. Coronel (2018) affirms that political interference in the work of public sector employees, including teachers, remains prevalent in the Philippines, particularly in areas dominated by strong local political actors.

At the local level, the municipality of San Quintin, Abra presents a unique context for examining these issues. As a rural and close-knit community, social relationships in San Quintin are deeply intertwined, and teachers are

highly visible as community leaders and trusted figures. While such visibility reinforces their credibility as poll workers, it also intensifies political expectations and pressures. Teachers may find it difficult to refuse requests from local political figures or influential community members without risking social conflict, professional repercussions, or personal safety. Studies by David, Atun, and Mendoza (2019) similarly indicate that rural public servants in the Philippines experience heightened political pressure due to close community ties and localized power structures.

Despite the central role of teachers in election administration, existing Philippine research largely focuses on voter behavior, electoral outcomes, or institutional processes, with limited attention given to the lived experiences of teachers as poll workers. There is a notable lack of localized, district-level studies that examine the risks, ethical dilemmas, coping mechanisms, and institutional support systems available to teachers during elections. Consequently, policy formulation and implementation often rely on generalized assumptions rather than evidence grounded in local realities. Hutchcroft and Rocamora (2020) emphasize the importance of micro-level research to understand how democratic processes affect frontline public servants within specific community contexts. The research gap, therefore, lies in the absence of empirical studies that document and analyze the experiences, perceived risks, and responsibilities of public school teachers serving as poll workers in rural municipalities such as San Quintin, Abra. While national laws and policies clearly define teachers' roles during elections, little is known about how these policies are interpreted, implemented, and experienced at the local level. Moreover, there is limited evidence on the adequacy of institutional support, security measures, and ethical guidance provided to teachers before, during, and after election periods.

This study seeks to address this gap by systematically examining the experiences of public school teachers who serve as poll workers during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra. By exploring their roles, challenges, risks, and coping strategies, the study aims to generate localized evidence that can inform policy implementation, strengthen teacher protection mechanisms, and enhance ethical and professional support systems. Ultimately, the findings are expected to contribute to the promotion of electoral integrity, the protection of teacher welfare, and the development of context-sensitive interventions that recognize teachers not only as educators but also as vital public servants in democratic governance.

Statement of the Problem- This study aims to determine the roles, responsibilities, and challenges of public school teachers as poll workers during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of public school teachers as poll workers during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra, in terms of Election duties and functions; Ethical and legal responsibilities; and Compliance with COMELEC and DepEd guidelines?
2. What challenges and risks do public school teachers encounter while serving as poll workers during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra, in terms of Political pressure and interference; Safety and security concerns; and Physical, emotional, and professional stress?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the roles and responsibilities of public school teachers as poll workers and the challenges and risks they encounter during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra?
4. What policy-oriented program or intervention may be proposed to strengthen support, protection, and ethical guidance for public school teachers serving as poll workers during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra?

Importance of the Study- The findings of this study are beneficial to different stakeholders involved in education and the electoral process:

Department of Education (DepEd). This study provides empirical evidence that can guide policy-making,

training, and support initiatives to ensure that public school teachers effectively perform their roles as poll workers while maintaining ethical and professional standards.

School Administrators. The results help school heads identify areas where teachers may require guidance, resources, or support when serving as poll workers, enabling administrators to develop strategies that reduce risks and promote compliance with election regulations.

Public School Teachers. This study serves as a reflective tool for teachers to assess their understanding of their election duties, ethical responsibilities, and adherence to guidelines, encouraging preparedness, professional growth, and resilience in handling challenges during elections.

Teachers, Parents, and Community Stakeholders. The study emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts in ensuring smooth and safe elections, helping stakeholders understand their roles in supporting teachers and safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process.

Students. While indirectly affected, learners benefit when their teachers are effectively trained and protected during elections, ensuring that teachers can continue to fulfill their educational duties without undue stress or risk.

Future Researchers. The study provides valuable reference material for those exploring related topics on teacher roles in elections, professional responsibilities, and risk management. It can serve as baseline data for comparative studies in other municipalities or electoral contexts.

