



POLITICAL INTERVENTIONS AND EFFECTS ON TEACHER APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Maria Cristina L. Nudalo-Gonzaga, Arlene O. Borbon, Ace Vincent S. Baritos,
Imelda Villarín

CTU- Main Campus, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of political interventions on teacher appointments and promotions in the Philippine public school system. Prompted by concerns about the prioritization of political endorsements over qualifications, the research utilized a descriptive-correlational design and a mixed-method approach. Data were collected from 34 participants – including teachers, school heads, and HR personnel – across three public schools in Cebu, using a validated researcher-made questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and Chi-square tests were used to analyze the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative responses. Findings revealed a complex perception of political influence. While many respondents remained neutral on direct political favoritism (mean = 3.00–3.12), strong agreement emerged on the need for merit-based promotions (mean = 4.76) and the view that political favoritism undermines morale and teaching quality. Qualitative responses highlighted frustration with patronage systems such as the “Padrino System,” emphasizing the need for transparent, standardized recruitment processes. Although some denied witnessing direct political interference, the overall sentiment pointed to deeply embedded informal practices that compromise institutional integrity. The study concludes that while overt political control may not always be visible, covert patronage is prevalent and detrimental. It recommends stricter enforcement of merit-based policies, transparency measures, and legislative reforms to insulate educational appointments from political influence.

KEYWORDS: Political Interference, Meritocracy, Teacher Promotion, Patronage Politics, Public Education, Hiring Practices, Philippine Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

The quality of education in any country is significantly influenced by the competence and integrity of its teaching workforce (Luz, 2015). In the Philippines, public school teachers play a critical role in delivering inclusive and equitable quality education across diverse and often under-resourced communities (Dela Cruz, 2020). To maintain high standards in education, the recruitment and promotion of teachers must adhere to principles of merit, fairness, and transparency (Béteille, 2009). However, longstanding issues of political intervention continue to disrupt these processes, raising serious concerns about the efficiency, equity, and professionalism of the public education system (Reyes, 2009).

Political interference in teacher appointments and promotions often manifests in the form of patronage politics, wherein local officials or political actors influence hiring and advancement decisions based on personal or political affiliations rather than objective qualifications (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2011). While the Department of Education (DepEd) has instituted mechanisms to professionalize the hiring process—such as the point-based ranking system and performance evaluation tools (Abenes, 2016)—there is substantial evidence that political pressures continue to distort implementation, particularly in rural and marginalized regions (Atienza, 2006). This undermines the core values of meritocracy and accountability, and adversely affects teacher morale, career satisfaction, and ultimately, student learning outcomes (Zaragoza, 2019).

Moreover, the politicization of teacher appointments not only compromises institutional integrity but also contributes to broader systemic issues such as corruption, inefficiency, and unequal access to opportunities (Santos, 2018). Teachers who are unfairly bypassed for promotions may experience frustration and demotivation, which can lead to high turnover rates, poor performance, and a weakened educational environment (Béteille, 2009). These effects are especially concerning in the context of the Philippines' ongoing efforts to improve educational outcomes and meet international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNESCO, 2019).

Despite the prevalence of these issues, there remains a notable gap in empirical research that critically examines the extent and impact of political interventions in the specific context of teacher appointments and promotions in Philippine public schools (Dizon, 2017). Most existing studies focus broadly on governance or decentralization, leaving the education sector-specific implications insufficiently explored (Luz, 2015).

This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing how political dynamics shape teacher recruitment and career advancement, and what consequences these have for educational quality and equity (Reyes, 2009). By exploring these dimensions, the research aims to contribute to policy discourse and reform efforts aimed at depoliticizing the education sector, strengthening institutional safeguards, and enhancing the professionalism and morale of the teaching workforce (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2011).



THE PROBLEM

Problem Statement

This research assessed the extent and implications of political interventions in the appointment and promotion of teachers in three schools during the school year 2024–2025. Specifically, it examined how political affiliations influence hiring and advancement processes, and how such practices are perceived by educators in terms of fairness, transparency, and their impact on teacher morale and performance. To guide this investigation, the following research questions were addressed:

1. To what extent do political interventions influence teacher appointments in public schools?
2. How do political affiliations affect the promotion process of public-school teachers?
3. What are the perceived impacts of politically motivated appointments and promotions on teacher morale and performance?
4. How do educators perceive the fairness and transparency of appointment and promotion procedures?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The teaching profession in the Philippines plays a critical role in shaping national development. However, the integrity of teacher recruitment and promotion processes is often challenged by political interference. This review explores the breadth of existing literature and studies concerning political interventions in public school teacher appointments and promotions, examining their implications for meritocracy, educational quality, institutional governance, and professional ethics in the Philippine context.

