EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ON REPUBLIC ACT 3019 AND CORRUPTION PERCEPTION: BASIS FOR ANTI-GRAFT AND CORRUPTION STRATEGIES

Ma. Dorothee J. Villarruz

Capiz State University, Capiz, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Corruption is a multi-faceted phenomenon, defined as a major factor behind the recent East Asian financial crises. In the Philippine context, corruption is the violation of norms of duty and responsibility for personal gain. This includes embezzlement, where public funds are used for one's own benefit, nepotism, where friends, relatives and associates are appointed to public office on the basis of the personal relationship rather than merit (Angeles, 2012).

According to Coronel (1999) Filipinos tend to be cynical about corruption in the government as they believe corruption is said to be as old as the government itself. However, while Filipinos are not shock about officials being corrupt, governance had made Filipinos raise issues on effectiveness of performance, accountability and transparencies of government institutions.

This study was a descriptive-quantitative/quantitative correlation study on the employee engagement on RA 3019, level of compliance on ant-graft and corrupt practices to draw insights for strategies to battle corruption in the government.

Results had presented that there was a non-compliance practices of the anti-graft and corrupt practices in the light of Sec 3 of the RA 3019, likewise the level of employee engagement on the said Republic Act posted a moderate level of engagement with a 3.37 mean perceived index of corruption. Further, results had shown that the level of employee engagement was a not a predictor of a perceived corrupt practices imply that to curb corruption require complex solutions.

The study gave insights on the various mechanisms required to help fight corruption in the government.

KEYWORDS: *anti-graft and corruption, perceived corruption, and RA 3091*

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Corruption has been defined as a major factor behind the recent East Asian financial crises. In the Philippine context, corruption is the violation of norms of duty and responsibility for personal gain. This includes embezzlement, where public funds are used for one's own benefit, nepotism, where friends, relatives and associates are appointed to public office on the basis of the personal; relationship rather than merit (Angeles, 2012).

Philippine Corruption Report (2016), points to Filipino culture and corruption. Corruption has been viewed by Tapales (2010) as a cultural and psychological phenomenon in a country marked by incompatible legal and cultural norms. Bautista (2012) on the other, believes on rationality and universal principles of action as against and in conflict with reliance and obligation toward kinship, friendship and primary groups (1982). This conflict is highlighted with the use of the alibi of a gift-giving culture to justify bribery and extortion, or the Filipino regard for the other as *"pakikipagkapwa-tao"* or solidarity and human relationship, to justify giving benefits to unqualified but personally known recipients.

Philippine initiatives against corruption have taken the form of law and anti-graft bodies created by the Constitution, law and executive orders. In addition to the state, others institutions have been active in the fight against graft and corruption. The Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (RA 3019) was passed in 1960. It enumerates what may be considered corrupt practices by any public officer, declares them unlawful (Moratalla, 2014).

Engaged employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and takes positive action to further the organization's interest, image and reputation. This study particularly referred to employees' engagement relative to the mandates of RA 3019 or the Anti-graft and Corruption Act.

The result of the study would be beneficial to the legislative Office of the Province of Capiz, Philippines as it would determine the perceived level of anti-graft and corrupt

practices in the Office to serve as input in crafting specific strategies to curb the problem of graft and corruption. Results of the study would be important to the employees in order to engage themselves on the prevention of different corrupt practices in the organization and be an agent of good governance. While the community would be involved in the advocacy for good governance as they participate in the affairs of the government of the people. Finally, the findings of this study would add wealth of information in the anti-graft and corruption and also serve as baseline of future studies.

It is the policy of the Philippine Government, in line with the principle that a public office is a public trust, to repress certain acts of public officers and private persons alike which constitute graft or corrupt practices (RA 3019). This study specifically referred only to the 11 statements in Section 3 of the Republic Act which was adapted as an indicator of the graft and corrupt practices. The perceived corruption in this study is limited to the indicated perception of the respondents on the level of non-compliance of the provisions stipulated in the Republic Act 3019 Section 3 in the Legislative Office of the Province of Capiz.

OBJECTIVES

The main concern of this study was to determine the employee engagement on Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act or RA 3019 and the perceived graft and corrupt practices in the Legislative Office (Sangguniang Panlalawigan) in the Province of Capiz but did not evaluate a particular official or employee of the said office.

