

How Should Transparency Be Arranged? A Japanese Case

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Abstract

Japan has been ranked as the twentieth most transparent government in the world and the third cleanest country in Asia. However, there is no specific anti-corruption agency and transparency assessment to curb corruption in the Japanese governance. How does Japan deal with corruption and its transparency? This paper delves into an explanation to this question. The main purposes are to (1) examine corrupt practices in the public sector of Japan, and (2) scrutinize the Japanese ways to deal with corruption and transparency enhancement in the Japanese public sector. The author uses documentary research as the main methodology for this study. Results show that Japan has a relatively low proportion of corruption in both national and local governments. The Japanese ways to cope with corruption and transparency in public sector could be classified into two means. First, an internal preventative mechanism consists of five elements which are; ringi-sei system, official payment, proper remuneration, oobeya-shugi system, and frequency of official rotation. Second, an external corruption control apparatus consists of three components which are: participatory countermeasure of local residents by Citizens' Ombudsman Network, survey on the causes of corruption in local government, and capacity and independence of investigation authorities.

Keywords: corruption, transparency, public sector, Japan

การยกระดับความโปร่งใสในภาครัฐ : กรณีศึกษาจากประเทศญี่ปุ่น

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บทคัดย่อ

ญี่ปุ่นถูกจัดให้เป็น 1 ใน 20 ประเทศที่มีความโปร่งใสมากที่สุดในโลก และ 1 ใน 3 ของเอเชีย ทั้ง ๆ ที่ญี่ปุ่นเองไม่มีหน่วยงานที่รับผิดชอบด้านการจัดการกับปัญหาการทุจริตคอร์รัปชันในภาครัฐโดยเฉพาะเหมือนในหลายประเทศ ดังนั้นจึงทำให้ผู้เขียนเกิดความสนใจศึกษาแนวทางการจัดการกับปัญหาทุจริตคอร์รัปชันในภาครัฐของญี่ปุ่นใน 2 ประเด็นคือ 1) ศึกษาสถานภาพและรูปแบบการทุจริตคอร์รัปชันในภาครัฐของญี่ปุ่น และ 2) วิเคราะห์แนวทางการจัดการกับปัญหาทุจริตคอร์รัปชันดังกล่าว โดยอาศัยการวิจัยเอกสารเป็นวิธีหลักในการศึกษา ผลการศึกษาพบว่าญี่ปุ่นเป็นประเทศที่มีระดับปัญหาการทุจริตคอร์รัปชันค่อนข้างต่ำทั้งในหน่วยงานส่วนกลางและระดับองค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่น นอกจากนี้ แนวทางในการควบคุมและจัดการกับปัญหาการทุจริตคอร์รัปชันในภาครัฐของญี่ปุ่นสามารถแบ่งได้เป็น 2 มิติ ได้แก่ 1) กลไกป้องกันการทุจริตคอร์รัปชันภายในหน่วยงาน ประกอบด้วย 5 องค์ประกอบหลัก ได้แก่ ระบบวินิชีระบบและเงื่อนไขการจ่ายเงินของหน่วยงานราชการ สัดส่วนค่าตอบแทนที่เหมาะสม ระบบโอเบยาซูกิ และระบบการหมุนเวียนบุคลากรในหน่วยงาน 2) กลไกควบคุมการทุจริตคอร์รัปชันจากภายนอกหน่วยงาน ประกอบด้วย 3 องค์ประกอบ ได้แก่ การมีส่วนร่วมเพื่อตรวจสอบการทำงานของรัฐบาลจากภาคประชาสังคมในระดับท้องถิ่นผ่านเครือข่ายผู้ตรวจการภาคพลเมือง ระบบสำรวจสาเหตุของปัญหาการทุจริตคอร์รัปชันในองค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่น และศักยภาพและความเป็นอิสระของหน่วยงานสืบสวน

คำสำคัญ: การทุจริตคอร์รัปชัน ความโปร่งใส ภาครัฐ ประเทศญี่ปุ่น

1) Introduction

Nowadays, the idea of clean government has been widely recognized. However, what exactly is clean government? Apparently, clean government denotes the public sector with an ability to: publicly reveal their performances related to public affairs which are (supposed to be) carried out efficiently and equally by officials. In case of the government is going to be dirty (or un-cleaned) and citizens are recognized that government's performances do not 'clean' enough for them to rely on, then the government need to be cleaned by some means. However, the ways to respond to an un-clean government are different from one country to another. Some countries such as Thailand, have utilized an assessment to appraise the government's performances on transparency and corruption issues in the hope of heightening its transparency reliabilities and public trust. On the other hand, some countries such as Japan have no such an assessment, but using some mechanisms. Surprisingly, the results of these different ways on transparency measures are highly distinct.

