WORKSHOP ON INNOVATIONS IN GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE TO ACHIEVE A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

A Spiritual Paradigm for Philippine Public Administration

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ABSTRACT

The study advocates A Spiritual Paradigm for Philippine Public Administration, as a modeling initiative for effective governance. It is a positive response to mitigating pervasive graft and corruption in the country and their link to chronic poverty and deteriorating human development conditions that impedes sustainable development. Towards the aim of achieving social harmony in society, the proposed paradigm could serve as an enabling environment to unify diverse efforts in improving public administration and governance in the Philippines.

In the context of the study, spirituality does not connote one’s affiliation to a certain religion or creed. A universal and inclusive definition of spirituality attributes to a “search for meaning and values, which includes some sense of the transcendent -- is some force or life energy beyond ourselves, which may simply be a sense of interconnectedness with others and a desire to make meaning and live out one’s own values about good and wrong” (Bruce and Novinson, 2002:163). Individual spirituality in government bureaucracy could be a moving force that functions compatibly with three public administration principles: 1) effective governance as “stewardship” based on the constitutional principle that public office is a public trust; 2) social equity as the defining philosophy of the new public administration; and, 3) the quest for meaning at work as primary motivational principle based on principled-centered leadership. For spirituality to work effectively in the government bureaucracy, opportunities for its enhancement must be engendered.

The study postulates the concretizing of the spiritual paradigm through individual conscience building among bureaucrats, integration of spirituality enhancement in in-service trainings, and the institutionalization of a report card on spirituality index integral to the performance management appraisal system.

The study utilized grounded theory method; where primary data were gathered through focus group discussions (FGDs), survey questionnaires, and one-on-one interviews with reputable public administration experts, practitioners and scholars. Secondary data were taken from related studies published in most recent books and journals, in aid of analysis of the findings of the study.

Findings of the research indicate a considerable acquiescence among respondents that initiating a spiritual paradigm in government offers a practical and promising approach, which could transform vulnerabilities of bureaucrats on graft and corruption. FGDs revealed that people generally consider corruption as an overriding problem in public administration. This could perhaps be due to a general lack of spirituality among erring public servants. Practitioners surveyed and experts interviewed agree with this claim. They assert that most government officials/officers/employees are actually not corrupt, only a handful, who abuses their authorities and powers, is corrupt.

On the overall, the proposed spiritual paradigm can be the overriding perspective whereby ‘pockets of excellence’ in the government can be properly nurtured and likewise, help reverse the status quo by way of capacitating bureaucrats cultivate a culture of goodness which demonstrates some sense of a functional spirituality.

Introduction

‘Philippine Public Administration’, as a practice and as a field of study, has a rich heritage. Its origin, as a practice, dates back to the Philippines’ pre-colonial era where its indigenous system of local governance was reposed on the datu (chieftain) of every barangay (village or locality); and, where villagers rendered habitual obedience and service for their good and the good of the community. The formal introduction of public administration, as a field of study, in the Philippines dates back to 1952 when the Institute, now the University of the Philippines’ National College of Public Administration and Governance (UP-NCPAG) was established. The institute was an offshoot of the Bell Mission in 1950, which found the country in bad shape and promptly blamed the bureaucracy as the cause of the country’s slow progress.

As a practice, Philippine public administration refers not only to those activities involved in carrying out or in implementing policies and programs of the Philippine government but also to the processes and contents of these policies and programs, and, as a distinct field of study, considered both as a professional and as a scholarly discipline, it concerns with public policies and programs, their formulation and implementation and the socio-cultural, economic and political factors bearing on them. Also, the systematic study of institutions and processes and the interplay of factors involved in authoritative decision-making on goals, in implementing them and in achieving desired results.
Philippine public administration, though strongly influenced by American public administration, was “inevitably ethnocentric or culture-bound” explaining that each country has its own distinctive patterns of public administration. Studies in the Philippines show that the character of the government bureaucracy or civil service changes under different regimes (Endriga 1985:132-154; Alfiler, 1979:321-349; Carino, 1977:310; Dans, 1977:291; Jorge 1977:3-4; Robles 1969:70-71; Corpuz 1965:87-92; Francisco, Jr. and De Guzman 1963:105-134; Corpuz 1957:34, 174-176; Stene et al., 1955:49-53). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Country Governance Assessment (2005:33) mentions that since the birth of the Philippine Republic in 1946, Philippine service reform has been undertaken five (5) times -during the administration of Presidents Roxas, Quirino, Magsaysay, Marcos, and, Aquino- each bringing a promise of improved government performance and responsive public service. The public sector, however, continues to suffer from various systemic and institutional gaps and weaknesses that perpetuate perceptions of the bureaucracy as inefficient, wasteful, ineffective, dishonest, and corrupt. Its “unforgiving mirror of frailties” makes Philippine public administration characteristically or “faithfully Filipino”. Education, politics and government have a pervasive role in shaping the quality of public administration in the country as they reflect many of the people’s basic values, which evolved through the years and centuries.

In the present context, the problem of Philippine public administration is poor governance brought about by rampant corruption in the bureaucracy due to the lack of spirituality among government employees. The 2004 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), conducted by Transparency International (TI), ranks the Philippines as number six (6) in the list of the most corrupt countries in the world.

According to UN agencies (2004:24-25), corruption damages the development process in many ways. For instance, it undermines social confidence in the willingness and capacity of public institutions to fulfill their obligations to the people. Corruption also reinforces existing power relationships that are themselves typically part of the development problem. Losses due to corruption deepen poverty as they deprive disadvantaged sectors of much-needed programs and environmental stewardship. Incidences of bribery and graft are often front-page news, leading the public to perceive them as the norm rather than the exception in government transactions, further reducing the incentive or willingness to increase taxpayer compliance.

The Philippines’ Office of the Ombudsman (OMB) estimated that a total of US$48 billion is lost to graft and corruption over the past 20 years, and that only 60 percent of the national budget is actually spent on government programs and projects.

To date, the Philippines, among other things, has an Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, and a Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees. There are three Constitutional oversight bodies: the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB), the Commission on Audit (COA), and the Civil Service Commission (CSC). The Philippines’ 1987 Constitution, crafted and promulgated during President Corazon C. Aquino’s administration included the Philippines Commission on Good Government (PCGG). Equally daring was President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s establishment of the ‘lifestyle check’ as an anti-corruption initiative proposed during her first administration.

However, it is very ironic that despite the Philippines’ comprehensive legal and organizational infrastructures in instilling and ensuring transparency and accountability in governance, corruption still thrives significantly in the bureaucracy. The 2005 SWS Surveys of Enterprises on Corruption shows that public sector corruption is dismissively high, and that there is also considerable corruption in the private sector, where use of honest business practices is far from pervasive.

It is thus in this light that the present study establishes the need for “A Spiritual Paradigm for Philippine Public Administration” as an alternative perspective towards the improvement of governance in the Philippine bureaucracy and the identification of principles and strategies in achieving social harmony in society.

The Research Problem
This research focuses on the issue of poor governance in the Philippine bureaucracy, brought about by rampant corruption due to the lack of spirituality among government employees. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:
1. To what extent is corruption the overriding problem in Philippine public administration?
2. What are the government initiatives in dealing with corruption in improving public administration and governance?
3. How are government employees motivated in the workplace?
4. How should public administration, as a discipline or practice, position itself to help combat corruption in the Philippine bureaucracy?
5. How may individual spirituality contribute to three concepts in public administration and governance: effective public administration and governance as stewardship; social equity as the defining philosophy of public administration; and, the quest for meaning at work as the primary motivational principle in principled-centered leadership.
6. What enabling strategies are needed to enhance the individual spirituality of bureaucrats and ways of implementing them?
7. What spiritual paradigm could be adopted in Philippine public administration to respond to the present realities?

The study assumes that spirituality does not connote one’s affiliation to a certain religion or creed. A universal and inclusive definition of spirituality adopted in this study attributes to a “search for meaning and values, which includes some sense of the transcendent—is some force or life energy beyond ourselves, which may simply be a sense of interconnectedness with others and a desire to make meaning and live out one’s own values about good and wrong” (Bruce and Novinson, 2002:163).

Offhand, corruption is not only a manifestation of poor governance but also of the poor spirituality of the workforce that makes up specifically the governance sphere of public administration. Since actual persons manage public administrative system, they should be responsible for the quality of public administration where spirituality is believed to play an important role in the shaping of the system.

The Significance of the Study
The most significant contribution of this study to the field of public administration, both as an academic discipline and as a practice, is its pioneering endeavor to model “A Spiritual Paradigm for Philippine Public Administration.” This spiritual paradigm is explained with its substantive elements and the different strategies needed to enhance the model within the context of Philippine public administration.

