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Ethical Standards and the Performance of the Sangguniang Bayan Members in Northern Samar

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Abstract:
This study determined the level of compliance to the ethical standards set forth by RA 6713 in terms of commitment to public interest, professionalism, justness and sincerity, political neutrality, responsiveness to the public, nationalism and patriotism, and commitment to democracy as determined by the Sangguniang Bayan secretaries, local government or municipal employees and the residents or clients of the respective municipalities.

Moreover, it also determined the performance of the Sangguniang Bayan members in terms of enactment of legislative measures and implementation of the legislative agenda, the legislator's performance record and public consultation and assessment conducted.

Using a descriptive-correlational method of research, and a survey questionnaire, the findings of the study showed that in the level of compliance, the responses of all Sangguniang Bayan secretaries was much complied, while the local government or municipal employees and residents or clients were only complied.

As regards the legislative performance, in terms of legislation and implementation of the legislative agenda, the municipalities of **A**, **B2** and **P** indicated low legislative performance; while the municipalities of **R**, **B1**, **M**, **C** and **G** were all on the average legislative performance; and only the municipality of **V** had high legislative performance.

Conceiving the legislators' performance record, **A**, **B1**, **M**, **C** and **P** indicated low performance record, while **V**, **B2** and **G** were on the average; and only the municipality of **R** had high legislative performance record.

As to public consultation and assessment, **A**, **B1**, **M**, **C**, **G** and **P** were low; **R**, **V** and **B2** were on the average. No municipality attained a high legislative performance on public consultation and assessment.

The test of relationships showed commitment to public interest, professionalism, justness and sincerity, political neutrality and responsiveness to the public were significantly related to Sangguniang Bayan members' legislative performance.

The test of difference showed that the difference of responses of the Sangguniang Bayan secretaries to that of the local government employees and the residents or clients articulates the fact that Sangguniang Bayan secretaries' work is closely connected to the Sangguniang Bayan members, such that their responses as regards the compliance to the ethical standards of the local legislators rests on every considerable detail of the Sangguniang Bayan members' actions and performance in and outside legislative processes.

The LGU employees and the residents or clients, on the other hand, may have responded casually as they may only perceived the compliance to the ethical standards of the SB members according to how they conduct themselves outside of their technical performance as local legislators.

Keywords: Local Government Unit, Residents, Legislations

1. Introduction

The realization of the holistic view of national development commences from the local government level to best achieve the desired future state – efficient

service delivery, management of the environment, economic development and poverty alleviation.

Local legislation influences a challenging role in development because it is a vital vehicle for addressing the multifarious problems, such as corruption, threatening the citizenry. Legislators can raise public awareness about the high costs of fraud and deceit in public offices and the ways to fight them. In order to more effectively combat these fraud and deceit, such as the corruption problem, legislators must first clean up their own mess. Toward this end, they must be guided by standards of official conduct such as the code of conduct for public officials and employees or RA 6713. Devoid of this, legislators have nothing to guide their behavior and the public has no way of gauging their representatives' conduct.

The growth and development of an organization is largely dependent upon the qualities of legislators who help define an overall approach of growth and in the same manner generate ordinances and resolutions that enable citizens to achieve a revivified life.

However, in the last decade, there has been little change in the development progression, despite the presence of legislative authority at the local level vested in the Sangguniang Bayan or the local legislative, being closer to the people they serve, to enact ordinances, approve resolutions, and appropriate funds for the welfare of the LGU and its inhabitants.

Local legislation can be more conclusive if it envisions what citizens need for a better life and fulfills development aspirations and offers solutions to problems that may be attributed to the local legislator's moral or ethical inclinations as this may serve as basis for their flawed judgment and decision-making capabilities.

Deficiencies in structures and systems make the legislation process or cycle inefficient and unsuccessful. This may be caused by the individualistic partiality of the legislators, thus, producing measures that do not effectively address the development objectives of the LGU as may be observed through poverty, environmental degradation, problems in peace and unity and immobile participation of citizens in social, economic, and political transformation in some of our localities.

Hence, to uphold the time-honored principle of public office being a public trust, the Philippine legislature passed R.A. 6713, on February 21, 1989, an act establishing a code of conduct for public officials and employees, as local legislators. The adoption of this code establishes public authorities as a distinctive sphere, with a directive to provide quality services to promote social and economic development through utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty and efficiency.

The Code sets out the norms of conduct that should govern the behavior and conduct of government officials and employees. These norms or standards include upholding the public interest over and above personal interest; discharging duties with the highest degree of excellence, professionalism, intelligence, and skill; acting with justness and sincerity and without discriminating against anyone; maintaining political neutrality; extending prompt, courteous, and adequate service to the public; and leading modest lives appropriate to their positions and income.

However, the presence of this kind of laws does not necessarily guarantee a highly ethical local government environment, and that there is even a perception that standards in public life tend to decline, especially in the Philippines, since mediocrity in expanding the range of choices of people is apparent, on account of the misconduct on the part of those who have been entrusted with guarding public interest and resources. Citizens are looking for better social conditions from the government; however, local legislators and civil servants alike are not able to meet this growing demand for efficiency and quality because of their various unscrupulous behaviors, as a result of an overwhelming group-centered or individualistic desire at times.

As one of the poorest provinces in the Philippines, Northern Samar unveils malfeasance in local legislation as characterized by the protracted frontline services and the pitiable social services as may be observed via the intermittent power supply, lack of housing, lack of access to clean water and sanitation facilities of few local units therein.

Subsequently, to address the aforementioned issues, the study and application of ethics in relation to public service delivery through legislative capabilities and decision-making inclinations of the members of the local legislation body is of principal interest.

