



The Ethical Standards of Local Government Units' Heads of Offices in the First District of Northern Samar

Prof. Jayvee Wilfred C. Baya

Faculty, Social Sciences Department, College of Arts and Communication,
University of Eastern Philippines, University Town, Northern Samar

ABSTRACT

In accordance with Section 4 (Norms of Conduct of Public Officials and Employees) of Republic Act No. 6713, this study was done to ascertain the degree of adherence to ethical standards by the Heads of Office in the local government unit in the first district of Northern Samar.

This study sought to identify the socioeconomic characteristics, including age, sex, civil status, religion, level of education, and monthly income, of the Heads of Offices in the Local Government Units in the First District of Northern Samar. It also sought to determine the ethical norms or standards of conduct that the Heads of Offices in the Local Government Units in the First District of Northern Samar adhered to.

Finally, this study sought to ascertain the relationship between the socio-economic profile and the degree of adherence by the heads of offices to the ethical standards and its ramifications. It also sought to ascertain the level of adherence to these norms of conduct or ethical standards.

The descriptive-correlational approach of research was used for this study. The respondents to this study included 83 public employees and 53 heads of offices.

The questionnaires that were given to the study's respondents were where the data for this study came from.

Keywords: *Governance, Local Government Unit, Head of Office*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Constitution of the Philippines (Section 1 of Article XI) states that, a public office is a public trust and that 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.

This provision requires every public official and employee to exhibit and live certain values while in government service. In addition, the State has been mandated by the constitution to maintain honesty and integrity in the public service and take positive and effective measures against graft and corruption.

However, like any government bureaucracy in other parts of the world, the Philippines is not without its own share of issues and problems. Its effectiveness as an institution is impeded by a number of factors. Graft and corruption continues to be its number one nemesis. Stories about embezzlement and misuse of public funds for personal gains by government functionaries are frequent staple in the news as depicted in the recent AFP controversies.

In addition to graft and corruption, the high vulnerability or susceptibility of the Philippine civil service to patronage politics is another serious cause of concern. Concededly, many political leaders regard positions in the government as a political largesse to be dispensed to their political allies and close supporters. Thus, instead of merit and qualifications, political connection becomes the overriding, if not the sole, consideration on matters of appointment and even career advancement.

Red tape is also a grievous affliction of the Philippine bureaucracy. Government transactions go through innumerable layers and processes before concrete results can be had. For instance, the issuance of a simple permit may require three or more signatures. This can be systemic if processes are based on specific requirements of some laws or rules.

All these problems and dysfunctions attributed to the Philippine civil service have ethical dimension. While some attribute the incident of graft and corruption in the Philippine bureaucracy to low and meager pay, it cannot be discounted that corruption is as much a function of the distortion and fragmentation of the values systems among those in the government.

Apart from these actual stories, national and international surveys have also resulted in the indictment of the government for alleged unmitigated graft and corruption. So pervasive and enduring is the issue of graft and corruption that public perception generally dismisses the Philippine bureaucracy as a haven of corrupt officials and employees. To combat these bureaucratic ills, it may therefore be necessary to foster ethics in the Philippine civil service.

In 1989, the Philippine legislature passed Republic Act No. 6713, a law embodying the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees. The Code spells out in fine detail the do's and don'ts for government officials and employees in and out of the workplace. These do's and don'ts are encapsulated in the norms of conduct to be observed by all government officials and employees. These norms or standards are: commitment to public interest, professionalism, justness and sincerity, political neutrality, responsiveness to the public, nationalism and patriotism and commitment to democracy.

Ethics and accountability are keys not only to effective government but also to effective governance.

And since the heads of offices of local governments units are closer to the people they serve, they are in a better location to perceive the preferences of their communities and respond to their needs. However, LGU's are unable to respond fully and are pulled down by procedural, resource and governance constraints and most importantly, ethics and accountability issues. These issues may include the ones that could lead the leader to failure because of mismanagement, graft and corruption. Hence, to be able to address the aforementioned issue, the study

and application of ethics at all times is therefore of paramount interest to the researcher.

This study will endeavor to discover relevant issues in consideration to the heads of offices in the local government units' ethical principles, norms or values which affect enormously the decision-making processes directed towards the solution to the existing problems of his/her respective municipality as part of Northern Samar as a whole.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall objective of this study is to determine the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the heads of offices of the local government units of the first district of Northern Samar in consonance with Section 4 (*Norms of Conduct of Public Officials and Employees*) of Republic Act No. 6713.

Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Determine the socio-economic profile of the Heads of offices in the local government units in the first district of Northern Samar in terms of age, sex, civil status, religion, educational attainment, and monthly income.
2. Identify the ethical norms or standards of conduct complied by the Heads of offices in the local government units in the first district of Northern Samar in terms of:
 - 2.1 Commitment to public interest
 - 2.2 Professionalism
 - 2.3 Justness and Sincerity
 - 2.4 Political neutrality
 - 2.5 Responsiveness to the public
 - 2.6 Nationalism and patriotism; and
 - 2.7 Commitment to democracy
3. Determine the level of compliance to the norms of conduct or the ethical standards of the heads of offices of the local government units of the first district of Northern Samar in terms of the norms of conduct embodied in section 4 of R.A. 6713.
4. Determine the relationship of the socio-economic profile and the ethical standards complied by the heads of offices of the local government units of first district of Northern Samar.
5. Detail the implications drawn 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.

Specifically, the first district municipalities of Northern Samar were taken as the locale of this study. These include Allen, Biri, Bobon, Capul, Catarman, Lavezares, Lope de Vega, Mondragon, Rosario, San Antonio, San Isidro, San Jose, San Vicente 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 METHOD

This study on the determination of the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the heads of office of the local government units of the first district

of Northern Samar employed the descriptive - correlational method of research.