The study will also provide a clearer and more rationale basis for understanding individual roles in public organizations and institutions, the positive manifestations of which will have transformational effects in the way the public sector is to be managed and administered.

The study will serve as an invitational research agenda for further research and development in response to the continuous search for contemporary approaches to address more pressing governance issue like graft and corruption. More significantly, the study can also take the views and findings of the investigation as an alternative paradigm of understanding corruption and other social phenomena that hinder the delivery of basic public services to government constituencies.

In the practice of public administration, the outcome of the study will also arm government authorities with other creative, innovative and proactive ways of addressing corruption in government by strategies and programs that will enhance if not heighten the spirituality of government officials and employees and the organizational values of government offices. Better still, this study can lead to other empirical studies on the relationship of spirituality and organizational values and their impact on governance.

Ultimately, this study will help popularize the concept of stewardship in governance, based on the philosophical directive of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, that public service is a special calling in a democracy and that those who participate in public service, regardless of background or occupation, are guardians of public trust.

Lastly, this study opens an invitation to dialogue among the different sectors of society, namely government, academe, civil society and even the corporate business sector, which is equally concerned with good governance in the country. Concomitantly, this study will serve as a big challenge to the field of research specifically on this very non-traditional subject area in public
administration, which as designed herein requires further examination, refinement and critique. Research in this direction will be critical for improving and understanding spirituality as earlier defined as a vital aspect of organizational life in the public sector and hence a \textit{sine qua non} in public service delivery system.

\textbf{Conceptual Framework}

The conceptual framework of this study, as illustrated below, is anchored on three (3) public administration concepts which are: firstly, effective governance as "stewardship" based on the constitutional principle that public office is a public trust; secondly, social equity as the defining philosophy of the new public administration; and thirdly, the quest for meaning at work as a primary motivational force based on principled-centered leadership.

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\textbf{Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework}

In Philippine public administration, effective governance as stewardship is deeply rooted in the constitutional principle that Public Office is a public trust, as provided for in Section 1, Article XI of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which states

\textit{"Section 1. 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."}

This constitutional provision reminds workers in government that as public servants they must exhibit at all times the highest sense of honesty and integrity for no less than the Constitution mandates that a public office is a public trust and 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. These constitutionally-enshrined principles are not mere rhetorical flourishes or idealistic sentiments. They should be taken as working standards by all in public service. Dishonesty and grave misconduct, therefore, have always been and should remain an anathema in the civil service. They inevitably reflect on the fitness of a civil servant to continue in
office. When an officer or employee is disciplined, the object sought is not the punishment of such officer or employee but the improvement of the public service and the preservation of the public’s faith and confidence in the government. Anything short of this standard would diminish the public’s faith in the government and constitutes, on the part of the official or employees, infidelity to the constitutional tenet that a public office is a public trust.

This provision also sums up the high sense of idealism that is expected of every officer of government. As expressed by Justice Malcolm in the case of Cornejo v. Gabriel (41 Phil. 188), the basic idea of government in the Philippines

...is that of a representative government, the officers being mere agents and not rulers of the people, one where no one man or set of men has a proprietary or contractual right to an office, but where every officer accepts office pursuant to the provisions of law and holds the office as a trust for the people whom he represents.

The notion of a public trust connotes accountability. The provisions of this article are designed to exact accountability from public officers. To “lead modest lives” means, if one’s means are generous, not to flaunt them in conspicuous display.

The second concept considered in the conceptual framework of this study is social equity as the defining philosophy of Public Administration. At the heart of the New Public Administration (NPA), the concept of social equity seeks to redress the deprivation of the minority and calls on public officials to abandon the facade of neutrality and, instead, use their discretion to protect and promote the welfare of the disadvantaged groups. It calls for a client-oriented administration, non-bureaucratic structures, participatory decision-making, decentralized administration and advocate-administrators (Nigro and Nigro, 1989; Frederickson, 1971).

Frederickson (1996:263-270) mentions that the NPA is a professional public service dedicated to both efficiency and social equity. It is more institutional and political and is concerned more with humanistic and democratic administration, concerned more with institution building and professional competence, concerned more directly with issues of politics and with matters of justice and fairness—broadly under the label of social equity. Denhardt (2003:113-117) adds that equity involves a sense of fairness or justice—specifically, the correction of existing imbalances in the distribution of social and political values. In contrast to equal treatment for all, equity proposes that benefits be greater for those most disadvantaged; in contrast to efficiency, equity emphasizes responsiveness and involvement. Moreover, in the NPA, the concept of equity is applied not only to the activities of the executive, legislative, and judicial bodies but to administrative agencies as well.

Hart (1974:3-4) notes that the existing ethical standard for public administration is that of impartial administration, which holds that policies be applied equally to all without regard for circumstances not specifically related to the policy at hand. Social equity would recognize the different needs and interests of different people and therefore would result in differential treatment.

The NPA is relevant in the Philippine context particularly in its avowed goal of addressing the issue of social equity because the poor and the disadvantaged comprise the majority of the country’s population. It calls for public officials to be advocates of the deprived and for creative structures that will facilitate their participation, like, for instance, in project identification and implementation.

The third concept in the conceptual framework of this study is based on the quest for meaning at work as a primary motivational force based on Covey’s (1991:176-180) principled-centered leadership. Covey mentions that organizations failed, among other things, because they concentrated only in seeing the employee as an economic being, psychological being, social being, and others but failed to consider him/her as a spiritual being. In principled-centered leadership, people are not just resources or assets, not just economic, social and psychological beings. They are also spiritual beings—they want meaning, a sense of doing something that matters. People do not want to work for a cause with little meaning, even though it taps their mental capacities to their fullest. There must be purposes that lift them, ennoble them, and bring them to their highest levels.

People want to contribute to the accomplishment of worthwhile objectives. They want to be a part of a mission and enterprise that transcends their individual tasks. They don’t want to work in a job that has little meaning, even though it may tap their mental capacities. They want purposes and principles that lift them, ennoble them, inspire them, empower them, and encourage them to their best selves.
THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study uses grounded theory as its research design. As a qualitative research design, grounded theory implies that the data are in the form of words as opposed to numbers usually reduced to themes or categories and evaluated subjectively. There is more emphasis on description and discovery and less emphasis on hypothesis testing and verification (Rudestam & Newton, 2001:36). According to Polkinghorne (1991:112), qualitative methods are especially useful in the 'generation of categories for understanding human phenomena and the investigation of the interpretation and meaning that people give to events they experience. In general, qualitative research implies an emphasis on processes and meanings over measures of quantity, intensity and frequency' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:86).

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) in their book The Discovery of Grounded Theory, postulate that it is much better to develop theories on the basis of empirical research and gradually build up general theories that emerge from the data. The insistence that theories should be 'grounded' presupposes that researchers should be engaged with fieldwork as the fundamental part of the work they do. When adopting the grounded theory approach, the researcher should undertake data collection in the field, not only at the starting point of the research but throughout the course of the research as well for further substantiation. Goulding (2002:55) notes that researchers adopt grounded theory when the topic of interest has been relatively ignored in the literature or has been given only superficial attention. A human being's spirituality is one realm of him/herself that is not studied in terms of its connectivity with the way public goods and services are produced in the workplace. It is undermined in comparison with how other realms of self are studied like the sensory, psychological and cultural fabric of existence of human beings.

The development of a spiritual paradigm for Philippine public administration is a crucial dimension that is relatively ignored in the literature or is given only superficial attention. Hence, this study deems it fit to use the grounded theory methodology. This study was grounded on data gathered from the field coupled with a systematic analysis of the said data.

Turner (1983:335) mentions that there is no particular method of data collection that is claimed unique to grounded theory. The novelty of grounded theory lies not in the mode of investigation associated with it, but in the manner in which the information collected is analyzed. In this study, focus group discussions (FGDs), one-on-one interviews and descriptive survey using questionnaires were used as the main tools in gathering primary data. Secondary data were gathered through books and journals especially the most recent articles in public administration as well as articles from other disciplines, which are related to the study.

FGDs were conducted with doctoral students in public administration in three (3) phases: the first phase was conducted with doctoral students in public administration from the Graduate School of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP); the second phase was conducted with doctoral students in public administration from the University of the Philippines-National College of Public Administration and Governance (UP-NCPAG); and, the final phase was conducted with doctoral students in public administration from the Graduate School of the Pontifical and the Royal University of Santo Tomas (UST).

The distribution of questionnaires was conducted with current public administration practitioners, who occupy second level positions or higher, i.e., from the rank of Division Chief up to the Department Secretary level.