In Thailand, neither an elected-government nor a military government have failed in dealing with corruption. From a global perspective, the Transparency International (TI) reports in 2016 on Corruption Perception Index (CPI) shows that Thailand was ranked in 101st among 176 countries (Transparency International, 2017), this means Thailand is a highly corrupt state. In addition to this, World Bank also reports in 2016 showing that there is no an effective anti-corruption mechanism to prevent corrupt practices in government agencies (World Bank, 2017).

Nevertheless, to deal with corruption issues, the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) of Thailand has adopted an assessment which is modeled from South Korea's Integrity Assessment (IA), and develop into a new assessment system called Integrity and Transparency Assessment (ITA) (NACC, 2018). ITA has been formally used as the main mechanism to evaluate and look on public sector transparency in Thailand, especially in local government since 2015 (NACC, 2018 see also Pholsim, 2017; Srikrueadong & Rangmeesrisuk & Uthaikitjarak, 2017).

For Japan, there is no transparency assessment measure, as well as a specific anti-corruption agency to deal with corruption issues. Surprisingly, in 2016 Japan was ranked 20th among 176 countries around the world (Transparency International, 2017). However, if Japan has no anti-corruption agency and assessment tool, *how does Japan curb with corruption issues?*

In the normal ways, we have always seen a highly self-responsible Japanese politician responds to their own scandals which is rarely find in other (developing) countries. However, only politician norms would not effectively curb with corruption. But there are also other patterns and mechanisms in the Japanese public sector which improve transparency. This paper traces on these

points, and the author believes that learning from Japanese case would be beneficial and contributes to the corruption control and transparency development for Thailand.

However, based on the study's framework, the transparency idea in this paper focuses on capacities of government of being open in clear disclosure of information, working procedures, and any creative ways of government to promote public engagement and prevent the corruption in public sectors.

2) Objectives

The main objective of this paper is to I.) examine on the corruption issues situation in Japanese public sectors, and II.) contemplate on the Japanese ways to curb with transparency enhancement and corruption control in Japanese public sector.

3) Methodology

The Author uses documentary research as a main method to examine the transparency enhancement and corruption control in Japan by reviewing books, journals, researches, and official reports related to corruption issues in Japan. This study is basically analyzed by using descriptive and content analysis.

4) Literature Review

4.1) Japanese Transparency

Curbing with corruption is complicated since the complexity of society has always been evolved, so does the corruption. The corrupt ways and patterns have been gradually developed along with the complicated evolution of an (*un*) public administration, political chaos, and capitalist influences. As a result, there are no absolute means to curb with corruption, because each society has its own ways of corruption. However, the global recognition shows that transparency could be, at least, a complementary means to deal with corruption in both public and private sectors. Therefore, at the beginning part, it is worthy to contemplate on Japanese transparency before going through this paper.

Focusing on transparency of Japan, it prominently displays that Japan has been performing as the third cleanest state in Asia, and most twentieth cleanest country in the world (Transparency International, 2017). However, tracing on Japanese governance regarding to corruption control shows a distinctive way to cope with corruption issues. Because, in Japan, there is no an anti-corruption agency compares to many other countries in this globe, the corruption offences are under the police authority (Hasegawa, 2000: 469-475; Parker, 2001; Reed, 1996: 400).

Surprisingly, the transparency and corruption control performances of Japan have been standing out notably in the world. Based on the well-known survey on transparency and corruption, *Corruption Perception Index (CPI)*, which annually launched by Transparency International. The CPI's report during 2012 -2016 shows that Japan has always been ranked at the twentieth cleanest country in the globe, and the third cleanest state in Asia as show in Table 1. Therefore, in case of Japan, it shows that they might not need to create any specific agency to deal with the corruption issue, since in the global perspective and comparison, Japanese governance still functions *transparently*.