The researcher believes that the first step in the process begins with the ethical standards of legislators as public servants in local government units as they dole out public services via legislating measures directed towards preservation and enrichment of culture; promotion of health and safety; enhancement of the right of the people to a balanced ecology; encouragement of, and support to, the development of

appropriate and self-reliant technological capabilities; improvement of public morals; enhancement of economic prosperity and social justice; promotion of full employment among the residents; and maintenance of peace and order as well as the preservation of the comfort and convenience of the inhabitants.

Accordingly, members of the Sangguniang Bayan in the local government units of Northern Samar, as public servants, must be evaluated to see if there is compliance to the ethical standards, norms or values, since these factors account for their performance, referring to their power of making rules in the form of ordinances and resolutions.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall objective of this study was to determine the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the Sangguniang Bayan members in Northern Samar and to determine their performance. Specifically, this study aimed to:

1. determine the level of compliance to ethical standards of members of the local legislative body or Sangguniang Bayan of the local government units of Northern Samar in terms of:

1.1. Commitment to public interest
1.2. Professionalism
1.3. Justness and sincerity
1.4. Political neutrality
1.5. Responsiveness to the public
1.6. Nationalism and patriotism; and
1.7. Commitment to democracy

2. assess the performance of the Sangguniang Bayan members in Northern Samar in terms of enactment of the legislative measures and implementation of the legislative agenda, the legislators' performance record and public consultation and assessment conducted.

3. determine the relationship that exists between the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the members of the Sangguniang Bayan in Northern Samar and their performance.

4. find out if there is a significant difference on the responses of the Sanggunian Secretary, local government employees and the residents or clients on the Sangguniang Bayan members' compliance to the ethical standards

5. draw out implications from the findings of this study.

3. METHODOLOGY

Locale of the Study

Northern Samar is one of the six provinces composing the Eastern Visayas Region. It is located at the northern most part of the Samar Island on the eastern edge of the archipelago. It is bounded on the north by the San Bernardino Strait, on the south by the province of Samar, on the west by the Samar Sea, and on the east by the Pacific Ocean.

The province was established on June 19, 1965 through R.A. 4221. Northern Samar is subdivided into two (2) congressional districts, 24 towns or municipalities, and 569 barangays with Catarman as its capital. It is divided into three major areas namely: Balicuatro Area, Central Area and the Pacific Area.

Northern Samar has very rugged terrain with restricted valleys. The river valleys are low lying and of highly dissected hills and mountain peaks. Low lying hills are found between the coastal plains of Palapag, the river valley of Gamay and Catubig Valley, all in the Pacific Area.

The province has no pronounced dry and wet seasons but has a heavy rainfall from October to January. The heaviest precipitation falls in the early part of the coolest season usually during the month of November. May is relatively the driest month.

The province is endowed with natural resources that include forest land which are source of lumber potentials for woodcraft industries, mineral deposit, aluminum and machine resources which abound in Samar Sea, the Philippine deep and Laoang Bay.

All municipalities of Northern Samar, assigned with respective codes in the discussion, were taken as the locale of this study. Allen, Biri, Bobon, Capul, Catarman, Catubig, Gamay, Laoang, Lapinig, Las Navaz, Lavezares, Lope de Vega, Mapanas, Mondragon, Palapag, Pambujan, Rosario, San Antonio, San Isidro, San Jose, San Roque, San Vicente, Silvino Lobos and Victoria.

Northern Samar is not without its share of controversies being considered as one of the poorest provinces of the Philippines. Hence, degeneration of the measure of trust and integrity in public institutions and officials is evident. Thus, Northern Samar will be able to address said controversies and be able venture the safeguard of democracy and promote better governance.

Research Design

The descriptive-correlational method of research was employed in this study. This study focused on the determination of the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the members of the Sangguniang Bayan in Northern Samar and similarly, their performance.

Descriptive method of research is a fact-finding study with adequate and accurate interpretation of the findings. It describes with emphasis the current practices, situations or phenomena. It contributes much to the establishment of standards norms of conduct, behavior or performance. Since the present study is concerned with the present level of compliance of the ethical code of conduct by the members of the Sangguniang Bayan in Northern Samar and their performance, the descriptive method is the most appropriate method to use.

In addition, the correlational research was also employed in the sense that this study aimed at determining the relationship between the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the members of the Sangguniang Bayan in Northern Samar and their performance.

Variables of the Study

To facilitate comprehensive understanding about this study, the following variables were discussed and were categorized as follows:

Ethical Standards. Ethical standards are principles that when followed promote values such as trust, good behavior, fairness and kindness. This independent variable reflects section 4 of R.A. 6713 the code of conduct for public officials and employees. The compliance of the Sangguniang Bayan members to the aforementioned ethical standard rests on the fact that it affects the dependent variable which is their performance.

As such, a 5-point scale instrument was used to determine the level of practice of the ethical standards. The responses will be as follows: "Very much complied," "Much complied," "complied," "less complied" and "least complied."

Ethical Standards include:

- Commitment to public interest
- Professionalism
- Justness and sincerity
- Political neutrality
- Responsiveness to the public
- Nationalism and patriotism; and
- Commitment to democracy

In the same manner, the performance of the members of the Sangguniang Bayan, as the dependent variable was measured in terms of the number of ordinances and resolutions acted upon by the Sangguniang Bayan members, the implementation of the Legislative Agenda, the legislators' performance record and the number of public consultation and assessment conducted.

Population and Sampling

In determining the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the Sangguniang Bayan members, the Secretary to the Sangguniang Bayan, the local government employees and the residents or clients of the respective municipalities were asked to provide pertinent information.