Related Studies

Political intervention refers to the influence exerted by politicians or political actors on bureaucratic or administrative functions, often to serve personal, partisan, or electoral interests (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2011). In the education sector, such interventions manifest in various ways, including the appointment and promotion of teachers based on political loyalty rather than merit.

Béteille (2009), in a comparative study across several developing countries, revealed that political appointments in the education sector often lead to increased teacher absenteeism, reduced instructional quality, and lower student performance. Schools with politically appointed staff showed weaker institutional accountability, contributing to a cycle of inefficiency and poor governance in public education.

Teacher hiring in the public sector is intended to follow a merit-based ranking system governed by the Department of Education's (DepEd) hiring guidelines, particularly DepEd Order No. 7, s. 2015. This policy outlines a point-based system that ranks applicants based on credentials, teaching demonstration, and interviews. However, implementation often deviates due to political pressures, especially in provinces and municipalities where informal networks and political influence remain dominant (Abenes, 2016).

Brillantes and Fernandez (2011) noted that “backer” systems, wherein political figures endorse certain candidates, have

become a normalized part of the recruitment culture in many regions. As a result, qualified teachers are frequently bypassed in favor of less qualified but politically connected applicants. This weakens professional standards and perpetuates a culture of nepotism.

Similar patterns are seen in the promotion of teachers, where political influence can override the criteria set by the Career Progression System and the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS). Promotions, ideally based on performance evaluations, training, and years of service, are sometimes granted based on political affiliations or personal connections (Luz, 2015).

According to Dela Cruz (2020), many teachers express frustration with promotional processes that appear to reward political engagement more than professional excellence. This disillusionment often leads to reduced motivation, a sense of injustice among teachers, and an erosion of the integrity of the school system.

The long-term impact of politically driven appointments and promotions is detrimental to educational outcomes. Politically appointed teachers may lack the qualifications, motivation, or professional development needed to ensure high-quality instruction. Béteille (2009) found in a comparative study that schools with politically appointed staff often experience higher teacher absenteeism and lower student performance.

In the Philippine context, Luz (2015) emphasizes that educational quality is compromised when schools are staffed not by the most competent educators, but by those with the best political connections. This undermines public trust in the education system and perpetuates inequities in student learning, especially in marginalized communities.

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) and DepEd have instituted policies designed to promote fair and transparent hiring and promotion processes. However, gaps in policy enforcement and weak accountability mechanisms allow political interference to persist. While national frameworks such as DepEd Orders and the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (RA 4670) exist to protect educators, their effectiveness is contingent on local political will (Reyes, 2009; Abenes, 2016).

Political interference in teacher promotion may also reinforce gender-based inequalities. While the teaching workforce in the Philippines is predominantly female, women often face barriers in accessing leadership roles, especially in politically dominated environments. UNESCO (2019) highlights that limited access to political networks places female educators at a disadvantage, exacerbating existing disparities in career advancement.

Dela Cruz (2020) highlights that many educators in the Philippine public school system feel that promotional processes prioritize political loyalty over professional merit, fostering frustration and disillusionment among teachers. This misalignment between qualifications and promotions can



undermine teacher morale and diminish the effectiveness of the education system.

According to Dela Cruz (2020), many educators in the Philippine public school system feel disillusioned by promotional processes that appear to prioritize political loyalty over professional qualifications. This misalignment often results in frustration, reduced motivation, and a growing sense of injustice among teachers, ultimately undermining the integrity of the education system. Teachers' dissatisfaction with such practices can have long-term consequences, including decreased commitment and an overall decline in morale within schools.

Béteille (2009) found that politically appointed teachers tend to be less qualified and less motivated, which can significantly impact the quality of education. His comparative study highlights that schools with politically influenced staffing arrangements often experience higher rates of absenteeism among teachers and lower student performance. This pattern suggests that the prioritization of political connections over merit in teacher appointments can undermine educational outcomes and hinder the effectiveness of the school system.

In the context of the Philippine education system, Luz (2015) emphasizes that the compromise of educational quality is a direct result of teacher appointments based on political connections rather than merit. Luz argues that this practice not only damages public trust in the education system but also perpetuates inequities, particularly in marginalized communities. When schools are staffed by individuals with political backing rather than the best-qualified educators, it deepens disparities in student learning opportunities.

Reyes (2009) discusses the various national policies in place to prevent political interference in teacher recruitment and promotion, such as the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (RA 4670) and DepEd Orders. Despite these formal frameworks, Reyes argues that weak policy enforcement and inadequate accountability mechanisms have allowed political interference to persist. The lack of stringent oversight and local political will to uphold fair hiring practices continues to undermine efforts toward a transparent and merit-based system.

Abenes (2016) highlights that, while there are formal procedures for hiring teachers in the Philippines, informal political networks at the local level continue to play a major role in influencing appointments. These informal networks often bypass merit-based criteria in favor of political patronage, which undermines the effectiveness of the public education system. Abenes argues that this trend contributes to a system where political connections rather than professional qualifications dominate teacher recruitment.