2. Related Literature

Roles and Responsibilities of Public School Teachers as Poll Workers - The roles and responsibilities of public school teachers as poll workers are considered essential for ensuring the credibility, efficiency, and fairness of elections. These roles include election duties and functions, ethical and legal obligations, and adherence to COMELEC and DepEd guidelines (COMELEC, 2020). Studies indicate that teachers who clearly understand their responsibilities are better able to manage polling stations, assist voters, and maintain impartiality (Reyes & Santos, 2019; Lim, 2021). In the Philippine context, DepEd Memorandum No. 178, s. 2016 emphasizes the legal and professional obligations of teachers when serving as poll workers, highlighting the need to prepare educators adequately for their electoral duties.

Challenges and Risks Encountered by Teachers During Elections - Serving as a poll worker presents teachers with various challenges and risks. Literature identifies political pressure, safety concerns, and physical, emotional, and professional stress as common issues faced by teachers during elections (Delgado, 2018; Cruz, 2020). International studies also emphasize that electoral work can expose educators to undue influence, conflicts of interest, and long working hours that affect their well-being and professional performance (UNDP, 2019; IFES, 2021). These findings underscore the importance of examining the risks and developing strategies to protect teachers while ensuring their effective participation in the electoral process.

Importance of Training and Preparation for Teachers as Poll Workers - Proper training and preparation are critical for teachers to perform effectively as poll workers. Torres (2017) emphasizes that teachers who receive structured pre-election orientation and guidance are better able to facilitate voting, assist special-needs voters, and manage polling stations efficiently. Similarly, Reyes and Santos (2019) argue that preparation reduces errors, enhances impartiality, and strengthens teachers' confidence in fulfilling their electoral responsibilities.

Global Perspectives on Teachers in Electoral Processes - International studies highlight that the involvement of educators in elections is a common practice with associated benefits and challenges. According to UNDP (2019) and IFES (2021), teachers globally are valued for their organizational skills and impartiality, yet they are often exposed to undue influence, administrative pressure, and safety risks. These findings underscore the need for clear ethical guidelines, institutional support, and protective measures to ensure teachers can serve effectively while safeguarding their professional integrity.

Ethical and Legal Responsibilities - Ethical and legal compliance is a critical factor in the performance of teachers as poll workers. Research indicates that impartiality, adherence to election laws, and confidentiality are key ethical requirements that teachers must uphold (Northouse, 2018; Aquino, 2020). Philippine studies reveal that lapses in ethical conduct or legal compliance can undermine the integrity of the election and place teachers at risk of legal sanctions or reputational harm (Garcia & Mendoza, 2021). Therefore, training and support mechanisms are necessary to ensure teachers understand and perform their duties within the boundaries of legal and ethical standards.

Compliance with COMELEC and DepEd Guidelines - Compliance with official guidelines significantly affects the smooth execution of election processes. Literature shows that teachers who follow COMELEC and DepEd directives are able to manage voter flow, report incidents, and perform their responsibilities efficiently (Santos, 2019; Tan, 2021). Local studies highlight that strict adherence to procedural guidelines reduces errors, prevents conflicts, and ensures transparency in the conduct of elections (Lopez & Cruz, 2022). This demonstrates the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and understanding of institutional policies.

Stakeholder Support and Collaboration - The success of teachers in their role as poll workers also depends on stakeholder support. Research emphasizes that coordination with school administrators, fellow teachers, local government units, and the community helps address logistical challenges and ensures the safety of educators during elections (Rivera, 2018; Bautista & Ramos, 2020). Collaboration fosters resource sharing, problem-solving, and the development of contingency plans, which enhances the overall efficiency and integrity of the election process.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Teacher Performance in Elections - Monitoring and evaluation are crucial in assessing the effectiveness and preparedness of teachers serving as poll workers. Studies show that post-election evaluations, feedback mechanisms, and reports from school administrators provide data on compliance, ethical conduct, and challenges encountered (UNDP, 2009; Ocampo, 2020). This process not only ensures accountability but also informs the design of training programs and policy improvements to better support teachers in future elections.

3. Methodology

Research Design- The study utilized a descriptive–correlational research design to describe the conditions experienced by public school teachers who served as poll workers and to determine the relationship between selected variables related to their responsibilities and challenges during the conduct of elections. This design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to examine existing situations and identify the degree of association among variables without manipulating them. Descriptive–correlational research is commonly applied in studies that seek to explore relationships among variables within a natural setting. Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun explained that correlational research investigates the extent to which differences in one variable are related to differences in another, using statistical techniques to measure the strength and direction of relationships. This approach is particularly useful in educational and social research where variables cannot be controlled but meaningful associations can still be identified and interpreted.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen) - The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), proposed by Icek Ajzen, explains how an individual's behavior is shaped by behavioral intention, which in turn is influenced by three key components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of teachers serving as poll workers, TPB helps explain why teachers decide to comply with election-related duties. Attitude refers to teachers' personal evaluation of poll work—whether they view it as a meaningful civic responsibility or as a burdensome and risky task. Teachers who believe that serving as poll workers contributes to fair and credible elections are more likely to develop positive intentions toward fulfilling their duties ethically and responsibly. Subjective norms involve the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior. Teachers may feel obligated to accept poll assignments due to expectations from the Department of Education, the