Table 1 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking of Japan during 2012-2016

Country	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	rank	score	rank	score	rank	score	rank	score	rank	score
Singapore	5	87	5	86	7	84	7	85	7	84
Hong Kong	14	77	15	75	17	74	18	75	15	77
Japan	17	74	18	74	15	76	18	75	20	72
Total Country	176		177		175		167		172	

Source: *Transparency International (2013 & 2014 & 2015 & 2016 & 2017)*

In addition, there is also another survey on governance assessment which annually launched by The World Bank, *Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)*, has been launched since 1996 to evaluate government's performance across the world. The WGI's survey consists of six criterions which are; i.) voice and accountability, ii.) political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, iii.) government effectiveness, iv.) regulatory quality, v.) rule of law, and vi.) control of corruption (The World Bank, 2017; Kaufmann & Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2010). In 2017's report shows that Japan has effectively performed in all six dimensions, especially in government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and corruption control indexes. However, specifically focus on the control of corruption index, WGI's 2017 report shows that, even though the corruption control in Japan has been declined as shown in Figure 1, but it is still effective, since an aggregate score of Japan is 90.87 from 100 percent (The World Bank, 2017), which means the Japanese governance on corruption control is highly effective.

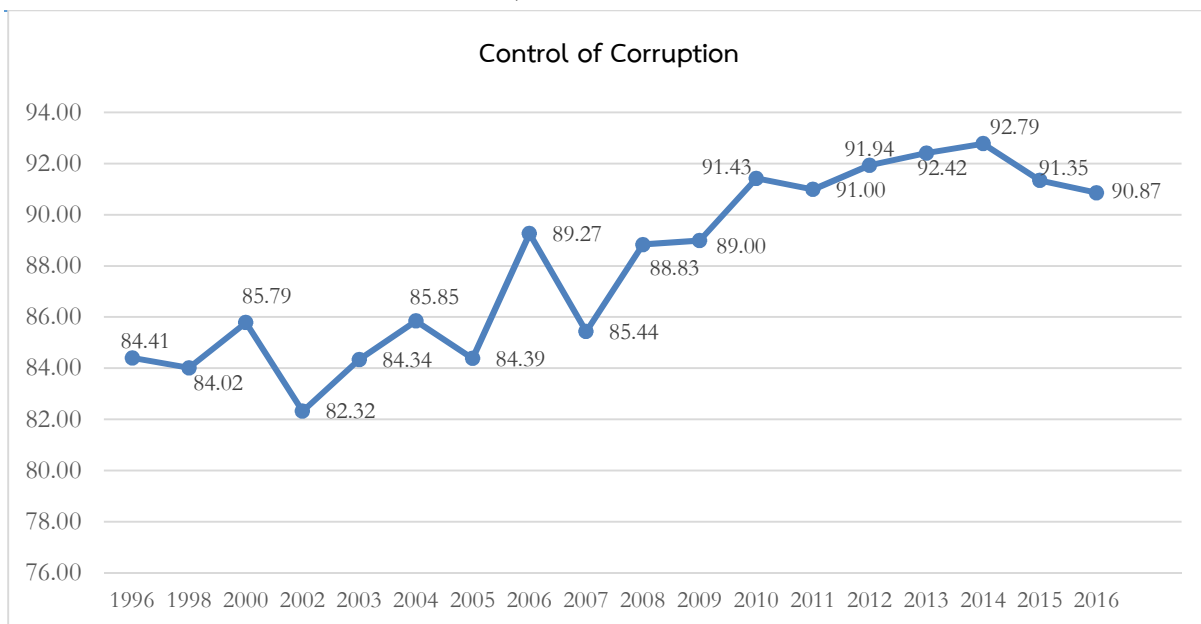


Figure 1 Worldwide Governance Indicator on Control of Corruption Index in Japan

*Remark: score is ranked by percentile among all countries form 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest) which means the high score, the high performance.

Adopt form: Full Dataset of the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicator

However, even these international reports classify Japan as a transparent state, and Japanese government is well-functioned, but it does not mean Japan has no corruption. On the other hand, there are, but its structural administrative corruption ways in bureaucracy and Japanese perspectives and norms on corruption, make it difficult to find out or disclose the corrupt practices to the society. Nonetheless, the next section would trace on the corrupt patterns in both bureaucratic and political corruption issues in Japan.