As regards the performance of the members of the Sangguniang Bayan, the secretary was asked to supply necessary information. This information was then reexamined through relevant legislative documents and records present in the Sangguniang Bayan Secretary's office.

On the other hand, significant difference was established involving the responses of the "SB secretary and the local government or municipal employees", the "SB secretary and the residents or clients", the "local government or municipal employees and SB secretary" and "the residents or clients and SB secretary", as the t-computed value is greater than the t-critical value at .05 level of significance.

While in the determination of the Sangguniang Bayan members' performance the Sangguniang Bayan secretary's responses were reexamined through documents and records inspection.

This study covered the local government units in Northern Samar. Hence, as for the selection of the Sangguniang Bayan in Northern Samar which served as respondents of this study, stratified random sampling was utilized. Subsequently, simple random sampling was employed as for the identified strata.

The local government units of Northern Samar were divided into three strata, namely: the Balicuatro, the Central and the Pacific area. Since this stratification results in strata of various sizes, the formula for proportional allocation will be utilized to ensure balanced representation from each of the identified areas. Hence, four (4) municipalities were randomly chosen from Balicuatro area, and two (2) and three (3) municipalities, were randomly chosen from Central and Pacific area, respectively.

Finally, as for the residents or clients of the respective local government units, where Sangguniang Bayan is located, purposive sampling was applied with a sample size of nine (9), matching the identified sample size for the Sangguniang Bayan. Residents or clients were determined as the researcher personally inquired and recognized knowledge from them as having particular familiarity on the ethical standards of the Sangguniang Bayan members. They were identified as they were present in the Municipal Hall of the respective LGU at the time of the conduct of this study.

The Respondents

In determining the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the Sangguniang Bayan members, nine (9) secretaries to the Sangguniang Bayan, being closely associated with the members of the Sangguniang Bayan; eighty-one (81) local government employees, being closely linked with their local government's Sangguniang Bayan members; and eighty (80) residents or clients of the respective municipalities, being the beneficiaries of the services derived form the Sangguniang Bayan, served as respondents.

Similarly, to ascertain the performance of the members of the Sangguniang Bayan, the secretary being present in all meetings of the sanggunian and being the keeper of a journal of all Sangguniang Bayan proceedings, supplied necessary information as respondent of this study. Information which was provided by the secretary was then reexamined through all non-confidential documents and records present in his/her office.

Research Instrument

The instrument which was utilized in this study was a survey questionnaire with written set of questions that was given to the respondents of this study in order to collect facts about the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the members of the Sangguniang Bayan in the local government units of Northern Samar and their performance.

Part I determined the opinions and perceptions of the respondents as to the Sangguniang Bayan members' level of compliance to the ethical standards in terms of commitment to public interest, professionalism, justness and sincerity, political neutrality, responsiveness to the public, nationalism and patriotism and commitment to democracy. Each of the aforementioned ethical norms consists of five questions and was measured using a five-point scale, as follows: A score of 5 with a qualitative value from 4.2 to 5 as "Very Much Complied", a score of 4 with a qualitative value from 3.4 – 4.1 as "Much Complied", a score of 3 with a qualitative value from 2.6 – 3.3 as "Complied", a score of 2 with a qualitative value from 1.8 – 2.5as "Less Complied" and, a score of 1 with a qualitative value from 1.0 – 1.7 as "Least Complied". This part of the survey questionnaire was partly patterned on the instrument used in the study "Compliance to the Ethical Standards of the Heads of Offices in the Local Government Units in the Selected Municipalities of the First District of Northern Samar" (Baya, 2011).

To ensure that respondents give realistic answers as regards the indicators of the ethical standards of the Sangguniang Bayan, some questions were manifested in negative approach. Hence, scoring and interpretation of these questions were conversed.

Part II of the questionnaire involved series of questions that determined the performance of the Sangguniang Bayan members through their formulation and enactment of legislative measures and of the legislative agenda. This part of the questionnaire is partially patterned from the "Local legislative performance appraisal form" (Local Legislator's Toolkit, 2004) with particular highlight on the formulation and enactment of legislative measures and the legislative agenda and the public consultation and assessment conducted.

4. DISCUSSION

Level of Compliance to Ethical Standards

Commitment to public interest

Table 1.1 shows the itemized responses of the respondents in consonance with the Sangguniang Bayan members' compliance to the ethical norms and standards of conduct in terms of their commitment to public interest. The corresponding interpretations of their responses are presented below.

As regards the use of government resources effectively and efficiently, shown by the weighted mean of 3.9, the SB Secretaries signified that SB members "much complied" this norm of conduct.

Among the employees, they signified that SB members "much complied" as to the effective and efficient use of resources, as shown by the weighted mean of 3.4.

As to the residents or clients, they perceived the SB members, as evidenced by weighted mean of 3.0, to have "complied" with the ethical norm of effective and efficient use of government resources.

In general, SB members, with a total weighted mean value of 3.4, indicated to have much complied ensuring an effective and efficient use of government resources.

As such, it could be inferred that SB members in their legislative performance and their actions as public officials undertake effective and efficient allocation of government resources to benefit the constituents' collective welfare and development. This detail further indicates that systems and policies in legislative organizations are in place such that it minimizes opportunities for the SB members to engage in fraud particularly in the use of government resources.

Similarly, the SB secretaries signified that SB members "very much complied" to this act as evidenced by the weighted mean of 4.6, the employees, with weighted mean of 3.8 signified that they "much complied", while the residents or clients observed that SB members, with a weighted mean of 3.0, only "complied" with the norm of avoidance of wastages of public funds.

Overall, SB members exemplified to have much complied in avoidance of wastages of public funds as evidenced by the total weighted mean value of 3.8.