Commission on Elections (COMELEC), school administrators, colleagues, and the community. The normalization of teachers' participation in elections strengthens compliance, even when personal apprehensions exist. Perceived behavioral control reflects teachers' beliefs about their capability to perform poll duties effectively. Factors such as prior experience, training, legal protection, and administrative support influence teachers' confidence in handling election tasks. When teachers feel adequately prepared and supported, they are more likely to intend—and actually—to comply with election rules and ethical standards. Overall, TPB provides a strong framework for understanding how personal beliefs, institutional expectations, and perceived competence interact to shape teachers' intentions and behaviors as poll workers.

Role Theory - Role Theory focuses on how individuals understand, internalize, and perform the roles assigned to them within a social structure. It emphasizes that behavior is influenced by social expectations, role norms, and role conflict. In this study, teachers occupy dual roles: as professional educators and as temporary election officers. As educators, teachers are expected to uphold neutrality, integrity, and professionalism. As poll workers, they are required to implement election laws, safeguard ballots, and ensure an orderly and credible voting process. Role Theory is particularly useful in examining how teachers interpret and balance these overlapping roles. Teachers may experience role conflict when election duties expose them to political pressures, security risks, or community tensions that challenge their professional identity. For example, enforcing election rules may strain relationships with parents, local leaders, or community members. The theory also explains role conformity, wherein teachers strive to meet institutional expectations despite personal discomfort. Teachers may strictly follow election protocols to avoid sanctions, preserve professional credibility, and maintain public trust. Thus, Role Theory provides insight into how teachers negotiate expectations, manage conflicts, and perform role-specific behaviors while serving as poll workers during elections.

Social Responsibility Theory - Social Responsibility Theory asserts that individuals and institutions have a moral obligation to act in ways that promote the welfare of society. While originally applied in media ethics, the theory broadly emphasizes accountability, public interest, and ethical conduct. Applied to teachers serving as poll workers, this theory frames their participation as an act of public service rather than merely a mandated task. Teachers are entrusted with ensuring honest, orderly, and transparent elections, which are essential to democratic governance. Teachers' involvement reflects a commitment to protecting the integrity of the electoral process, particularly in communities where teachers are viewed as educated, credible, and relatively impartial figures. Their ethical conduct—such as maintaining neutrality, resisting political influence, and safeguarding election materials—demonstrates social responsibility toward voters and society at large. This theory also highlights the ethical dimension of teachers' actions. Failure to act responsibly (e.g., negligence, bias, or misconduct) can undermine public trust in elections. Therefore, Social Responsibility Theory supports the view that teachers' roles as poll workers are grounded in ethical accountability and societal trust.

Civic Duty Theory - Civic Duty Theory is rooted in political participation literature and emphasizes the idea that citizens engage in civic activities due to an internalized sense of obligation rather than external rewards. Civic duty is shaped by socialization, education, cultural values, and institutional norms. Teachers, as educated professionals and public servants, often possess a heightened sense of civic consciousness. Serving as poll workers is viewed not merely as compliance with a government directive but as a fulfillment of one's responsibility as a citizen to support democratic processes. This theory explains why many teachers accept poll duties despite known challenges such as long working hours, exposure to conflict, and personal safety risks. Their participation is motivated by a belief that democratic elections require collective effort and sacrifice. Civic Duty Theory also underscores the role of teachers as models of civic engagement. By participating in elections, teachers reinforce democratic values within their communities and demonstrate responsible citizenship to students and the public.

The synthesis of these theoretical frameworks highlights a comprehensive understanding of why public school teachers participate as poll workers and how they navigate the complexities of their roles. The Theory of Planned Behavior explains that teachers' intentions to fulfill poll duties are shaped by their attitudes toward election work, the social expectations placed upon them, and their perceived competence in handling election responsibilities.