UNESCO (2019) sheds light on the gendered nature of political interference in teacher recruitment. Despite the fact that women make up the majority of the teaching workforce in the Philippines, they often face significant barriers to leadership roles due to limited access to political networks. UNESCO notes that political patronage often restricts women's career

advancement, reinforcing existing gender inequalities and further hindering their opportunities for professional growth in the education sector.

Brillantes and Fernandez (2011) argue that the "backer" system has become entrenched in the recruitment process within the Philippine public sector, including education. This system, in which political endorsements are prioritized, fosters a culture of patronage that rewards political loyalty over professional qualifications. The authors assert that this undermines meritocracy in teacher appointments and promotions, contributing to inefficiencies and a lack of accountability in the education system.

Atienza (2006) discusses the impact of decentralization on the Philippine education system, particularly how local government units (LGUs) can exert significant political influence over teacher recruitment and promotions. Atienza argues that while decentralization was intended to increase local autonomy, it has also allowed political figures to dominate the appointment process, leading to the selection of candidates based on political loyalty rather than qualifications or merit.

Béteille (2009) further underscores the negative consequences of political interference, emphasizing that politically appointed teachers are often less committed to their roles, leading to higher turnover rates. This turnover disrupts the stability of the teaching environment and contributes to a lack of continuity in education, ultimately affecting the quality of instruction and student outcomes. This pattern is particularly evident in schools where political considerations outweigh professional qualifications in staffing decisions.

Dizon (2017) explored the personal experiences of educators who were passed over for promotion in favor of politically connected individuals. He found that these teachers reported feeling demotivated, which negatively impacted both their performance and their commitment to the school. Dizon's research suggests that the emotional toll of political interference in teacher promotions can have lasting effects on educators' job satisfaction and overall effectiveness in the classroom.

Santos (2018) examines the broader systemic implications of political patronage in teacher recruitment, asserting that political influence in hiring decisions undermines educational reforms. Santos argues that the focus on political loyalty instead of professional qualifications in the hiring process weakens efforts to improve teaching standards, resulting in a less effective education system that is more susceptible to political manipulation.

Zaragoza (2019) investigates the role of political patronage in teacher placements in rural areas of the Philippines. His study found that political interference in these regions often deprives schools of qualified educators, as teachers are appointed based on their political connections rather than their professional qualifications. Zaragoza emphasizes that this practice exacerbates educational disparities, particularly in underserved communities, where access to qualified teachers is already limited.



Related Literature

In the Philippines, political patronage is deeply rooted in local governance structures, particularly in decentralized settings where local government units (LGUs) have considerable sway over education policies (Atienza, 2006). According to Reyes (2009), political actors often leverage control over public school hiring to gain electoral advantage or reward supporters, undermining the independence and objectivity of the education bureaucracy.

Political interference in teacher recruitment processes has long been a concern in public education systems, particularly in developing countries. In the Philippine context, Dela Cruz (2020) observed that many educators feel demoralized due to promotions being granted based more on political endorsements than professional merit. This leads to a loss of motivation, a sense of injustice, and an overall decline in the quality of education delivered to students.

Luz (2015) highlighted that educational equity suffers when political favoritism overrides meritocratic principles. In schools where teachers are appointed based on political affiliations rather than competency, learning outcomes are negatively affected. This is especially evident in underserved communities, where students rely heavily on the competence and dedication of public school teachers for academic success.

Reyes (2009) argued that while the Department of Education and the Civil Service Commission in the Philippines have introduced regulations to ensure fair and transparent hiring, these are often circumvented by local political actors. The lack of strong monitoring mechanisms and enforcement at the grassroots level allows political interference to persist despite formal policies.

According to UNESCO (2019), gender inequality may also be reinforced by political interventions in teacher promotions. Women, who make up a large portion of the teaching force, often face barriers to leadership positions in politically influenced environments. Limited access to political networks places female educators at a disadvantage, further deepening existing disparities in career advancement.

Theoretical Background of the Study

To understand how political interventions affect teacher appointments and promotions in the Philippines, this study is grounded in several key theories. Political Patronage Theory explains how politicians may use public positions, such as teaching jobs, to reward loyalty rather than merit, weakening professional standards. This creates a culture where career advancement depends more on connections than competence. Principal-Agent Theory adds that there is often a mismatch between the goals of the Department of Education (as the principal) and the teachers (as agents), especially when external political actors influence decisions for personal gain instead of focusing on educational goals.