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 heads of offices in the local government units of the first district of Northern Samar, the descriptive method will be the most appropriate method to use.

Specifically, this study made use of the correlational research method in the sense that this study aimed to determine the relationship between the socio-economic profile and level of compliance to the ethical standards of the heads of offices of the local government units of the first district of Northern Samar.

POPULATION AND RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The population of this study were the respective heads of offices of the local governments units of the first district of Northern Samar, the public employees and the clients of the first district municipalities of Northern Samar.

Utilizing the Slovin's formula, a total of 65 heads of offices, 88 public employees and 100 clients served as the respondents of this study. They are primarily concerned and associated being the benefactor and the recipients of the services emanating from the offices of the local government units. Hence, they are better situated to provide accurate and unbiased opinions and perceptions related to the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the heads of offices.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

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

Part I of the questionnaire indicates the socio-economic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, religion, educational attainment and monthly income.

Part II determines the opinions and perceptions of the respondents as to the heads of offices' 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 consisted of five questions and this was measured using a five-point scale.

VALIDATION OF INSTRUMENT

To test the validity of the instrument, experts were consulted in the person of Dr. Lourdes Moscare, Dr. Antonio Broto, Dr. Zenaida Penaranda and Dr. Leonila Longcop. Comments and suggestions were taken from them and necessary revisions were made so as to arrive at a better instrument.

The improved instrument was then used in gathering data from the respondents of the study.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

This study utilized the random sampling technique on the selection of the heads of offices of the local government units of the first district of Northern Samar, the public employees and the clients in every municipality.

To increase the credibility and validity of the results, data triangulation was employed. Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from various sources.

Cohen and Manion (1986) define triangulation as an "attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint."¹

In this study the sources originated from the heads of office themselves, the public employees and the clients of the respective municipalities.

DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

The data was gathered in the following manner:

First, a communication was given to the respective municipal office to allow the researcher to distribute the questionnaires. Upon approval, respondents were identified using the selected sampling technique; and

Finally, the questionnaires were retrieved, and the data was scored, analyzed and interpreted.

SCORING AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The scoring and interpretation was based on the following categorization and quantification.

A. Demographic Profile

1. Age. Based on the mean, the young and the old was determined. Those whose age fell

within or above the mean were considered "old" and those below the mean as "young".

2. Sex. This was classified into male and female. Frequency counts and percentages were used.
3. Civil status. This was classified as single, married, widow or widower and separated. Frequency counts and percentages were determined.
4. Religion. This was categorized as Roman Catholics and non-Roman Catholics. Frequency counts and percentages were presented.
5. Educational Attainment. This was classified into non-schooling, elementary level, elementary graduate, high school level, high school graduate, college level, college graduate, and a post-graduate candidate or course. Frequency counts and percentages were presented.
6. Monthly Income. In this study, this was categorized as 31,000 to 50,000 and up – High; 16,000 to 30,000 – Average; and 1,000 to 15,000 – low. Frequency counts and percentages were determined.
7. Ethical norms variables. A numbered-item, 5-point scale instrument, was used to determine the level of practice of the ethical standards. The respondents will be asked to analyze and rate accordingly. The responses will be as follows: "Very much complied," "Much complied," "complied," "less complied" and "least complied." Corresponding points of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 will respectively be assigned to them. Individual scores will be summed up and the basis for the categorical description will be made, namely: "Very much complied" (4.10 – 5.00 pts.); "much complied" 3.10 – 4.00); "complied," (2.10 – 3.0 pts.); "less complied" (1.10 – 2.0 pts); and "least complied" (0 – 1 point).

STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

Different kinds of statistical methods were utilized in this study, according to its appropriateness. The following were applied.

1. To describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondent heads of offices, the formula for Frequency and Percentage distribution² was utilized.

$$\% = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

- % = percentage
- f = Frequency
- N = Number of cases
- 100 = Constant number

2. To compute for the average level of compliance to the ethical standards of the heads of offices, the formula for Weighted Mean³ was employed.

$$\sum fx \ X = \frac{\quad}{N}$$

Where:

- X = mean
- $\sum fx$ = summation of frequencies
- N = total number of respondents

3. Chi-Square⁴ test of independence was also employed to determine the relationship between the socioeconomic profile and the level compliance to the ethical standards of the heads of offices of the LGU's of First district of Northern Samar.

2

$$X = \frac{\sum (O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where: 2

- X = Chi-square test
- O = Observed frequency
- E = Expected frequency
- \sum = Summation

4. DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Profile

Age. Table 1 presents the distribution of the respondents according to age. The data show that of the 53 heads of offices of the Local Government Units in the first district of Northern Samar, three or 5.7

percent were between 26 – 35 years old; 12 or 22.6 percent were between 36 – 45 years old; 22 or 41.5 percent were at the age range of 46 – 55 years old and 16 or 30.2 percent were between 56 – 65 years old. The most number of heads of offices fell within the 46 – 55 age bracket, while the least number of fell within the 26 – 35 age bracket and none within the 16-25 age range. The mean age was 50.1 years old, thirty-eight or 74 percent of them were within and above the mean; hence, categorized as “adult”; and only fifteen or 26 percent were considered “young”.

The afore-stated data underscored the reality that the respondents as head of offices at the local government units of the first district of Northern Samar were mature persons, which means that they were responsible in undertaking and administering their positions, and as such, were expected to possess the knowledge and ability to comply with the ethical standards of conduct as they become mature.

Ghosh confirmed this finding that, though 'old age' is something that is looked down by the young. It has always and will always have its many advantages. Companies which have employees with high average ages always end up doing better than companies with employees which have low average ages, in the long-run.