Role Theory complements this by illustrating how teachers manage potential conflicts between their professional educator role and their temporary role as election officers, striving to balance institutional expectations with personal and ethical considerations. Meanwhile, Social Responsibility Theory emphasizes the moral and ethical obligations inherent in their participation, framing teachers' actions as crucial to promoting societal welfare and maintaining public trust in the electoral process. Lastly, Civic Duty Theory underscores the intrinsic motivation of teachers to engage in poll work as an expression of responsible citizenship, driven by civic consciousness and a commitment to democratic ideals. Together, these theories provide a solid foundation for the present study, as they explain both the motivations and challenges of teachers serving as poll workers in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra, highlighting the interplay between personal beliefs, social expectations, ethical responsibility, and civic engagement in shaping their experiences.

Conceptual Framework of the Study- This study is anchored on the idea that the roles and responsibilities of public-school teachers as poll workers directly influence the challenges and risks they encounter during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra. The independent variable of the study is the roles and responsibilities of public school teachers, which include their election duties and functions, ethical and legal responsibilities, and compliance with COMELEC and DepEd guidelines. These responsibilities are considered essential because they determine how effectively teachers can perform their duties while maintaining integrity, professionalism, and adherence to election laws. On the other hand, the dependent variable is the challenges and risks encountered by teachers while serving as poll workers, which include political pressure and interference, safety and security concerns, and physical, emotional, and professional stress. By examining the relationship between these two variables, the study seeks to determine whether clear understanding and proper execution of roles and responsibilities can mitigate the challenges and risks faced by public school teachers during elections.

Data Gathering Procedure- The researcher began the data gathering process by securing an endorsement from the Schools Division Superintendent of Abra and obtaining permission from the school heads of selected public elementary and secondary schools in the Municipality of San Quintin. After approval, a formal communication was sent to the identified public school teachers, informing them of the nature, objectives, and scope of the study. Once the necessary permits were granted, the researcher personally administered the survey questionnaire to the respondents at a time convenient for them to avoid disruption of classes, school programs, and other official duties. Before distribution, the purpose of the study and clear instructions for accomplishing the questionnaire were explained. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses and that all data collected would be used strictly for academic purposes. The respondents were given ample time to answer the questionnaire thoughtfully. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after accomplishment to ensure a high return rate. For questionnaires not retrieved on the same day, follow-up visits were conducted until all responses were collected. After the collection process, the researcher carefully checked all accomplished questionnaires for completeness and accuracy. The responses were then systematically tallied, organized, and encoded for statistical treatment.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1

Roles and Responsibilities of Public School Teachers as Poll Workers during Elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalency
a. Election Duties and Functions		
Public school teachers are aware that their primary duty as poll workers is to ensure the orderly, honest, and peaceful conduct of elections.	4.23	A
Public school teachers are responsible for verifying the identity of voters before allowing them to cast their votes.	4.34	A
Public school teachers ensure that voting procedures are properly followed inside the polling precinct.	4.45	A
Public school teachers assist elderly voters, pregnant voters, and persons with disabilities in accordance with election rules.	4.44	A

Public school teachers help safeguard election paraphernalia, ballots, and official documents before, during, and after voting.	4.26	A
Public school teachers participate in the proper counting of votes and recording of election results.	4.46	A
Public school teachers ensure that the secrecy of the ballot is strictly observed at all times.	4.28	A
Public school teachers coordinate with fellow members of the Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs) to resolve election-related concerns.	4.35	A
Public school teachers manage crowd control inside the polling place to avoid confusion or disorder.	4.34	A
Public school teachers prepare and submit accurate election reports and documents as required by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC).	4.38	A
Sub-Mean	4.35	A
b. Ethical and Legal Responsibilities		
Public school teachers uphold a non-partisan stance in the performance of their duties as poll workers.	4.35	A
Public school teachers maintain discretion regarding political views inside the polling place.	4.24	A
Public school teachers do not favor or discriminate against any voter based on political affiliation.	4.48	A
Public school teachers uphold honesty and integrity in all election-related tasks assigned to them.	4.56	SA
Public school teachers avoid engaging in any act that may compromise the credibility of the election.	4.66	SA
Public school teachers respect the rights of voters and fellow poll workers at all times.	4.43	A
Public school teachers strictly follow election laws even when under pressure from political groups or individuals.	4.44	A
Public school teachers report any observed election irregularities to proper authorities.	4.23	A
Public school teachers avoid conflicts of interest that may affect their performance as poll workers.	4.25	A
Public school teachers understand that violations of election laws may result in administrative or legal sanctions.	4.69	SA
Sub mean	4.43	A
c. Compliance with COMELEC and DepEd Guidelines		
Public school teachers are familiar with COMELEC rules governing the conduct of teachers as poll workers.	4.36	
Public school teachers follow Department of Education (DepEd) policies related to their participation in election activities.	4.45	A
Public school teachers attend mandatory election briefings and trainings conducted by COMELEC or DepEd.	4.36	A
Public school teachers comply with the prohibition against engaging in partisan political activities.	4.35	A
Public school teachers observe proper conduct and discipline as required by civil service rules during elections.	4.23	A
Public school teachers adhere to prescribed procedures for opening and closing of polling precincts.	4.58	SA
Public school teachers follow official guidelines in handling election materials and documents.	4.54	SA
Public school teachers observe safety and security protocols mandated by COMELEC and DepEd.	4.31	A
Public school teachers comply with reporting and documentation requirements after the election.	4.36	A
Public school teachers seek guidance from authorized officials when election-related issues arise.	4.34	A
Sub-Mean	4.39	A
Overall	4.38	A