From the responses, it could be deduced that there is good management of resources in legislative organizations in Northern Samar such that SB members effectively examine and monitor that whatever is spent in the local government are consistent with the purpose for which they have been allocated.

In relation to openness to suggestions and criticisms, as shown with a weighted mean of 4.2, both SB secretaries and employees expressed that SB members "very much complied" as to the openness to suggestions and criticisms.

As for the residents or clients, they alluded that SB members "much complied" with regard to openness to suggestions and criticisms having rated them with a weighted mean of 3.4.

Taken as a whole, SB members much complied in the standard of being open to suggestions and criticisms as posted by the total weighted mean value of 3.9.

As such, the data entails that SB members possess a good attitude, an open mind, and willingness to gain knowledge of and grow from the feedback that is given to them.

The findings affirm the notion that being in the public service, it is of great importance knowing oneself and being in control of one's reactions and work related antics. Criticisms, constructive or not, is a part of any working experience. As such, as a part of professionalism at work, one needs to be receptive of criticism.

Professionalism

The data in Table 1.2 reveals the Sangguniang Bayan members' compliance to the ethical standards of conduct in terms of professionalism as to the following:

Based on the weighted mean value of 3.7, the SB Secretaries indicated that SB members "much complied" in their performance of duty with the highest degree. The employees and the residents or clients, similarly noted that their SB members "much complied" their performance of duty to the highest degree as shown with the weighted mean value of 3.9 and 3.8, respectively.

Overall, the SB members indicated to have much complied in performing their duties to the highest degree as evidenced by the total weighted mean value of 3.8.

Consequently, the data indicates that SB members through the combination of their personal qualities and exceptional skills, bring about significant contributions in crafting and enacting legislative measures that promotes local level development.

Professionalism in the place of work is important to ensure good performance by all. If everyone is professional, everyone will do the best s/he can that the job requires ensuring a good team spirit. If people work professionally, they will know how to value their organizational goals, along with their personal ones.

Professionalism is the axis around which any organization revolves. Without this axis, the organization will be lost in the galaxy of politics, mind games and blame games.

However, SB members should not only focus on their personal performance but also review the performance of the local government unit and identify strengths and weaknesses as well as propose reforms and improvements.

Similarly, as shown by the weighted mean of 3.5, the SB Secretaries signified that SB members "much complied" to serve the public with utmost devotion.

Employees and residents or clients, however, professed that SB members only "complied" in terms of their service to the public with devotion as exhibited in the weighted mean value of 2.6 and 2.9, respectively.

Generally, SB members showed to have complied serving the public with utmost devotion as reflected by the total weighted mean value of 3.0.

As such it could be construed that SB members in their legislative performance and enactment of ordinances and resolutions endeavored to be viewed as an asset to the government and the community and a model to the rest of the citizenry. However, employees and residents or clients customarily perceived such venture as SB members only have enacted a handful number of ordinances and resolutions as they have only held office for less than a year.

Justness and Sincerity

The data in Table 1.3 summarizes the distribution of the itemized responses of the SB Secretaries, the employees and the residents or clients as to the SB members' compliance to the ethical norms of conduct in terms of justness and sincerity as shown in the following:

As disclosed in the weighted mean computation of 4.2, the SB secretaries indicated that SB members "very much complied" to the ethical standard of conduct in terms of treating constituents fairly and genuinely in enacting legislative measures.

Employees and residents or clients, however, exhibited "much compliance" only in evaluating the SB members as shown by the weighted mean value of 3.4 and 3.8, correspondingly.

As a whole, SB members showcased to have much complied treating their constituents fairly as evidenced by a total weighted mean value of 3.8.

The findings indicate that SB members exemplify fairness in treating constituents as manifested in their legislative actions of crafting and enacting measures that are free from discrimination.

As Plato has put it, justice is a proper, harmonious relationship between the warring parts of the person or city. Hence, justice is having and doing of what is one's own. A just man is a man in just the right place, doing his best and giving the precise equivalent of what he has received. This applies both at the individual level and at the universal level.

Relatedly, as elicited by the weighted mean value of 4.3, SB members, according to the SB secretaries, "very much complied" in showing respect of the rights of others in passing ordinances or resolutions.

Employees and residents or clients however, exhibited that SB members only "complied" with this norm of conduct as unfurled by the weighted mean value of 3.0 and 3.1, respectively.

On the whole, SB members indicated to have much complied respecting the rights of others as signified by the total weighted mean value of 3.5.

What was significantly inferred from the data was the fact that SB members possess the capacity to care for the constituents showing empathy and compassion by considering the ethical standard of respecting their rights in crafting and enacting ordinances and resolutions.

In the same way, the weighted mean value of 4.2 manifest that SB members showed that they "very much complied" to the ethical standards of conduct, in consideration to actions reflecting good morals and good customs as perceived by the SB secretaries.

Political Neutrality

Table 1.4 presents the summary of the responses of the SB members' compliance to ethical code of conduct in terms of political neutrality and its interpretation.

As gleaned from the weighted mean value of 4.1, the SB secretaries' responses signified that SB members "much complied" in generating political support for policies and proposals deemed beneficial to constituents.

The perceptions of the employees and the residents or clients however, differ, as they contended that SB members merely "complied" as to the aforementioned political neutrality indicator as represented by weighted mean value of 2.8 and 2.9, respectively.

Overall, the SB members indicated to have complied generating political support beneficial to constituents as evidenced by the total weighted mean value of 3.3.

The difference of the respondents' perceptions indicates that SB members as perceived by their respective secretaries, engender political aid to deliver services effectively to the constituents through legislative measures. However, employees and residents or clients, have possibly viewed such acts as trivial since they may have construed it negatively.