In contrast, both the study of Pegels and the survey in AMA disconfirmed the finding of the present study. They argued that organizations which include senior managers under the age of 40 show a greater success pattern than those with older top executives.

The emphasis, however, differs. The present study's focus was in various socio-economic factors while that of Pegels and the AMA's looked solely on a single factor, age.

Sex. Table 1 also presents the distribution of the respondents according to sex. The data show that of the 53 total Heads of offices, twenty-five (25) or 47.2 percent were male and twenty-eight (28) or 52.8 percent were female. The data revealed that a majority of the heads of offices of the LGUs in the first district of Northern Samar were female.

The data bespeak of the fact that heads of offices of the LGUs in the first district of Northern Samar were dominated by female. This means that women can also possess strong qualities of becoming heads of offices, and thereby assumed to possess the ability to cope with whatever assigned responsibilities equally

well with that of the men in the local government units.

The data also conveyed that there is no gender discrimination in favor of the male individuals such that employees in the Philippine government service are comprised with men and women. Appointment of employees in the government according to the initiatives of the CSC is based on the principle of merit and fitness, not on gender preferences.

In connection, based on the data presented, it can be deduced that local government offices are capable of rendering better performance since there are a number of women than men in executive positions as confirmed in the study of Adler which argues that there is a strong correlation between a company's performance and the number of female senior executives in its ranks.

He found that companies with the highest percentage of female executive delivered performance and earning far in excess of the median for other large firms in their industries.

While the link does not prove that having women in the top ranks causes higher performance, clearly women are playing a great role in the most successful organizations.

Educational Attainment. Presented in the same table is the educational attainment profile of the respondents. Of the 53 heads of offices, thirty-eight (38) or 71.1 percent were college graduates; nine (9) or 17.0 percent were in the graduate school level or with MA units; and five (5) or 9.4 percent were masters degree holder and one (1) or 1.9 percent, PhD graduate. A majority were college graduates.

The data conveys that the heads of the local government offices of Northern Samar were educated and highly literate individuals. As such, it means that they were equipped with the knowledge to appreciate and to understand the mandate of R.A. 6713 of the ethical standards for public officials and employees.

Significantly, as heads of offices of the local governments, education is necessary since it enhances skills that help improve executive's performance and overcome skill deficits. It helps the executives face issues and challenges, and it accelerates development. This contention is similar with that posited by Lore International Institute on their research on executive education which emphasizes education as a paramount concern.

Civil Status. In terms of the civil Status of the respondents, Table 1 also reveals that out of the total number of the heads of offices, seven (7) or 13.2 percent are single; forty-three (43) or 81.1 percent are married; three (3) or 5.7 percent are widow.

The data further speak that a majority of the heads of offices in the local government units of the first district of Northern Samar were married. This means that their status of being married was a factor on their keener understanding or compliance of the significance of the ethical standards in their respective work and place of work.

Similarly, it could be deduced that a majority of the heads of offices of the local government of Northern Samar were healthy people as confirmed by the ASPE Research Brief that married people are generally healthier than unmarried people.

As ASPE Research Brief puts it, marriage could improve health outcomes in a variety of ways. It improves economic well-being and also provides an emotionally fulfilling, intimate relationship, satisfying the need for social connection, which could have implications for both physical and mental health.

The physical and mental health of personnel, undoubtedly, is a favorable consideration especially in the government service.

Religion. Table 1 also presents the distribution of the 53 Heads of offices in terms of religion. The data show that forty-nine (49) or 92.5 percent are Roman Catholics; two (2) or 3.8 percent are UCCP and one (1) or 1.9 percent both PIC and LDS.

Based on the data, it shows that a majority of the heads of offices were Roman Catholics.

The finding of the present study supports the contention of Abdon in his study. The test of applicability of religiosity, however, contends the secular realm that if the individual subscribes to the ethical requirements of one's office, it is a recognition that there is continuity between the religious and the secular affairs.

Monthly Income. The same table shows the distribution of the respondents according to monthly income. Of the 53 heads of offices, four (4) or 7.5 percent earned Php10, 000 – 14,999 per month; eight (8) or 15.1 percent earned Php15, 000 – 19,999 per month; 13 or 24.5 percent earned Php20 – 24,999 per month; six (6) or 11.3 earned Php25, 000 – 29,999; 10 or 18.9 earned Php30, 000 – 34,999; 11 or 20.8 earned

Php35, 000 – 39,999 and only one (1) or 1.9 received or earned Php40, 000 – 44,999.

The data show that a majority of the heads of offices had monthly income ranging from Php20, 000 to 24,999. A significant number had monthly income ranging from Php35, 000 – 39,999; while a few had monthly income within Php10, 000 – 14,999.

This indicates that the heads of offices had incomes which were relatively high as compared to ordinary employees of the government.

Theoretically, underpaid civil servants are forced to develop individual coping strategies to compensate for their declining purchasing power. It is generally accepted that low wages provide incentives for corruption.

On the other hand, higher salaries make corruption potentially more costly, as corrupt behaviors increase the risks of losing a highly rewarding job, instead of a low paying one. In other words, highly paid officials have, in principle, less inducement to indulge in corruption and have more to lose if they are caught.

However, there is a growing consensus that this argument does not directly predict the impact of increasing salary rates on reducing corruption, as other variables are important to consider, such as risks of detection, severity of sanctions and level of enforcement. In countries with weak monitoring systems, risks of detection and punishment are minimal. Under such circumstances, the prospect of losing a highly paid job is unlikely to have a deterrent impact on corruption.

Ethical Standards

Commitment to public interest. Table 2.1 shows the itemized responses of the respondents in consonance with the heads of offices' 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.

