

Comparative Analysis of Anti-Corruption Curricula and Ethical Training Programs in Philippine Law Schools and Their Perceived Impact on Student Value Formation

Atty. Emily C. Sison-Acompaño, CPA, DPA

Dean, College of Business Administration, Former Law Dean/Associate Professor,
College of Law, University of Eastern Philippines, Northern Samar, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study conducted a comprehensive comparative analysis of anti-corruption curricula and ethical training programs across various Philippine law schools, assessing their perceived and actual impact on student value formation. Employing a descriptive-comparative mixed-methods design, the research meticulously mapped curriculum content and pedagogical approaches through document analysis and key informant interviews. Quantitative surveys, which utilized established value scales like the Panukat ng Ugali at Pagkatao (PUP) and adapted corruption propensity items, were used to compare student value profiles across institutions. Perceptions of effectiveness were also gathered from both students and faculty.

The study's findings revealed that while all law schools included ethics as a formal component of their curricula, there was significant variation in the depth, integration, and pedagogical approaches employed. This variability was found to correlate with different levels of perceived effectiveness and actual student value formation. Law schools that adopted experiential, scenario-based, and interdisciplinary approaches to ethics demonstrated a higher perceived effectiveness among both students and faculty. Conversely, schools with a purely theoretical or lecture-based approach were perceived as less effective. The study identified a strong relationship between the depth of an institution's ethics program and its students' value profiles, particularly in traits like Pagkaresponsable (Responsibleness) and Katiyagaan (Perseverance). Furthermore, the ethical leadership and institutional culture of a law school were found to be significant predictors of student value formation. The research identified and documented several innovative practices, such as moot court competitions with an ethical focus and collaborations with anti-corruption NGOs, which were perceived as highly effective.

Based on these findings, the study provided evidence-based recommendations for standardizing and enhancing ethical training in legal education. These recommendations centered on mandating comprehensive curriculum integration, promoting experiential pedagogies, strengthening faculty development, and fostering a pro-integrity institutional culture. Ultimately, this research offers a pathway for legal education to more effectively mold a new generation of legal professionals who are not only competent but also deeply committed to ethical principles and public service.

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KEYWORDS: Anti-corruption curricula, Ethical training, Philippine law schools, Value formation, Panukat ng Ugali at Pagkatao (PUP), Corruption propensity, Legal education, Organizational culture, Gender sensitivity, Best practices.

INTRODUCTION

The foundational purpose of legal education extends beyond imparting substantive legal knowledge; it is

fundamentally charged with molding ethical professionals who can uphold justice and contribute

to the integrity of the legal system and public administration. Concerns about persistent corruption, particularly within the legal profession, underscore the critical importance of robust ethical formation during the law school years. Although individual institutions have developed varying approaches, a comprehensive understanding of the ethical and anti-corruption education landscape across Philippine law schools had remained elusive. Prior investigations had suggested potential deficiencies in curriculum design, indicating that an overemphasis on traditional legal domains left insufficient space for extensive values-based learning. This challenge was compounded by the recognition that deeply ingrained values are not easily altered in mature students, implying that the foundational influence of legal education, however brief, must be profoundly impactful.

This study was designed to meticulously map the diverse approaches to anti-corruption, ethics, and values education currently employed by various law schools across the Philippines. By systematically examining curriculum content, pedagogical methodologies, and institutional support mechanisms, we aimed to identify models of best practice and innovation. Crucially, the research delved into the perceptions of both law students and faculty regarding the effectiveness of these programs in fostering integrity-related values and mitigating corruption propensity. This inquiry was vital for informing the Legal Education Board (LEB) and individual law schools on concrete, evidence-based enhancements to their curricula and training programs. Ultimately, this research endeavored to contribute directly to the production of a new generation of legal professionals who are not only competent but also imbued with an unwavering commitment to ethical principles, thereby strengthening the integrity of the legal profession in the Philippines.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to conduct a comparative analysis of anti-corruption curricula and ethical training programs in various Philippine law schools and assess their perceived and actual impact on student value formation. Specifically, it accomplished the following:

- **Meticulously mapped and characterized** the current content, pedagogical approaches, and formal integration of anti-corruption education, legal ethics courses, and general values formation components within the official curricula of a selected range of law schools across the Philippines. This included a detailed review of

syllabi, course descriptions, and program learning outcomes, specifically noting how gender concepts, frameworks, and legal processes for discrimination were addressed.

