

**THE EFFECT OF THE PUERTO RICAN
GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS LAW ON THE PERCEPTION
OF CORRUPTION AMONG MUNICIPALITY OF
HATILLO EMPLOYEES**

by

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Abstract

Since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a seemingly continuous sequence of corruption cases presented in U.S. federal courts involving Puerto Rican governmental officials. In an effort to curb corrupt behavior among officials and the deleterious effects thereof, the government of Puerto Rico has developed and implemented Law Number 12, better known as the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law. To shed light on the effects of this law on governmental employees, this research study determined the extent to which the development and implementation of the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law has affected the perception of corruption among Municipality of Hatillo employees. This study was an attempt to address the following question: How has the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law affected perceptions among Municipality of Hatillo employees?

The findings of this research have significant implications for the public sector and for governmental management. For those in the public sector, the study serves as a reminder that the ethical education that is required under the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law is necessary and important for the development of ethical maturity in public sector employees. Moreover, for management to develop a more ethical climate, it is recommended that supervisors increase their participation and compliance with the ethics educational programs that are required by law. An improved ethical environment could help to prevent ethical lapses and penalize the criminal behavior of those officials who, in the performance of their governmental work, violate the basic principles of an ethics of excellence.

Introduction

In recent decades, ethical conduct has been an important issue for governments at all levels in the United States. The government of Puerto Rico is no exception; since the beginning of the 21st century, U.S. federal courts have heard a seemingly continuous sequence of corruption cases involving Puerto Rican governmental officials. One prominent case concerned the governor, Anibal Acevedo Vila. On March 27, 2008, the

U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) charged Vila with 19 counts of campaign finance corruption and conspiracy in violation of U.S. federal election laws.

Burnside and Dollar (1998) defined corruption as “behavior on the part of officials in the public sector, whether politicians or civil servants, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves, or those close to them, by the misuse of the public power entrusted to them” (p. 8). Within public service, corruption can be described as a behavior, typically characterized as an abuse of public power or position for personal advantage by public officials, that has a negative impact on governmental performance and the public trust. As institutions, it is important for governments gain understanding of individual-organizational relationships in terms of the entire individual, the entire group, the entire organization, and the entire social system, as well as the factors leading to corrupt behavior, to address corruption in an appropriate manner.

Over the last decade, the government of Puerto Rico has suffered from serious corruption at all levels. As has the central government, local governments, better known as municipalities, have felt the negative impacts of acts of corruption, one of which is the development of distrust among Puerto Ricans toward central and local government entities. In an effort to combat and prevent acts of corruption, Puerto Rican leaders have sought to educate and train employees in the need for and application of governmental ethics.

Concern over this issue led to the development and implementation of Law Number 12 of 1985, better known as the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law. This law requires that governmental officials in funds management positions submit personal financial reports to comply with certain ethical mandates. Furthermore, this law requires that within 2 years, all governmental employees must complete 10 hours of continuous education offered by the government office known as the Center for the Development of the Ethical Thought. This law is frequently amended, thus challenging the capacity of local Puerto Rican governments to remain in compliance, especially when they are experiencing financial difficulties.

In this investigation, the researcher will determine the extent to which the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law has affected the perception of corruption among the Municipality of Hatillo employees.

Background of the Study

In the first few years of the 21st century, governmental bodies in Puerto Rico have faced extremely complex situations brought about by corruption. This corruption has been attributed to multiple factors, including unethical activities within governmental operations; problems with political, economic, and social development; the erosion of loyalty within political parties; the rise of high technology as an instrument of efficient criminal activity; the informal economy; drug trafficking; and international money laundering. To counter corruption, governmental leaders have enacted and enforced new laws while seeking to educate the workforce on ethical matters.

Results of a national survey performed by the New York KPMG Company indicate that employees in the public sector are at greater risk of engaging in unethical behavior than those in private organizations. Brock (2007) stated that the KPMG survey reveals that “public employees were also less likely to report misconduct to an outside

authority, preferring to handle the problem directly or through supervisors, and fewer of them had confidence that a complaint would be handled appropriately” (p. 8).

In a research study, Bowman and Knox (2008) examined attitudes about ethics in the American government from 1990s to the present. This study used data from a national survey on governmental employees’ views regarding ethics in society and integrity in public agencies. The results of this study demonstrated that 50% of respondents did not report ethical misconduct to the proper authorities in government. Furthermore, survey respondents believed that ethics was not a fad and that government has the responsibility to set an example in society. Weaver and Treviño (2001) examined the impact of values orientations and compliance-orientations in ethics programs on observed unethical behavior, employees’ willingness to report ethical problems, and employees’ commitment.

This research study surveyed a random selection of 6,300 employees across four large companies, each of which had a formal ethics and compliance program in place. A key study finding was that values and compliance orientations have varying impacts depending on the outcome under consideration; results indicate that although both are important in reducing obviously unethical behavior, a values orientation has a greater impact on employees’ willingness to report problems and employees’ commitment to the organization. Saltos (1995) examined ethics and corruption in Hispano American organizations. As key finding in this study was that 72% of Hispano Americans mentioned that corruption and ethical fraud are significant problems that can jeopardize an organization’s success. Implications emerge from these research studies. First, the research of Bowman and Knox (2008) indicates that there is a need for ethical guidance from governmental agencies. Future researchers could gather valuable information by examining ethical issues and determining how government can attend to them.