Public interest over personal interest. With the mean value of 4.2, the heads of offices signified that they very much complied such acts for the well being or the general welfare of the people.

On the part of the employees, the mean value of 3.8 indicated that they perceived their heads to have complied much with regard to their commitment to public interest over their personal interest.

Rohr's study reinforces the present study in as much as he endeavored to remind public servants of the

nobility of their calling, reinforce their role in articulating public interests against the excesses of private concerns, and encourage managers to make greater use of constitutional language to describe their everyday activities.

Pereira, likewise reinforces the present study, exhibiting the idea that public officials are part of the elite. And as such, their ethics, besides being the ethics of power and efficiency, are the republic ethics of the public interest as a goal which must be actively pursued.

As Bozeman has put it, there are so many and such diverse treatments of the public interest that an entire subgenre of literature and books categorizing the public interest. Theorists distinguish among normative, process and consensualist approaches to the public interest.

Effective and efficient use of government resources. As regards the use of government resources effectively and efficiently, shown by the weighted mean of 4.1, most of the heads of offices signified that they have complied much this norm of conduct.

Among the employees, they have signified that their heads have much complied as to the effective and efficient use of resources, as shown by the weighted mean of 4.0.

Avoidance of wastages of funds. Both heads of offices and the employees signified that the heads of offices complied much this act as evidenced by the weighted mean of 4.1 and 4.0 respectively.

Serves all clients honestly and sincerely. With a weighted mean of 4.4 the heads of offices signified very much compliance as regards their honest and sincere services to their clients.

The employees, however, perceived them with much compliance as indicated by a weighted mean of 4.0 in their honest and sincere services to all clients.

Openness to suggestions and criticisms. As shown with a weighted mean of 4.4, the heads of offices expressed very much compliance as to their openness to suggestions and criticisms.

Likewise, employees also alluded for only much compliance of their heads of offices with regard to suggestions and criticisms having rated them with a weighted mean of 4.0.

Adding up all weighted means of the responses of the heads of offices, very much compliance was evident

as characterized by a weighted mean of 4.2. As cross-checked by the employees, much compliance was evident as characterized by the 3.9 weighted mean.

Indeed, the primary concern in government or public service, not just in Northern Samar but in all other local governments present in the Philippines, is ideally directed towards the promotion of public interests over personal interests.

Bozeman affirms the study in his argument that public interest assumes that there is a common good that is different than the aggregate of private benefit and, as usually expressed, that common good is something that is in the interest of the community as a whole, even if against the interest of some of the individuals in the community.

Professionalism

The data in Table 2.2 reveals the head's compliance to the ethical standards of conduct in terms of professionalism as to the following:

Performance of duties to the highest degree. Based on the weighted mean value of 4.3, most of the heads of offices indicated that they have very much complied in their performance of duty with the highest degree.

Employees on the other hand alluded that their heads have very much complied their performance of duty to the highest degree as shown in the weighted mean value of 4.0.

Kultgen supports this study with his contention that morality and professional ideals are connected. Thus, in assessing the moral impact of professionalism in society both the structure and organizations of occupations and the ideals and ideology were associated with professions.

Serves public with utmost devotion. As shown by the weighted mean of 4.3, the heads of offices signified that they have very much complied to serve the public with utmost devotion.

Employees professed much compliance on their heads in terms of their service to the public with devotion as exhibited in the weighted mean value of 4.0.

Bailey, ropes this study having a vision of democratic morality and projected that vision to recommend a personal ethics for public servants, thus promoting utmost devotion to public servants.

Promptness. As evidenced by the weighted mean value of 4.1, the heads of offices indicated that they

have much complied as regards their performance of duties by reporting to their offices promptly and attending to important matters on time.

Employees perceived the same as characterized by weighted mean of 4.0.

Completes planned targets. Both heads of office and employees have expressed very much compliance in their commitment for the completion of planned targets in spite of constraints or negative reactions, as shown by the weighted mean value of 4.2.

Allows capacity building. As manifested by the weighted mean value of 4.2, the public officials disclosed that they have very much complied in their duty of allowing capacity building through seminars, trainings and short courses extended to personnel's and even himself.

Employees, however, viewed that they only have much compliance in this area of professionalism.

What was significantly indicated from the data in Table 2.2 was the fact that the heads of offices have very much compliance on their ethical norms of conduct in terms of professionalism.

Hence as depicted in the same table, a weighted mean of 4.2 generalizes the indicators of professionalism as for the heads of offices, while the employees perceived that heads of offices much complied only as depicted by the weighted mean of 4.0.

It could be deduced that the heads of offices of the local government units of the first district of Northern Samar are professionals and exemplifies a high degree of professionalism.

Professionalism in government or public service is very important since it leads to logical and completely unbiased decision making, making it the basis of a good work environment.

Similarly, professionalism is required to keep all the employees motivated which is deemed important to keep a good reputation in the office.

Justness and Sincerity

The data in Table 2.3 summarizes the distribution of the heads of offices and employees' itemized responses in their compliance to the ethical norms of conduct in terms of justness and sincerity as shown in the following:

Treats clients fairly. As disclosed in the weighted mean computation of 4.4, the public officials have indicated very much compliance in their ethical

standards of conduct in terms of treating clients fairly and genuinely and observing “first come first serve basis” principle in dealing with employees and clients.

Employees, however, exhibited much compliance only in evaluating their heads of offices.

Rawls supports the study since according to him social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both, first, to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and

second, attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

Respects the rights of others. As elicited by the weighted mean value of 4.4, most public officials have displayed very much compliance in showing respect of the rights of others. Employees have also exhibited their heads to have very much compliance as unfurled by the weighted mean value of 4.3.

