

Practices and Challenges Among Members of Electoral Board in Guinsacat, Camiguin

Ian Mark D. Kionisala
Camiguin Polytechnic State College
kionisalaianmark@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the practices and challenges encountered by Electoral Board members in Guinsiliban, Sagay, and Catarman (GuinSaCat), Camiguin during the May 12, 2025 National and Local Elections. A quantitative descriptive-survey design was used. Complete enumeration covered 129 Electoral Board members who served as chairpersons, poll clerks, and members. Data were gathered through a validated questionnaire with a Cronbach's alpha of .96 and analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, independent-samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance, and Tukey post hoc analysis. Electoral practices were implemented to a high extent overall ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.27$), particularly voter registration ($M = 3.98$), voter-record accuracy ($M = 3.96$), and safeguarding electoral

materials ($M = 3.96$). Challenges were generally reported at a low extent ($M = 1.73$, $SD = 0.87$); the leading concerns were physical fatigue and health issues ($M = 1.98$), diverse voter-education needs ($M = 1.89$), and technical difficulties with voting equipment or systems ($M = 1.88$). Practice implementation did not significantly differ across respondent profiles. However, challenge perception differed significantly by sex ($p = .033$) and age ($p = .011$), with a Tukey comparison identifying a difference between members aged 21-30 and 41-50 years ($p = .008$). The findings indicate that standardized electoral procedures support consistent implementation, but targeted interventions remain necessary for personnel well-being, voter education, technical readiness, and age-responsive support.

Keywords: *electoral administration, Electoral Board members, election practices, operational challenges, Philippine elections, voter education*

INTRODUCTION

Credible elections depend on frontline personnel who translate electoral laws, guidelines, and technical systems into orderly polling-place operations. Electoral Board members safeguard the integrity of election procedures by verifying voters, maintaining records, managing electoral materials, documenting results, responding to voter concerns, and coordinating with stakeholders. Their work is central to the quality of local electoral administration and to public confidence in democratic institutions.

Electoral administration has become increasingly complex. Poll workers must carry out standardized procedures while responding to technical problems, logistical constraints, public expectations, and the physical and emotional demands of extended election duties. Studies have shown that training improves preparedness, but election-day situations still require judgment, adaptation, and institutional support (Bryant et al., 2024; Czapiewski, 2025; Rebuscas et al., 2025). Technical difficulties, internet instability, fatigue, and stakeholder-management concerns can therefore persist even when personnel are committed and well prepared.

This issue is relevant in the municipalities of Guinsiliban, Sagay, and Catarman in Camiguin, collectively referred to as GuinSaCat. Electoral Board members in these municipalities administered the May 12, 2025

National and Local Elections under common procedures but within distinct local contexts. Existing assessments commonly emphasize equipment, transmission, and system milestones. Less attention is given to the actual practices of Electoral Board members and the obstacles they encounter at the precinct level. This study addressed that gap by assessing practice implementation, identifying challenges, testing differences across demographic groups, and developing an action plan for stronger local electoral governance.

Literature Review

Institutional Standardization in Electoral Administration

Institutional Theory explains how formal rules, organizational norms, and routinized practices shape behavior within institutions (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In electoral administration, standardized procedures are important because they reduce discretion in sensitive processes and promote consistent service delivery. Electoral Board members work within legal mandates, training systems, supervisory structures, and prescribed workflows. When these mechanisms are clear and accessible, personnel from different backgrounds can implement comparable procedures across precincts and municipalities.

Electoral administration is also a form of collaborative governance. Its effectiveness depends on coordination among election authorities, local government units, security agencies, schools, communities, and voters. Emerson et al. (2012) emphasized that collaborative systems require principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. At the precinct level, these conditions are reflected in communication, material safeguarding, accurate documentation, and timely responses to voter needs.

Poll Worker Preparation and Operational Resilience

Poll workers are frontline representatives of democratic institutions. Their tasks extend beyond routine clerical functions because they must maintain impartiality, manage complex procedures, and respond calmly to unforeseen events. Rebucas et al. (2025) documented the lived experiences of public school teachers who served as poll workers and identified preparation, technical difficulty, internet instability, coping strategies, and fulfillment as important aspects of election service. Bryant et al. (2024) likewise showed that training must be complemented by scenario-based preparation and practical support during actual operations.