Periera in his study on "Higher Civil Service Ethics" concluded that civil servants understand that they are political agents, that they have a direct responsibility to their nation. Hence, this study supports such claim as SB members must engender political support advantageous to constituents.

On the other hand, SB members, as perceived by the SB secretaries, "complied" in providing service to everyone as shown by the weighted mean value of 3.3. The employees and the residents or clients similarly deduced that SB members "complied" in providing service to everyone as evidenced by the same weighted mean value of 3.2.

Overall, the SB members indicate that they have complied performing legislative functions to all as indicated by the total weighted mean value of 3.2.

The findings indicate that SB members of Northern Samar regularly exhibit performance of legislative functions to all, since this is the very nature of being a local legislator, crafting and enacting legislative measures to address issues and concerns towards local level development deemed beneficial to all constituency.

It must be the case that public servants execute public decisions loyally and zealously irrespective of the philosophy and programs of the party in power and regardless of their personal opinions.

Similarly, the SB members, as perceived by the SB secretaries, "very much complied" in using their authority or position as a public official to benefit the entire public or service populace as manifested by the weighted mean value of 4.4.

On one hand, the employees signified that, based on the weighted mean value of 3.3, the SB members only "complied" in this area.

The residents or clients, on the other hand, perceived SB members to have "much complied" in this area as indicated by the weighted mean value of 3.6.

In general, SB members showed that they much complied using their authority to benefit the public as manifested by the total weighted mean value of 3.8.

The findings indicate that SB members utilize the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience to craft and enact legislative measures that effectively realize the constituents' aspiration of local level development. This means, essentially, that SB members as public servants must keep their jobs out of their politics and their politics out of their jobs.

Finally, as viewed from the summary of responses in Table 1.4, the SB members, as manifested by the responses of the SB secretaries and the residents or clients, "much complied" in ensuring the continuity of work in the Sanggunian despite changes in leadership as a result of elections, as reflected by the equal weighted mean value of 4.1. According to the employees, SB members only "complied" in this aspect as reflected by a weighted mean value of 3.2.

Responsiveness to the Public

Table 1.5 unfolds the distribution of responses of the SB secretaries, employees and residents or clients in terms of SB members' responsiveness to the public as exhibited in the following:

As indicated by the weighted mean value of 4.2, it shows that the SB members, consistent with the SB secretaries' responses, "very much complied" with their desire to be more responsive with their clients.

Based on the weighted mean of 3.3, the residents or clients said that the SB members have "much complied" in providing prompt and adequate measures to local problems by solving and reaching agreeable solutions.

Municipal employees, however, contended that SB members merely "complied" to this responsiveness-to-the-public indicator as evidenced by the weighted mean value of 3.3.

As a whole, SB members much complied in providing prompt and adequate measures to local problems as manifested by the total weighted mean value of 3.6.

The information indicates that Sangguniang Bayan members embody commendable ability to create and complete legislative measures within a given time, effectively addressing and providing solution to perceived local problem or concern.

Moreover, responsiveness and accountability is an even obligation of local officials at all levels, as agents of public purpose, to serve, to conform with the collective will, to avoid taking unwarranted power into their own hands, and to make certain that public objectives are not scuttled by insolence, intolerance and inaction.

In terms of providing information on their policies and procedures in clear and understandable language, the SB secretaries, employees and residents or clients, disclosed that SB members have merely "complied"

on this indicator as defined clearly in the weighted mean value of 3.3, 3.2 and 3.0 respectively.

On the whole, SB members complied providing clear information on policies as reflected by the total weighted mean value of 3.2.

This perception indicates that local legislators provide practical, easy and understandable provisions on policy, ordinances or resolutions, so as to demand obedience from the constituents thus, achieving the purpose of which it is created for.

As such, the legislative body and other agencies can ensure that its communications are comprehensible. This may mean that forms and statements of rules are written simply enough so that people who have a very basic reading ability can read, understand, and comply with them.

In similar manner, based on Table 1.5 with a weighted mean value 4.8, consistent with the responses of the SB secretaries, the SB members "very much complied" in their desire to avoid red tape such as accepting gifts to facilitate transactions.

Likewise, employees and residents or clients also stated that SB members have "much complied" with their desire to avoid red tape, as reflected by the weighted mean value of 3.7 and 3.4, respectively.

In general, the SB members embodied to have much complied avoiding red tape as showed by the total weighted mean value of 4.0.

Nationalism and Patriotism

Table 1.6 reveals the summary of responses of the SB members' compliance to the ethical norms of conduct in terms of nationalism and patriotism, as perceived by the SB secretaries, the employees and the residents or clients.

As shown by the weighted mean value of 3.2, SB members "complied" in promoting the use of locally made goods, resources and technology, as per SB secretaries' manifestation. Employees and residents or clients also cited the SB members to have "complied" in their desire to promote local goods as elicited by the weighted mean value of 2.6 and 3.0, respectively.

Generally, SB members exhibited to have complied promoting local goods as signified by the total weighted mean value of 2.9.

The fact indicates that SB members as officials of their respective municipalities, manifest pride and honor in promoting locally made goods, resources and technology as this entails progress also for local economy. It is however a fact that there are few local products available and created by municipalities of Northern Samar.

Similarly, the weighted mean value of 3.5 demonstrates that SB members "much complied" this indicator by encouraging appreciation and promotion of Filipino culture and practices, as supposed by the SB secretaries. With the 4.5 weighted mean value, the officials "very much complied" as perceived by the employees. However, the residents or clients argue differently, as according to them, SB members merely "complied" with such indicator as supported by 3.3 weighted mean value.