What was significantly inferred from the data in Table 2.3 was the fact that a majority of the heads of offices have very much complied the ethical standard of “respecting the rights of others”.

Refrains from actions contrary to law. With regard to the respondents’ compliance to the ethical norms of conduct, the heads of offices demonstrated very much compliance when it comes to justness and sincerity in terms of refraining from doing acts contrary to law, good morals, good customs, etc. as exposed by the weighted mean value of 4.3.

Thus, Mother Service organization underpins the above variable as according to them it is necessary to act according to the dictates of the inner divine and to obey the Divine Will.

Actions reflecting good morals and good customs. The weighted mean value of 4.3 manifests that heads of offices showed very much compliance to the ethical standards of conduct in considerations to actions reflecting good morals and good customs. At the same time, employees signified very much compliance to the same act with a weighted mean value of 4.3.

Does not extend undue favors to relatives. A majority of the heads, as shown by the weighted mean value of 4.3, stressed very much compliance when it comes to extension of undue favors to relatives by consanguinity or affinity. Employees also expressed very much compliance for their heads, as indicated by the weighted mean of 4.3.

The data, in Table 2.3 stressed that a majority of the heads of offices and as employees signified that there was very much compliance in so far as justice is the concept of moral rightness based on ethics, with a total weighted mean of 4.3 and 4.2, respectively.

The heads of offices of the local government units of the first district of Northern Samar exemplified the quality of being just and being sincere. According to Plato, a just man is a man in just the right place, doing his best and giving the precise equivalent of what he has received. Thus, heads of offices should render their actions in accordance to giving a person what is due to him or her. Sincerity means to act according to the dictates of the inner divine and to obey the Divine Will. In other words sincerity is by acting according to the dictates of conscience.

Know supports the study as he sees justice as the concept of moral rightness based on ethics, rationality, law, natural law, religion, fairness, or equity, along with the punishment of the breach of said ethics.

Similarly, Rawls used social contract argument to show that justice, and especially distributive justice, is a form of fairness: an impartial distribution of Goods.

Political Neutrality

Table 2.4 presents the summary of the responses of the heads of offices and employees in terms of political neutrality and its interpretation, as follows.

Implements Merit Systems. As gleaned from the weighted mean value of 4.1, the heads’ responses signified that they have complied much the implementation of merit system in terms of high performance as basis for promotion without reservation.

The employees, also, underpinned the fact that heads of offices showed much compliance as evidenced by the weighted mean of 3.9.

In support, Kernaghan explained the traditional doctrine of political neutrality that public servants’ appointment and promotion must be on the basis of merit rather than on the basis of party affiliation and contribution.

Provides equal and fair access. As revealed from the weighted mean value of 4.2, the public officials disclosed that they have very much complied in the adoption of a system of service pledge which provides clients equal and fair access to government services.

According to the public employees, heads of offices have much complied this area as displayed by the weighted mean value of 4.

Provides service to everyone. Public officials have very much compliance in providing service to everyone as shown by the weighted mean value of 4.4.

Public employees deduced that the heads of office have only much complied in providing service to everyone as evidenced by the weighted mean value of 4.0.

Guidance state services commission reinforces the study, that a requirement that public servants must be, is being apolitical when carrying out their duties, functions and powers. It is a principle that underpins the continuing employment status of public servants and enables them to provide consistent services for the government and for its constituents.

Considers length of service in selection/promotion.

The heads of offices have very much complied in considering the length of service in the selection or promotion of employees as manifested in the weighted mean value of 4.2.

The employees also signified that, based on the weighted mean value of 3.8, the heads have only much compliance in this area.

Observes next-in-rank concept. As viewed from the summary of responses in Table 2.4, the heads of offices have very much complied in their observance of the next-in-rank concept as displayed in the weighted mean value of 4.1.

According to public employees, officials have only much complied in this aspect.

The heads of offices have very much complied to political neutrality as evidenced by the average mean of 4.2 while public employees perceived their heads of offices to have only much complied as it is apparent with an average mean of 3.6.

Public employees according to Kernaghan, on The Traditional Doctrine of Political Neutrality, politics and policy are separated from administration. Thus, politicians make policy decisions while public servants, such as heads of offices, execute this decision zealously irrespective of the philosophy and programs of the party in power and regardless of their personal opinions.

Responsiveness to the Public

Table 2.5 unfolds the distribution of responses of the officials and employees in terms of responsiveness to the public as exhibited in the following:

Provides Prompt, Courteous and Adequate Services. As indicated by the weighted mean of 4.3, it shows that the heads of offices have very much complied with their desire to be more responsive to their clients.

Based on the weighted mean of 4.0, the employees said that the officials have much complied their desire to extend prompt, courteous and adequate service to the public.

Policies and procedures are made clear. In terms of providing information on their policies and procedures in clear and understandable language, the heads disclosed that they have very much complied on this indicator as defined clearly in the weighted mean value of 4.3.

Public employees also manifested their heads to have very much complied as indicated by the weighted mean value of 4.2.

Simplifies rules and procedures. In view of simplifying and systematizing policy, rules and procedures, public officials have indicated 4.2 weighted mean value which shows that they have very much complied this aspect or indicator.

While the employees also revealed the heads' responses with very much compliance, as indicated by the weighted mean value of 4.2.

Avoids red tape. Based on Table 2.5 with a weighted mean value 4.3, the heads of offices have very much complied in their desire to avoid red tape such as accepting gifts to facilitate transactions.

Likewise, employees also stated that officials have much complied with their desire to avoid red tape.

Conducts public consultation. As shown by the weighted mean value of 4.3, the heads have very much complied in the conduct public consultation and hearings whenever appropriate while the employees said that the heads of offices have much complied in public consultations.

This means that heads of offices ensures helpful, expeditious and responsible service to the public.