- **Assessed the perceptions** of both law students and their faculty members in these different law schools regarding the effectiveness and adequacy of their respective anti-corruption and ethics training programs in fostering integrity-related values, promoting ethical reasoning, and cultivating a robust sense of public service. This assessment included perceptions of support for gender-sensitive leadership and awareness of bias and stereotypes among administrators and faculty.
- **Compared the value profiles** and baseline corruption propensity of students from law schools with varying emphasis, depth, and pedagogical approaches to ethical and anti-corruption formation. This comparison used selected subscales from the **Panukat ng Ugali at Pagkatao (PUP)**, particularly those related to responsibility, perseverance, and critical thinking, as well as relevant items from previous socio-economic profile questionnaires.
- **Identified and systematically documented** innovative or highly effective pedagogical practices, extracurricular activities, co-curricular programs, and broader institutional initiatives that were perceived by students and faculty to significantly contribute to positive value formation, strengthen ethical reasoning, and demonstrably reduce corruption susceptibility among law students. This exploration included the role of gender-sensitive pedagogy and inclusive decision-making.
- **Analyzed how the prevailing institutional culture** of each law school, including the perceived integrity of its leadership (e.g., deans, faculty) and their demonstrated commitment to values such as gender inclusivity, might implicitly or explicitly influence the perceived effectiveness of ethics education and overall student value formation, especially given that organizational culture can impact the values, beliefs, and social norms within a group.
- **Formulated concrete, evidence-based recommendations** for standardizing and enhancing anti-corruption and ethical training programs across Philippine law schools. These recommendations aimed to promote best practices, address identified gaps in procedural understanding and practical application, and ultimately contribute to the holistic development

of more ethically sound, socially responsible, and public service-oriented legal professionals who are resilient to corruption's allure.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a robust descriptive-comparative research design that integrated both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative component involved comparing value profiles and corruption propensity across institutions. The qualitative component delved into curriculum content, pedagogical approaches, and perceptions of effectiveness, providing rich, contextualized insights. This mixed-methods approach allowed for the systematic comparison of practices and outcomes across different law schools, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research problem.

Locale of the Study

The study involved a selected sample of diverse law schools across the Philippines. This included institutions from the National Capital Region (NCR), other major urban centers, and the Eastern Visayas region (e.g., University of Eastern Philippines and Christ the King College of Law in Calbayog City), which allowed the research to capture a wide range of institutional contexts, student demographics, and approaches to legal education.

Population and Sampling

The study's population included third- and fourth-year law students and law faculty members. Third- and fourth-year law students from the selected institutions were targeted, as they would have been exposed to core legal ethics subjects and were closer to entering the profession. A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure representation across different year levels within each participating school. Professors who taught core legal ethics, criminal law, constitutional law, public international law, and professional responsibility were purposively sampled to ensure that the perspectives gathered were from those directly involved in teaching and shaping ethical formation.

Research Instruments

A multi-component research instrument was developed and used:

- **Curriculum Mapping and Content Analysis Tool:** This structured checklist and guide was used for systematically reviewing official law school syllabi, course outlines, teaching methodologies, and learning outcomes related to anti-corruption, ethics, and values education. It also assessed the integration of topics like legal processes for discrimination or unconscious bias.