The one-on-one interviews were conducted with experts in public administration in accordance with the functional key processes and relationships in public administration: development planning and fiscal management; formulation of public policy; services delivery; relationship with the private business sector; relationship with the political leadership; and, relationship with civil society.

Population

The proponent of the study used purposive sampling for the choice of its population, which included the following: thirty (30) doctoral students in public administration—ten (10) students from each school—enrolled in the three (3) identified schools offering the doctoral degree in public administration as participants of the FGDs; ninety (90) public administration practitioners occupying...
third level position or higher, that is, ten (10) practitioners each from the ranks of Division Chief up to the Department Secretary Level from nine (9) government agencies; and, seven (7) experts, identified and interviewed in accordance with the functional elements in public administration, namely: development planning and fiscal management; services delivery; formulation of public policy; relationship with the private business sector; relationship with political leadership; and, relationship with civil society organizations.

The criteria for the selection of the aforementioned respondents are the following. First, the doctoral students in public administration are chosen for the FGDs because the research study on the Spiritual Paradigm for Philippine Public Administration is undertaken in the context of public administration as an academic discipline, which necessitates students’ input on the matter. Being currently employed in the government bureaucracy, these doctoral students have experiences and exposures in the practice of public administration. They are believed to have gathered knowledge and wisdom on the experiential aspects of the spirituality of individuals in public organizations and institutions. As members of the public administration discipline they will likely be interested in innovative perspectives that will improve public sector administration and management. Secondly, the criteria for selecting the practitioners as respondents to the survey questionnaires are that they must be currently employed with the three branches of government and must have a rank of a Division Chief up to the Department Secretary level who, apart from acquiring the wisdom and the experience of working in the bureaucracy, are already conversant with the public administration system. Lastly, for the one-on-one interview with the pool of experts, they are chosen because of their expertise and ability to contribute to the evolving Spiritual Paradigm for Philippine Public Administration for their respectable involvement in the functional key processes and relationships in public administration: development planning and fiscal management; formulation of public policy; services delivery; relationship with the private business sector; relationship with the political leadership; and relationship with civil society.

Also, the criteria for the selection of nine (9) government agencies surveyed were as follows: (1.) Most likely prone to corruption referring to agencies collecting revenues for government, developing and constructing major infrastructure, approving/issuing clearances/permits for business investments and awarding of franchises. The researcher selected the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and the Commission on Audit (COA); (2.) More likely prone to corruption referring to agencies performing policy formulation, regulatory, adjudication, investigatory, prosecutory and administration of key national programs and vital services. The Civil Service Commission (CSC), Court of Appeals (CA), and the Philippine National Police (PNP) were selected to represent this category; and, (3.) Least likely prone to corruption referring to agencies devoted to specific education and technical field, delivery of basic services, research and creative studies, planning and coordination and social and cultural activities. The Department of Tourism (DOT), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), and National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) were selected under this category.

Data Collection

Although there is no particular method of data collection claimed to be unique to grounded theory (Turner, 1983:335), this study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data were gathered through FGDs, survey questionnaires, and one-on-one interview. FGDs were conducted with enrolled doctoral students in public administration from the three (3) identified schools offering the doctoral degree in public administration; survey questionnaires were given to ninety (90) public administration practitioners from the ranks of Division Chief up to Department Secretary level; and, one-on-one interview were conducted with seven (7) identified pool of experts. Secondary data, were taken from related studies published in books and most recent journals used in aid of analysis of the primary data gathered.

Research Instruments

This study used the following research instruments: Firstly, FGDs for the three (3) graduate schools in public administration; Secondly, survey of practitioners in public administration with the ranks of Division Chief or higher; and, Thirdly, one-on-one interview with experts in public administration which included respectable members of the academe in the field.
Data Recording and Analysis
The study used descriptive analysis. It also used the following data recording instruments: the FGDs and the one-on-one interviews were audio-taped and transcribed after which the data gathered were systematically analyzed. The data gathered from the survey questionnaires were collated and analyzed based on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

Statistical and Mathematical Tools Used
Since the study used grounded theory in its research design, which is qualitative in nature, it used only to the least extent descriptive statistical tools, such as percentage, ranking and Likert Scale.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & ANALYSIS
The findings of the study were drawn from the responses of thirty (30) doctoral students in public administration who participated in the FGDs, ninety (90) public administration practitioners from the ranks of Division Chief up to the Department Secretary level from nine (9) government agencies, who answered the questionnaires; and, a pool of seven (7) experts interviewed in accordance with the following functional processes of public administration: Development Planning and Fiscal Management, Public Services Delivery, Relationship with Political Leadership, Relationship with Civil Society Organizations, Relationship with Private Business Sector and the Formulation of Public Policy.

Findings are discussed in the proper order according to their sequence in the statement of the problem in this study:

1. To what extent is corruption the overriding problem in public administration?

Data gathered from the different FGDs conducted with the doctoral students in public administration of PUP, UP-NCPAG and UST, yielded the following results: 60% of the participants from the PUP agree that corruption is the overriding problem in public administration while 40% strongly-agree that indeed corruption is the overriding problem in public administration; 60% of the participants from the UP-NCPAG strongly-agree that corruption is the overriding problem in public administration, and, 40% agree that corruption is the overriding problem in public administration; and, 50% of the participants from the UST strongly-agree that corruption is the overriding problem in public administration and another 50% agree that corruption is the overriding problem in public administration.

With a mean of 3.40, PUP respondents gave a ‘High’ rating, meaning that they think corruption is a major issue in public administration. UP-NCPAG respondents gave a ‘Very High’ rating (mean: 3.60), which is similar to what UST respondents gave (mean: 3.50), indicating that they consider corruption as very damaging to public administration. In general, all respondents are very aware of the highly-damaging impact of corruption in government organizations.

Based on the survey conducted with public administration practitioners from nine (9) government agencies identified in this study, almost all respondents (75% ‘Strongly Agree’ and 25% ‘Agree’) concurred that corruption is the overriding problem in public administration, with a mean of 3.77 or ‘Very High’.

Experts interviewed on the matter are unanimous in saying that even though corruption is perceived to be the overriding problem in Philippine public administration, majority of government officials/officers/employees are not corrupt. Only a handful is corrupt. One of the experts even vouched that 75-85% of civil servants are honest. Another expert believes that people in government face greater restraint/problems in so far as resources are concerned.

The Dean of the University of the Philippines National College for Public Administration and Governance (UP-NCPAG) mentioned that despite some small percentage of government officials/officers/employees succumbing to corruption, there are pockets of excellence in government:

I work in the government myself, in the bureaucracy. I am running an organization with 150 employees with an annual budget worth P80 million. In this bureaucracy, I see
pockets of excellence, gems of excellence. The challenge for us now is how to encourage people and really highlight all these pockets of excellence, pockets of gems and jewels in the bureaucracy and brings about creating what Taguigalo call a virus of excellence and reach that ‘tipping point,’ where the bureaucracy would finally change towards something better.

2. What are the government initiatives in dealing with corruption in improving public administration and governance?

The following were the laws passed by the Legislative\textsuperscript{23} and Executive Departments as government initiatives in dealing with corruption since the 1950s:

### List of Laws Related to Graft and Corruption\textsuperscript{24}

**1946-1971**
- Republic Act (RA) 1379 (1955): This Act declared forfeiture in favor of the state any property found to have been unlawfully acquired by any public officer or employee, and provided for the proceedings.
- RA 3019 (1960): This Act provided for the repression of certain acts of public officers and private persons alike, which constitute graft or corrupt practices or which may lead thereto, also known as Anti-Graft and Corruption Practices Act.
- RA 6028 (1969): This Act provided for the promotion of higher standards of efficiency and justice in the administration of laws as well as to better secure the right of the people to petition the government for redress of grievances, creating the office of the citizen’s counselor.

**1972-1986**
- Presidential Decree\textsuperscript{25} (PD) 6 (1972): This decree amended certain rules on discipline of government officials and employees.
- PD 677 (1975): This decree amended Section 7 of RA 3019 (as amended).
- PD 749 (1975): This decree granted immunity from prosecution to givers of bribes and other gifts and to their accomplices in bribery and other graft cases against public officers.
- PD 807 (1975): This decree provided for the organization of the Civil Service Commission, in accordance with provisions of RA 8249 (1997). This act further defined the jurisdiction of the Sandiganbayan, amending PD 1606 (as amended).
- PD 1606 (1978): This decree revised PD 1486 (creating a special court to be known as Sandiganbayan – the main anti-graft court that adjudicates criminal cases brought to it by the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB); it deals only with cases filed against high-ranking government officials.