This study assessed, analyzed the graft and corruption practices prevailing in the local legislative office in the Province of Capiz; determined the employees level of engagement on Republic Act 3019, known as the Anti-Graft and Corruption Act of 1960 of the Philippines; and also determined the perceived level corruption whereby results of the study, the analysis and understanding would serve as basis in crafting anti-graft and corruption strategies towards good governance.

To deliver the objectives of the study , it was anchored on the context of employee engagement on anti-graft and corruption Act, the Republic Act 3019 Section 3. Republic Act No. 3019, known as Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act is a policy of the Philippine Government in line with principle that a public office is a public trust, to repress certain acts of public officers and private persons alike which constitute graft and corrupt practices or which may lead thereto.

Section 3 of the Republic Act 3019, in addition to acts or omissions of public officers already penalized by existing law, the following shall constitute corrupt practices of any public officer and are hereby declared to be unlawful:

a. Persuading, inducing or influencing another public officer to perform an act constituting a violation of rules and regulations duly promulgated by competent authority or an offense in connection with the official duties of the latter, or allowing himself to be persuaded, induced, or influenced to commit such violation or offense;

b. Directly or indirectly requesting or receiving any gift, present, share, percentage, or benefit, for himself or for any other person, in connection with any contract or transaction between the Government and any other party, wherein the public officer in his official capacity has to intervene under the law;

c. Directly or indirectly requesting or receiving any gift, present or other pecuniary or material benefit, for himself or for another, from any person for whom the public officer, in any manner or capacity, has secured or obtained, or will secure or obtain, any Government permit or license, in consideration for the help given or to be given without prejudice to Section thirteen of this Act;

d. Accepting of having any member of his family accept employment in a private enterprise which has pending official business with him during the pendency thereof or within one year after its termination.

e. Causing any undue injury to any party, including the Government, or giving any private party any unwarranted benefits, advantage or preference in the discharge of his official administrative or judicial functions through manifest partiality, evident bad faith or gross inexcusable negligence. This provision shall apply to officers and employees of offices or government corporations charged with the grant of licenses or permits or other concessions.

f. Neglecting or refusing, after due demand or request, without sufficient justification, to act within a reasonable time on any matter pending before him for the purpose of obtaining, directly or indirectly, from any person interested in the matter some pecuniary or material benefit or advantage, or for the purpose of favoring his own interest or giving undue advantage in favor of or discriminating against any other interested party;

g. Entering, on behalf of the government, into any contract or transaction manifestly and grossly disadvantageous to the same, whether or not the public officer profited or will profit thereby;

h. Directly or indirectly having financial or pecuniary interest in any business, contract or transaction in connection with which he intervenes or takes part in his official capacity, or in which he is prohibited by the Constitution or by any law from having any interest; and

i. Directly or indirectly becoming interested, for personal gain, or having a material interest in any transaction or act requiring the approval of a board, panel or group.

Conceptualized along the paradigm of anti-graft and corruption, employee engagement input to anti-graft and -corrupt strategies towards good governance, schematically shown in Figure 1 (See Appendix)

METHODOLOGY

The study used the survey techniques of the descriptive-correlational research design. Gay (1992) defined descriptive research as involving a correlation of data to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject under survey. A descriptive study determines and regards the way things are, affords penetrating insights into the nature of occurrence. The rationale behind the use of this research design is related to its function as a fact finding operation.

The study was conducted at the Legislative Office (Sangguniang Panlalawigan), Province of Capiz among the 32 employees and elected officials. A validated and reliability-tested researcher-made survey questionnaire consisted of

three parts was the main instrument in gathering the needed data on the employee-work related factors, graft and corruption practices, and employees enagement on the RA 3019. Responses to the questionnaire on employee engagement and Anti-graft and corruption Practices Act were scored independently.