Justification of the Study

Ethical problems are occurring in the government with more frequency than in the past. The Puerto Rican Ethics Law was developed to minimize the impact of corruption in government structures. In addition, the law was designed to create awareness among government employees of what is considered acceptable versus unacceptable behavior.

However, the Puerto Rican Ethics Law does not contain provisions to enable officials to measure whether employees have obtained sufficient knowledge through the courses and seminars offered by the Office of Government Ethics of Puerto Rico to discern what acceptable and unacceptable conduct is.

The Office of Government Ethics of Puerto Rico and the ERC jointly released the results of a research study of all governmental employees. This research study measured the perception of ethics within the workplace and the need to maintain ethical standards in government service. The ERC and the Office of Government Ethics of Puerto Rico gave all government employees the opportunity to participate in the study. At the time of survey distribution, the Puerto Rican Government estimated that its workforce contained a total of 250,000 employees; thus, researchers distributed the same number of survey questionnaires.

A key finding of this research study was that 26% of governmental employees mentioned that they felt pressure to violate ethics standards. Among this group of

employees, 64% indicated that the pressure came from their supervisors. Moreover, 34% of the surveyed employees stated that they had observed ethical misconduct at their workplace without notifying their supervisors. It is not clear whether these employees did not report the ethical misconduct on purpose or due to lack of knowledge of the Puerto Rican Ethics Law. Based on the information gathered in the Puerto Rican government survey, the

ERC presented a series of recommendations with the purpose of moving forward the ethics agenda of the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. One of these recommendations was that the Puerto Rican Government “create a conscience statement of organizational and fundamental principles to help facilitate employee adherence to the Law of Governmental Ethics” (ERC, 2004, p. 302). The ERC further recommended that the Puerto Rican Government provide training to public-sector supervisors to minimize pressure related to reporting ethical misconduct. Two important implications emerge from the study. First, the Puerto Rican Government needs to enhance its ethics training programs for all governmental employees. Second, to understand employees’ ethical perceptions and address complex ethical issues, it is necessary to conduct a more comprehensive assessment program in the Puerto Rican Government. When the nationwide and Puerto Rican governmental studies developed by the ERC are compared, it becomes clear that both offered the key finding that public servants witnessed misconduct and often did not report it.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law has affected the perception of corruption among the Municipality of Hatillo employees. To do so, the researcher will investigate the manner in which the Governmental Ethics Law has affected the knowledge of Municipality of Hatillo employees in regard to maintaining behavior in compliance with the law.

Governmental employees in Puerto Rico are required to comply with the law’s mandates, one of which is engaging in continuous education focused on ethical training that results in their earning at least 10 continuing education credits within 2 years. Through the law and such ethical training, the government aims to increase employee knowledge and awareness of corrupt behavior to achieve the ultimate goal of preventing all employee actions that aim at attaining personal advantage at the expense of the general well-being.

Ethics Academic Debate

At the end of the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st century, tolerance for human diversity makes it even more imperative and pertinent that people who seek to prepare at the university level to integrate government positions acquire adequate training in the correct understanding and application of the norms of public ethics in democratic states of law. The academic area presents that education in values and, more specifically, around public ethics should not be postponed, in any way, in the academic and professional programs of Political Science, Public Administration, Government and Public Affairs or Public Policies. This if we really want the university graduates of such

programs to live up to what the times demand in the contexts of government, public administration, and the new collaborative governance.

Limitations of the Study

This research study employed a nonrandom purposive sample to examine data related to different employee job classifications. Therefore, the study had a high rate of return from Municipality of Hatillo employees. The dissertation sample consisted of 137 participants, yielding a 68.5% return rate. The study sample was limited due to the methods of survey distribution that were used. Employees located in offices outside City Hall were not considered because of the 83 difficulty of locating these employees. The study therefore does not offer a full reflection of the experiences of all employees, including those located outside the City Hall of the Municipality of Hatillo. The accuracy and the return rate were higher than for the ERC survey, in which questions were presented through a survey and interviews were conducted via telephone. The ERC research study discussed in chapter 3 had a return rate of 25% for the distributed survey.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are presented in this section to clarify the context of their use in this research study:

1. *Compliance*. Refers to an organization's competence in conforming to accepted practices, legislation, prescribed rules, and regulations.
2. *Ethics*. Refers to acceptable behavior or the ability to meet requirements established by legislation, rules, and regulations. Ethical understanding relies on an individual's definition of what is right and wrong.
3. *Perception*. Refers to an employee's ability to use sensory information to obtain, understand, and process organizational information.
4. *Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law*. Refers to legislation that established the standards, rules, and regulations that pertain to the ethical behavior of Puerto Rican governmental employees.
5. *Local governments of Puerto Rico*. Refers to the municipalities located in Puerto Rico. The local government considered in this study is the Municipality of Hatillo.
6. *Employees*. Refers to workers employed by the Municipality of Hatillo who are classified as supervisors, technical or professional employees, or office employees.