5) Result

5.1) Corruption Situation in Japan

Focusing on corruption study in Japan shows limitations, because the studies or literatures on Japanese corruption are limited (Reed, 1996: 395; Babb, 2005: 174-181). The conventional approach for Japanese corruption studies has its own drawbacks and constraints (Babb, 2005: 174-181); *economic rationality approach* seems to simplify and construct an implicit assumption; *cultural approach* does not provide an insight internal logic of Japanese politician in which how they construct their interpretation of corruption, *rational choice approach* arbitrarily elucidates value

preferences into their model, *institutional approach* using empirical evidence from historical events and collected data could not completely review the lived experience of Japanese with the corruption. Therefore, to understand corruption in Japan, Babb (2005: 181-183) argues that we should broaden on Japanese hermeneutic context. Reminiscently, focusing on the Japanese hermetic and history reveal that the corruption issues can be interpreted in various patterns, but it is not important than disciplinarization, democratization, and equalization which sometime avoids to mention the corruption, or even ignores it, in both the past and nowadays (Babb, 2005: 174-181; Reed, 1996: 395-405) as it shows in Japanese society, corrupt-politicians have always been re-elected. However, this pattern has not only been in Japan, but also in any democratic states.

Therefore, this section tries to identify and explore the corrupt practices in the Japanese public sector. However, even Japan shows an excellent performance on transparency. But, similar to any country in this globe and the nature of human creature, there is a various form of corruption as well. Nonetheless, in the opposite to many other countries, in case of Japan, the corruption is uncommonly (or rarely) takes place in their daily life (Kamiko: 2015; Hasegawa, 2000: 469), but rather in political and bureaucratic spheres (Mitchell, 1996; Reed, 1996: 395-405; Yoshida & Park, 2017: 142-150; Iga & Auerbach, 1997: 556-564).

Based on an annual report of the National Personnel Authority (NPA), an independent organ for Japanese public officer management, annually reports on the officials' disciplinary action cases. Therefore, focusing on NPA's annual report could conspicuously show the corrupt and demoralized practices in both national and local government as shown in Table 2 and 3 about the officials who violate act against National Government Officials Ethics Law and National Public Service Ethics Law.

Interestingly, most of demoralized practices that annually report is *misconduct outside the public service* which means public services and tasks carried out in workplace are still clean enough, followed by irregularity related to service's discipline, irregularity related to daily works, traffic offence, bribery, embezzlement, and misconduct regarding to public money management. However, the number of demoralized and corrupt practices in central agencies has been declined as shown in Table 2. In addition to this, if we examine on the proportion in 2016 between total number of national officials and officers who corrupt, it shows that corrupt-officers in central agency are small, around 0.045 percent, and most of the corruption offences by embezzlement and bribery are dismissal.

Table 2 Overview of Demoralized and Corrupt Practices in Central Agencies of Japan

No.	Demoralized and Corrupt Practices	Year					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1	Embezzlement, etc.	10	14	6	11	15	15
2	Acceptance of bribes, entertainment or treat, etc. (violations of the Ethics Act, etc.)	11	43	7	13	8	7
3	Irregularity related to general service discipline (absence, inappropriate working attitude, etc.)	63	51	65	69	60	40
4	Irregularity related to transaction of daily work (improper processing, failure to report, etc.)	76	71	68	57	26	25
5	Irregularity related to handling of public money or property (loss, wrongful handling, etc.)	4	3	5	11	2	6
6	Traffic offence	77	49	45	55	41	32
7	Misconduct outside the public service (theft, assault, etc.)	128	131	123	145	123	122
8	Lack of supervisory responsibility	14	21	13	6	9	16
Total case		383	383	332	367	284	263
Total number of central officials (in 2016)		583,000					

Source: data during 2011-2012 from Kamiko (2015) and during 2013-2016 from National Personnel Authority (2012 & 2013 & 2014 & 2015 & 2016 & 2017)

Furthermore, considering on statistics of demoralized and corrupt patterns in local government shows that most of local government officer's demoralized-practice involve with *public services efficiency and attitude*, followed by traffic offences, misconducts outside the office, lack of supervisory responsibility, bribery and embezzlement, and illegal labour union activities. Notwithstanding, the apportionment in 2016 between total number of local officials and officials who corrupt, displays that aggregation of them is small, around 0.15 percent. In addition, most of the local officers' demoralized-practices which classify as corruption offence are dismissed.