**1987-Present**
- 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines: Article XI, Accountability of Public Officers; Article II, Section 27 and Section 28 policy of the State to maintain honesty and integrity in the public service and take positive and effective measures against graft and corruption; and Article III, Section 7, provides for the right of people to have access to public information.
- 1987 Administrative Code (Executive Order [EO] No. 292): This code instituted the administrative code of the Philippines.
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<tr>
<th>Act/Order</th>
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<tr>
<td>RA 6713 (1989)</td>
<td>This act established a Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.</td>
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<td>RA 6770 (1989)</td>
<td>This act provided for the functional and structural organization of OMB and delineated its powers and functions.</td>
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<td>RA 7055 (1991)</td>
<td>This act strengthened civilian supremacy over the military by returning to the civil courts the jurisdiction over certain offenses involving members of the armed forces, other persons subject to military law, and members of the Philippine National Police.</td>
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<td>RA 7080 (1991)</td>
<td>This act defined and penalized the crime of plunder.</td>
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<td>RA 8249 (1997).</td>
<td>Proclamation 189 (1999). This proclamation declared war against graft and corruption and authorized the Philippine Jaycee Senate, through the Graft Free Philippines Foundation, Inc., to institutionalize public awareness of clean, efficient, and honest governance.</td>
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<td>EO 317 (2000).</td>
<td>This order prescribed a code of conduct for relatives and close personal friends of presidents, vice-presidents, and members of the Cabinet.</td>
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<td>EO 12 (2001)</td>
<td>This order created the Presidential Anti-graft Commission and provided for its powers, duties, and functions and for other purposes to investigate complaints or hear administrative cases filed against presidential appointees.</td>
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<td>EO 25 (2001).</td>
<td>This order established The Governance Advisory Council to encourage more active involvement of the business sector in curbing graft and corruption.</td>
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<td>Code of Corporate Governance (2002).</td>
<td>This code further provided to actively promote corporate governance reforms aimed to raise investor confidence, develop capital market, and help achieve high sustained growth for the corporate sector and the economy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Code of Judicial Conduct (1989)</td>
<td>This Code provided for the appropriate conduct of judges in performing their duties; otherwise known as the Code of Judicial Conduct.</td>
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<td>RA 9160 (2001)</td>
<td>This act defined the crime of money laundering and provided for the penalties of such act.</td>
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<td>RA 9184 (2002)</td>
<td>This act provided for the modernization, standardization, and regulation of procurement activities of the Government, also known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.</td>
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<td>EO 38 (2001)</td>
<td>This order reorganized and extended the life of the Special Task Force created under EO 156 dated 7 October 1999 entitled “Creating a Special Task Force to Review, Investigate and Gather Evidence Necessary to Successfully Prosecute Irregularities Committed at the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs and Other Government Offices or Agencies Under or Attached to the Department of Finance.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>EO 40 (2001)</td>
<td>This order consolidated procurement rules and procedures for all national government agencies, government-owned or –controlled corporations, and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
government financial institutions, and required the use of the Government electronic procurement system.

EO 72 (2002) This order rationalized the agencies under or attached to the Office of the President.

EO 109 (2002) This order streamlined the rules and procedures of the review and approval of all contracts of departments, bureaus, offices, and agencies of the Government including government-owned or controlled corporations and their subsidiaries.

EO No. 114 (2002) This order restructured the Bureau of Internal Revenue toward a Taxpayer’s Focused Organization.

EO No. 251 (2003) This order required the Bureau of Internal Revenue to furnish OMB with income tax returns filed.


The executive department, since the 1950s to date, also had the following as initiatives in curbing corruption in government:

**Presidential Anti-Graft and Investigation Agencies since 1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Integrity Board</td>
<td>Elpidio Quirino</td>
<td>May-Nov 1950</td>
<td>6 mos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Presidential Complaints &amp; Action Committee</td>
<td>Ramon Magsaysay</td>
<td>Dec 1955-July 1958</td>
<td>3 yrs. &amp; 7 mos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Presidential Committee on Administration Performance &amp; Efficiency</td>
<td>Carlos P. Garcia</td>
<td>July 1958-Dec 1961</td>
<td>2 yrs. &amp; 5 mos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Presidential Anti-graft Committee</td>
<td>Carlos P. Garcia</td>
<td>Feb 1960-Dec 1961</td>
<td>1 yr. &amp; 1 mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Presidential Anti-graft Committee</td>
<td>Diosdado Macapagal</td>
<td>Jan 1962-Jan 1966</td>
<td>4 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Inter-Agency Anti-Graft Coordinating Council (IAGCC)</td>
<td>Joseph E. Estrada</td>
<td>Aug 1999</td>
<td>Over 2 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Presidential Committee on Effective Governance (PCEG)</td>
<td>Joseph E. Estrada</td>
<td>Oct 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Governance Advisory Council (GAC)</td>
<td>Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo</td>
<td>April 2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aforementioned government initiatives, however, to curb or eliminate corruption are mostly rule and system-based. The government is much wanting of initiatives that will holistically
address the weakening integrity of persons and institutions that constitute government. This is not of course to undermine the effect and impact of rule and system-based initiatives.

Apart from the already existing laws passed by the legislatures as measures against graft and corruption, data gathered showed that the three branches of government have various initiatives in curbing or eliminating corruption at the national, LGUs and at the agency levels, which includes, among other things, the following: the initiative for all government agencies to develop their anti-corruption plan; the advocacy movement within the government to fight corruption; the development of Integrity Development Review (IDR) within the agency in procurement, initiating the process in public bidding through transparency by conducting training on observers and their accreditation; the improvement of the recruitment process of prospective government employees so that only those who have genuine calling to work with government will be able to do so; transparency in public biddings where people outside government are now invited to join the bids and awards committee; people are invited to help government in its management and performance audit; and, the government is now akin to entertain complaints against workers in government who do not act fast.

In an interview with the Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission, Karina Constantino-David,26 worth noting were the initiatives, among other things, undertaken by the CSC in professionalizing the bureaucracy thereby minimizing corruption and improving public service delivery system towards better governance.

When we examine the performance ratings of the personnel in various government agencies, we find that 85% to 90% of people in the bureaucracy are given a Very Satisfactory or almost Outstanding rating. Hence, the CSC is working on a new performance management system that will ensure objective measurement of performance and effective uses of performance evaluation results.

We developed an ethics-based personality test to determine the behavioral tendencies and personality profile of an applicant for a job in government, which is now being adopted by some government agencies.

We were among the first agencies in government to capitalize on the pervasive text messaging system as a mechanism for instant client feedback through the “Text CSC” project. During the first five (5) months of the Text CSC in 2002, the facility registered a total of 4,618 messages that ranged from queries on CSC rules (42%), to complaints regarding government agencies and personnel (38%), to requests for assistance regarding documents or claims in various government agencies (15%), to suggestions on improving government services (4%), to commendation of good service rendered in a government agency (1%).

We adopted also Public Service Delivery Audit (PASADA) to improve problem areas in frontline services delivery and to curtail graft and corruption. It involves the training and deployment of a pool of volunteers who will masquerade as clients. The volunteers are armed with a checklist that scrutinizes three (3) areas of concern: the people staffing the frontline services, the agency’s systems and procedures, and the agency’s physical working conditions. We hope to use the results to eventually set up mechanisms and adopt procedures for monitoring frontline services on a regular, systematic, and methodical basis.

On the other hand, LGU initiatives like what the Quezon City government has done can be categorized as a best practice in curbing corruption. According to Quezon City Vice-Mayor, Herbert Bautista:27

The following can be categorized, I suppose as a best practice of an LGU in curbing or eliminating corruption: (a) Mayor Sonny Belmonte’s policy of respecting the tenure of career officers and employees of Quezon City as mandated by the Civil Service Commission; (b) Quezon City’s institution and use of Information Technology in transacting business at the Quezon City Hall which have to a greater extent eliminated fixers; (c) The implementation by the Quezon City government of the E-Procurement Act, which includes procurement proper and the review of the contracts of contractors and suppliers; and, (d) The use of Information Technology for the salaries of Quezon
City employees, which will later expand according to the Mayor to use IT (ATM) for the payment of taxes.

Equally important and that which is becoming popular for the public in fighting corruption, according to the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), is the lifestyle check of government employees.