Experience and demographic characteristics may affect how personnel perceive election work, but they do not automatically determine performance. DeMora et al. (2022) found that age and familiarity with technology should not be treated as simple predictors of success when poll workers use new election technologies. Hostetter and Atkeson (2025) also observed that experienced poll workers can report both improved preparedness and additional operational demands. These findings suggest that standardized training should be paired with responsive support systems for distinct personnel needs.

Technical, Logistical, and Human Challenges

Electoral Board members may encounter technical, logistical, security, and human-resource challenges. Apiri and Lim (2025) emphasized the importance of integrated logistics, information technology, and coordination in ensuring reliable election operations. Czapiewski (2025) identified ground-level election management challenges that require administrative competence and adequate institutional support. In the Philippine context, Rebucas et al. (2025) highlighted technical issues and internet instability among teacher poll workers.

The human dimension is equally important. Clark et al. (2022) described the emotional labor involved in election administration, while Binaldo-Velasco (2025) underscored the need for voter education, electoral security, accountability, and collaborative governance in provincial election contexts. These studies support a balanced assessment of Electoral Board performance: strong procedural compliance should be recognized, but low-frequency challenges should still inform preventive action planning.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-survey research design. The approach was appropriate because it documented the extent of Electoral Board practices and challenges during the May 12, 2025 National and Local Elections and tested whether the reported measures differed according to respondent profile.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Guinsiliban, Sagay, and Catarman in Camiguin Province. These municipalities vary in population size and administrative context but operate within common electoral procedures. Their inclusion provided a local cluster for assessing the consistency of Electoral Board implementation across municipal settings.

Participants and Sampling Technique

Complete enumeration was used. The respondents were all 129 eligible Electoral Board members who directly administered the May 12, 2025 elections in the three municipalities. They served as chairpersons, poll clerks, or members and had firsthand experience in voter management, safeguarding materials, documentation, vote counting, and results transmission.

Table 1. *Distribution of Electoral Board Members by Municipality*

Municipality	Frequency	Percentage
Guinsiliban	30	23.26
Sagay	45	34.88
Catarman	54	41.86
Total	129	100.00

Research Instrument

The researcher-developed questionnaire had three parts: respondent profile, extent of electoral practices, and extent of challenges encountered. The practice indicators measured procedural actions, while the challenge indicators measured obstacles and difficulties experienced during electoral administration. Three COMELEC experts reviewed the instrument for relevance, appropriateness, and clarity. Pilot testing among 30 Electoral Board members in Mambajao yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .96, indicating high reliability.

Data Gathering Procedure

Written permission was obtained from the appropriate DepEd district authorities. The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms using official communication channels. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and completed the survey voluntarily. The retrieved responses were organized, tabulated, and analyzed.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage described the respondent profile. Weighted mean and standard deviation summarized the extent of practices and challenges. Independent-samples t-tests examined sex-based differences. One-way ANOVA tested differences according to age, educational attainment, Electoral Board position, assigned municipality, and years of experience. Tukey post hoc analysis identified the age groups associated with a significant ANOVA result. All inferential tests used a .05 significance level.

Ethical Consideration

Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained. No identifying information was included in the analysis. Survey records were coded, stored securely, and accessed only for research purposes. The findings were reported objectively to protect respondent confidentiality and professional standing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The Electoral Board workforce was predominantly female (82.17%). Most respondents were aged 31-40 years (41.86%) or 41-50 years (37.21%). Each Electoral Board position was represented equally, with 43 chairpersons, 43 poll clerks, and 43 members. Catarman accounted for the largest group of respondents (41.86%), and most members had one to five years of experience (59.69%).