Peñaranda emphasized that the general welfare and the preservation of the government necessitates the proper administration of public affairs and that it is

essential that government officers and employees be elected or appointed must possess impeccable moral attributes.

In support, Friedman argued that “responsiveness” refers to the practice of ensuring that clients are served helpfully and responsibly by government agencies and officials. The first step in acting according to responsiveness is to commit to interact cooperatively and respectfully with clients.

To strive for even higher levels of responsiveness, as Friedman supports, some of the things that an agency can do to be even more responsive to clients: first, the agency can ensure that its services are accessible to clients. Such as establishment of branch offices in places that are conveniently located for public, by operating a web site, or to transport clients from their homes to the government facility or to operate a mobile branch.

Nationalism and Patriotism

Table 2.6 reveals the summary of responses of the heads of offices and employees in compliance to the ethical norms of conduct in terms of nationalism and patriotism, as follows:

Promotes local goods. As shown by the weighted mean value of 4.3, public officials have very much complied in promoting the use of locally made goods, resources and technology.

Employees cited the heads of offices to have much complied in their desire to promote local goods.

Appreciates pride of country. The weighted mean value of 4.3 demonstrates that heads of offices have very much complied this indicator by encouraging appreciation and promotion of Filipino culture and practices. With the 4.1 weighted mean value, the officials have much complied as perceived by the employees.

Hence, heads of offices exemplify much appreciation of pride of our country. According to Kymlicka, nationalism involves a strong identification of a group of individuals with a political entity defined in national terms. Often, it is the belief that an ethnic group has a right to statehood, or that citizenship in a state should be limited to one ethnic group, or that multi-nationality in a single state should necessarily comprise the right to express and exercise national identity even by minorities.

Defends Country from foreign Intrusion. Public officials have very much complied in their

impetuosity of maintaining and defending the country against foreign intrusion as evidenced by the weighted mean value of 4.3.

Similarly, employees disclosed that their heads have also displayed very much compliance in this indicator as unveiled by the weighted mean value of 4.5.

Similarly, as Kymlicka have put it, nationalism and patriotism can also include the belief that the state is of primary importance, or the belief that one state is naturally superior to all other states. It is also used to describe a movement to establish or protect a homeland for an ethnic group as may be distressed by foreign intrusion.

Regular attendance in flag Ceremonies. Department Heads have shown very much compliance in their endeavor to encourage subordinates in regular attendance during flag raising/retreat ceremonies as elicited in the weighted mean value of 4.4.

As perceived by the employees, Heads of offices showed much compliance in their encouragement for nationalism and patriotism as clearly defined by the weighted mean value of 4.1.

According to Nathanson, love of one's country, identification with it and special concern for its well-being and that of compatriots, can be pronounced as nationalism and patriotism.

Observes nationalistic commitment values. As indicated in the weighted mean of 4.4, the heads of offices very much complied in developing and observing nationalism and love of country. Likewise, employees showed the same perception as displayed by the weighted mean value of 4.4.

As Orwell supports, nationalism is about individuality. While nationalism is accordingly aggressive, patriotism is defensive, it is a devotion to a particular place and a way of life one thinks best, but has no wish to impose on others.

Commitment to Democracy. Table 2.7 elucidates the responses of the head of offices and employees in terms of commitment to democracy and its interpretation as follows:

Commits to democratic ways. As underpinned by the weighted mean value of 4.4, public officials very much complied their commitment to the democratic way of life and values.

Public employees highly rated the heads of offices having very much complied the same indicator with a weighted mean value of 4.5.

Maintains public accountability. Public officials highly maintained the principle of public accountability as indicated by the weighted mean value of 4.3 showing very much complied in their commitment to democracy.

The weighted mean value of 4.5 indicated that the heads of offices very much complied their public accountability as rated by the employees.

Cariño stressed the value of administrative accountability as a central problem for democratic forms of government. She reiterated that the activities of civil servants and public agencies must follow the will of the people to whom they are ultimately responsible.

Manifest civilian over military authority. The weighted mean value of 4.4 clearly indicates that public officials have very much complied their manifestation that civilian authority is over military authority.

Employees, likewise, have the same perception as indicated by the weighted mean of 4.5.

Upholds the constitution. As viewed by the weighted mean value of 4.4, it is indicated that officials have very much complied their aspirations of upholding the constitution.

Employees also highly signified the same perception as elicited by the weighted mean value of 4.6.

Loyal to country than to persons or party. Putting loyalty to country above loyalty to persons or party has been very much complied by heads of offices as manifested by the weighted mean value of 4.4.

At the same time, employees have also indicated that public officials have very much complied this value as shown by the weighted mean value of 4.6.

Heads of offices much complied commitment to democracy as depicted in the average mean of 4.4 and 4.5, respectively. Hence, the heads of offices of the local government of the first district of Northern Samar identified the important characteristic of democracy which is equality and freedom. It could be reflected as having equal protection before the law and having equal access to power.

As Seigle contended, public servants must execute public decisions loyally and zealously irrespective of the philosophy and programs of the party in power and regardless of their personal opinions.

In connection, as Box maintained, democracy as a form of government rests on procedures and rules by which citizens can exercise significant influence on the shape of public policy. At the same time, democracy itself is a policy choice and depends greatly on the use of public power. The government by its very nature embodies the use of authority and power to facilitate the attainment of collective goals. Public policy refers to a purposive course of action established by public officials that is binding on the residents on a community or nation.

Table 2.8 presents the summary of the level of compliance to the ethical standards of the heads of offices of the local government units of the selected municipalities of the first district of Northern Samar. As reflected on the table, the heads of offices signified very much compliance to the ethical standards set forth in section 4 of R.A. 6713 as indicated by a grand mean of 4.3. Employees, On the other hand, They perceived their heads of offices to have only much complied with the same ethical standards as characterized by a grand mean value of 4.0.