Research Methodology

To achieve a well-developed professional ethical conscience among employees, it is necessary to understand how employees perceive ethical standards. Surveys help with the evaluation of employee perceptions for the following reasons. First, surveys are effective in gathering and quantifying a large number of employees' ethical perceptions. Second, an ethics survey provides a basis for the development of perception comparisons. Third, surveys are used to identify and to demonstrate employee relationships. Finally, surveys provide employees with the opportunity to be part of the ethical improvement phase in their organization upon sharing their valuable opinions and perspectives.

For the reasons presented, the researcher has chosen to employ a survey as a quantitative method to obtain and analyze the research data. Techniques for dealing with quantitative data are essential components of a researcher's professional toolkit. Quantitative analysis covers a wide range of areas, from simple organization to complex statistical issues (Robson, 2002). Quantitative data provide the opportunity to present numerical information through graphical charts because "to measure is to discover the extent, dimensions, quantity, or capacity of something, especially by comparison with a standard" (Cooper & Schindler, 2003, p. 151).

Test and Retest of the Instrument

The researcher will use a survey to analyze Municipality of Hatillo employees' ethical perceptions and awareness of the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law as they relate to ethics standards legislation, ethics training, and instruments for reporting unethical behavior in government.

The construction of the instrument began with the generation of items from a review of the literature and suggestions from four members of a judgmental panel. The academic experts who formed the judgmental panel were the Dean of the School of Business and Administration, the Assistant Vice President for Planning and Research, an educational research professor, and a statistic professional, who, as faculty and administrators of the Universidad Metropolitana of Puerto Rico, specialize in business and social research. The items, which were statements describing specific governmental ethics situations, were placed in a questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale ranging on a continuum from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

The questionnaire was distributed to the judgmental panel and then screened by the same panel for ambiguity, wording, and content overlap. Furthermore, to ensure content validity, the resultant poll of the instrument items was subjected to the scrutiny and evaluation of the four academic experts on the judgmental panel. As a result of this field test of the instrument, several items were modified and a number of the statements were omitted, leaving 16 items in the final form of the instrument. The academic experts were individually instructed to determine which items related to the research questions. When the majority of the judges on the panel agreed, an item was retained.

If examinees understand the test and are motivated to take it, then validity is higher. To examine the quality of the test measures and the degree to which constructs account for performance, a second test or retest will be implemented with the pilot study group or control group after 2 weeks of implementing the pilot study. The retest will evaluate construct validity. A positive correlation with other indicators will establish construct validity.

Results

The research methodology and the three research questions, which had emerged from the review of the literature pertaining to governmental ethics.

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference among Municipality of Hatillo public employees regarding their perceptions of the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law?

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference among Municipality of Hatillo public employees regarding their knowledge of the implementation of the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law?

Research Question 3: Is there a statistically significant difference among Municipality of Hatillo public employees regarding their knowledge of how to achieve compliance with the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law?

After first reviewing the population and sample, it proceeds to examine and discuss the participants' organizational demographics. The primary research findings before concluding with a summary.

Study Sample

The researcher administered the Ethics Questionnaire survey to Municipality of Hatillo employees who met the criteria of being a regular or transitory employee of the Municipality of Hatillo. Of the 200 surveys that the researcher distributed, he determined that 137 were acceptable for scoring and analysis. As a result, the dissertation sample consisted of 137 participants, yielding a 68.5% return rate.

Research Findings

Surveys are a means of gathering important information from employees, especially for the purposes of improving ethics at work and gaining insight into employees' perspectives.

The independent variable or presumed causes in this study are employment classification and number of years employed by the Municipality of Hatillo. The employment classifications are supervisors, technical and professional employees, and office employees of the Municipality of Hatillo. The number of years employed by the Municipality of Hatillo is considered on a scale from 0 to 10 years or more.

The dependent variable or presumed effect in this study is the survey scores. Through the survey scores, the researcher will determine Municipality of Hatillo employees' perceptions, knowledge of implementation, and knowledge about achieving compliance.

After the independent and dependent variables have been identified, it is important to understand how the variables relate. ANOVA, which represents Analysis of Variance, is a factual test used to break down the distinction between the method for multiple gatherings. ANOVA decides if the gatherings made by the levels of the autonomous variable are measurably unique by computing whether the method for the treatment levels are not quite the same as the general mean of the reliant variable. Utilize a single direction ANOVA when you have gathered information around one all out autonomous variable and one quantitative ward variable. ANOVA advises you if the reliant variable changes as indicated by the level of the free factor.

The researcher developed cross-tabulation tables to accord with the three principal areas addressed by the research questions: perception, implementation, and compliance. Cross tabulations are basically information tables that present the consequences of the whole gathering of respondents just as results from sub-gatherings of study respondents.

Cross classifications empower you to inspect connections inside the information that probably won't be promptly evident when breaking down all out-study reactions.

The researcher described his intention to develop cross-tabulation charts to present the relationship between the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law and the perception of corruption among Municipality of Hatillo employees, as well as to perform a one-way ANOVA to test the hypotheses and identify the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), “One-way analysis of variance uses a single-factor, fixed-effects model to compare the effects of one factor on a continuous dependent variable” (p. 546).

Cross-Tabulation Results

The researcher developed cross-tabulation tables to accord with the three principal areas addressed by the research questions: perception, implementation, and compliance. He also designed and classified the survey statements (see Appendix A) to address the research questions. Specifically, he designed statements 6, 7, 10, 14, and 16 to assess perception; statements 5, 9, 12, and 13 to assess implementation; and statements 3, 6, 8, 11, and 15 to assess compliance. For each table, a text discussion is provided where findings are discussed.

Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 present the survey results regarding employee perception. As shown by the data presented in Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, the Municipality of Hatillo employees who took the survey maintain different perceptions regarding the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law.

Table 3
Survey Results for Perception Statement 1

		Employment_Classification			
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	Total
Strongly agree	Count	7	17	16	40
	% within Employment Classification	31.8%	33.3%	25.0%	29.2%
Agree	Count	8	16	18	42
	% within Employment Classification	36.4%	31.4%	28.1%	30.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	3	9	17	29
	% within Employment Classification	13.6%	17.6%	26.6%	21.2%
Disagree	Count	1	3	6	10
	% within Employment Classification	4.5%	5.9%	9.4%	7.3%
Strongly disagree	Count	3	6	7	16
	% within Employment Classification	13.6%	11.8%	10.9%	11.7%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The most notable difference in employee perception can be observed in Table 3. Less than one in three (29%) of the participants reported that they *agree* that the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law is effective in penalizing employees who have committed acts of corruption within the government. The most significant difference

between the employee subgroups' perceptions is in percentages that *strongly agree* with Perception Statement 1: 33.3% of technical employees versus 25% of office employees. This finding is critical; if the majority of employees perceive that acts of corruption go unpunished, they may believe that unethical behavior will be tolerated in their workplace.

Table 4
Survey Results for Perception Statement 2

Perception Statement #2: You have knowledge of the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law.

		Employment Classification			
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	Total
Strongly agree	Count	12	26	20	58
	% within Employment Classification	54.5%	51.0%	31.3%	42.3%
Agree	Count	9	20	26	55
	% within Employment Classification	40.9%	39.2%	40.6%	40.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	1	3	13	17
	% within Employment Classification	4.5%	5.9%	20.3%	12.4%
Disagree	Count	0	2	4	6
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	3.9%	6.3%	4.4%
Strongly disagree	Count	0	0	1	1
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	.0%	1.6%	.7%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As shown by the data presented in Table 4, the great majority of the Municipality of Hatillo employees who were surveyed by the researcher *strongly agree* or *agree* that they have knowledge of the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law. When the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses are combined (for a total of 82.4%), it is clear that nearly all employees feel that the Government of Puerto Rico and the Municipality of Hatillo have communicated what the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law is. The most significant difference between the employee subgroups' perceptions is in percentages that *strongly agree* with Perception Statement 2: 54.5% of supervisors and 31.3% of office employees.

Table 5
Survey Results for Perception Statement 3

Perception Statement #3: Acts of corruption are properly prosecuted in the Municipality of Hatillo.

		Employment Classification			
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	Total
Strongly agree	Count	13	24	25	62
	% within Employment Classification	59.1%	47.1%	39.1%	45.3%
Agree	Count	5	15	16	36
	% within Employment Classification	22.7%	29.4%	25.0%	26.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	3	6	13	22
	% within Employment Classification	13.6%	11.8%	20.3%	16.1%
Disagree	Count	0	6	5	11
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	11.8%	7.8%	8.0%
Strongly disagree	Count	1	0	5	6
	% within Employment Classification	4.5%	.0%	7.8%	4.4%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

When the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses are combined from Table 5, 71.6% of the survey respondents said that the Municipality of Hatillo properly prosecutes acts of corruption. This finding has a positive implication in terms of how employees perceive the ethics environment in the workplace and how the municipality takes action against

unethical behavior. The most significant difference between employee subgroups is in percentages that *strongly agree* with Perception Statement 3: 59.1% of supervisors versus 39.1% of office employees.

Table 6
Survey Results for Perception Statement 4

Perception Statement #4: The frequency with which training related to the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law is offered is adequate for the development of ethics knowledge.

		Employment Classification			
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	Total
Strongly agree	Count	9	28	18	55
	% within Employment Classification	40.9%	54.9%	28.1%	40.1%
Agree	Count	7	11	32	50
	% within Employment Classification	31.8%	21.6%	50.0%	36.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	4	4	8	16
	% within Employment Classification	18.2%	7.8%	12.5%	11.7%
Disagree	Count	1	7	1	9
	% within Employment Classification	4.5%	13.7%	1.6%	6.6%
Strongly disagree	Count	1	1	5	7
	% within Employment Classification	4.5%	2.0%	7.8%	5.1%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As shown by the data presented in Table 6, more than one in three employees (40%) *strongly agree* that the frequency of training related to the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law is adequate for the development of ethics knowledge. In other words, the majority of the survey employees responded positively regarding the training frequency. This is a key finding in terms of understanding how employees identified training as an important aspect of achieving improvements in ethics. The most significant difference between employee subgroups is in percentages that *strongly agree* with Perception Statement 4: 54.9% of technical employees versus 28.1% of office employees.