Table 2. *Profile of Electoral Board Members (N = 129)*

Profile Variable	Category	n	%
Sex	Male	23	17.83
	Female	106	82.17
Age	21-30 years	15	11.63
	31-40 years	54	41.86
	41-50 years	48	37.21
	51-60 years	12	9.30
Educational attainment	Bachelor's degree	29	22.48
	Master's units	54	41.86
	Master's degree	46	35.66
Position	Chairperson	43	33.33
	Poll Clerk	43	33.33
	Member	43	33.33
Municipality	Guinsiliban	30	23.26
	Sagay	45	34.88
	Catarman	54	41.86
Experience	1-5 years	77	59.69
	6-10 years	41	31.78
	11 years and above	11	8.53

Extent of Electoral Practices

Electoral Board members implemented their responsibilities to a high extent overall ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.27$). Voter registration received the highest mean ($M = 3.98$), followed by voter-list accuracy, neutrality, and safeguarding of electoral materials ($M = 3.96$ each). These results indicate strong adherence to core procedures. The relatively lower voter-education score ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.58$) identifies an area for strengthening, particularly because public guidance must remain clear and consistent across municipalities.

Table 3. *Selected Electoral Practices of Electoral Board Members*

Practice Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
Conducts voter registration according to prescribed procedures	3.98	0.12	High Extent
Ensures accuracy of voter lists and records	3.96	0.19	High Extent
Maintains impartiality and neutrality	3.96	0.19	High Extent
Safeguards election materials and documents	3.96	0.19	High Extent
Documents election results accurately and completely	3.95	0.23	High Extent
Communicates effectively with Board members and stakeholders	3.95	0.23	High Extent
Conducts voter-education activities	3.74	0.58	High Extent
Overall	3.93	0.27	High Extent

The high overall rating reflects institutional standardization. Consistent procedures, training, and ethical expectations appear to support uniform implementation. However, voter education requires attention because it is less routinized than registration, record keeping, and material safeguarding. This aligns with literature emphasizing that voter-education programs need appropriate content, audience alignment, and implementation support (Binaldo-Velasco, 2025).

Differences in Electoral Practices According to Profile

Practice implementation did not significantly differ according to sex, age, educational attainment, position, assigned municipality, or years of experience. All p-values exceeded .05. This suggests that centralized procedures and training supported consistent practice implementation across demographic and organizational groups.

Table 4. *Differences in the Extent of Electoral Practices According to Profile*

Profile Variable	Test Statistic	p-value	Decision
Sex	t = 0.716	.476	Not significant
Age	F = 2.50	.062	Not significant
Educational attainment	F = 1.82	.166	Not significant
Electoral Board position	F = 1.56	.214	Not significant
Assigned municipality	F = 0.839	.434	Not significant
Years of experience	F = 1.25	.291	Not significant

Extent of Challenges Encountered

Challenges were reported at a low extent overall (M = 1.73, SD = 0.87). Physical fatigue and health concerns received the highest mean (M = 1.98), followed by the difficulty of responding to diverse voter-education needs (M = 1.89) and technical difficulties with voting equipment or systems (M = 1.88). Although the overall rating was low, these concerns remain operationally relevant because even infrequent difficulties can affect election-day performance.

Table 5. *Selected Challenges Encountered by Electoral Board Members*

Challenge Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
Physical fatigue and health concerns during election activities	1.98	1.00	Less Extent
Managing diverse voter-education needs	1.89	0.93	Less Extent
Technical difficulties with voting equipment or systems	1.88	0.80	Less Extent
Community tensions and conflict during election periods	1.86	0.85	Less Extent
Political pressure from candidates or political parties	1.80	0.88	Less Extent
Time-management difficulties due to competing responsibilities	1.79	0.83	Less Extent
Limited resources for conducting elections effectively	1.62	0.78	No Extent
Lack of clear communication from higher electoral authorities	1.51	0.66	No Extent
Overall	1.73	0.87	No Extent

The findings indicate resilience rather than the absence of needs. Respondents sustained strong procedural performance even when faced with fatigue, voter-education demands, and technical concerns. This is consistent with research describing both the emotional labor of election work and the need for practical, scenario-based support (Clark et al., 2022; Rebuscas et al., 2025).

Differences in Challenges According to Profile

Challenge perception differed significantly by sex and age. Male respondents reported a higher average challenge rating ($M = 2.01$) than female respondents ($M = 1.67$), $t(127) = 2.16$, $p = .033$. Age also produced a significant difference, $F(3,125) = 3.90$, $p = .011$. Educational attainment, position, assigned municipality, and years of experience did not significantly affect challenge ratings.