Ant-graft and Corruption Practices Scoring:

Score	Scoring Interval	Response Category	Verbal Interpretation
5	5.00-4.45	Always Practiced	Highly corrupt
4	4.44-3.45	Practiced	Corrupt
3	3.44-2.54	Moderately Practiced	Moderately corrupt
2	2.44-1.45	Less Practiced	Less Corrupt
1	1.44-1.00	Almost not practiced	Almost not corrupt

Level of Employee Engagement on RA 3019 Scoring:

Score	Scoring Interval	Response Category	Verbal Interpretation
5	5.00-4.45	Strongly agree	Highly Engaged
4	4.44-3.45	Agree	Engaged
3	3.44-2.54	Moderately agree	Moderately Engaged
2	2.44-1.45	Less Agree	Less Engaged
1	1.44-1.00	Least Agree	Least Engaged

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceived Graft and Corrupt Practices. Table 1(See Appendix) showed that of the eleven (11) statements adapted from the RA 3019 on the Graft and Corrupt practices of government officers, none of the statements showed to be highly practiced as perceived by the respondents from the Office of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. However, while results did not deny the fact that graft and corrupt practices were observed in the particular Office, results showed that non-compliance conduct towards RA 3019 ranged from presence of practice to least practiced. The results indicated clearly the presence of corruption in the government were similar with other studies and cases presented in the corruption and governance in the Philippines (Coronel, 1998, Graft in the Philippines Report, 2015; Obejas, 2012).

Data further implied respondents' perception on the presence of corrupt practices was consistent at a mean of 3.64, indicating a perceived presence of graft and corrupt practices, though not high, but still a predicament for executives to seriously look into in the light of their move towards accountability, transparency, quality public service and good governance. Study also showed that when perception of employees on the non-compliance of the RA 3019 or their observation of the corrupt practices in the Sangguniang Panlalawigan Office were evaluated as to the profile of the employee-respondents, only those who had been in the service, for eleven to fifteen years had a perception that corrupt practices were moderately practiced verbally interpreted as moderately corrupt; and only one employee-respondent had a low perception of the corrupt practices interpreted as "less corrupt".

In the analysis of corruption in the Philippines, Obejas (2010) wrote:

". . . analysis confirms the prevalence of corruption in the Philippines... the serious consequence of institutionalized corruption in the Philippines. . . damages national psyche, it miseducates and tells people that there is nothing wrong in being corrupt as corrupt people have not been punished even if public knows them."

It is said that corruption is as old as the government itself. According to Coronel (1999) Filipinos therefore tend to be cynical about corruption in the government. Filipinos are not shock about officials being corrupt; however, governance had made Filipinos raise issues on effectiveness of government performance, the accountability of government institutions, and the transparency of government agencies. However, while there exists a gap between the mandate of RA 3019 and the corrupt practices, these results were far away from the graft and corrupt practices as reported of the Philippine experience but rather more similar of the good practices report on anti-graft and corruption (UNDP, 2015). In the book, "Pork and Other Perks", examined the corrupt and graft practices in the Philippines, to include scrutiny of the "pork barrel" funds; how official play around the government budget; investment monopolies; cuts from infrastructure projects; people's money on political campaigns, and just a lot more (Coronel, 1999; Graft Report, 2016).

Level of employee engagement on RA 3019 showed that employees were only moderately engaged as a whole and across employee profile. Instances of employees being less engaged were only noted when employees were grouped according to their position. Lower positioned employee-respondents (administrative Aide and Maintenance) were less engage on the compliance of RA 3019. The results implied that not all employees surveyed were aware of the mandates of RA 3019. This further implied that administration, especially the Human Resource Management and head of offices, need to develop mechanisms to improve understanding thereby, actions will be guided especially in the effective and efficient delivery of public service.

Along with enhancing employee engagement on RA 3019 for improving the image of the government away from being stereotyped as a "corrupt institution", the Citizen's charter and the Anti-Red Tape Act should support the anti-graft and corrupt practices in the government.

Employee Engagement as Predictor of Employee Engagement. Results showed that the level of employee engagement on RA 3019 was not a predictor of the perceived corruption in the Legislative Office of Capiz

Province by the employees. Results showed that employee engagement on RA3019 had no significant predictor on corruption perceived index of the government employee, beta value equal to 0.022, t-value equal to 0.121 with a significant value of 0.905, greater than 0.05 beta. This means the strength of the predictor was low and direct to the perceived corruption of the government employee-respondents.