Legend: SA- Strongly Agree A- Agree

The analysis of the roles and responsibilities of public-school teachers as poll workers shows that teachers strongly agree with their duties and functions, ethical and legal obligations, and compliance with COMELEC and DepEd guidelines, with an overall weighted mean of 4.38 (Agree). This indicates that teachers in San Quintin, Abra, are highly aware of their responsibilities and committed to performing them effectively during election periods.

On Election Duties and Functions - Teachers demonstrated strong awareness of their primary operational duties as poll workers. Highly rated indicators include ensuring proper voting procedures inside the precinct (Mean = 4.45, A), participating in vote counting and recording of results (Mean = 4.46, A), and assisting elderly voters, pregnant voters, and persons with disabilities (Mean = 4.44, A). The sub-mean for this dimension was 4.35 (A), reflecting teachers' consistent understanding and performance of key election tasks. These results suggest that teachers are highly capable of managing polling operations, maintaining order, and safeguarding election materials. This is consistent with the study of Reyes and Santos (2020), who emphasized that poll workers' competence in operational duties is crucial to the credibility and smooth conduct of elections. Teachers' attention to procedural accuracy ensures efficiency, fairness, and integrity at polling stations.

On Ethical and Legal Responsibilities - Teachers scored particularly high on indicators related to integrity, neutrality, and adherence to election laws. Notable ratings include avoiding acts that may compromise election credibility (Mean = 4.66, SA), upholding honesty in election-related tasks (Mean = 4.56, SA), and understanding that violations of election laws may result in sanctions (Mean = 4.69, SA). The sub-mean of 4.43 (A) indicates a strong commitment to ethical and legal standards. These findings imply that teachers recognize the importance of maintaining impartiality and transparency in their roles. Consistent with Aquino (2018), ethical compliance among public servants, including teachers serving as poll workers, is essential to prevent election malpractice and promote public trust. Teachers' awareness of legal consequences further reinforces accountability in election processes.

On Compliance with COMELEC and DepEd Guidelines - Teachers reported high compliance with official rules and guidelines, including adherence to prescribed procedures for opening and closing polling precincts (Mean = 4.58, SA) and proper handling of election materials (Mean = 4.54, SA). The sub-mean for this dimension was 4.39 (A), highlighting teachers' commitment to following procedural regulations and attending required briefings and trainings. These results suggest that teachers are well-prepared to fulfill their roles in accordance with institutional guidelines, thereby contributing to orderly elections. This aligns with the findings of COMELEC (2020), which emphasized that adherence to official procedures by poll workers is critical to maintaining election integrity and minimizing operational errors. The findings indicate that public school teachers in San Quintin, Abra, demonstrate a high level of competence, ethical responsibility, and procedural compliance in their roles as poll workers. Strong performance across all three dimensions suggests that teachers are capable of ensuring orderly, honest, and credible elections while upholding neutrality and adhering to institutional guidelines. The results underscore the importance of continuous training, ethical reinforcement, and institutional support to maintain high standards of poll worker performance.

Challenges and Risks of Public School Teachers Encounter while Serving as Poll Workers during Elections in the Municipality of San Quintin Abra - This section examines the challenges and risks faced by public school teachers while serving as poll workers during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra, focusing on the difficulties and potential hazards they encounter in fulfilling their electoral duties.