Hence, with an average mean value of 4.1, heads of offices of the local government units of the selected municipalities of the first district of Northern Samar exemplified much compliance as to the ethical standards mandated by R.A. 6713, a code of conduct for public officials and employees.

Test of Relationships

The multiple regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the level of compliance to the Ethical Code of Conduct of the heads of offices in the local governments of the first district of Northern Samar and their socio-economic profile as to age, sex, civil status, religion, educational attainment and monthly income.

Age. The statistical analysis showed that age was not significantly related to the level of compliance to the Ethical Code of Conduct. This is shown in Table 3 with an F-ratio of .06063 which is lesser than its Significant F of .8065 indicating a 0-.12 percent of coefficient of determination. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted or confirmed.

It can be gleaned in this study that age, as a socio-economic variable was not related nor did affect the level of their compliance to the Ethical Code of conduct. This result confirmed the findings of Domdom that age was not significantly related to the

operation of the Samahang Nasyon program and activities.

Sex. Similarly, the sex of the respondents was found not significantly related to the level of compliance to the Ethical Code of Conduct. As shown in Table 3, the F-ratio of .14716 is lower than the tabular value or the significant F or .7029 indicating a .29 percent coefficient of determination. Hence, the null hypothesis was again accepted.

This confirmed the fact that whether or not the respondents were male or female, both can be potential leaders or head of offices in the LGUs, particularly in the compliance to R.A 6713, or the Ethical Code of conduct.

The finding was confirmed by Pua that sex has no bearing on the management of BWSA.

Civil Status. The study revealed that there was no significant relationship that existed between the civil status and the compliance to the Ethical Code of conduct by the heads of offices. Hence, the null hypothesis was confirmed.

This is shown in Table 3 with an F-ratio of .00122 against the tabular or significant F value of .9723 indicating a zero (0.0) percent coefficient of determination. This means that the social status of the heads of offices in the local government units in the first district of Northern Samar had no bearing on their level of compliance to the Ethical Code of conduct.

Whether one is single, married, or widow, such status will not affect, nor has a bearing with one's compliance to the Code of Ethical Conduct.

Religion. The result of the study showed that religion was not significantly related to the level of compliance of the Heads of Offices to the Ethical code of conduct. Table 3 shows that the F-value of .00002 is lesser than the tabular or significant F value of .9968 indicating zero (0.0) percent coefficient of determination. Thus, the null hypothesis was confirmed or accepted.

This connotes that the respondents' religion did not prevent them from complying with the Ethical Code of conduct. Regardless of religion, the level of compliance of heads of offices to the Ethical Code of Conduct had no bearing nor will it affect their manner of compliance.

Educational Attainment. The regression analysis showed that educational attainment was not

significantly related to the level of compliance by the heads of offices of local government units in the first district of Northern Samar. Table 3 shows that the F-value is .06907, which is lower than the tabular value or the significant F-value of .7938 indicating .13 percent coefficient of determination. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

The table further shows that the respondents' higher educational qualification was a plus factor in the implementation of the Ethical Code of Conduct.

Monthly Income. The study revealed that there was a negative relationship between the monthly income of the respondent-heads of offices and their level of compliance to the Ethical Code of Conduct. Hence, the null hypothesis was confirmed. This is shown in Table 3 with an F-ratio of .01589 which is lower than the tabular or significant F o .7938. Thus, the null hypothesis was confirmed.

This means that a head of office with sufficient income had no bearing to his level of compliance of the Ethical code of conduct. An individual's personal characteristic and social position with a combination of relative wealth are not bases for his compliance of the Ethical Code of conduct.

Finally, as evidenced by the findings of the study, with regression analysis applied, no significant relationship existed between the dependent (level of compliance) and the independent (Socio-economic profile) variables. Compliance to the aforementioned ethical standard does not rest solely on one side of a specific indicator. For instance, both young and old in age can manifest high or low compliance to this Ethical Code of Conduct. In other words, being young does not absolutely entail high compliance level, and being old, with low compliance level. Same is true with sex, civil status, religion, educational attainment and monthly income socio-economic profile of nay person.

The afore-stated data on the socio-economic profile of the respondents underscored the reality that the head of offices at the local government units of the selected municipalities of the first district of Northern Samar were dominated by adult or mature persons. This implies that being responsible in undertaking and administering their positions, and as such expected to possess the knowledge and ability to comply with the ethical standards of conduct as they attained maturity of ages.

The same data bespeak of the fact that heads of offices of the LGUs in the first district of Northern Samar were dominated by female. It implies that women can also possess qualities of becoming heads of offices, and thereby assumed to possess the ability to cope with whatever assigned responsibilities equally well with that of the men in the local government units.

The data also convey that heads of the local government offices of Northern Samar are educated and highly literate individuals. As such, it implies that they are equipped with the knowledge to appreciate and to understand the mandate of R.A. 6713, the ethical standards for public officials and employees.

The data further speak that majority of the heads of offices in the local government units of the first district of Northern Samar are married. This implies that their status of being married is assumed as meant on expectation of concern and keener understanding of the significance of compliance of the ethical standards in their respective work and place of work.

Based on the same data, it showed that majority of the heads of offices are Roman Catholics and that may speak of the fact that the province of Northern Samar is dominated by this religion and as such, the heads of offices are expected to act not just in consonance with the provisions of this code but by the dictates of the ecclesiastical laws as forwarded by Roman Catholicism.

Finally, same data imply that heads of offices have income which are relatively high as compared to ordinary employees of the government. As such, it could be construed that they have in principle less tendency to indulge in negative practices such as corruption.