With a total weighted mean value of 3.8, SB members, on the whole, manifested to have much complied in appreciation of pride of our country.

The findings indicate that SB members exemplifies appreciation of their pride of country by having devotion to the nation's interests associated with the belief that they have the potential to develop their country by commencing on lower level as the local government units.

As such, nationalism is a special affection for one's own country; a sense of personal identification with the country; special concern for the well-being of the country; and willingness to sacrifice to promote the country's good

Likewise, according to the SB secretaries, local legislators showed "much compliance" in their regular attendance during flag raising/retreat ceremonies as elicited in the weighted mean value of 3.8.

As perceived by the employees and the residents or clients, however, SB members showed to have "less complied" in their nationalism and patriotism, in terms of regular attendance in flag raising/retreat ceremonies, as clearly defined by the weighted mean value of 2.3 and 2.5, respectively.

Commitment to Democracy

Table 1.7 shows the responses of the SB secretaries, employees and residents or clients as to the SB members' commitment to democracy.

SB members maintained the principle of public accountability as indicated by the weighted mean value of 3.3 showing they "complied" in their commitment to democracy.

The weighted mean value of 3.5 indicated that the SB members "much complied" their public accountability as rated by the residents or clients.

Different perspective, however, were shared by the employees as they specified that SB members "less complied" with this indicator as manifested by the weighted mean value of 1.8.

SB members complied in maintaining public accountability, in general perspective, as evidenced by a total weighted mean value of 2.9.

The findings indicate that SB members embody their obligations trusted with the public resources, as answerable to the fiscal and the social responsibilities that have been assigned to them as local legislators. SB members also exhibit accountability and the responsibility to carry out their duties as SB members.

There are several varieties of democracy, some of which provide better representation and more freedoms for their citizens than others. However, if any democracy is not carefully legislated – through the use of balances – to avoid an uneven distribution of political power, such as the separation of powers, then a branch of the system of rule could accumulate power, thus becomes undemocratic.

As indicated, the weighted mean value of 3.4 indicates that SB members "much complied" their manifestation that civilian authority is over military authority.

Employees had different perceptions as they indicated that SB members "very much complied" in this area, as indicated by the weighted mean of 4.3.

But as for the residents and clients, local legislators believed that they merely "complied" manifesting civilian over military authority, as hinted by weighted mean value of 3.0.

Overall, SB members exemplified to have much complied manifesting civilian authority over military authority as denoted by a total weighted mean value of 3.6.

The information indicates that SB members relatively manifest civilian over military authority. It would however be insignificant as the Philippines is a democratic country and that authority resides on the people.

In the same manner, as viewed by the weighted mean value of 3.7, it is indicated as per SB secretaries' contention, that local legislative officials "much complied" in their aspirations of upholding the constitution.

Legislative Performance

Legislation and Implementation of Legislative Agenda

Table 2.1 presents the itemized responses as regards the legislative performance of the Sangguniang Bayan members in terms of legislation and implementation or adoption of the legislative agenda.

The first procedural step in enacting ordinances or resolutions is the filing of measures by a sanggunian member or group of members with the secretary in its draft form.

SB members of **"V"** exhibited the highest number of ordinances filed for the six-month duration of holding office with a total of sixteen (16)exhibiting a high performance, the SB members of **"B1"**, on the other hand, displayed the lowest number of ordinances filed with only one (1) manifesting a low performance. The municipalities of **"A"**, **"R"**, **"B2"**, **"M"**, **"C"** and **"G"**, each indicated an average performance as regards the number of ordinances filed.

In relation to the above-mentioned ordinances, SB members of **"V"** similarly disclosed the highest number of ordinances acted upon with a total of sixteen (16), flaunting 100% from the filed ordinances. SB members of **"B1"**, also indicated 100% legislative action on filed ordinance, but exhibited the least number as they have only filed a total of one (1) measure. The municipalities of **"B2"** and **"M"** showed an average performance acting a total of eight (8) and six (6) legislative measures, respectively. The municipalities of **"A"**, **"B1"**, **"R"**, **"C"**, **"G"** and **"P"**, conversely, presented low performance.

Many ordinances are enacted based on the legislative body's reaction to a problem that has already arisen. This type of legislation is valid but often has a short-term effect in addressing a problem. Local legislation can be more responsive if it addresses or predicts that citizens need to have a better quality of life, even before the citizens bring them to the attention of legislators. Further, local legislation can be effective if it addresses long-term, strategic needs that can contribute to the attainment of the vision of the LGU for its citizens.

A resolution is a legislative action of a temporary nature. It is a mere expression of the opinion or sentiment of the sanggunian on matters relating to proprietary function and to private concerns.

In terms of resolutions filed, SB members of **"A"** indicated the highest number with a total of forty-

eight (48), manifesting a high performance in this area, while SB members of **"V"**, showed the least with a total of only eleven (11) measures. The municipalities of **"R"**, **"M"** and **"C"** also unveiled high performance.

In addition, **"C"** displayed the highest number of adopted resolutions with a total of thirty-eight (38), while **"V"** displayed the least with a total of only eleven (11). Both municipalities however indicated 100% adoption from the entire resolutions filed. **"M"**, matching **"C"**, also exhibited high performance in adoption of resolutions filed with a total of forty-two (42), while **"A"**, **"R"** and **"G"** expressed low performance.