The nature of the public service provided by the Legislative office could be an area of concern. Elected officials in the legislative office are highly sought after by constituents as their source of financial assistance for hospitalization, education of children, and even their day-to-day subsistence. These inevitably provides opportunity or situations wherein clients often bring or offer tokens as they lobby for prioritization and allocation. Economic corruption takes place in a market-like situation and entails an exchange of cash or material goods, which is basic to corruption. This is a strict definition of corruption, reflected in the regulations that stipulate limits to what amounts can be "given" before it is considered a bribe. Transfers are not only in cash or other tangibles, however, and the exchange takes place in a social setting with a number of cultural and moral meanings. Corruption understood in these broader terms has been called "social exchange" and social corruption. Social corruption is conventionally understood as an integrated element of clientelism. Clientelism often implies an exchange of material benefits but cannot be reduced to this, because clientelism has a wider cultural and social implication.

Inputs to Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices. The results of the study inputs to anti-graft and corrupt strategies towards good governance. First input, the need to investigate what predicts the perception of the employees that there exists graft and corrupt practices in the Legislative Office of Capiz Province; second, to investigate on the level of awareness of employees on RA 3019 and other mandates relative to the curbing of corrupt practices; third, to identify other factors that contribute to the acts of graft and corrupt practices; and lastly, to develop the political will of leaders and be exemplars in fighting graft and corruption.

CONCLUSIONS
Graft and corrupt practices were present in the Legislative Office, however, as to the degree, it only posted a Mean of 3.67 with the verbal interpretation of a "Perceived" corruption. Employee engagement on RA 3019 was generally "moderately engaged" and that this engagement was not able to pose as a significant predictor of the perceived graft and corrupt practices. Results thereby, revealed that there are a lot to do to improve the levels of employee engagement and to further lower and to zero-out the level of perception on the graft and corrupt practices. The results thereby conclude the need to craft anti- graft and corruption indigenous solutions or measures to improve the integrity and credibility of the public office.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The study was an eye opener to all whom this study is significant. The study would serve as a baseline for future studies and in crafting anti-graft and corruption strategies for the Legislative Office of the Province of Capiz. The study recommends across the four statements of the problem anti-graft and corrupt mechanisms or strategies: first, measure need to focus initiatives to deal with graft-prone areas in view of the RA 3019; second, strategies need to include promotion and strengthening of people's advocacy; third, the need for political will of leaders to look into the problem of graft and corruption; and lastly, efforts to develop leadership ethical training as part of staff development program focused on fighting corruption; and the need to incorporate core values and ethical conduct in the performance appraisal system.

REFERENCES
1. Alatas, S.H., 1986. The Problem of Corruption, Times Books International, Singapore.
2. Coronel, S.C. , 1998. Pork and Other Perks: Corruption and Governance in the Philippines, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Pasig, MM, Philippines.
3. Employee engagement, 2016 retrieved on April 15, 2017 from http://www. Custominsight.com/employee-engagement-survey/what-is-employee-engagement.asp
4. Ernst and Young, 1996. Fraud-the unmanaged risk: a survey of the views of senior executives in Australia in the effect of fraud on their business,
5. Ernst & Young, National Sales and Marketing Publication NAA5607, Australia.
6. Moratalla, Nelson Nogot, 2014. Graft and Corruption: The Philippine Experience.
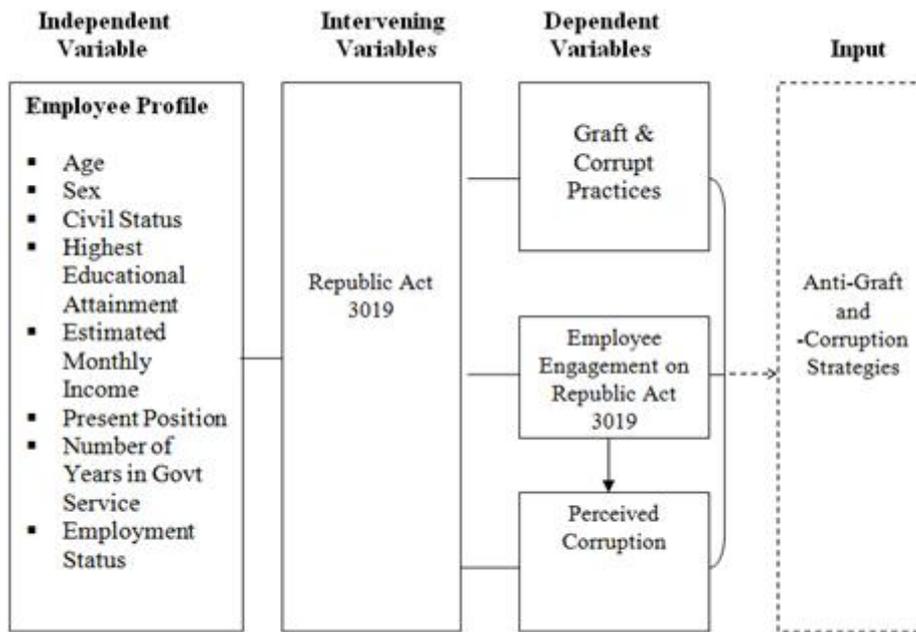
APPENDIX

Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework.