Table 3 Overview of Officials' Demoralized and Corrupt Practices in Japanese Local Government

Demoralized and Corrupt Practices	Year								
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Mismanagement related to recruitment and salary	86	46	42	48	60	58	68	60	98
Irregularity related to general services	2,189	2,214	1,868	1,676	1,965	2,041	1,760	1,693	1,705
Misconducts outside office	772	679	855	797	909	899	758	798	723
Embezzlement and bribery	163	118	129	167	94	96	114	104	131
Traffic offences and accidents	1,367	1,263	1,302	1,147	1,079	1,022	1,052	1,058	1,008
Illegal labour union activities	50	176	17	-	42	8	33	8	1
Lack of supervisory responsibility	1,029	1,487	705	779	613	607	627	527	552
Total case	5,656	5,983	4,918	4,614	4,762	4,731	4,412	4,248	4,218
**Total number of local officials (in 2016)	2,740,000								

Source: *Annual Survey on Disciplinary Actions Taken Against Local Government Officials by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2009 & 2010 & 2011 & 2012 & 2013 & 2014 & 2015 & 2016 & 2017)*

****** part time or non-regular employees are excluded, about 140,000 employees (National Public Authority, 2016; Statistics Bureau, 2017)

In addition, it would be worthy to examine not only on corrupt practices in public sector, but also political ways of corruption in Japan. Reminiscently to political corruption evolution of Japan, some argues that political corruption has been remained since the prewar, and democracy and political party are failed, Babb (2005:184-186) also asserts that Japanese representative democracy has its own flaws, and legacy from the Occupation reform contributes to the construction of corruption patterns in democratic governance of Japan as he said “*The main legacy of the Allied occupation may have been more democracy , but also more corruption, and more moralizing over the problem of corruption*”.

However, Japanese political corruption has its own ways to demoralize and corrupt such as; frequency of gift-giving tradition, study tour and sightseeing (*Kenshukai*), biddings, and personal network. These are prominent in political ways of corruption in Japan (Choi, 2007: 933; Kamiko, 2010: 260-262; Scheiner, 2006: 64-89; Reed, 1996: 396-398; Iga & Auerbach, 1997: 556; Mitchell, 1996: 144). Based on Japanese customs, which is frequent occasions of gift-giving, there is a little need for Japanese to bribe under the table. In the same way, *kenshukai* (study tour and sightseeing) which hosted by political candidates and politician's supporter club, usually takes place with politician donation to entertain their supporters, who are normally given around 3,000 yen per participant (Iga & Auerbach, 1997: 558). Besides, Japan is a comprehensive 'clique' (*habatsu*) and networking society, connection between *politician*, *big business*, and *bureaucrat* is noticeable in both policy making and corrupt ways (Sato, 2005: 23-38; Hook, 2005: 1; Fukushima, 1989: 255-277). Corresponding to Reed (1996: 401) said; "*When the government has much influence over which companies will profit and grow, bribery is a good investment. Japanese companies invested heavily and profited greatly.*"

Furthermore, focusing on prominent bureaucratic system in Japan which is administrative guidance and *Amakudari* are main issues of the corruption between Japanese bureaucrats and private sector. The term *Amakudari* could be literally translated as 'descent from the heaven' (Mizoguchi & Quyen, 2012: 813-847; Inatsugu, 2011: 29-49; Choi, 2007: 933-934), which means high ranking retired-bureaucrats will be sent to work with big company at a prestigious position as their postretirement employment or a second career for retiring bureaucrats. In this sense, *Amakudari* is problematic, and has been a structural administrative corruption in Japan (Choi, 2007: 930-942). Because personal network between businessman and elite bureaucrats has been used for the reciprocal benefits (Jones, 2014: 954-959; Mizoguchi & Quyen, 2009; Choi, 2007: 930-942; Khondaker, 2008: 1-20; Usui & Colignon, 1995: 682-698; Blumenthal, 1985: 310-321). In addition, *Amakudari* always benefits to companies, because retiring bureaucrats who will be dispatched to the company under *Amakudari*, are usually the former ministry officials whose works are closely related to business of private firms which they will be work with in postretirement employment, so that companies can use their (elite bureaucrats) expertise and personal network for company advantages.

5.2) Curbing with Corruption and Transparency Enhancement in Japanese Public Sector

"All men are good at birth, same are their natures, different are their habit"

Above quotation is translated from "*San Zi Jing*," in a Confucian thought written by Wang Yinglin (1223-1296), scholar in Confucian political philosophy, which is used in the formal child's education in China (Dong & Yang & Wang, 2010, p.97). This thought is rational, since all human creature are

supposed to be good at birth, but distinct in *habit*. Corruption is taken the same way, the differences on corruption situation in each country are disparate depend on *corrupt habit and norms* of citizen in each society. Therefore, how the society constructs their citizen's habit and norms are crucial for identifying effective ways to curb with the corruption.