3. How are government employees motivated in the workplace?

Based on data gathered working in government is still more of a livelihood and employment rather than a call to public service. Government employees are primarily motivated to work because of their salaries, increases and bonuses, vacation leaves, hospitalization benefits, fulfillment of their goals and finding meaning of working in the public service. As contended by the Assistant Ombudsman, only few find meaning in working in government and in being able to give public service. Further, he said that:

If you try to consider the salary being received by government employees, I think there are no reasonable individuals who would continue serving the government with this kind of salary and perks. So, one of the motivating factors really is service to the people. Finding meaning in working in the bureaucracy. I have been talking with new graduates every year and the problem is always attracting new graduates because the government cannot offer a competitive salary. Your only selling point is there is no nation that will ever survive without government. So, in a given generation of men and women, there must be a group that must necessarily sacrifice and work for the government, because without a government this nation will be in chaos. It is only unfortunate that our government cannot give reasonable salary or compensation but it does not follow that our young graduates must not entertain working in government. I hope we will reach that stage like what Singapore is doing rejecting applicants in government because while it offers very high salary, it is very strict in responsibilities.

4. How should public administration, as a discipline or practice, position itself to help combat corruption in the Philippine bureaucracy?

Public administration has to be moved by some people. It must not be too theoretical. “It must be dynamic like an organism that evolves. It must always evolve with the times. It must not be stagnant,” says the Acting Mayor of Quezon City.

The Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) added that:

Public administration as being taught today focuses more on theories. This is not bad in itself. However, public administration should I think be taught to help people develop or acquire skills—whether they are cognitive skills or affective skills. Analytic skills, as well, that will train people not only to analyze people but to analyze events, circumstances in the work place because the terms and conditions of work in the public sector is very different. It is not the same as the ones we find in the private sector.

I really feel that our curriculum in public administration should contain segments that would help people in government to make practical decisions or problem solving activity. I want people in government to use the theories in public administration for problem solving or proper decision-making. This is what I do not see most often in governance. We have a P5Million grant. I would expect that before you announce the grant you already have the criteria on how to get the
grant, absence of such criteria may tantamount to patronage again—giving the grant to friends and those whom you know.

A member of the academe of the De La Salle University, who is also a staunch advocate of civil society, mentioned that:

Public administration as a discipline should make government work to bring government closer to the people. Also, public administration should be more relevant in its curriculum. Like now there is already public ethics in the school where I came from although during our times we don’t have public ethics. Public administration which began during the American period is not really able to address the issue of corruption in government. The Americans want to be the supplier of government officials because there was a shortage of American personnel in the Philippines. So, they got Filipinos not really to train them as future administrators but simply to provide future public administrators. This was where local patronage came in.

The Executive Director of a non-governmental organization mentioned that:

Public administration as a discipline should have some moral and ethical standards. It should establish on what is expected of public servants – code of ethics and code of behavior. I think this will have to be morally and ethically grounded, whatever religion, there are some universal truths and principles that have to be or are morally acceptable.

Also, in schools there should be subjects offered, which are dedicated to moral or ethical considerations as requirements for good public administration. The school of public administration should be concerned with its advocacy program to influence its members to call attention for the role of advocacy and the equally important prophetic role of workers, where they are said to work and are not afraid with what they are doing.

5. How may individual spirituality contribute to three concepts in public administration and governance: effective public administration and governance as stewardship; social equity as the defining philosophy of public administration; and, the quest for meaning at work as the primary motivational force in principled-centered leadership.

a. Contributions of Spirituality to Stewardship

Spirituality ushers in the right perspective of stewardship in a public servant which will move him to do his share towards the improvement of public service and the preservation of the public’s faith and confidence in government. As the steward is the people’s responsible representative in government, spirituality would entail public officers and employees to be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty, efficiency, act with patriotism and justice, and lead modest lives at all times and in all places. Through spirituality workers in government will be able to appreciate more that as public servants they have the obligation not only to serve but also to protect the resources of government and society as a whole and the lives of the people entrusted to them.

With spirituality government employees will value their work in the bureaucracy as a privilege; not as a source of income, not as a place to amass power, experience or authority, but as a trustee of something valuable and for the benefit of the principal—the general public. Exploitation and theft of public resources will be eliminated because the people in the bureaucracy who have embraced spirituality understand that these public resources are not supposed to be used privately as they are meant to benefit the public especially those who are most in need.
According to the Acting Mayor of Quezon City:

Definitely spirituality will enrich and enhance the practice of governance through stewardship. If an elected official for example realizes that the position he is occupying is only entrusted to him by the people, he will administer his office and perform his duties in accordance with what the people want him to do. The ultimate result of this will be good governance, as he will perform his functions or his duties in accordance with what is mandated by the people based on law. This will be true not only for the elected public officials but also to the officers and ordinary employees, as they will see the good examples of their leaders. Leadership by example will certainly work here again. Once this is realized, employees will be moved to do well for public service.

The DOLE Secretary added:

Spirituality should be defined in some terms that people in the bureaucracy can understand. If by spirituality we say that every government employee must perform his work everyday so that people will benefit from it and so that his work will be better for tomorrow…If by spirituality we mean we have to assess on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis whether our work is benefiting the people we’re suppose to serve…then spirituality will indeed enrich the practice of public administration and governance through stewardship.

If the person takes on a job then he should do it very well and find meaning with it. For instance, say your daily wage as an employee of government is P1,500.00. The question is, have we worked worth our daily wage? Deeper still, do we find meaning with our jobs? Because if people just say that they are in government because it is only their sideline then you and I have a problem.

b. Contributions of Spirituality to Social Equity

Spirituality will help realize social equity between the rich and the poor as regards: equal opportunities to education; equal opportunities to economic needs; equal opportunities to the services by the government administrators; equal rights to protect and conserve our natural resources and environment.

The three branches of government practicing social equity especially the judiciary will give those who have less in life to have more in law. Those who have less in life, the underprivileged, the oppressed and the destitute should receive equal or if not even more attention from public officers and employees. When these groups of less fortunate people are treated with impartiality either through a client-oriented administration, non-bureaucratic structures, participatory decision-making, decentralized administration, and advocate administrators, the purpose of social equity as the defining philosophy of new public administration is realized. Spirituality through social equity will lead the government official to give fair and equitable attention to the citizenry. It will lead the government employee to serve all clients of government fairly whatever or whoever he is.

c. On spirituality’s contribution to the person’s quest for meaning in the workplace

Spirituality will lead leaders in government to assign workers in the bureaucracy where they think they are more effective and self-fulfilled. If spirituality resides in every government servant then professionalism in work would be the concern of all. Spirituality brings in a sense of pride and dignity
to public servants as they strive to find more meaning with what they are doing in the workplace. Spirituality will help the individual government employee realize the true meaning of being a public servant to improve the lives of others and not just his own life.

Through spirituality one finds self-actualization in government employment. The sense of right and wrong will make an official/employee to practice the virtues of fairness, justice and will not lead the government employee or official to resort to greed for power in his quest for self-actualization or satisfaction at work. He will not step on the toes of others in climbing the ladder for promotion.

Spirituality will encourage the person to always work in accordance with what his office expects of him; and, he will do his best for the good of the service. Spirituality would consciously make them value people both inside and outside the bureaucracy as “significant others” and not simply as meaningless individuals. Spirituality will serve as a guide or direction in the attainment and fulfillment of every employee in his search for a meaningful existence in an organization and not just an employee working to be compensated. The overriding motivational factor therefore is “self-fulfillment” through public service. It is an orientation, a mindset, a philosophy of work and a practice that must be developed as a culture in public organizations.

6. What enabling strategies are needed to enhance the individual spirituality of bureaucrats and ways of implementing them?

The enabling strategies needed to enhance the individual spirituality of bureaucrats and the ways of implementing them are: individual conscience building among bureaucrats; integration of spirituality enhancement in in-service training; and, a report card on spirituality index as part of the performance management appraisal system.

a. On Individual Conscience building among bureaucrats

The Assistant Ombudsman mentioned that:

I look at conscience building among bureaucrats from the perspective of making sure that only those leaders who have very strong spiritual development, strong accountability, strong integrity, which can be seen from their experience and checked from references, should be considered for promotion. Only those who are worthy and who are not corrupt are promoted. I would make sure that I have a cadre of people who would think the way I do. Share the same vision of a graft-free bureaucracy. When you bring this people together and create a critical mass they will live by example in their respective organizations. They are leaders of integrity because their manager is good, there will be no corruption. The manager will make sure that no one of his people is corrupt. But if you have a leader who is corrupt then people under him will also be corrupt. People should have strong sense of service. They should be principled-centered.

Actually, if there is a group of people who should be conscienticized, it should be the Secretaries. Look at the structure of our bureaucracy. The career people are already there. The problem lies in those political appointees who are above, which change every three or six years. They have their own agenda. As I see it, the fight against corruption is very easy if the leaders have their conscience or the moral ascendancy over their subordinates.