Table 1.   RA 3019 Act compliance/Anti–Graft and Corrupt Practices in the Legislative Office in   the Province of Capiz.

Statement	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.There is persuading, inducing or influencing another public officer to perform an act constituting a violation of rules and regulations duly promulgated by competent authority	Always Practiced	-	-
	Practiced	1	3.1
	Moderately Practiced	15	46.9
	Less Practiced	6	18.8
	Almost not Practiced	10	31.3
2.There is direct or indirect request or receiving any gift, shares, percentage, or benefit for any office contract or transactions	Always Practiced	-	-
	Practiced	4	12.5
	Moderately Practiced	9	28.1
	Less Practiced	18	56.3
	Almost not Practiced	1	3.1
3.There is direct or indirect requesting or receiving any gift, present or other pecuniary or material benefit, for himself or for another, from any person for whom the public officer has secured any government permit in consideration for the help given.	Always Practiced	-	
	Practiced	7	21.9
	Moderately Practiced	11	34.4
	Less Practiced	7	21.9
	Almost not Practiced	7	21.9
4. Employee accept or having any member of family accept employment in a private enterprise which has pending official business	Always Practiced		
	Practiced	5	15.6
	Moderately Practiced	19	59.4
	Less Practiced	8	25.0
5.There is undue injury to any party by giving unwarranted benefits through manifest partiality or giving any private party an advantage or preference in the discharge of official administrative functions	Always Practiced		
	Practiced	11	34.4
	Moderately Practiced	9	28.1
	Less Practiced	6	18.8
	Almost not Practiced	6	18.8
6. Employee personally neglect and refuse demand or request without sufficient justification or to act within a reasonable time on any matter pending before obtaining directly or indirectly from any person interested in the matter or material benefit of favoring his own interest or giving undue advantage to interested party	Always Practiced	-	-
	Practiced	1	3.1
	Moderately Practiced	13	40.6
	Less Practiced	12	37.5
	Almost not Practiced	6	18.8

7. Employee enter on behalf of the government into any contract or transaction manifestly and grossly disadvantageous to the office	Always Practiced	-	-
	Practiced	-	-
	Moderately Practiced	9	28.1
	Less Practiced	5	15.6
	Almost not Practiced	18	56.3
8. Employee directly or indirectly having financial or pecuniary interest in any business, contract or transaction in connection as an organization employee	Always Practiced	6	18.8
	Practiced	-	-
	Moderately Practiced	7	21.9
	Less Practiced	6	18.8
	Almost not Practiced	13	40.6
9. Employee directly or indirectly becoming interested, for personal gain, or having a material interest in any transaction or act requiring the approval of a board, panel or group	Always Practiced	-	-
	Practiced	-	-
	Moderately Practiced	10	31.3
	Less Practiced	14	43.8
	Almost not Practiced	8	25.0
10. Employee are aware of how to approve or grant any license, permit, privilege or benefit in favor of any person not qualified for or not legally entitled to such license, permit, privilege or advantage, or of a mere representative or dummy of one who is not so qualified or entitled	Always Practiced	-	-
	Practiced	11	34.4
	Moderately Practiced	-	-
	Less Practiced	12	37.5
	Almost not Practiced	9	28.1
11. I am divulging valuable information of a confidential character, acquired in the office or on account of my official position to unauthorized persons, or releasing such information in advance of its authorized release date.	Always Practiced	-	-
	Practiced	6	18.8
	Moderately Practiced	7	21.9
	Less Practiced	5	15.6
	Almost not Practiced	14	43.8
Grand Mean		**3.64 = Practiced**	

Response Category	Verbal Interpretation
Always Practiced	Highly Corrupt
Practiced	Corrupt
Moderately Practiced	Moderate Corrupt
Less Practiced	Less Corrupt
Almost Not Practiced	Almost Not Corrupt