Table 7
Survey Results for Perception Statement 5

Perception Statement #5: The Committee of Governmental Ethics established in the Municipality of Hatillo efficiently performs its functions

		Employment Classification			
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	Total
Strongly agree	Count	14	25	23	62
	% within Employment Classification	63.6%	49.0%	35.9%	45.3%
Agree	Count	4	16	20	40
	% within Employment Classification	18.2%	31.4%	31.3%	29.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	2	6	10	18
	% within Employment Classification	9.1%	11.8%	15.6%	13.1%
Disagree	Count	1	2	4	7
	% within Employment Classification	4.5%	3.9%	6.3%	5.1%
Strongly disagree	Count	1	2	7	10
	% within Employment Classification	4.5%	3.9%	10.9%	7.3%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As shown by the data presented in Table 7, 45% of survey respondents stated that they *strongly agree* that the Governmental Ethics Committee established in the Municipality of Hatillo efficiently performs its functions. This finding is necessary to understand how

effective the Municipality of Hatillo Ethics Committee is in maintaining an ethical environment. The most significant difference between employee subgroups is in percentages that *strongly agree* with Perception Statement 5: 63.6% of supervisors versus 35.9% of office employees.

Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11 present the survey results regarding implementation. As shown by the data presented in Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11, more than half of the participants *strongly agree* with the implementation of the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law.

Table 8
Survey Results for Implementation Statement 1

		Employment_Classification			
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	Total
Strongly agree	Count	4	16	11	31
	% within Employment Classification	16.2%	31.4%	17.2%	22.6%
Agree	Count	8	13	18	39
	% within Employment Classification	36.4%	25.5%	28.1%	28.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	4	11	19	34
	% within Employment Classification	18.2%	21.6%	29.7%	24.8%
Disagree	Count	6	9	12	27
	% within Employment Classification	27.3%	17.6%	18.8%	19.7%
Strongly disagree	Count	0	2	4	6
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	3.9%	6.3%	4.4%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As shown by the data presented in Table 8, less than one in three (22.6%) of the survey respondents stated that the process by which an act of corruption is reported is effective. This finding indicates that the majority of the surveyed employees do not agree with the process for reporting acts of corruption in the government. This is a potential challenge for the Municipality of Hatillo and the Governmental Ethics Office in maintaining public employees' trust.

Table 9
Survey Results for Implementation Statement 2

		Employment_Classification			
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	Total
Strongly agree	Count	16	30	36	82
	% within Employment Classification	72.7%	58.8%	56.3%	59.9%
Agree	Count	6	12	15	33
	% within Employment Classification	27.3%	23.5%	23.4%	24.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	0	6	9	15
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	11.8%	14.1%	10.9%
Disagree	Count	0	2	4	6
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	3.9%	6.3%	4.4%
Strongly disagree	Count	0	1	0	1
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	2.0%	.0%	.7%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As shown by the data presented in Table 9, the great majority of the survey respondents (59.9%) *strongly agree* that they consider the Puerto Rican Governmental

Ethics Law when making decisions. This finding is positive for the municipality and represents the willingness of the employees to implement what the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law establishes at the moment of making decisions at work.

Table 10
Survey Results for Implementation Statement 3

Implementation Statement #3: In your workplace, you apply the knowledge that you have acquired from attending required courses from the Governmental Ethics Office.

		Employment Classification			Total
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	
Strongly agree	Count	19	35	37	91
	% within Employment Classification	66.4%	68.8%	57.8%	66.4%
Agree	Count	3	12	18	33
	% within Employment Classification	13.6%	23.5%	28.1%	24.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	0	2	4	6
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	3.9%	6.3%	4.4%
Disagree	Count	0	1	2	3
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	2.0%	3.1%	2.2%
Strongly disagree	Count	0	1	3	4
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	2.0%	4.7%	2.9%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10 shows that 66% of the participants apply the knowledge acquired in Governmental Ethics Office courses as required by the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law, which likely has a positive impact on the overall ethical environment of their workplace. This finding represents the most positive employee response to any of the statements considered in the distributed survey. When the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses are combined (for a total of 90.5%), it is clear that having nearly all employees applying ethical knowledge in their work decisions provides the Municipality of Hatillo with an environment of the highest ethical standards.

Table 11
Survey Results for Implementation Statement 4

Implementation Statement #4: The workshops offered by the Governmental Ethics provide information greatly aid you in performing your work responsibilities.

		Employment Classification			Total
		Office employee	Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	
Strongly agree	Count	34	17	31	82
	% within Employment Classification	53.1%	77.3%	60.8%	59.9%
Agree	Count	20	3	15	38
	% within Employment Classification	31.3%	13.6%	29.4%	27.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	6	1	2	9
	% within Employment Classification	9.4%	4.5%	3.9%	6.6%
Disagree	Count	2	1	2	5
	% within Employment Classification	3.1%	4.5%	3.9%	3.6%
Strongly disagree	Count	2	0	1	3
	% within Employment Classification	3.1%	.0%	2.0%	2.2%
Total	Count	64	22	51	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11 shows that more than two in four employees (59.9%) *strongly agree* that workshops offered by the Governmental Ethics Office provide information that aids them

in performing their work responsibilities. This finding makes it clear that the survey respondents feel that the Municipality of Hatillo and the Governmental Ethics Office have an obligation to prepare employees with ethical standards.

Tables 12, 13, 14, and 15 display the survey results regarding compliance.