In the same way token, public organization as the 'society organ' has its own norms and specific habit-forming for their members to construct organization's working culture. This is one mechanism which Japan has been utilized for dealing with corruption issues in public sector. However, examining on the preventative ways to curb with corruption issue and transparency enhancement in Japanese government agencies could be classified into two mechanisms which are; *I.) internal preventative apparatus within public organization, and II.) external preventative component to curb with corruption in government agencies.*

Nonetheless, even some arguments on Japanese corruption studies contemplate on cultural perspectives tracing to samurai values which construct its gentlemen norms, disciplinary and decisive standards in Japanese bureaucracy (Babb, 2005: 181-183; Kamiko, 2010: 251-271). But, it is somewhat superficial, and the corruption studies should not be purely focused by a cultural relativist, but also hermeneutics and perspectivist which would broaden to an internal logic of corruption (Babb, 2005: 174), and scrutinizing on corrupt mechanism would also be able to identify any demoralized patterns as well as preventative apparatus, to fill loopholes of corruptible systems and structures in its mechanism.

In addition to this, focusing on how Japanese public sector has arranged its transparency enhancement and corruption control systems would display one of the reasons why Japan has always considered as the clean-state. At first, internal preventative mechanism to curb with corruption in Japanese government agencies comprises of five elements (Kamiko, 2015: 71-72 & 2010: 251-271; Inatsugu, 2001: 8-9) which are; *ringi-sei* system, official's payment, proper remuneration, *oobeya-shugi*, and frequency of officials' rotation.

Ringi-sei system is a collective method for decision making in which any public projects are co-operatively decided within office. This is a preventative modus operando to arbitrary decision making, if one decides to corrupt in any means, another would realize the dysfunction. Because the *Ringi-sei* system involves a number of officers for decision making process which every involved person has to responsible and deal with any matters in the paper and need a personal seal (*inkan*) on it. If someone want to adjust in details, it would be apparently edited on its working paper and passed on to another. In the same way, if once tries to corrupt, which supposes to break the *ringi-*

sei system, the corrupt matters on working papers would be rendered and the skeptics would be investigated. The *ringi-sei* also functions as an interception apparatus to the corrupt practices in government agencies. Because, if someone endeavors to corrupt, it means he/she has to exert and persuade every involved person in whole line of *ringi-sei* system.

It is not only a *rengi-sei* system that could identify as an internal presentation system in Japanese public organization. But there is also a consideration on the amount of Japanese officials payment, because it is relatively large and various kinds of payment. The payment here includes not only salary, but also bonus and retirement allowance. In addition to this, focusing on the payment method condition in Japan, it also contributes to the Japanese public officer's cognizance on the corruption or any demoralized behavior. Because, a huge amount of bonus of officials will be forfeited if he/she implicates with corruption or demoralized offences, and officials will not get any retirement allowance if they are dishonorably dismissed and involved with the corruption. In this sense, the more official's length of service, the more awareness of Japanese officers on not to be in any parts of corruption.

In addition, considering on proper remuneration for officials is one factor which contributes to the low motivation of corruption (Quash, 1999: 73-77). In Japan, the average wage and income are higher than an average of OECDs' countries (OECD, 2017: 8-9). Besides, Japanese official's salary is legally affirmed to be equal with an average salary of private employee. It might not be high, modestly says in Japanese ways, but adequately to deal with their life. In addition, focusing on OECD's income average, it might conspicuously show that how high Japanese officials salary is. This argument on high (or proper) remuneration officials is also similar to Singapore, the cleanest state in Asia. If the corrupt practices and scandals are exposed, it means they are losing all in his career and life.

Furthermore, focusing on how Japanese public sector arranges its internal transparency enhancement and corruption control system could show by "*oobeya-shugi*" system, a Japanese physical workplace style in government agencies, sometimes call large roomism working style or open-office. This workplace style, which officials work in the same room divides job among themselves in each division or section, contributes to the transparency improvement among officers within each division which finally lead to transparency improvement in whole organization. Because, an individual's achievement is evaluated by the whole performances in each division or section. Therefore, mutual monitoring between workers in the same open working-space promotes worker's incentive and working transparency. In addition, the working tradition between officials also sustain the transparency norms in its organization, the low rate of official corruptionists in both national and

local governments as show in Table 2 and 3 for example.