Let us analyze the political history of our country from President Marcos. How many times have we changed our government from presidential to dictatorial, parliamentary to presidential then revolutionary to presidential? Taking to consideration the change in national leadership including the upheaval in the first and second EDSA, there has been no interregnum or gap in the delivery of basic services to the people. The government machineries run smoothly. The transition period is even negligible, it is unnoticeable. So, how could you possibly attribute this capacity of the bureaucracy to cope with this changing political development? I would
presuppose that we have a professional, capable and mature bureaucracy. So, if there are things happening which are not good, I think one that is critical is our political leaders and at the same time the legislative. Look at the leadership of MMDA or Marikina City. How did Marikina transform itself of being a credible and progressive city government? The key is Fernando. He was able to transform the municipality of Marikina into a city, to (become) one of the most progressive, dynamic and respected city governments. Puerto Princesa under Haggedorn and Naga City under Robredo. The key here are the leaders. Now, when then City Mayor Bayani Fernando went to MMDA, MMDA was transformed from a perceived corrupt agency into a better agency. Filipinos can easily obey if not emulate leaders who have moral ascendancies over their subordinates. It’s leadership by example at work.

The Acting Mayor of Quezon City added that:

Enhancing the conscience of those running the government will definitely be of great help! If we go back to history, during the medieval period even during the time of Christ the Church has great influence on governance. Pharaohs considered themselves anointed by God. Political leaders may claim that they’re there because of political destiny. True, probably. But no politician can claim that he has a monopoly to public service or public service is only for himself. Rather, we, the elected public officials, have only a term, a period, in occupying our offices. We are only put there temporarily. We are placed there because people believe in us. We are their entrusted guardians. So, we should do on what is expected of us to work for them. So, whether we are a regular employee, an elected official, or a political appointee, we should bear in mind based on our conscience that we have a term and because of this we should do to the best of our ability on what is proper for us to serve the people as mandated by law.

The DOLE Secretary gave another perspective on conscience building:

We should not promote people who do nothing in government offices other than come to the office everyday. We should look at our rewards and sanction system. Those who don’t do anything should be dismissed or terminated. Those who do something should be rewarded, promoted and given additional incentives. Those who are not working should be asked why they’re not working or performing. As I said this is my bigger unhappiness or dissatisfaction in the public service. Not too many people strive to work on how to do a better job or think on how they can make their job better.

We should have conscientious effort to stretch ourselves and find out how we can be better servants. Oftentimes, we limit graft and corruption to money…malversation of public funds…but I think this is not much in the bureaucracy. Many of us suffer from the sin of omission of not doing our work well and not doing them fast. For me this is the bigger corruption in government. That’s why many people are unhappy with those people working in government because we move very, very, slow. If a paper comes to you for instance and you do not know what to do then say so do not let the paper stay with you without doing nothing…act on it.

Explains the UP-NCPAG Dean:

Conscience is between the person and his God. If the person believes in God then he is accountable to Him. But if the person does not believe in God then we have a problem. How should we be accountable based on our conscience? We are all unworthy. But this I believe that we should stand with the value system that we believe in. Bring and live this in the bureaucracy…in our offices. In this way we are enhancing the conscience. Reach out to others and bring this outrage against
corruption in every formal or informal forum in our offices so that people are aware that there is ‘corruption watch’ in our offices.

The De La Salle professor still believes that leadership has a very big role in conscience building among bureaucrats:

I think conscience building, changing the hearts and minds of government officials is needed. We need reforms in our governmental system. We have models for better bureaucracy and good governance but the problem is, why is our country still like this? Looking at our neighbors like Singapore and Malaysia, what is obvious in their success is the kind of leaders that these countries had. For example, Lee Kwan Yu, his conviction is ‘this is my country’ so I will have to do things that would benefit my country and my people. Prime Minister Mahatir showed his leadership during the 1997 financial crisis where Malaysia’s economy benefited from it. Both of them are exemplars in giving that which is beneficial to their people.

In our country, the problem is, we don’t have leaders in this context. Our leaders look at our people only as voters not as subjects-objects to development. So, a change in the conscience of leaders is indeed very important.

The NGO Executive Director upholds that:

There is a great need of enhancing the conscience of those running the bureaucracy but I just don’t know how. May be like what Mao Tse Tung has done purging people physically or changing the conditions at the top.

People in government especially at the Secretary level have become so good in lying and rationalizing in trying to justify their misdeeds and that of the President. This to me is a spiritual decay or moral decadence in government. Look at what the Secretary of the DENR is doing he has been saying lies after lies after lies...and, rationalizing that GMA did not commit any wrongdoing. The irony is GMA has already asked an apology and yet her boys are trying to rationalize what she has done.

Other respondents suggested the following by which individual conscience building among bureaucrats may be established: individual conscience building must be made an integral part of the screening, selection and recruitment of any applicant to any government office; incorporate it in human career development program of the different government offices; a one-on-one counseling for those deemed very corrupt by psychologists and social counselor; a team building activity focused on conscience building with the assistance of psychologists to find out the root causes of undesirable behavior; continuing of the lifestyle check among government employees; a spiritual counselor invited to a forum periodically; brown bag discussions on conscience building in government offices; formation of spiritual development committees in government offices; performance evaluation monitored in accordance with the person’s commitment on how work is performed; and, film demonstration/film analysis about good governance thru conscience building.

b. On the integration of spirituality enhancement in in-service training

In-service training is given to employees in connection with their work to help them develop skills in working in the government bureaucracy. Data gathered suggest that the integration of spirituality enhancement in in-service training among government employees can be done under the following considerations:

[1] Roundtable discussions should be held on the conduct of government employees, e.g., On the Code of Judicial Conduct; [2] Appoint a leader who deeply values spirituality—a strong willed leader; [3] Regular meeting/seminar that is

c. On the maintenance of a report card on spirituality index integral to the management performance appraisal system

Improve the civil service performance evaluation system to include a spirituality index. Such evaluation system shall be rated quarterly to include also monitoring the spiritual development of the worker. Reinforcing mechanisms on good spirituality performance should also be in place in the workplace. Evaluation system should be rated quarterly to monitor the employee’s spiritual development in the workplace. A manager with employees of different religious beliefs should be oriented on the different types of religions so he has a wider knowledge and understanding of his subordinates; and, thus encourage correct religious perspective and practices on issues that affect their performance at work and conduct in their offices.

The whole work culture of the government agencies should be molded through some kind of spirituality, regardless of religious beliefs and affiliations. Peer evaluation and peer review should be encouraged. Conduct of Christian Life Program (CLP) in government offices. Allowing prayer groups to exist in the office where members could make spiritual assessments of themselves. Institute measures or policies that will address the poor performers and reward high performances.

7. What spiritual paradigm could be adopted in Philippine public administration to respond to the present realities?

Respondents were unanimous in saying that advocating “A Spiritual Paradigm for Philippine Public Administration” as a modeling initiative for individual bureaucrats to follow will be of great help in good governance.

Said the Assistant Ombudsman:

I always support the theory that for governance in the public sector, even in the private sector, spirituality can never be taken aside because Filipinos are very spiritual. If we look at our history God’s name, “Bathala” or whoever, He is called, people will vow to him. The only problem is the system within the institution if it is not well supported.

Despite of all limitations, there are so many who remain dedicated and remain believing that maybe one day the scenario at the top will change. So, there is still hope. It looks like what is being done at the middle is damage control. Actually, these are the roles being done by the bureaucrats—damage control. Otherwise, if this bureaucracy will not move/work but instead will just go with the wishes of the political government, the government will collapse. Many in the private sector are not appreciating this. The sufferings of the people in the bureaucracy at least minimize the damage being inflicted to the entire economy are the entire reason. Serious and deliberate efforts to institutionalize these core values into the institution are being undertaken. In corruption it takes two to tango, if the private sector will have a policy with respect to any public sector transaction against corruption then corruption will be minimized. On the government side also those who are incorruptible only will remain.
Added the Acting Mayor of Quezon City:

It will be of great help especially if we instill in the minds of elected people/officials that we should serve our people the way our Lord Jesus Christ wants us to serve because we are here only for a very short time. We cannot claim that we will be in that office forever. This is a very humbling experience for us. If you are humbled all the more will you strive to serve the people the way they want to be served. That’s why I am requesting our City Personnel Officer consultant, to come-up with a training program that will instill in the minds and hearts of our civil servants not only to think politically but also to think and act in accordance with community development orientation. They should understand why projects are being done. That they are community workers, that they should develop communities. This is the paradigm shift we give them because we’re only temporary in this position. The shift is very important.