Table 12
Survey Results for Compliance Statement 1

		Employment Classification			
		Supervisor	Office employee	Technical or professional employee	Total
Strongly agree	Count	7	19	19	45
	% within Employment Classification	31.8%	29.7%	37.3%	32.8%
Agree	Count	7	16	12	35
	% within Employment Classification	31.8%	25.0%	23.5%	25.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	2	10	11	23
	% within Employment Classification	9.1%	15.6%	21.6%	16.8%
Disagree	Count	4	8	8	20
	% within Employment Classification	18.2%	12.5%	15.7%	14.6%
Strongly disagree	Count	2	11	1	14
	% within Employment Classification	9.1%	17.2%	2.0%	10.2%
Total	Count	22	64	51	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As shown in the data presented in Table 12, less than one in three employees (32.8%) responded that they *strongly agree* that the penalties for corrupt acts within government are effective in deterring these acts. This finding presents an opportunity for the government to review the penalties for committing corrupt acts. Employees need to have confidence in how the government processes and penalizes corrupt acts; if this issue is not attended to, the ethical environment may be affected.

Table 13
Survey Results for Compliance Statement 2

		Employment Classification			
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	Total
Strongly agree	Count	15	31	33	79
	% within Employment Classification	68.2%	60.8%	51.6%	57.7%
Agree	Count	6	9	16	31
	% within Employment Classification	27.3%	17.6%	25.0%	22.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	1	9	8	18
	% within Employment Classification	4.5%	17.8%	12.5%	13.1%
Disagree	Count	0	2	3	5
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	3.9%	4.7%	3.6%
Strongly disagree	Count	0	0	4	4
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	.0%	6.3%	2.9%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 13 shows employees' perceptions regarding how their supervisor prevents acts of corruption. When the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses are combined, 80.3% of the survey respondents said that their supervisors demonstrate compliance in preventing acts of corruption and that this is a priority for their supervisors. This has a positive

implication for how employees perceive the environment of ethics in the Municipality of Hatillo.

Table 14
Survey Results for Compliance Statement 3

Compliance Statement #3: You have received training related to the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law.

		Employment Classification			Total
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	
Strongly agree	Count	22	34	38	94
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	66.7%	59.4%	68.6%
Agree	Count	0	12	16	28
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	23.5%	25.0%	20.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	0	2	3	5
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	3.9%	4.7%	3.6%
Disagree	Count	0	0	5	5
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	.0%	7.8%	3.6%
Strongly disagree	Count	0	3	-2	5
	% within Employment Classification	.0%	5.9%	3.1%	3.6%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As shown by the data presented in Table 14, 68.6% of survey respondents *strongly agree* that they have received training related to the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law. This indicates that a substantial majority of survey respondents recall receiving information on the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law. This finding is important because employees' lack of knowledge about ethical issues can create a difficult ethical working environment.

Table 15
Survey Results for Compliance Statement 4

Compliance Statement #4: The mechanisms by which the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law mandates that governmental corruption is disclosed and prevented are adequate for notifying the State Governmental Ethics Office acts of corruption.

		Employment Classification			Total
		Supervisor	Technical or professional employee	Office employee	
Strongly agree	Count	8	18	18	44
	% within Employment Classification	36.4%	35.3%	28.1%	32.1%
Agree	Count	8	22	21	51
	% within Employment Classification	36.4%	43.1%	32.8%	37.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	Count	3	5	16	24
	% within Employment Classification	13.6%	9.8%	25.0%	17.5%
Disagree	Count	2	6	6	14
	% within Employment Classification	9.1%	11.8%	9.4%	10.2%
Strongly disagree	Count	1	0	3	4
	% within Employment Classification	4.5%	.0%	4.7%	2.9%
Total	Count	22	51	64	137
	% within Employment Classification	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As shown by the data presented in Table 15, more than one-third of the participants *strongly agree* or *agree* with, as well as comply with, the mechanisms that the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law mandates to prevent acts of corruption. These compliance results indicate that the participants have a positive perception of ethics in the workplace and the manner in which the Municipality of Hatillo is complying with its ethical responsibilities.

ANOVA Results

The researcher performed a series of one-way ANOVAs to compare the differences in responses among the participant subgroups. The researcher set the level of confidence for the ANOVA score at 95%, meaning that a significance level of less than .05 indicates a statistical difference between subgroups. Because he had found mean differences among the different employee subgroups, he also performed Scheffe post-hoc analysis to identify the precise source of the significant mean differences. Lastly, the researcher performed descriptive analysis to rank the order of the employee subgroups. The results are displayed in Tables 16, 17, and 18.

Table 16
ANOVA Results for Perception

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	6.233	2	3.116	4.145	.018
Within groups	100.760	134	.752		
Total	106.993	136			

Table 17
Descriptive Analysis Results for Perception

N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
				Lower bound	Upper bound	Minimum	Maximum
22	4.2273	.86914	.18530	3.8419	4.6126	2.00	5.00
51	4.1765	.79261	.11099	3.9535	4.3994	2.00	5.00
64	3.7656	.92139	.11517	3.5355	3.9958	1.00	5.00
137	3.9927	.88697	.07578	3.8428	4.1426	1.00	5.00

Table 18
Post-Hoc Analysis Results for Perception

	(I) Classification	(J) Classification	Mean difference (I- J)	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence interval	
						Lower bound	Upper bound
Scheffe	Supervisor	Technical	.05080	.22119	.974	-.4967	.5983
		Office	.46165	.21431	.102	-.0688	.9921
	Technical	Supervisor	-.05080	.22119	.974	-.5983	.4967
		Office	.41085*	.16277	.045	.0079	.8138
	Office	Supervisor	-.46165	.21431	.102	-.9921	.0688
		Technical	-.41085*	.16277	.045	-.8138	-.0079

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 17 demonstrates that group size is different between the employees subgroups considered in the study. Moreover, the descriptive tables present a difference between the means that are from 3.7656 for office employees to 4.2273 for supervisor employees.