Table 2

Challenges and Risks of Public School Teachers Encounter while Serving as Poll Workers during Elections in the Municipality of San Quintin Abra

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalency
a. Political Pressure and Interference		
Public school teachers experience pressure from local political figures to favor certain candidates.	3.42	HE
Public school teachers are occasionally asked to influence voters within their communities.	3.45	HE
Public school teachers feel compelled to comply with requests from political groups to avoid conflict.	4.34	HE
Public school teachers encounter expectations to attend campaign-related activities while serving as poll workers.	4.16	HE
Public school teachers face subtle threats or intimidation from political supporters during election periods.	4.35	HE

Public school teachers are concerned about negative repercussions for refusing political requests.	4.38	HE
Public school teachers observe attempts by candidates or supporters to manipulate election procedures.	3.24	HE
Public school teachers feel that community relationships sometimes compromise their ability to remain neutral.	4.57	VHE
Public school teachers experience pressure to use school facilities for political purposes.	4.68	VHE
Public school teachers feel their professional judgment is occasionally challenged by political interference.	4.44	HE
Sub-Mean	4.10	HE
b. Safety and Security Concerns		
Public school teachers are concerned about their personal safety while performing poll worker duties.	4.58	VHE
Public school teachers feel vulnerable to verbal abuse or threats from voters or political actors.	4.34	HE
Public school teachers worry about physical confrontations during crowded or tense election situations.	4.56	VHE
Public school teachers are concerned about the security of election materials and ballots.	4.35	HE
Public school teachers feel unsafe traveling to and from polling stations, especially in remote areas.	4.67	VHE
Public school teachers experience anxiety due to insufficient security measures at polling sites.	4.36	HE
Public school teachers are concerned about potential damage to property or school facilities during elections.	4.45	HE
Public school teachers feel that law enforcement presence is sometimes inadequate at polling precincts.	4.56	VHE
Public school teachers worry about health and safety risks during long working hours on election day.	4.24	HE
Public school teachers experience fear of retaliation from community members if disputes arise at the polling place.	4.44	HE
Sub-mean	4.46	HE
C. Physical, Emotional, and Professional Stress		
Public school teachers experience physical fatigue due to long hours of work on election day.	4.45	HE
Public school teachers feel emotionally drained by handling large crowds of voters.	4.36	HE
Public school teachers experience stress from the high responsibility of ensuring fair elections.	4.38	HE
Public school teachers feel anxious when managing conflicts or disputes among voters.	4.59	VHE
Public school teachers experience tension due to the pressure of maintaining political neutrality.	4.33	HE
Public school teachers feel mentally exhausted from multitasking election duties and responsibilities.	4.89	VHE
Public school teachers experience worry about possible mistakes that could affect election results.	4.45	HE
Public school teachers face stress balancing election duties with their regular teaching responsibilities.	4.34	HE
Public school teachers feel frustrated when encountering non-compliance or disruptive behavior during elections.	4.50	VHE
Public school teachers experience professional strain due to community scrutiny and expectations during election periods.	4.16	HE
Sub-mean	4.45	HE
Overall Mean	4.34	HE

Legend: VHE- Very Highly Experienced HE- highly Experienced

The analysis of the challenges and risks experienced by public school teachers while serving as poll workers revealed that teachers **highly experience various forms of political pressure, safety concerns, and professional stress** during election periods, with an **overall mean of 4.34 (Highly Experienced)**. The findings are organized into three dimensions: Political Pressure and Interference, Safety and Security Concerns, and Physical, Emotional, and Professional Stress.

On Political Pressure and Interference - Teachers reported significant political pressure from local figures, including requests to favor certain candidates or influence voters. Indicators such as feeling compelled to comply with political requests to avoid conflict (Mean = 4.34, HE) and facing subtle threats from political supporters (Mean = 4.35, HE) were highly experienced. The highest-rated indicators were pressure to use school facilities for political purposes (Mean = 4.68, VHE) and the influence of community relationships compromising neutrality (Mean = 4.57, VHE). The sub-mean for this dimension was 4.10 (HE), indicating that political interference is a prevalent challenge. These findings suggest that teachers' neutrality and professional judgment are often tested by political pressures during elections. This aligns with the study of Manglicmot and Reyes (2019), who noted that election personnel, particularly teachers in small communities, frequently face implicit and explicit pressures from local political actors. The results imply that **strong ethical training and clear institutional support** are essential to safeguard teachers from undue political influence.