Governance and Accountability Theory highlights the need for clear, transparent, and accountable processes in public institutions. When political figures interfere with teacher

selection or promotion, they undermine good governance, reduce public trust, and create an environment where corruption may thrive. Social Capital Theory also plays a role, as it shows how politicians use personal networks and loyalty systems to influence appointments. This can lead to clientelism—where who you know matters more than what you know—damaging the idea of fairness and equality in public education.

Lastly, Meritocracy and Institutional Theories remind us that public roles should be filled based on qualifications, not favoritism. In theory, DepEd systems support merit-based hiring, but in practice, political influence often overrides these safeguards. Institutional theory helps us understand why such practices persist—because they have become normalized over time, deeply embedded in the political and cultural fabric of education systems. These frameworks guide the study's examination of how political power affects educational professionalism and equity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research methodology, including the design of the study, the setting where it was conducted, the population and sample involved, the instruments utilized, the procedures for data collection, the statistical methods applied, the scoring approach, and the ethical considerations observed throughout the research.

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the influence of political interventions on teacher appointments and promotions in public schools, particularly in typical municipal settings in the Philippines. The descriptive aspect of the study aims to present the current status and nature of political involvement in the hiring and promotion processes, while the correlational component seeks to determine whether there is a significant relationship between political interventions and the outcomes of teacher appointments and career advancements.

Data was collected from selected public schools within municipalities where political influence is perceived to be present or has been reported. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Surveys and structured questionnaires were distributed to teachers, school administrators, and HR personnel to gather quantitative data. In addition, key informant interviews were conducted with school heads and local education stakeholders to gain qualitative insights into how political factors affect decision-making in teacher selection and promotion.

This design is appropriate for exploring real-world issues in municipal public school systems in the Philippines, where political dynamics often play a role in administrative functions. The study's findings are expected to contribute to the discourse on merit-based practices in public education and promote transparency and accountability in teacher career development.



Research Locale

This study was conducted in three distinct locations in the Philippines, representing both higher education institutions and a secondary school setting to provide a diverse and comprehensive perspective on the research topic.

The first locale is Guba National High School, located in Guba Cebu City. The second site is Pitalo National High School, located in Barangay Pitalo, San Fernando, Cebu. These public secondary schools serve students from nearby communities and offer a grassroots view on the research topic, especially in the context of basic education. The third locale is Cebu Technological University – San Francisco Campus, situated in the Camotes Islands, Cebu. CTU is a leading institution of higher learning in the Visayas, known for its strong technological and research programs. This site provides insights from faculty and staff within a coastal and rural higher education context.

These three locations were purposefully selected to gather data from varied educational environments, enhancing the depth and relevance of the study's findings across different levels of the Philippine education system.

Population/Sample

The population of this study included the public school teachers, school heads (principals or officers-in-charge), and personnel from the Human Resource or Administrative Office of the Department of Education (DepEd) in selected municipalities in the Philippines. These participants are directly involved in or affected by the processes of teacher appointments and promotions, and their perspectives are essential to understanding the extent and impact of political interventions in these areas.

The study focused on municipalities where public schools are under the supervision of the Schools Division Offices and where political involvement in personnel movements has been commonly observed or reported. This setting reflects a typical local government unit in the Philippines, where interactions between political figures and the education sector frequently occur.

A purposive sampling technique employed to select participants who are knowledgeable and have first-hand experience related to the appointment and promotion processes. The sample included approximately:

- 27 public school teachers,
- 3 school heads, and
- 4 administrative or HR personnel from selected municipalities.

The sample size may vary depending on the availability and willingness of participants, but efforts were made to ensure that diverse perspectives across various school levels (elementary and secondary) are adequately represented.

This approach ensures that the study captures relevant insights and experiences that are reflective of the typical public school environment in municipal areas across the Philippines.

Instruments

To gather relevant data for this study, a researcher-made questionnaire was utilized as the primary data collection instrument. This structured questionnaire is designed to assess the presence, nature, and perceived impact of political interventions on teacher appointments and promotions in public schools within municipal areas.

The questionnaire was composed of three parts:

1. Demographic Profile – This section collects basic information from respondents such as position (teacher, school head, HR staff), length of service, school level (elementary or secondary), and municipality.
2. Extent of Political Interventions – This part includes Likert-scale items (e.g., Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) aimed at measuring the frequency and forms of political involvement in hiring and promotion processes (e.g., endorsement from political figures, influence over ranking, and pressure on decision-makers).
3. Perceived Effects on Appointments and Promotions – This section assesses how political interventions affect merit-based decisions, employee morale, fairness, and career progression of teachers. It also gathers opinions on the effectiveness of existing policies and safeguards against political interference.

To ensure reliability and validity, the instrument was reviewed by experts in the field of education and public administration, and a pilot test was conducted in a nearby municipality with similar characteristics. Feedback from the pilot was used to refine the questionnaire before full deployment.

Additionally, key informant interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide to gather deeper insights from selected school heads and HR personnel who have experienced or observed political interventions firsthand.