In the same way, the heads of offices in the selected municipalities of the First District of Northern Samar exemplify a high degree of compliance to the ethical norms or code of conduct as set forth in section 4 of RA 6713 and that, problems perceived in local governments cannot absolutely be ascribed to the heads of offices.

Furthermore, socio-economic profile of the heads of offices of the local governments of the selected municipalities of the first district of Northern Samar showed no significant relationship to their level of compliance to the ethical code of conduct, as set forth in section 4 of R.A. 6713. This implies that significant relationship between the dependent and independent

variable of this study could not be established since compliance to the aforementioned ethical standards do not rest solely on one side of a specific indicator such as age, sex, civil status, religion and monthly income. Another significant detail is the fact that R.A. 6713 is a mandate for public officials and employees to obey at all times and that socio-economic profile is irrelevant since as public servants. It is their prime responsibility to maintain and follow the provisions of this code such that violations incurred against this code is subject to civil or criminal liabilities.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

This study was conducted to determine level of compliance to the ethical standards of the Heads of Offices in the local government unit in the first district of Northern Samar, in consonance with Section 4 (*Norms of Conduct of Public Officials and Employees*) of Republic Act No. 6713.

Specifically, this study aimed at determining the socio-economic profile of the Heads of offices in the local government units in the first district of Northern Samar in terms of age, sex, civil status, religion, educational attainment and monthly income; this study also aimed at identifying the ethical norms or standards of conduct complied by the Heads of offices in the local government units in the first district of 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; this study also aimed determining the level of compliance to these norms of conduct or the ethical standards; and finally this study also aimed at determining the relationship of the socio-economic profile and the level of compliance by the heads of offices to the abovementioned ethical standards and its implications.

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational method of research. A total of 53 heads of offices and 83 public employees served as the respondents of this study.

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

The data gathered from the respondents revealed the following findings:

The data show that of the 53 heads of offices, 5.7 percent are between 26 – 35 years old; 22.6 percent

are between 36 – 45 years old; 41.5 percent are at the age range of 46 – 55 years old and 30.2 percent are between 56 – 65 years old.

Respondents of this study include 47.2 percent male and 52.8 percent female.

Of the 53 heads of offices, 71.1 percent are College graduates; 17.0 percent are in the graduate school level or with MA units; and 9.4 percent are Masters Degree holder and only 1.9 percent PhD graduates.

In terms of the civil Status of the respondents, 13.2 percent are single; 81.1 percent are married; 5.7 percent are widow. The data revealed that the vast majority of the Heads of Offices were married.

In terms of religion, 92.5 percent are Roman Catholics; 3.8 percent are UCCP and 1.9 percent both PIC and LDS.

According to monthly income, 7.5 percent earned between 11,000 – 15,000 PhP per month; 13.2 percent earned between 16,000 – 20,000 PhP per month; 26.4 percent earned between 20 – 25,000 PhP per month; 11.3 percent earned between 26,000 – 30,000 PhP; 15.1 percent earned between 31,000 – 35,000 PhP; 24.5 percent earned between 36,000 – 40,000 PhP and only 1.9 percent received or earned between 41,000 – 45,000 PhP.

On the relationship between the Level of Compliance to the Ethical Code of Conduct of the Heads of Offices in the First District of Northern Samar and their Socio-Economic Profile in terms of Age, Sex, Civil Status, Religion, Educational Attainment and Monthly Income. Findings, utilizing the multiple regression analysis, revealed that the independent variables of this study were not significantly related to the independent variable which is Level of Compliance to the Ethical Code of Conduct of the Heads of Offices in the local governments in the First District of Northern Samar.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings derived from this study, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. Generally, heads of offices were middle and old aged and that they are generally mature and educated individuals. This entails noteworthy experiences and practices advantageous to local governments, since these are essential to promote excellence in public service.
2. As indicated, heads of offices in the local governments of first district of Northern Samar

are highly paid. As they also have high level of compliance to the ethical norms or code of conduct, it could be construed that they have in principle less inducement to indulge in negative practices such as corruption.

3. Majority of the heads of offices are Roman Catholics and that may speak of the fact that the first district of Northern Samar is dominated by this religion.
4. Heads of offices in the First District of Northern Samar exemplifies a high degree of compliance to the ethical norms or code of conduct as set forth in section 4 of RA 6713 and that, problems perceived in local governments can not absolutely be ascribed to the heads of offices. For this matter, other key players in the realm of public service should be taken into account.
5. Socio-economic profile of the heads of offices of the local governments of the first district of Northern Samar showed no significant relationship to that of the level of compliance of these heads of offices to the ethical code of conduct, as set forth in section 4 of RA 6713. As evidenced by the findings of regression analysis made, significant relationship between the dependent and independent variable of this study could not be established since compliance to the aforementioned ethical standards do not rest solely on one side of a specific indicator such as age, sex, civil status, religion and monthly income.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered based on the findings and conclusion of the study.

1. Although the heads of offices of the first district of Northern Samar exemplified high level of compliance to the ethical norms of conduct there should be an effort, on the part of the government, of developing and regularly reviewing policies, procedures, practices and institutions influencing ethical conduct in the public service.
2. Authorities should promote government action to maintain high standards of conduct and counter corruption in the public sector.
3. Greater transparency and accountability are needed to address the perverse effects of negative practices in the local governments. Hence, relevant and competent authorities

should establish more effective control mechanisms.

4. There should be incorporation of the ethical dimension into management frameworks, especially in the local governments, to ensure that management practices are consistent with the values and principles of public service.

The future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies by utilizing variables not identified in this study, which might affect the performance not just of the heads of offices but all other key personnel present in the public service arena.

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