- **Student and Faculty Perception Surveys:** These were Likert-scale questionnaires (5-point scale) designed to assess the perceived effectiveness of a law school's ethics and anti-corruption curriculum, the extent of integration of values-based discussions in different subjects, awareness of anti-corruption principles, confidence in ethical decision-making abilities, and perceptions regarding the value of gender inclusivity and support for gender-sensitive leadership.
- **Value Profile and Corruption Propensity Assessment:** Selected relevant subscales from the **Panukat ng Ugali at Pagkatao (PUP)** were administered to assess specific traits pertinent to ethical formation, such as *Pagkaresponsable* (Responsibleness), *Katiyagaan* (Perseverance), and *Pagkamapunahin* (Criticalness). Additionally, specific items from previous socio-economic profile instruments related to ethical decision-making and corruption scenarios were adapted and used to gauge corruption propensity.
- **Key Informant Interview Protocols:** Semi-structured interview guides were used for in-depth discussions with deans, associate deans, and program chairs of the selected law schools. These interviews explored the philosophy behind their ethics curriculum, specific pedagogical strategies employed, challenges in curriculum implementation, and institutional initiatives related to promoting integrity and GAD compliance.

Validation of the Instrument

All newly developed or significantly adapted instruments underwent rigorous validation processes. A panel of interdisciplinary experts, including legal ethics professors, curriculum development specialists, psychometricians, and GAD advocates, reviewed the instruments for content validity. A small-scale pilot test was also conducted to refine the instruments and assess their reliability using Cronbach's Alpha.

Data Gathering Procedure

Formal approvals for the study were secured from the heads of the respective law schools. All participants provided informed consent, which detailed the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the strict confidentiality and anonymity protocols for all responses. Surveys were administered both online and through physical copies. Key informant interviews were conducted in person or virtually, and all were audio-recorded with explicit consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim. All collected data was securely stored in compliance with data privacy regulations.

Statistical Treatment

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the characteristics of the curriculum content and the perceptions of students and faculty.

Inferential statistics were also applied:

- **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)** and **Independent Samples t-tests** were used to compare mean scores of value profiles and corruption propensity across different law schools.
- **Pearson Correlation** and **Spearman's Rho** were used to determine the strength and direction of relationships between specific curriculum characteristics and student/faculty perceptions or value profiles.
- **Multiple Regression Analysis** was used to identify the most significant predictors among curriculum and institutional factors that influenced student value formation and corruption propensity.

Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups were analyzed using **thematic analysis**. This involved systematically coding the data to identify recurring themes, patterns, and categories related to the effectiveness of ethics programs, challenges in implementation, and innovative practices. Cross-case analysis was used to compare and contrast findings across different law schools.

Finally, the quantitative and qualitative findings were systematically integrated during the interpretation and discussion phases. This **triangulation** of data provided a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research problem.

Results and Discussion

Drawing upon existing literature and insights from previous studies on law student profiles and gender sensitivity in academic leadership, this comparative analysis yielded several key findings regarding anti-corruption curricula and ethical training programs in Philippine law schools. The research confirmed the initial expectation that while all law schools included legal ethics as a formal curriculum component, there was considerable variability in the depth, pedagogical approach, and integration of anti-corruption and values formation topics. This variability aligned with prior observations that legal education might be too brief and too focused on traditional legal domains to provide extensive time and room for effective ethics and values-based learning.

We found that law schools that adopted more experiential, scenario-based, or interdisciplinary

approaches to ethics education, rather than purely theoretical or lecture-based methods, demonstrated a higher perceived effectiveness among both students and faculty. This finding underscored the principle that values are often shaped through active engagement and reflection rather than rote memorization. Law schools that integrated anti-corruption themes across various subjects (e.g., public corporations, criminal law, constitutional law) rather than isolating them to a single ethics course also showed a stronger impact on student value formation. This holistic integration mirrored the comprehensive approach advocated in Transformative Gender-Sensitive Academic Leadership Theory, which posits that fostering gender sensitivity requires embedding equity in leadership knowledge, values, and institutional behavior, beyond mere compliance.

Regarding the perceived impact on student value formation, the study found that students from law schools with more robust and integrated ethics programs reported higher levels of **Pagkaresponsible** (Responsibleness) and **Katiyagaan** (Perseverance) in ethical matters. They also demonstrated a greater sense of **Pagkamagalang** (Respectfulness) for legal processes and integrity. Conversely, students from programs with less emphasis on practical ethics exhibited slightly higher scores on traits linked to corruption propensity, such as **Pagkasalawahan** (Ficklemindedness) or susceptibility to **Pagkasunud-sunuran** (Conformity) to prevailing unethical norms, especially where there was a perceived lack of accountability within the organizational culture.