In addition to this, another way of corruption control and transparency improvement in Japanese public sector is the frequency of Japanese government officer's rotation which also conduces to the prevention and low rate of corruption in public agencies. The shortly working interval in one position and rotates to another agency with changes of assignment is typical in Japanese official system. For the national officials, average rotation is every two years, prefectural officer regularly rotates in every three years, and municipal officer is every five years (Kamiko, 2015: 74). In this way, officials could not be able to form personal networks whether with their colleagues or businessman in specific area.

However, focusing on how Japan curb with the corruption by focusing only on internal preventative system is not comprehensive explanation. Because there is also an *external apparatus* which directly functions as a *controlling mechanism* to systematic corruption in Japanese governance and also contributes to an effective transparency arrangement in Japan. Because this external controlling mechanism which comprises of; *participation from local citizen ombudsmen; survey on the causes of corruption in local government; and capacity and independence of an investigation authorities against corruption*, are initiated and supported by government to promote transparency and control the corruption in public sectors.

In Japan, participatory countermeasure to corruption and scandals in public sector is operated by local movement calls, *local citizen ombudsmen* and *neighborhood association*. But, local citizen ombudsman is more directly deal with the corruption and scandal issues rather than neighborhood association which normally deals with social services and development, but neighborhood association also works as a bilateral function involves with monitoring local government as well (Pekkanen & Tsujinaka & Yamamoto, 2014; Shigeru, 2003: 161-178; Parker, 2001: 25-26). The Citizen's (shimin) Ombudsman Network has its own local citizens network across Japan, there are both national and local citizen ombudsmen networks (Kozuka, 2015: 164-184; Kurokawa, 2010: 56-63 Soderberg, 2002; Shigeru, 2003: 161-178; Japan Times, 2014; Repeta, 1999: 21-50; Tsubogo, 2004: 39-61). The roles of Citizen's Ombudsman Network are usually deal with corrupt and inappropriate practices of national and local officials such as; incongruous public spending, disclosure the falsified receipts, and rooting out the bid-rigging (dangou) (Japan Time, 2014; Soderberg, 2000: 5-6). Furthermore, the resident's lawsuit system in Japan also contribute to support the movement of local citizen ombudsman for dealing with corrupt practices of local officials, suing dirty politicians, bureaucrats, and monitoring public spending of government agencies (Walle, 2013: 94-116: Kozuka,

2015: 168-171; Korukawa: 56-58). To rooting-out corrupt and inappropriate practices, the movement of Citizen's Ombudsman Network is supported by laws (Tsubogo, 2014: 43-45; Shigeru, 2003: 166; Soderberg, 2000: 5-6) such as; the Law to promote Specified Nonprofit Activities promulgated in 1998 and National Information Disclosure Act promulgated in 1999. Nowadays, Japanese local citizen ombudsman has its own member throughout Japan, and this movement directly affects bureaucrat's realization on disciplinary working and also contributes to form civic engagement in monitoring governments' performances in each local area. Their performances to curbing with corruption especially in local government are effective (Repeta, 1999: 22-55).

In addition, to be more effective for curbing with corruption, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications launches an annual survey on the causes of corruption to local government officials, targeting mainly to local governments where there has a corruption scandals in each year. This survey traces on an "*understanding*" of local officials about the *causes of corruption* in their organization. The survey comprises mainly three categories (Kamiko, 2015: 69-70) which ask about I.) organizational and systematic problems, II.) problems in working procedures and assignment's implementation, and III.) issues in officials' working quality. As a result, based on this survey in 2011 – 2013 shows that majority of local officials examine on the causes of corruption are stemmed from I.) insufficient supervision, ii.) insufficiency of execution review, and iii.) lack in necessary quality. Most of Japanese local officials examine that organizational system functions well, but the corruption occurs because of improper implementation, which refers to an inadequacy of supervision from supervisor and colleagues in organization.