On Safety and Security Concerns - Teachers expressed concerns about personal safety while performing poll worker duties. High ratings were observed in indicators such as feeling unsafe traveling to and from polling stations (Mean = 4.67, VHE), worry about physical confrontations during tense situations (Mean = 4.56, VHE), and inadequate law enforcement presence (Mean = 4.56, VHE). The sub-mean of this dimension was 4.46 (HE), highlighting that safety and security remain significant concerns during election duties. The findings indicate that the physical security of teachers is at risk, particularly in remote or politically charged areas. This is consistent with research by Santos and Velasco (2020), who reported that frontline election workers in the Philippines often experience vulnerability to verbal abuse, intimidation, or physical threats during polling activities. These results emphasize the **need for proper security protocols, law enforcement support, and contingency planning** to ensure teachers' safety during elections.

On Physical, Emotional, and Professional Stress - Teachers reported high levels of stress due to the demanding nature of election responsibilities. They experienced fatigue from long working hours (Mean = 4.45, HE), emotional strain from handling large crowds (Mean = 4.36, HE), and anxiety over possible mistakes affecting election results (Mean = 4.45, HE). The highest-rated stress indicators were mental exhaustion from multitasking duties (Mean = 4.89, VHE), frustration due to disruptive behavior (Mean = 4.50, VHE), and anxiety when managing conflicts (Mean = 4.59, VHE). The sub-mean for this dimension was 4.45 (HE). These results suggest that teachers experience **intense occupational stress** while performing poll worker roles. This aligns with the findings of Cruz and Bautista (2018), who observed that teachers serving as election personnel often face psychological and emotional strain due to the high stakes and visibility of election activities. The study implies that **stress management programs, scheduled breaks, and support from election authorities** are necessary to maintain teachers' well-being and effectiveness. The results indicate that public school teachers encounter **considerable challenges while serving as poll workers**, with political interference, safety risks, and occupational stress being highly experienced. These findings corroborate previous studies on election workers' experiences in the Philippines (Manglicmot & Reyes, 2019; Santos & Velasco, 2020; Cruz & Bautista, 2018), highlighting the need for **institutional safeguards, ethical training, security measures, and professional support systems** to ensure that teachers can fulfill their responsibilities effectively, safely, and impartially.

Significant Relationship Between the Roles and Responsibilities of Public School Teachers as Poll Workers and The Challenges and Risks they Encounter During Elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra - Table 3 presents the correlation between the roles and responsibilities of public school teachers as poll workers and the challenges and risks they encounter during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra across three dimensions: Election Duties and Functions, Ethical and Legal Responsibilities, and Compliance with COMELEC and DepEd Guidelines, along with the overall roles and responsibilities score.

Table 3 presents the relationship between the roles and responsibilities of public school teachers as poll workers and the challenges and risks they encounter during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra. The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis reveals that all dimensions of roles and responsibilities exhibit positive and statistically significant relationships with the identified challenges and risks, as indicated by p-values

of 0.000, which are all lower than the 0.05 level of significance.

Table 3

Significant Relationship Between the Roles and Responsibilities of Public School Teachers as Poll Workers and the Challenges and Risks They Encounter during Elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra

Roles and Responsibilities (Independent Variable)	Challenges and Risks (Dependent Variable)	Pearson r	Strength of Relationship	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Election Duties and Functions	Political Pressure and Interference	0.621	Moderate Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Election Duties and Functions	Safety and Security Concerns	0.658	Moderate to Strong Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Election Duties and Functions	Physical, Emotional, and Professional Stress	0.701	Strong Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Ethical and Legal Responsibilities	Political Pressure and Interference	0.676	Moderate to Strong Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Ethical and Legal Responsibilities	Safety and Security Concerns	0.712	Strong Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Ethical and Legal Responsibilities	Physical, Emotional, and Professional Stress	0.745	Strong Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Compliance with COMELEC and DepEd Guidelines	Political Pressure and Interference	0.693	Moderate to Strong Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Compliance with COMELEC and DepEd Guidelines	Safety and Security Concerns	0.728	Strong Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Compliance with COMELEC and DepEd Guidelines	Physical, Emotional, and Professional Stress	0.764	Strong Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