Table 16 shows that the ANOVA significance score is .018, indicating that there is a statistically significance difference among the employee subgroups. To further analyze this difference, the researcher performed a Scheffe test to determine which subgroups differ most significantly in their response to the perception statements. As shown in Table 18, he found that the largest difference exists between the technical employee and office employee subgroups. Tables 19, 20, and 21 display the analysis results regarding implementation.

Table 19

ANOVA Results for Implementation

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	2.672	2	1.336	2.445	.091
Within groups	73.225	134	.546		
Total	75.898	136			

Table 20

Descriptive Analysis Results for Implementation

N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error	95% Confidence interval for mean		Minimum	Maximum
				Lower bound	Upper bound		
22	4.5455	.50965	.10866	4.3195	4.7714	4.00	5.00
51	4.3333	.73937	.10353	4.1254	4.5413	2.00	5.00
64	4.1563	.80116	.10015	3.9561	4.3564	2.00	5.00
137	4.2847	.74704	.06382	4.1585	4.4109	2.00	5.00

Table 21
Post-Hoc Analysis Results for Implementation

	(I) Classification	(J) Classification	Mean		Sig.	95% Confidence interval	
			difference (I- J)	Std. error		Lower bound	Upper bound
Scheffe	Supervisor	Technical	.21212	.18856	.533	-.2546	.6789
		Office	.38920	.18269	.107	-.0630	.8414
	Technical	Supervisor	-.21212	.18856	.533	-.6789	.2546
		Office	.17708	.13876	.445	-.1664	.5206
	Office	Supervisor	-.38920	.18269	.107	-.8414	.0630
		Technical	-.17708	.13876	.445	-.5206	.1664

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As shown in Table 19, the ANOVA significance score for implementation is .091, indicating that there is not a statistically significance difference among the employee subgroups. Despite the lack of a statistically significance difference between the subgroups, the researcher performed a Scheffe test to identify which subgroups differ most significantly in their response to the implementation statements. As shown in Table 21, the post-hoc analysis indicated that the largest difference exists between the supervisor and office employee subgroups.

For the implementation statements considered in the questionnaire the descriptive or Table 20 show that there is not a significance difference among the means, and the standard deviation results show that there are no significant differences among the job subcategories. Tables 22, 23, and 24 display the descriptive analysis results regarding compliance.

Table 22
ANOVA Results for Compliance

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	2.661	2	1.330	1.767	.175
Within groups	100.872	134	.753		
Total	103.533	136			

Table 23
Descriptive Analysis Results for Compliance

	N	Mean	Std. deviation	95% Confidence interval for mean				
				Std. error	Lower bound	Upper bound	Minimum	Maximum
Supervisor	22	4.1364	.77432	.16508	3.7931	4.4797	3.00	5.00
Technical	51	4.0392	.84760	.11869	3.8008	4.2776	2.00	5.00
Office	64	3.7969	.91165	.11398	3.5692	4.0246	2.00	5.00
Total	137	3.9416	.87251	.07454	3.7942	4.0890	2.00	5.00

Table 24
Post-Hoc Analysis Results for Compliance

(I)	(J)	Mean			95% Confidence interval			
		Classification	Classification	difference (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.	Lower bound	Upper bound
Supervisor	Technical			.09715	.22131	.908	-.4507	.6450
	Office			.33949	.21443	.289	-.1913	.8703
Technical	Supervisor			-.09715	.22131	.908	-.6450	.4507
	Office			.24234	.16286	.334	-.1608	.6455
Office	Supervisor			-.33949	.21443	.289	-.8703	.1913
	Technical			-.24234	.16286	.334	-.6455	.1608

As shown in Table 22, the ANOVA significance score for the compliance statements is .175, indicating that there is not a statistically significance difference among the employee subgroups. Despite the lack of a statistically significance difference among the subgroups, the researcher performed a Scheffe test to identify which groups differ most significantly in their response to the compliance statements. As shown in Table 24, the post-hoc analysis indicated that the largest difference exists between the supervisor and office employee subgroups.

For the compliance statements considered in the questionnaire the descriptives or Table 23 show that there is not a significance difference among the means, and the standard deviation results show that there are no significant differences among the employee subgroups.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of Results and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law has affected the perception of corruption among Municipality of Hatillo employees. The results presented in the previous chapter in Tables 16, 19, and 22 can be applied to the three research questions and the supporting hypotheses articulated in the preceding chapter. The data gathered to answer the three research questions will be analyzed in this section, which contains a summary of the findings presented in Chapter 4.

Implications for Public Sector

This study has important implications for the public sector and for governmental ethics. Moreover, it has important implications for those seeking to understand and develop the Municipality of Hatillo employees' ethical environment. The results of this study can help the Municipality of Hatillo to determine which employee job classifications require further attention to ethical development and how employees at various levels of the organizational hierarchy perceive the ethical environment.