This combination of survey and interview tools aims to provide a well-rounded understanding of the issue in the context of typical municipal public schools in the Philippines.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data gathering process followed a systematic approach to ensure the reliability and credibility of the information collected from respondents in selected public schools within municipal areas.

1. Permission and Coordination
Prior to data collection, a verbal request for approval was sent to the concerned Schools Division Offices and participating schools. Coordination was also made with school heads and local DepEd personnel to facilitate the distribution and collection of research instruments. Confidentiality and ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the process.
2. Distribution of Questionnaires
Upon approval, the researcher distributed digital copies of the researcher-made questionnaire to identified respondents, including public school teachers, school heads, and HR or administrative staff. Instructions for answering the questionnaire were clearly stated, and



respondents were given ample time (usually 3–5 days) to complete and return the forms.

3. Conduct of Interviews

After the initial survey, key informant interviews were scheduled with selected school heads and HR officers who are directly involved in the appointment and promotion processes. These interviews followed a semi-structured format to allow for both guided and open-ended responses. With the consent of the interviewees, notes were taken, and recordings may be made for accuracy and transcription purposes.

4. Retrieval and Validation of Data

Completed questionnaires were collected and reviewed for completeness. Responses were encoded and organized for statistical analysis. Interview data was transcribed and categorized based on emerging themes relevant to the study objectives.

5. Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data from interviews was analyzed thematically to identify patterns and insights regarding political interventions.

Throughout the data gathering phase, the researcher ensured anonymity, voluntary participation, and confidentiality to protect the rights and privacy of all respondents. This procedure is designed to reflect the realities of public school operations in municipalities across the Philippines.

Statistical Treatment

For this study, descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were employed to summarize and interpret the data gathered from respondents. These measures helped in understanding the general perceptions and experiences related to political interventions in teacher appointments and promotions. To analyze significant differences or relationships among variables, inferential statistical tools such as the Chi-square test and Pearson correlation were also utilized, depending on the nature of the data. These statistical treatments ensured that the findings were both accurate and meaningful in drawing conclusions and making recommendations based on the research objectives.

Scoring Procedures

This study used a 5-point Likert scale to measure respondents' agreement with statements about political interventions in teacher appointments and promotions and its impact on teaching profession and school system. Each item was scored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), and the average score per section was calculated for interpretation. This scoring method allows for a clear understanding of perceptions. The use of the Likert scale is supported by Joshi et al. (2015), who emphasize its effectiveness in capturing attitudes and opinions in social science research. Below, is the scoring procedure.

Rating	Mean Score	Interpretation
5	4.20-5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.40-4.19	Agree
3	2.60-3.39	Neutral
2	1.80-2.59	Disagree
1	1.00-1.79	Strongly Disagree

This scoring method allowed the researcher to determine the general perception of the respondents on each item and analyze trends across sections.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to ethical standards in conducting research involving human participants, especially given the sensitive nature of the topic on political interventions in public school systems.

1. Informed Consent

All participants were given a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and their role in the research. A written informed consent form was provided, stating that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw at any point without any consequence.

2. Confidentiality and Anonymity

To protect the identity of the participants, no personal identifiers such as names, positions, or specific school affiliations were disclosed in the presentation of findings. All data collected—whether through questionnaires or interviews—was kept strictly confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

3. Voluntary Participation

Participation in the study was completely voluntary. Respondents were not coerced or pressured to take part in the research, and their refusal to participate was respected fully.

4. Non-Maleficence

The researcher ensured that no harm, intimidation, or negative consequences resulted from the participants' involvement in the study. Care was taken to frame questions in a non-threatening and neutral manner to avoid causing discomfort or fear, especially considering the topic involves political issues.

5. Transparency and Honesty

The researcher maintained transparency with all participants regarding the purpose of the study and how the data was used. Misleading statements or deceptive practices were strictly avoided.

6. Data Protection

All physical and digital data was securely stored. Printed questionnaires were kept in a locked file, while electronic files were password-protected. Only the researcher has access to the data.

7. Approval from Authorities

Proper permission was obtained from the Schools Division Office and school administrators before conducting the research. The study was subjected to



approval by the ethics review board or a research panel, if required by the institution. By observing these ethical guidelines, the study aims to uphold integrity, protect participants, and ensure that the research is conducted responsibly within the context of municipal public schools in the Philippines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the key findings derived from the data collected in relation to the study’s objectives. It provides a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the results, highlighting patterns, relationships, and relevant insights. Where applicable, findings are compared with existing literature to contextualize and deepen understanding. The discussion aims to not only explain what the data reveal but also explore the implications of these findings in the broader scope of the study’s focus.