The research uncovered a significant relationship between knowledge and attitudes, and between attitudes and practices, indicating that the former were strong predictors of the latter. Law schools where administrators and faculty demonstrated high knowledge of ethical concepts and legal mandates related to integrity, coupled with favorable attitudes toward ethical inclusivity and GAD compliance, were found to have students with stronger integrity-related value profiles and lower corruption propensity. This suggested that the ethical leadership and commitment of academic administrators played a crucial role in shaping the institutional ethical climate, which in turn influenced student values. However, a potential gap emerged between administrators' high knowledge and favorable attitudes versus the actual consistent application of ethical practices in policy formulation or daily interactions. This gap was reflected in student perceptions of the institution's true commitment to integrity, which sometimes tempered the positive impact of ethical instruction.

The study also explored innovative practices, such as moot court competitions with a focus on ethical dilemmas, collaborations with anti-corruption NGOs, and the integration of gender-sensitive pedagogy that encouraged diverse ethical perspectives. The success of these initiatives correlated with a reduction in corruption propensity by actively engaging students in ethical reasoning and real-world applications of integrity. Conversely, a lack of bias and stereotype awareness among faculty was found to inadvertently undermine ethical instruction, suggesting a potential for the uneven application of policies and a disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance anti-corruption curricula and ethical training programs in Philippine law schools, aiming to produce more ethically sound and public service-oriented legal professionals:

- **Mandate and Standardize Comprehensive Anti-Corruption and Ethics Curriculum Integration:** The Legal Education Board (LEB) should review and revise the model law curriculum to mandate a more extensive and integrated approach to anti-corruption laws, legal ethics, and values formation. This should include not just standalone courses but also the weaving of ethical dilemmas and anti-corruption principles across core subjects (e.g., property law, criminal law, constitutional law).
- **Promote Experiential and Reflective Pedagogies:** Law schools should be encouraged to adopt experiential and reflective pedagogical approaches for ethics education. This includes mandatory pro bono clinics with ethical components, mock trials centered on corruption cases, ethical dilemma simulations, role-playing exercises, and regular debriefing sessions that encourage critical self-reflection on values and potential ethical pitfalls. This directly responds to the need for practical exposures to litigation through apprenticeship and mooting.
- **Implement Sustained Professional Development for Law Faculty on Ethical Pedagogy:** Faculty development offices should offer sustained professional development programs for law professors. These programs should focus on effective strategies for teaching ethics, integrating values discussions across disciplines, fostering critical thinking about corruption, and recognizing and addressing
- unconscious biases in the classroom and curriculum.
- **Strengthen Admission and Retention Policies with Behavioral Qualification:** Law schools should refine their admission and retention policies to include behavioral qualifications, potentially incorporating ethical aptitude assessments or components that evaluate a candidate's value profile. This builds upon previous recommendations for behavioral qualification standards and ensures that candidates possess a baseline of integrity-related traits.
- **Foster a Pro-Integrity Institutional Culture:** Law school administrations must actively cultivate a strong pro-integrity institutional culture. This involves demonstrating ethical leadership, ensuring transparency in decision-making, providing clear mechanisms for reporting unethical behavior, and consistently enforcing policies related to academic honesty and professional conduct. This aligns with the importance of organizational culture in shaping behavior and the recommendations for inclusive and participatory decision-making structures.
- **Encourage Research and Outreach on Anti-Corruption:** Law schools should actively promote faculty and student research on anti-corruption issues and encourage outreach and extension programs that engage with local communities on good governance and legal literacy initiatives. This practical engagement can reinforce students' commitment to public service and provide real-world context to their ethical learning.
- **Collaborate with Professional Bodies and the Judiciary:** Law schools should foster stronger collaborations with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) and the judiciary to align ethical training with the practical demands and challenges of the legal profession. This could involve joint seminars, mentorship programs, and shared resources that bridge the gap between academic instruction and real-world ethical dilemmas, strengthening discipline and fraternal measures among lawyers.

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