Table 6. *Differences in the Extent of Challenges According to Profile*

Profile Variable	Test Statistic	p-value	Decision
Sex	$t = 2.16$	.033	Significant
Age	$F = 3.90$	.011	Significant
Educational attainment	$F = 1.56$	.213	Not significant
Electoral Board position	$F = 0.138$	.871	Not significant
Assigned municipality	$F = 0.85$	.430	Not significant
Years of experience	$F = 0.834$	.437	Not significant

The results indicate that personnel can implement the same procedures successfully while experiencing work demands differently. Support programs should therefore retain uniform procedural training but include responsive measures for health, stress, and age-related learning needs. Such an approach avoids treating demographic characteristics as performance deficits while acknowledging distinct support requirements.

Table 7. *Tukey Post Hoc Comparison for Age-Based Challenge Ratings*

Comparison	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value	Decision
21-30 years vs. 41-50 years	0.64	3.257	.008	Significant

The Tukey test identified a significant difference between Electoral Board members aged 21-30 and those aged 41-50 years. This finding supports cross-generational mentoring and differentiated professional development. Early-career members may benefit from structured technical and procedural coaching, while mid-career members can contribute practical experience and institutional memory.

Proposed Action Plan

The proposed action plan focuses on the areas directly supported by the findings: voter education, personnel well-being, technical readiness, age-responsive mentoring, and consistent monitoring. It is designed to reinforce existing strengths while addressing low-frequency but operationally important concerns.

Table 8. *Proposed Action Plan for Strengthening Electoral Board Operations*

Priority Area	Key Actions	Responsible Units	Time Frame	Verification
Voter education	Standardize voter-education materials; conduct municipality-based orientations; monitor implementation consistency	COMELEC, LGUs, Electoral Board leadership	Before the next election cycle	Approved materials, attendance, monitoring reports
Personnel well-being	Adopt fatigue-management protocols, scheduled breaks, and on-site health support during election activities	COMELEC, LGUs, Municipal Health Offices	Election preparation and election day	Protocols, duty schedules, health-support logs
Technical readiness	Inventory equipment; conduct troubleshooting drills; establish technical-assistance contacts and redundancy procedures	COMELEC technical unit, IT personnel	Pre-election period	Inventory, drill records, technical-assistance plan
Age-responsive mentoring	Pair early-career and mid-career members; conduct scenario-based coaching and knowledge-transfer sessions	COMELEC training unit, Electoral Board leadership	Quarterly or pre-election	Mentoring records, session reports, evaluation forms
Monitoring and coordination	Maintain regular procedural updates; document municipality-specific issues and corrective actions	COMELEC, LGUs, Electoral Board focal persons	Quarterly and pre-election	Update logs, issue tracker, corrective-action reports

CONCLUSION

Electoral Board members in GuinSaCat, Camiguin demonstrated consistently high implementation of electoral practices during the May 12, 2025 National and Local Elections. Their strongest areas were voter registration, records accuracy, neutrality, material safeguarding, and documentation. The consistency of implementation across demographic profiles suggests that standardized procedures and training effectively supported uniform practice.

Challenges were generally reported at a low extent, but physical fatigue, voter-education needs, and technical difficulties remain important concerns for preventive action. Sex and age significantly influenced challenge perception, even though practice implementation remained consistent. These findings show that institutional standardization should be sustained while support mechanisms become more responsive to personnel well-being, learning needs, and local implementation conditions.

Recommendations

COMELEC, local government units, and Electoral Board leadership should strengthen voter-education delivery through common materials, clear schedules, and regular monitoring. Personnel well-being protocols should be established for extended election duties, including scheduled breaks and accessible health support. Technical readiness should be reinforced through equipment checks, troubleshooting drills, and clearly designated assistance channels. Cross-generational mentoring is recommended to combine the procedural readiness of early-career members with the practical judgment of mid-career members. Future studies may examine additional operational outcomes, include perspectives from voters and other stakeholders, and compare findings across election cycles.

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