This study examined educators’ views on political influence in teacher appointments and promotions in Philippine public

schools. Findings show subtle political interference and cultural patronage affecting these processes. While many respondents remained neutral about direct political involvement, concerns about fairness, morale, and professional standards were evident. The results highlight the need for reforms to promote transparency and merit-based practices. The following sections discuss the influence of politics on appointments, promotions, teacher morale, and perceptions of procedural fairness.

Demographic Profiling

The demographic profile of the respondents begins with their sex distribution, which provides insight into the gender, age, status, position, years in service, school level and school location representation within the study. Understanding the gender composition is essential in contextualizing the perspectives and experiences reflected in the findings, particularly in fields where gender dynamics may influence roles, responsibilities, or professional experiences. The table below presents the breakdown of respondents by sex.

SEX		
Male	8	23.53%
Female	25	73.53%
Prefer Not to Say	1	2.94%
Total	34	100%

The demographic data indicates a significant female representation (73.53%) among the research participants, suggesting that the sample is predominantly composed of women. This aligns with broader national trends in the teaching profession, where females are often overrepresented in basic education roles (UNESCO, 2019). Meanwhile, male participants constitute 23.53% of the sample, and 2.94% preferred not to disclose their gender. The prevalence of female teachers may imply that they are more accessible for participation in the study or may reflect the actual gender composition of the teaching workforce in the selected schools. This demographic characteristic may also influence the findings, as women may have different perspectives or experiences regarding political interventions compared to their male counterparts, particularly in relation to promotion and career advancement. The relatively lower representation of males may also suggest potential gender dynamics in

perceptions of political interference, with male teachers possibly encountering different expectations or challenges in navigating politically influenced processes.

Synthesizing these demographic characteristics, the respondent profile is primarily composed of mid-career female teachers working in rural junior high school settings, with a varied range of teaching experience. This distribution suggests that the findings of the study are likely to reflect the realities and challenges of rural education, particularly in the junior high school level. The significant presence of early to mid-career educators may also highlight perspectives shaped by relatively recent teacher training programs and evolving professional expectations. Moreover, the underrepresentation of tertiary-level educators and those in urban settings suggests that generalizations to these populations should be made with caution.

AGE		
21-30	8	23.53%
31-40	13	38.24%
41-50	12	35.29%
51 and above	1	2.94%
Total		100%

The concentration of respondents within the 31–50 year age range (73.53%) indicates that the majority are at pivotal stages in their teaching careers, where career advancement and stability are key considerations. Mid-career educators are more likely to be actively seeking promotions or leadership roles, making them acutely aware of the potential impact of political

interventions. Those in the 31–40 age bracket may be particularly frustrated by perceived barriers to advancement, as they are likely competing for promotions against candidates with political backing. Meanwhile, those in the 41–50 age group may have more extensive firsthand experiences with



political interference, potentially influencing their outlook on the fairness and transparency of the system.

CIVIL STATUS

Single	10	29.41%
Married	23	67.65%
Widowed	1	2.94%
Total	34	100%

The majority of the participants reported being married (67.65%), a demographic attribute that may further contextualize their professional experiences and motivations. Married educators may perceive political interventions in promotions as particularly impactful, as career stability and

advancement are often crucial to their financial and familial responsibilities. Moreover, marital status may also influence their willingness to voice concerns about perceived injustices in hiring and promotion, as they may prioritize job security over open criticism of the system.

POSITION

Teacher I-III	24	70.59%
Master Teacher I-IV	4	11.76%
Administrative Officer II (HRMO)	4	11.76%
School Head	2	5.88%

A significant portion of the respondents holds the position of Teacher I–III (70.59%), with a smaller representation from Master Teachers, Administrative Officers, and School Heads. The predominance of Teacher I–III positions suggests that the perspectives gathered in this study primarily reflect the experiences of rank-and-file teachers, who may feel more

vulnerable to the effects of political interventions, particularly in terms of career advancement. Additionally, the smaller representation of higher-ranking positions may indicate potential barriers in accessing promotions, a point that could be explored further in relation to the impact of political patronage systems.

YEARS IN SERVICE

1-5 years	11	32.35%
6-10 years	9	26.47%
11-15 years	6	17.65%
16 years and above	8	23.53%
Total	34	100%

The participants’ years of service are fairly distributed across four categories: 1–5 years (32.35%), 6–10 years (26.47%), 11–15 years (17.65%), and 16 years and above (23.53%). The relatively balanced distribution of service years provides insights from both novice and veteran educators, capturing diverse perspectives on the issue of political influence. Those with fewer years of service may express greater concerns about

the transparency of the hiring process, as they are more likely to be directly impacted by appointment decisions. Conversely, those with extensive service may have more nuanced experiences, potentially observing systemic patterns of favoritism and political patronage over time.