The present study indicated that ordinances and resolutions filed were numerous; however, only few are lapsed into law, hence, this concurs with the findings of Saiegh in the study, "Government Defeat: Coalitions, Responsiveness, and Legislative Performance", since it concluded that government bills may "die" in the legislature in different ways. And that their fate depends on legislative procedures in each country, and in general, can be: a negative committee report which kills the bill; no committee report, so the bill never leaves the committee; a positive committee report, which makes it possible for the Floor to debate the bill, but does not guarantee that the bill will come up for debate; and outright defeat of the bill by the Floor. In most countries, bills that are not considered during a legislative year expire and have to be introduced again to the legislature in the following period. But in some other countries, legislative proposals can carry over into the following year. Thus, if a bill does not reach the floor, its "death" can be automatic after some period of time or can "languish" in the legislature for a longer period.

Among the powers and functions of the Sangguniang Bayan for an efficient and effective municipal government is to review barangay ordinances approved by the Sangguniang Barangay issued by the Punong Barangay, to determine whether these are within the scope of the prescribed powers of the sanggunian and of the Punong Barangay.

In this regard, the ordinances for Sangguniang review in **"B2"** and **"G"** accumulated ten (10) each, the highest quantity, while **"C"** and **"P"** accrued nothing. SB members of **"G"** listed ten (10) barangay ordinances valid boasting 100% while **"A"** listed two (2) as valid, boasting 50% from the barangay ordinances submitted for Sanggunian review. The municipalities of **"B1"**, **"R"** and **"M"** exhibited average performance in this area.

Legislative Agenda is a package of priority legislative measures to support local development priorities. This includes a list of prioritized ordinances and resolutions for enactment during a specified period, usually three years, contributing to the attainment of the LGU vision and mission.

SB members of **"V"** listed or targeted the most number of legislative agenda with a total of forty-three (43) measures while **"A"**, **"B2"** and **"G"** listed only ten (10) measures. **"B1"** and **"M"** listed nothing as SB members of these municipalities have not yet been able to identify their legislative agenda as for the first six months of their three year term duration of office.

SB members of **"A"**, **"V"**, **"B2"** and **"P"** indicated 100% adoption from their listed or targeted measures in their legislative agenda with, ten (10), forty-three (43), ten (10) and twenty (20), respectively. **"R"** adopted only thirty (30) of thirty-four (34), **"C"** with sixteen (16) of twenty-three (23) and **"G"** with five (5) out of ten (10) listed measure. **"B1"** and **"M"** have yet to identify their legislative agendas.

The Legislative Agenda is a tool for fulfilling the sanggunian members' mandate as elected representatives of the people; hence identification of the same may be prepared as soon as the newly-elected officials assume office. This is indispensable as LA serves as the road map to guide the sanggunian in identifying, analyzing and formulating solutions to problems and issues requiring public policy action.

The legislative performance of SB members in terms of legislation and the implementation of the legislative agenda are as follows: **"V"** with a performance mean value of 2.5 is the only municipality exhibiting a high performance in this area, the municipalities of **"R"**, **"B2"**, **"M"**, **"C"** and **"G"** showcased average performance with a performance mean value of 2.13, 2.0, 1.75, 1.75 and 1.75, respectively. **"A"**, **"B1"** and **"P"**, on the other hand exhibited low performance with performance mean value of 1.5, 1.38 and 1.38, correspondingly.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study determined the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the Sangguniang Bayan members in Northern Samar, in terms of commitment to public interest, professionalism, justness and sincerity, political neutrality, responsiveness to the public, nationalism and patriotism and commitment to

democracy, their legislative performance in terms of enactment of the legislative measures and implementation of the legislative agenda, the legislator's performance record and public consultation and assessment conducted

The descriptive-correlational method of research was employed. A total of nine (9) secretaries to the Sangguniang Bayan of respective municipalities, eighty-one (81) local government employees, and eighty (80) residents or clients of the respective municipalities, served as respondents of this study.

The data were utilized from questionnaires distributed to the respondents of this study.

The findings showed that Sangguniang Bayan secretaries signified that local legislators had much compliance to the ethical standards set forth in RA 6713.

The municipal or local government employees and the residents/clients as respondents of this study indicated that Sangguniang Bayan members merely complied with the aforementioned ethical standards.

The Sangguniang Bayan members of Northern Samar exhibited much compliance to the ethical standards mandated by R.A. 6713, a code of conduct for public officials and employees.

As to legislative performance in terms of legislation and implementation of legislative agenda, legislator's performance record and public consultation and assessment conducted, few municipalities exhibited high performance on certain indicators; several exemplified average performance on other areas, while the majority of the municipalities highlighted low performance in almost all aspects of the indicators on legislative performance.

On the relationship of the ethical standards and the legislative performance of the Sangguniang Bayan members in Northern Samar, multiple regression analysis indicated that commitment to public interest, professionalism, justness and sincerity, political neutrality and responsiveness to the public were significantly related to SB members' legislative performance.

On the other hand, nationalism and patriotism and commitment to democracy did not show significant relationship with legislative performance.

As to the significant differences t-test for independent samples showed that SB secretaries' responses differed than those of the local government employees and the residents or clients; while the responses of the LGU employees and the residents or employees were equally associated.

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions and implications were drawn.

That Sangguniang Bayan members exhibit much compliance to the ethical standards set forth by RA 6713 which include commitment to public interest, professionalism, justness and sincerity, political neutrality, responsiveness to the public, nationalism and patriotism and commitment to democracy.

It could be deduced that Sangguniang Bayan members depict the practice of ethical and accountable governance, in their performance of the legislative functions. As such, these local legislators are competent of enacting ordinances or resolutions that directly address development issues and concerns which could realize progress in their respective localities.

Further, these legislators, having much complied the aforementioned ethical standards, could very well give integrity exemplifying Section 1, Article X1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which states that:

"A Public Office is a public trust. Public officers and employees must at all times be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty and efficiency, act with patriotism and justice and lead modest lives."