Legend

r – Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient

p-value < 0.05 – Significant

Ho – Null Hypothesis

Specifically, Election Duties and Functions show a moderate to strong positive correlation with Political Pressure and Interference ($r = 0.621$, $p = 0.000$) and Safety and Security Concerns ($r = 0.658$, $p = 0.000$), and a strong positive relationship with Physical, Emotional, and Professional Stress ($r = 0.701$, $p = 0.000$). These results suggest that teachers who are more actively engaged in election-related duties—such as voter verification, crowd management, and vote counting—are more likely to experience heightened political pressure, safety concerns, and work-related stress during election periods. Likewise, Ethical and Legal Responsibilities demonstrate moderate to strong-to-strong positive correlations with Political Pressure and Interference ($r = 0.676$, $p = 0.000$), Safety and Security Concerns ($r = 0.712$, $p = 0.000$), and Physical, Emotional, and Professional Stress ($r = 0.745$, $p = 0.000$). The strongest relationships were observed in this dimension, indicating that teachers who strictly uphold neutrality, integrity, and compliance with election laws are more exposed to external pressures, security risks, and emotional strain. This may be attributed to increased accountability and resistance to partisan influence, which place teachers in more vulnerable and demanding situations.

Furthermore, Compliance with COMELEC and DepEd Guidelines exhibits moderate to strong positive correlations with Political Pressure and Interference ($r = 0.693$, $p = 0.000$) and strong positive relationships with Safety and Security Concerns ($r = 0.728$, $p = 0.000$) and Physical, Emotional, and Professional Stress ($r = 0.764$, $p = 0.000$). The strongest correlation in the entire table was found between compliance with guidelines and physical, emotional, and professional stress, suggesting that strict adherence to prescribed rules and procedures intensifies teachers' workload, vigilance, and stress levels during elections. Overall, the findings indicate that greater awareness, commitment, and performance of roles and responsibilities among public school teachers as poll workers are associated with higher levels of challenges and risks during elections. Since all computed *p*-values are below 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming the existence of a significant relationship between the variables.

These results imply that while teachers' competence and dedication are essential for ensuring credible and orderly elections, such responsibilities also expose them to considerable political pressure, safety threats, and

physical and emotional strain. The findings are consistent with the views of election and public service scholars who emphasize that frontline election workers often face increased risks as accountability and task complexity increase. In practical terms, the results highlight the need for stronger institutional support, including enhanced security measures, stress management programs, legal protection, and comprehensive pre-election training to safeguard public school teachers serving as poll workers and ensure their well-being during election duties.

A policy-oriented program or intervention may be proposed to strengthen support, protection, and ethical guidance for public school teachers serving as poll workers during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra - This section discusses the potential for a **policy-oriented program or intervention** aimed at enhancing support, protection, and ethical guidance for public school teachers serving as poll workers during elections in the Municipality of San Quintin, Abra.

5. Conclusions

- Public school teachers in San Quintin, Abra demonstrate a high level of competence, ethical responsibility, and compliance with the guidelines set by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) and the Department of Education (DepEd). Their effective performance of election duties reflects professionalism, impartiality, and commitment to ensuring credible, orderly, and peaceful elections.
- Despite their competence, public school teachers serving as poll workers encounter significant challenges, particularly political pressure, safety risks, and elevated stress levels during election periods. These challenges pose potential threats to teachers' well-being and underscore the need for stronger ethical reinforcement, adequate security provisions, and institutional support.
- The findings reveal that greater engagement and strict adherence to election duties are significantly associated with higher exposure to political pressure, safety risks, and stress. This indicates that teachers who perform their responsibilities diligently are more vulnerable to external pressures, emphasizing the importance of protective mechanisms and psychosocial support.
- Based on the results, there is a clear need for a policy-oriented program that strengthens training, ethical guidance, and support systems for public school teachers in San Quintin, Abra. Such a program is essential to sustain teachers' effectiveness, safeguard their welfare, and preserve the integrity of the electoral process.

Recommendations

- The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), may continue and further strengthen capacity-building programs focusing on election laws, ethical responsibilities, and proper execution of election duties to maintain the high level of competence among public school teachers.
- Local government units and concerned agencies may implement enhanced security measures, including the presence of law enforcement personnel and clear reporting mechanisms, to protect teachers from political pressure, intimidation, and safety risks during elections.
- Institutional support systems such as stress management programs, psychological first aid, and legal assistance may be provided to help teachers cope with the pressures associated with their role as poll workers.
- A policy-oriented support and training program is strongly recommended for adoption and implementation. This program should focus on continuous ethical training, safety preparedness, legal protection, and welfare support to ensure that public school teachers can perform their election duties effectively, safely, and with integrity.

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