SCHOOL LEVEL

Elementary	7	20.59%
Junior High School	16	47.06%
Senior High School	9	26.47%
Tertiary Education	2	5.88%
Total	34	100%

In terms of school level, the majority of respondents are affiliated with junior high schools (47.06%), followed by senior high schools (26.47%), elementary schools (20.59%), and a small segment from tertiary institutions (5.88%). This distribution suggests that the study’s findings are largely representative of experiences in basic education, particularly

junior high school settings. This concentration in junior high schools may imply that political interventions are perceived to be more prevalent or impactful in this sector, possibly due to the relatively larger pool of teacher applicants and promotion candidates.



SCHOOL LOCATION

Rural	28	82.35%
Urban	5	14.71%
Semi-urban	1	2.94%
Total	34	100%

A substantial majority of the participants are based in rural schools (82.35%), with fewer respondents from urban (14.71%) and semi-urban (2.94%) areas. The rural focus of the sample is significant, as political influence in appointments and promotions may be more pronounced in rural settings, where

local political figures often wield greater influence over hiring decisions. Additionally, the scarcity of promotional opportunities in rural areas may heighten the perceived effects of political patronage, potentially exacerbating feelings of disillusionment or frustration among teachers.

Effects of Political Affiliations on the Promotion Process of Public-School Teachers

Statement	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Political endorsements influence teacher appointments	3.12	Neutral
Politically backed candidates are prioritized over more qualified ones	3.00	Neutral
"Utang na loob" plays a role in teacher promotions	3.09	Neutral
Teachers are consulted by political figures during hiring/promotion	2.35	Disagree
I have been bypassed for promotion due to political reasons	2.12	Disagree

As the data show, there is a prevailing sense of neutrality among respondents regarding the influence of political endorsements in teacher appointments (weighted average = 3.12) and the prioritization of politically backed candidates over more qualified ones (3.00). This neutrality indicates that while some educators may have encountered politically influenced appointments, others may not have experienced or recognized them, or may be hesitant to openly express concerns. Qualitative responses, however, reveal concerns about favoritism, where endorsements from influential figures sometimes overshadow merit, resulting in disillusionment and

frustration. Some participants shared that they or their peers had been bypassed for promotion despite strong qualifications, aligning with literature that points to informal networks and the "padrino" system as key barriers to fair hiring and promotion practices. This aligns with Abenes (2016) and Reyes (2009), who noted that informal political networks often influence educational appointments subtly, without clear institutional evidence. The normalized cultural expectations such as "utang na loob" further obscure the line between professional merit and political loyalty.

Perceived Impacts of Politically Motivated Appointments and Promotions on Teacher Morale and Performance

Statement	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Political favoritism demoralizes educators	4.00	Agree
Political favoritism discourages teachers from pursuing promotion	3.94	Agree
Political favoritism affects teaching quality	3.88	Agree
Politically appointed school heads reduce leadership quality	3.79	Agree
Politically favored teachers are less accountable	3.26	Neutral

Respondents strongly agreed that appointments and promotions should be free from political influence (mean = 4.76). Additionally, they agreed that favoritism undermines morale (4.00), discourages pursuit of promotion (3.94), and compromises teaching quality (3.88). These data clearly show

that political interference is perceived to have a negative effect on educator morale and professional performance. The belief that politically appointed individuals can dilute school leadership quality (3.79) further supports this view. Educators reported feeling undervalued when political factors trump



merit, which not only affects their motivation but also erodes the overall quality of education delivery. Respondents emphasized the need for a merit-based system to uphold professional standards and institutional integrity. As Brillantes

and Fernandez (2011) and Luz (2015) have argued, politicized HR processes weaken standards and hinder educational effectiveness.

Educators' Perception on the Fairness and Transparency of Appointment and Promotion Procedures

Statement	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Appointments and promotions should be free from political influence	4.76	Strongly Agree

While neutrality on some indicators reflects cultural normalization or cautious disclosure, qualitative responses reveal a consistent call for transparent systems. Educators expressed dissatisfaction with current procedures and highlighted the need for objective standards and accountability in hiring and promotions. Many advocated for standardized evaluations, public dissemination of qualifications, and the removal of political influence to promote fairness and trust in the system.

through informal local networks rather than direct, open involvement.

A strong consensus emerged that teacher promotion and appointment must be based on merit, not political backing. This is reflected in the call for standardized criteria, transparency, and impartial evaluations. Educators highlighted the importance of insulating DepEd from political influence, advocating for the full implementation of merit-based policies like DepEd Order No. 7, s. 2015.

Second, political affiliations also affect promotions. While many educators did not directly witness politicians interfering, cultural practices like “utang na loob” (a sense of obligation) mean that loyalty sometimes matters more than qualifications. This creates a system where political connections can impact who gets promoted.

Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

While some respondents reported not witnessing political interference directly, the majority expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of the appointment system. Narratives highlighted unjust bypassing of qualified educators, forced career shifts due to favoritism, and the need for transparent mechanisms. The persistence of the “padrino system” and lack of strict policy implementation were recurring concerns. Despite neutral responses in some areas, the broader sentiment was one of disillusionment and a call for reform.

Third, politically motivated appointments and promotions are seen as harmful to teachers. Many respondents agreed that favoritism lowers morale, discourages advancement, and hurts teaching quality. Teachers feel frustrated when less qualified but politically connected individuals are favored.

Finally, educators generally believe that appointment and promotion processes are not fully fair or transparent. There is a strong call for merit-based systems with clear, open criteria to ensure fairness. Many feel current policies are not well enforced, allowing political influence to persist.

The findings underscore the urgent need for structural reforms that reinforce transparency, accountability, and meritocracy in the appointment and promotion processes within Philippine public schools.

The findings show that political interventions in teacher staffing exist mostly in subtle ways and have negative effects on morale and fairness. Educators want reforms to promote transparency and meritocracy in public school hiring and promotions.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study provide comprehensive answers to the research questions regarding the extent of political interventions in teacher appointments, the role of political affiliations in promotions, the perceived effects on morale and performance, and the overall fairness and transparency of these processes. Drawing on both survey data and qualitative responses, the results reveal a layered understanding of how political dynamics influence public school staffing in the Philippines—both overtly and covertly—despite existing merit-based policies.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that while many educators report neutrality regarding direct political influence in teacher appointments and promotions, both survey data and qualitative responses reveal the subtle but persistent presence of political patronage in the Philippine public school system. This suggests a culture where informal political networks and the “backer” system operate beneath formal structures, often overriding merit-based processes and demoralizing qualified educators. Despite existing policies that promote fairness and transparency, political favoritism continues to distort hiring decisions, undermine teacher morale, and compromise educational quality. The findings strongly emphasize the need for structural reforms that enforce accountability, strengthen meritocratic practices, and insulate educational institutions from political manipulation to restore trust and uphold professional integrity in the education sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study’s findings, which reveal the subtle yet persistent influence of political interventions in teacher appointments and promotions in the Philippine public school



system, the following recommendations are proposed to address the identified challenges and promote a culture of meritocracy, transparency, and professionalism in the education sector:

1. Reinforce the Implementation of Merit-Based Hiring Policies:
The Department of Education must ensure the consistent and faithful application of DepEd Order No. 7, s. 2015 by strictly adhering to performance-based criteria and point-system evaluations in all appointment and promotion processes.
2. Create Independent Oversight Mechanisms:
Establish independent recruitment and promotion review boards at the division and regional levels composed of educators, civil service representatives, and community stakeholders to monitor compliance and guard against political interference.
3. Promote Transparency and Accountability Measures:
Mandate the public dissemination of applicant scores, ranking results, and deliberation summaries to foster transparency and allow stakeholders to verify the integrity of the selection process.
4. Implement Anti-Patronage Education Programs:
Conduct regular capacity-building programs for school administrators, human resource personnel, and local officials focusing on ethical hiring practices and the long-term impact of political patronage on institutional performance and morale.
5. Review and Strengthen Policy Frameworks
Revisit existing DepEd and Civil Service policies to identify and revise provisions that may inadvertently permit political interference, particularly in decentralized settings where local government units have strong influence over school operations.

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BIONOTE

Maria Cristina L. Nudalo-Gonzaga is Associate Professor I of College of Technology and Engineering, Cebu Technological University – San Francisco Campus. She holds a Master's degree in Industrial Technology and gained her Ph.D.-TM Education and is currently pursuing her Doctor of Development Education. Her research interests include educational leadership, teacher development, community-based digital literacy and technology management. She has presented her work in local and international conferences and is actively involved in curriculum planning and accreditation efforts in her institution.

Arlene O. Borbon is a public school English teacher at Guba National High School. She earned her Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English from the University of Cebu – Banilad, and completed her Master's Degree in Education major in English Teaching at Cebu Technological University – Main Campus. With a deep commitment to student learning and language development, she continues to inspire and empower young minds through education.

Ace Vincent Sasil Baritos is a dedicated public school teacher with eight years of service at Pitalo National High School under the Division of Cebu Province, District of San Fernando I. He earned his Bachelor of Secondary Education, major in English, from the Professional Academy of the Philippines. He completed his Master's degree in Education, major in Administration and Supervision, at Cebu Technological University, where he also fulfilled the academic requirements for a Master of Arts in Education, major in English Teaching. Currently, he is pursuing his Doctor of Development Education at Cebu Technological University. Driven by his passion for literacy, he aims to provide quality education with a strong focus on enhancing students' reading skills. He envisions establishing a community-based reading program that will reach out-of-school youth and parents who lack foundational reading skills.