Another way to control the corruption in Japanese public sector is an effective investigation authority against corruption. This function is under the police and prosecutor authorities (Iwashita, 2012: 77-87; UNAFEL, 1999: 39-58). The police are a primary investigating authority and prosecutor is supplementary on corruption investigation. However, a good collaborative relation contributes to police and prosecutor authorities working as a mutual assistance in an initial investigation to conduct thoughtfully the criminal corruption investigation (Hasegawa, 2000: 469-475; Iwashita, 2012: 77-78). In addition, in Japan, the police and prosecutor are independent authorities even Ministry of Justice could not directly hamper or interfere the investigation, since the persecutor's independent authority is secured by law and any public prosecutor could not be removed nor prejudicially conducted, there is also no arbitrary dismissal and suspension could be made.

Furthermore, in Japan there is the Special Investigation Department which is established under the District Public Prosecutors Offices, this special investigation department is specifically deal

with corruption, bribery, and economic crimes which conducted by officials (Tachi, 2003: 4-13). The Special Investigation Department independently investigates against corrupt practices in public sectors both in detective and investigative authorities. In addition, in Japan, there is also a Local Public Prosecutors Office which is different from District Public Prosecutors Offices that located one in each prefecture throughout Japan (except Hokkaido there are four offices because of its prefecture's size), but Local Public Prosecutors Offices are located at municipality level in major cities, wards, and towns. Nowadays, there are 438 Local Public Prosecutors Offices nationwide (UNAFEI, 1999: 39). Therefore, the comprehensive area-based operational prosecutors, independent authority, and collaborative and stringent investigation against corruption between police and prosecutor authorities directly contribute to the control of corruption in Japan.

6) Conclusion

There is no perfect cure which could completely root out corruption. By the same way token, Japan is not an impeccable country, as same as any country in this globe. Each country has its own corruption patterns which need to be curbed by some means, and learning from the experiences of each other is beneficial to fight against the corruption and demoralized practices. Some Japanese experiences show that changing electoral system is not an effective way to deal with corruption as Curtis (1999: 165) clarifies *"experience suggests that the way to reduce corruption is to pass and enforce laws that are targeted directly at corrupt practices rather than by changing the electoral system."* Since the presumption on the causes of corruption are pre-assumed that, corruption usually comes from political section. Therefore, many countries try to adjust its electoral system with the expectation that this solution would effectively reduce political corruption, Thailand is one of them (see also Pholsim, 2017: 182-190).

However, blaming solely on politician is unfair, since the corruption is proceeded by its *mechanism*, and collusion between bureaucrat, private sector, and politician. This corrupt pattern is usually formed in any countries, but more prominent in terms of clique and networking in Japan. The tripartite collusion and administrative corruption (*amakudari*) are noticeable corrupt issues in the Japanese society. Nonetheless, to curb with these corruption, various countermeasures both internally and externally are formed.

In Japan, the *internal preventative mechanism* is arranged by its own working procedures and norms within public organizations such as; *ringi-sei* system and *oobeya-shugi*. In addition, proper payment and remuneration for officials are also the key elements which contribute to the low incentive of officials to corrupt or conduct any demoralized practices because of substantial

retirement allowances and huge amount of salary are equivalent to private company. Furthermore, frequency of public officer rotation is also one of the preventative measure to inhibit networking and forming the close relation with private firms and colleagues in fraudulent ways.

In addition to this, *external countermeasure against corruption* is also another arrangement which contributes to effectiveness of corruption control and transparency enhancement in Japan. The civic countermeasure of local residents by Citizen's Ombudsman Network is effective, this local citizen movement spreads throughout Japan and independently works against corruption in local government. On the other hand, survey on the causes of corruption in local government is another measure to curb with corruption in Japanese local government as well as an independence and efficiency of related investigation authorities in Japan.

In the conclusion, Japanese ways of curbing the corruption in public sector is a prominent lesson to be learnt both in an internal and external arrangement to control the corruption and enhance transparency in public sector. According to Kis-Katos and Schulze (2013: 85-86) suggests that better transparency through various participation and stringently frequent audit apparatus, and heighten civil servant's salary are effective ways to cope with corruption. Japanese ways are conformed to these patterns or even more comprehensive. The Japanese lesson shows that local movement against the corruption is one of the effective means to deal with corruption and any demoralized issues in local government; Citizen's Ombudsman Network, Local Public Prosecutors, for examples. In addition, the government apparatus and tools against corruption is also important ways to control the corruption; annual survey on the causes of corruption, frequency of officials rotation, remuneration system, internal working procedures, and independence of related anti-corruption authorities are the crucial elements to curb with corruption that we could learn from the Japan.

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