The study results indicate that the ethical education that is required under the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law is necessary and important for the development of ethical maturity in public sector employees. Employees of the Municipality of Hatillo agreed with dedication of time and coursework to ethics. The study results in Table 10 indicate that 66% of the participants stated that they had applied the knowledge they acquired in Governmental Ethics Office courses as required by the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law. Weaver and Treviño (2001) found that values and compliance orientations are important in reducing obviously unethical behavior.

Furthermore, it is important for those in the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Office to review their educational ethics program. Governmental employees in Puerto Rico are required to comply with ethical training that results in earning at least 10 continuing education credits within 2 years. To understand the efficiency of these programs, a periodic educational assessment process must be implemented. Such a process would assure that the investment in ethical educational programs is being monitored.

Governmental agencies must recognize the utility of modern educational programs using tools such as the Internet, which can be cost-effective. The efficiency of such tools must be monitored and tested through employee assessment programs.

Implications for Governmental Management

This study presents important implications regarding ethical management within the Municipality of Hatillo and the Puerto Rican government. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the Puerto Rican Governmental Ethics Law has affected the perception of corruption among Municipality of Hatillo employees. Furthermore, this research study links the ethics educational programs created by the Puerto Rican Ethics Law to employees' ethical development in the Municipality of Hatillo.

The Municipality of Hatillo in Puerto Rico serves a population of 38,925 with a budget of \$8 million. It provides services related to health, security, education, Federal Programs Administration, housing, transportation, sports, and food assistance. The municipality has received a prize for Administrative Excellence from the Puerto Rican Comptroller Office for the past 11 years. To maintain this success, it is crucial for municipality leaders to observe the organization's ethical environment.

The study results demonstrated that there was a link between the ethics educational programs in the municipality and employees' ethical development levels. Furthermore, as Table 16 indicates, there is a significant statistical difference in perceptions among Municipality of Hatillo employees by job classification. One of the employee job classifications considered in the study was supervisor. Employees with this job classification showed a statistically significant difference in their perceptions of ethics

relative to office employees. Municipality of Hatillo supervisors must be responsible for their employees complying with the ethics educational programs required by the Puerto Rican Ethics Law. As supervisors, they must also provide ethical examples for their employees. To develop a more ethical climate, supervisors must increase their participation and compliance with the ethics educational programs that are required by law.

Those in municipal and governmental management must recognize that the Puerto Rican Ethics Office has a \$10.6 million budget for ethics education and corruption prevention. The Puerto Rican Ethics Office needs assistance from the municipalities and governmental agencies to achieve higher ethical maturity among employees.

Table 8 indicates that less than one in three (22.6%) of the survey respondents stated that the process by which an act of corruption is reported is effective. This finding shows that the majority of surveyed employees did not agree with the process for reporting acts of corruption in the government. This is a potential challenge for the Municipality of Hatillo and the Governmental Ethics Office in maintaining public employees' trust. Managers in the government are responsible for implementing periodic and comprehensive educational assessment programs. Such programs can help in developing an understanding of how employees are learning about ethics and developing ethically.

Improved ethical education and ethical perception are necessary for a better ethical environment in the workplace. Governmental management and governmental employees must be reminded that their acts of corruption will be penalized and that corruption is not accepted in their place of work.

Directions for Future Research

A wide range of possible directions for future research on governmental ethics could be suggested on the basis of this study.

It would be beneficial to understand how employees perceive justice at the moment that they are notifying others of acts of corruption. Moreover, by examining additional data by job classifications, one could understand whether there are significant differences in employees' justice perceptions at different levels of the organizational hierarchy. Such information could help governmental authorities in attending to employees' notifications of acts of corruption.

Employees outside the City Hall offices in the Municipality of Hatillo need to be researched in order to assess their ethical knowledge. Data on this group could shed light on whether being located outside the City Hall offices limits employees' ethical understanding and knowledge development. Those in governmental upper management could be encouraged to participate in these research studies to motivate their employees to participate. The endorsement of upper management could help to increase employee participation in a research study.

The current research could be implemented in the other 77 Puerto Rican municipalities to create additional knowledge in the field of governmental ethics. The current study could be replicated not only at the municipal level, but also at the Puerto Rican state governmental offices; such replication would help in testing hypotheses regarding the local governments and state offices. Moreover, instead on focusing on

ethical development, research could focus on understanding the relationship between governmental employees' ethical approach and work decisions.

A periodic ethical assessment program could help to build an understanding of how governmental employees are developing their ethical knowledge. Ponce (2009) explained that "Assessment occurs in the daily process of education, knowledge must be monitored, and . . . assessment requires the implementation of clear educational goals and objectives" (p. 3). Understanding the efficiency of the educational strategies that are being implemented at governmental agencies and municipalities will help in increasing ethical awareness and organizational responsibility. Future research and assessment strategies must reflect a consideration of the advantages of new technologies such as the Internet, long distance learning, videoconferencing, and assessment tests.

If these research directions are pursued, the resulting data could help the Puerto Rican government in understanding the ethical knowledge of employees in order to develop an ethical environment that serves to restore the confidence of the people of Puerto Rico in their government and in their public officials. An improved ethical environment could help to prevent and penalize the criminal behavior of those officials who, in the performance of their governmental work, violate the basic principles of an ethics of excellence.

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