The DOLE Secretary said:

Yes, I think this is very important. I think we all agree that it is very important. But I think the problem is how do we get others to let them feel this is very important? How can we teach people to be able to serve well, faster and not to commit graft and corruption? Those who manage people like myself, I feel obliged to say that by way of example I imbibe policies and programs that we have in government. Even in the way we impose sanctions and give rewards that there will be a fair and objective way so that the next generation of people in the bureaucracy will also think that way. With this, you will have a generational effect on people in the bureaucracy. Unless people who manage will really do it…you can’t give what is not in you. Yes, this is part of a moral ascendancy…leadership by example…where people should transcend the limit imposed in being part of bureaucracy…in being able to think outside of what has been traditionally done so that when you move to an organization you run it better. Otherwise, there will be no progress and people and systems will not be improved.

The Dean of UP-NCPAG cautioned:

There are many people who have an allergy to ‘spirituality’. But I believe it can be done without really labeling it as “spiritual” instead maybe we can say creating something like a “collective conscience” or if we want it to be progressive call it even “Marxian” as in liberation theology or creating a “conscienticized public service”. When somebody is able to discern on things that go against being a public servant…against public trust…where the individual bureaucrat is bothered from stealing from government then this is the accountability that we are after based on our laws as stewards in government and more so based on our belief with our God.

A staunch member of civil society and of the academe had this to say:

Yes, it will surely help. We have examples of best practices in the government of Marikina City, Puerto Princesa City, Quezon City and etc. These are time bound because of the kind of leadership that these local government units have shown. This is the only country we have and where we should be concern for its future. That’s why we in the academe and in civil society inculcate this sense of service and appreciation of government and its instrumentalities. We should not be indifferent in asserting our rights and duties in being ‘watchdogs’ and ‘contributors’ for reforms in whatever way we can for a better Philippine bureaucratic system.
THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

The transformation process, as seen in Figure 2 below, pertains to a combination of enabling steps that creates the environment within the government office to concretize the functioning of the three (3) concepts of public administration as mentioned in this study’s conceptual framework. These steps are: Step 1 – individual conscience building among bureaucrats; Step 2 - integration of spirituality enhancement in in-service training; and, Step 3 – maintenance of report card on spirituality index as part of the performance evaluation system.

The first enabling step deals with individual conscience building amongst government employees. This entails a clear-cut understanding and personalization by the government employee (the “spiritual being”) on the meaning and value of his/her conscience in his/her workplace as he/she relates to others of his/her kind in the performance of his/her governmental functions. Nevins (1965:139-140) defines conscience as “a judgment of the intellect, dictating what is to be done as morally good, or what is to be avoided as morally wrong, in the particular circumstances in which one is now placed.” It is also one’s subjective ethical guidance system (Nee, 1968). Beyond an individual’s cognitively held beliefs and values, conscience informs regarding what is just and fair. It is thought of as the individual’s most deeply held value system.
The present study holds that conscience should be the guiding principle of every government employee in the public service doing that which brings good to public service and avoiding that which brings evil or wrong to public service. The individual employee’s conscience should be the norm of action in the workplace and must be followed when it is certain and true, or certain and invincibly erroneous. All of the employee’s actions in the workplace should be reflective of his/her righteous conscience. The employee should know that his/her conscience is the subjective norm of morality in the workplace, his/her personal capacity to judge and guide his/her actions morally in the performance of his/her governmental functions through his/her most deeply held value system.

The second enabling step deals with the integration of spirituality enhancement during in-service training in the bureaucracy. Bruce and Novinson (2002:163) mention that the following elements of spirituality can empower government employees in the workplace. First, a call to integrity—that is, a self expectation that one will make an effort to discern right from wrong, act on the discernment of right, and say openly that one is acting on one’s own understanding of right. Second, relationships—which is a recognition that people are intricately connected to one another and that each action has a ripple effect. Third, love—the kind of love that emerges from spirituality is what the Greeks called “philio” or brotherly love and “agape” charity. Love in the workplace calls a spiritual person simply to make decisions and act based on their sense of how others should be treated. Lastly, search for meaning—involves seeing the big picture trying to make sense of sometimes senseless happenings and wrongful acts. It requires that one ask what problems need new solutions; it asks how issues are interconnected and what unspiritual thoughts are contributing to problems. It requires an expectation that meaning may come from diverse places and that others may make different meanings from the same situation.

In summary, the integration of spirituality enhancement in in-service training in the workplace simply means living out one’s deep values. Spiritual persons should have the courage to speak from their own deeply held values and to listen to and respect the values of others, even when they are in conflict. They look for shared values, celebrate the diversity and interconnectedness of the people involved and their differing views, and they treat the persons involved with the kind of charity and love they hope for themselves.

The third enabling step refers to the maintenance of report card on spirituality index integral to the performance management appraisal system of the Civil Service Commission; this means that there should be a sustainable effort in the infusion and strengthening of spirituality in the government bureaucracy through the use of a spirituality index. Groen (2003) mentions the emergence of a surprising consistency about the key tenets of a spirituality-infused organization: first, people have a sense of vocation and passion about their work; second, the workplace culture encourages creativity and risk taking through training and career development; third, the workplace balances both work and home by having supports and programs in place, which foster outside commitments; fourth, baseline wages and benefits are in place, which demonstrate the organization’s willingness to invest in its workforce; fifth, there is a sense of community both within and beyond the workplace, which is reflected in its operational and decision-making practices; and, lastly, the articulated values of the organization are infused into its day-to-day practice.

According to Mitroff and Denton (1999:180), one of the fundamental dimensions of “best practices” of a spiritual workplace is the “ongoing necessity of constantly taking moral audits of the values to ascertain whether it is living up to its proclaimed ideals of managing in a more spiritual manner.” The link between spirituality and personal leadership is built upon the belief that spirituality is not limited to times of reflection and meditation, but also involves how we live day to day. O’Murchu (1998:11-12) states that as people mature, evolve and work through their spirituality, there is a “tendency to adopt ethical standards in lifestyle and work and involvement in cultural or social movement, addressing the injustices and wrongs in our world.”

Resulting from the standards of spirituality in public administration corresponding to the three concepts and the transformational processes achieved through the combination of three sequential steps, it is envisioned that elements of good governance could be achieved as outputs.

For purposes of this study, the output referred to is premised on the definition of good governance by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) which ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources.
Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. And it promotes the rule of law (UNDP, 1997:3).

In summary, the linkages and the relationships of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the research study, actualized in the government bureaucracy, through public administration happens when the “spiritual being” having searched for meaning and values, which includes some sense of the transcendent and through interconnectedness with others as well as his/her desire to make meaning and live out one’s own values about good and wrong in the government office, is ultimately directed to a self-actualized spirituality in public administration. Through conscience building, the “spiritual being” understands and personalizes the meaning, value and role of his/her conscience in the workplace. He/she is able to personally decide for him/herself that which brings good to public service and avoids that which brings evil or wrong to public service. He/she is able to judge and guide his/her actions ethically or morally in the performance or conduct of his/her governmental functions.

Through spirituality and value enhancement in the bureaucracy, the “spiritual being” fosters a sense of meaning, purpose and mission in life, which ultimately leads to empower government employees with fundamental values of honesty or integrity, transparency and responsibility in the bureaucracy. The “spiritual being” lives out these deep values in public service. He/she finds courage to speak from his/her own deeply held values and listens to and respects the values of others, even when they are in conflict. He/she looks for shared values, celebrates the diversity and interconnectedness of the people involved and their differing views and treats the persons involved with the kind of charity and love he/she hopes for him/herself. That is why consensus building in decisions and policy-making that would affect the life of the “spiritual being” and the lives of those for whom he/she is responsible for, as an expression of one’s spirituality, is self-actualized in the public service. Any action or decisions made, therefore, by the “spiritual being” becomes and rules, individually and collectively, people in public service to create conscience building and spiritual enhancement.

This means that his/her actions and decision-making must always be in accordance with the law and carried out through the dictates of his/her own conscience. In this way, catering to the lure of committing corruption is avoided. This ultimately ends in good governance as people in government are transformed to be principled-centered in the performance of their leadership functions and shared-participation in achieving social equity, being effective stewards in and of public offices.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the following are drawn:

First, advocating “A Spiritual Paradigm for Philippine Public Administration” as a modeling initiative for individual bureaucrats to follow is very timely owing to the country’s poor governance brought about by corruption and by the deteriorating lack of spirituality among government employees; individual spirituality of government employees can be enhanced in order to help build integrity, uprightness and honesty in the bureaucracy as a developmental and alternative course of curbing occasions and practices of corruption plaguing the Philippine bureaucracy.