As to level of compliance to the ethical standards of the recently elected SB members, it can be implied that they possess potentials of ensuring the prosperity of their respective localities and free their constituents from poverty through legislative performance that translates to measures and provisions for adequate social services, promote full employment, rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life throughout the end of their term of office.

As to the legislative performance of the Sangguniang Bayan members of Northern Samar in terms of legislation and implementation of legislative agenda, legislators' performance record and public consultation and assessment conducted, findings of which indicated a mediocre performance implies that of their having held office just recently and still currently on the stage of getting accustomed together to act as one collegial body agreeing on roles and work norms, and setting up appropriate organizational structures, committees, internal rules of procedures,

systems and mechanisms for supporting its work and relations with the executive branch.

That this mediocre performance of the SB members may be attributed to the fact that some legislators are new entrants to the public service, hence, they may not thus far fully grasp a clear understanding and internalization of their roles as policymakers, lawmakers, representatives, and constituency builders; as this implies understanding as key to effective performance of their functions in the various stages or processes of legislation which includes legislative agenda formulation, drafting of ordinances and resolutions, enacting ordinances and codes of ordinances, and evaluation of ordinance implementation.

As to the ethical standards related to the legislative performance of the Sangguniang Bayan members in Northern Samar, findings indicated that commitment to public interest; professionalism; justness and sincerity; political neutrality; and responsiveness to the public; were the only indicators significantly related to legislative performance, while nationalism and patriotism and commitment to democracy, did not show significant relationship.

It sets out, that the abovementioned norms of conduct is significantly related to the SB members' legislative performance since those are the imperative categories of behavior or demeanor that should govern local legislators and all other government officials and employees in the conduct and discharge of their official duties and functions.

That nationalism and patriotism and commitment to democracy did not pose significant relation to the SB members' legislative performance implies that these indicators propound national concern which is beyond legislative performance in local legislation.

That the difference of responses of the SB secretaries to that of the local government employees and the residents or clients articulates the fact that SB secretaries work closely connected to SB members, such that their responses as regards the compliance to the ethical standards of the local legislators rests on every considerable detail of the SB members' actions and performance in and outside legislative processes.

That the responses of the municipal or LGU employees and the residents or clients indicated as casually oriented implies that they only perceive SB members' demeanor outside of their technical performance as local legislators.

Theory Evolved

"Theory of Commitment to Compliance of the Ethical Standards to Effect Successful Legislative Performance."

This theory advances that commitment to public interest, professionalism, political neutrality, justness and sincerity and responsiveness to the public are vital norms of conduct on how SB members as local legislators and as public officials should deliver their respective mandates and meet expectations from all stakeholders.

The theory highlights the need for local legislators to be properly guided by these ethical standards specifically in their dealings with their respective constituencies' especially as regards official capacities as public servants in view of the fact that these are the indispensable categories of behavior or demeanor that should govern local legislators in the conduct and discharge of their official duties and functions, as these standards direct them in crafting, enacting and implementing legislative measures that effectively and successfully address local development issues and concerns.

Furthermore, the theory accentuates that all changes or reforms will have to start fromthe individual public official or employee, for no one can ever effect changes if there is no admission as regards limitations and restrictions such that if one will not set aside pride and personal interest, the welfare of the greater majority will not be addressed. As such, the theory endeavors to bestow local legislators with a practical moral fiber to making local laws or legislation responsive to people's needs. In this manner, it will promote effective local legislation paving way of enhancing local governance and attaining development for local communities. It further contributes to building capacities of local legislators by providing them with moral or ethical backbone to understand local legislation as a systematic, participatory process that involves specific, interrelated tasks and interaction with various stakeholders to address development goals.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered based on the findings and conclusions drawn in the study.

1. Oversight institutions such as the CSC, Office of the Ombudsman and the COA, tasked to institutionalize a management climate conducive to public accountability, should be empowered and be strengthened further in the provincial and

local level to help local legislators protract and further improve their level of compliance to the ethical standards in the performance of their legislative functions.

2. A joint venture between local government units of Northern Samar and the University of Eastern Philippines - Local Government Training and Research Institute should be established so as to regularly conduct training programs and values orientation seminars for public officials and employees to update their methodological expertise and to inculcate in them appropriate norms and conduct becoming of a government official.
3. The provincial government should regulate and elaborate rules on crafting, enacting and implementing legislative plans and put in place compliance mechanisms for local legislators in every municipality to pursue. This is to synchronize development progression and to increase the involvement and accountability of all stakeholders in the planning and legislative processes.
4. All new entrants in Sangguniang Bayan should undergo training programs and seminars, as regards ethical standards and legislative performance, in recognized academic institutions such as the University of Eastern Philippines, to augment their energies and commitment before they assume their roles as public servants.
5. A continuous advanced professional training for the local legislative body, particularly in modern legislative methods, should be imposed, to update SB members to the new trends, techniques and other relevant matters concerning effective local legislation.
6. Committee meetings and hearings should be conducted periodically and regularly appropriating funds for incentives thereof, such that each sanggunian committee may invite its counterparts in the executive department to brief its members on the status of a particular program that it wants to evaluate.
7. Sanggunian committees should make a regular practice of getting resource persons from the local executive departments for its committee or public hearings. This way the committee gets the information it needs and at the same time provides an opportunity to the public attending the hearing to ask questions and make suggestions on how to improve the implementation of government programs.
8. There must be a regular monitoring team in charge with regulation of public and stakeholder participation in the legislative process, in order to generate ideas on relevant policies and legislative measures to address identified issues.
9. The future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies by utilizing different research techniques and by involving variables not identified in this study which might affect Sangguniang Bayan members' legislative performance.

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