Second, the Philippine government has not been remiss in its efforts to fight corruption in the bureaucracy since the 1950s through the different laws, executive orders, and government interventions and initiatives passed and implemented by the different administration(s), in curbing corruption; the proposed Spiritual Paradigm for Philippine Public Administration could serve as an enabling environment to unify diverse efforts in improving public administration and governance in the Philippines.

Third, the Quezon City government initiative in curbing corruption through the use of information technology is a “best practice”, which may be replicated by other LGUs in curbing corruption in their localities.

Fourth, public administration, as a practice and as a discipline, should be moved by people and should be dynamic like an organism. It should not be stagnant but should be taught not only on theories but also to help people in government acquire skills—whether they are cognitive, affective, or analytical skills—so that government officials and employees are trained to analyze events,
circumstances in the workplace as the terms and conditions of working in the public sector are very different.

Fifth, the factor of leadership is very relevant in solving corruption in government; a leader with moral ascendancy would not only be easily obeyed by people working in the bureaucracy but would be looked up to as a model to be emulated.

Finally, the participation of civil society in initiatives to curb corruption is now in place in the Philippine public administration milieu.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Aside from the full enforcement of existing laws, relevant policies and programs to minimize corruption in the bureaucracy, conscious planned efforts must be done by all stakeholders to enhance spirituality in the government bureaucracy. Recognizing the fact that all stakeholders have this shared-responsibility, the following recommendations are herein presented to concerned authorities:

1. There is an imperative need for all stakeholders in government to develop and implement a spirituality enhancement program in the workplace which can be incorporated in government’s in-service training;
2. The present government management development programs which service officials and managers in the bureaucracy, must include an orientation program on stewardship;
3. The public administration curriculum should offer a subject or a module in conscience building among bureaucrats;
4. A spirituality index should be made integral to the recruitment and the performance management appraisal system of the Civil Service Commission;
5. Social equity should be accorded to by workers in government in the delivery of basic services so that those who have less in life should have more in law;
6. Civil Society’s participation in safeguarding public biddings should be expanded to cover all government agencies and instrumentalities; and,
7. Workers in government and other stakeholders should continue to enmesh in the goals and values for which the Philippine government envisions to be, so that they are co-sharers as the Philippines traverses the path towards good governance.

Finally, a spiritual paradigm for Philippine public administration as a transformative process and a de-centering dynamism or process should not only be advocated by leaders in government but should also be a lived experience so that occasions of corruption is avoided; hence, good governance is achieved and public services are better delivered. Through the said paradigm ‘pockets of excellence’ in the government bureaucracy can be properly nurtured to help reverse the status quo by way of capacitating a critical mass of bureaucrats cultivate a culture of goodness in every aspect of their work.

END NOTES

3 See Ocampo (1993), citing the U.P. Annual Report for 1952-1953) where the Institute of Public Administration was suppose to provide in-service training to meet the immediate needs of training government workers in the country; and, to offer
academic program to stimulate interest in public administration as a field of study leading to a degree. It aims also to make the Philippines the center of such educational endeavor in Southeast Asia.

4 Few years after the Philippines became a Republic in 1946, the U.S. government sent the Bell Mission in 1950, headed by Daniel W. Bell, to assess the political, economic, and social conditions in the country.


6 Ibid., p. 4.

7 Ibid., p. 10.


9 See ADB Country Governance Assessment (2005:1), where governance is broadly defined as the sound exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to manage a country’s resources for development. It involves the institutionalization of a system through which citizens, institutions, organizations, and groups in a society articulate their interests, exercise their rights, and mediate their differences in pursuit of the collective good.

10 The Corruption Perception Index (CPI), focuses on corruption in the public sector and defines corruption as the use of public office for private gain. The surveys used in compiling CPI tend to ask questions in line with the misuse of public power for private benefits, with a focus, for example, on bribe-taking by public officials in public procurement. The sources do not distinguish between administrative and political corruption. This year ranks 102 countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians. It is a composite index, drawing on 15 different polls surveys of residents, both local and expatriate. The CPI builds awareness of the corruption issue, and it adds to pressure on governments to directly address the issue and the damaged image of their nation. The country with the lowest score is the one perceived to be the most corrupt of those included in the index.

11 Sec. 4, Article XI of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states: “The present anti-graft Court known as the Sandiganbayan shall continue to function and exercise its jurisdiction as now or hereafter may be provided by law.” Sandiganbayan has jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases involving graft and corrupt practices. This is a constitutional recognition of the continuing need to combat graft and corruption already recognized in earlier anti-graft laws.

12 R.A. No. 3019 (The Anti Graft and Corrupt Practices Act) was approved in 17 August 1960 specifically to repress certain acts of public officers and private persons alike which constitute graft or corrupt practices or which may lead thereto.

13 R.A. No. 6713, Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees approved on 20 February 1989, mentions the policy of the State to promote a high standard of ethics in public service. Public Officials and employees shall at all times be accountable to the people and shall discharge their duties with utmost responsibility, integrity, competence, and loyalty, act with patriotism and justice, lead modest lives, and uphold public interest over personal interest.

14 [D] Section 1 (1) (2), Article IX of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states on the existence of the Commission on Audit mandated to examine the accuracy of the records kept and to determine whether expenditures have been made in conformity with law. Section 2, gives a broad outline of the powers of the Commission: (1) to examine and audit all forms of government revenues; (2) to examine and audit all forms of government expenditures; (3) to settle government accounts; (4) to define the scope and techniques for its own auditing procedures; (5) to promulgate accounting and auditing rules “including those for the prevention and disallowance of irregular, unnecessary, excessive, extravagant, or conscionable expenditures,” and (6) to decide administrative cases involving expenditure of public funds.

15 [B] Section (1) (2), Article IX of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states of the Civil Service Commission, the general objective of which is to establish and promote professionalism and efficiency in public service. The earliest Civil Service Law was Act No. 5 (1900) of the Philippine Commission. Later this was incorporated into the Administrative Code. Article XII of the 1935 Constitution later provided for a constitutionally mandated service. Commonwealth Act 177 (1936) purged the ADMINISTRATIVE CODE of undesirable Civil Service provisions. The Civil Service Law at the time of the enactment of the
1973 Constitution was R.A. 2260 as amended by R.A. 6040. The Civil Service Law enacted by President Marcos was P.D. 807, October 6, 1975.

16 A feature of the 1987 Philippine Constitution was the inclusion the PCGG, mandated to run after the hidden wealth of President Ferdinand E. Marcos and his cronies.

17 In October 2002, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, ordered the lifestyle checks on all government officials including the police and the military. It provides the means by which corruption may be detected through disparities between earned income and apparent lifestyle. They are based on four “probed areas”; behavioral such as leisure habits; asset value or net worth; kin checks, looking at relatives who could have gained employment through official’s influence; and conflicts of interest. The Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) is the initiative’s primary agency, with the office of the Ombudsman as enforcer.


19 Founded in 1985, Social Weather Station (SWS) is the Philippines’ leading survey research institute on Quality of Life, Public Opinion, and Governance. It is a private, non-stock, non-profit, and politically non-partisan scientific institute engaged in research, analysis, training, and outreach activities.

20 See 2005 SWS Surveys of Enterprises where Filipino managers become increasingly willing to give a percentage of their enterprises’ net income to anti-corruption efforts, which was a key factor behind the launching of the private sector’s Coalition Against Corruption in September 2004.


22 Philippine government agencies surveyed were: Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR); Civil Service Commission (CSC); Commission on Audit (COA); Commission on Human Rights (CHR); Court of Appeals (CA); Department of Tourism (DOT); Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH); Philippine National Police (PNP); and, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

23 The Philippines has a Presidential form of government where the three (3) branches of government (executive, legislative, and judiciary) are co-equal with each other; and, where the law making power is primarily the function of the Legislative branch (Congress and Senate).

24 See http://www.tag.org.ph/philaw

25 When President Ferdinand E. Marcos declared martial law in 21 September 1972, which lasted up to 25 February 1986, he arrogated unto himself the legislative function of Congress by issuing Presidential Decrees which in effect became the laws of the country.

26 Karina Constantino-David was appointed Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission on 23 February 2001 to date, by Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

27 Quezon City Vice-Mayor Herbert Bautista, who holds an MPA from UP-NCPAG, was the Acting Mayor when the interview was conducted; Mayor Sonny Belmonte was out of the country on an official trip from 09 May to 18 May 2005. It is worth noting that when Mayor Belmonte became the Mayor of Quezon City, the Quezon City government was in deficit, but due to his leadership and some innovations in management, which included among other things, the use of IT Quezon City now holds a surplus of several billion pesos; and, the City government was recently awarded as one of the top City governments in the Philippines.

References


The 1987 Philippine Constitution

