
ANNOTATION

Laguda, FSC, Ricky P. “Being Called to Mission for Stakeholders in Educational Settings” PhD dissertation, De La Salle University, Manila, 2007. 144 pp.

The purpose of Brother Ricky Laguda, FSC’s grounded theory study was to understand what it meant for Lasallians in the Philippines to be “called to Mission” and how they went about deepening their understanding of and commitment to their vocation as Lasallians. In his own words, “this study attempts to articulate the call of the Lasallian Mission in the Philippines, as well as, increase the stakeholders’ (i.e., Brothers and Partners in the Lasallian Mission) consciousness of the need to be more intentional and deliberate in discovering increasingly their vocation or “calling” and doing the Lasallian Mission based on grounded theory processes” (p. 6).

Using a grounded theory approach, Laguda gathered data through interviews, observations, and field notes gathered over five months from 32 students, teachers, administrators, parents, and alumni (both lay and religious – Brothers) serving in various Lasallian schools in the Philippines. Participants were chosen from sections of the District where Brothers’ communities were located. Teachers, staff, and administrators who participated in the study had at least 10 years of experience in Lasallian ministries. Parent participants were active in some leadership capacity for at least one year. Student participants came from Lasallian ministries. Brother participants served either as teachers or administrators in the schools. Alumni participants had served either on a school board or an alumni board for at least one year.

Over a five-month period, from July 2006 until December 2006, Laguda interviewed each participant for one to two hours at their school site, at a time that was convenient for them. Laguda did not record the interviews so as not to interrupt the spontaneity and flow of the interviews. Laguda also explained that interviews that are used for grounded theory are undertaken for the purpose of conceptualization and generating concepts and theses. As such, researcher notes taken after the interview are sufficient for later data analysis. Interviews began with an open-ended question such as, “Briefly tell me something about yourself and how you got involved in the Lasallian family” or “What comes to your mind when you hear the word Lasallian (or Lasallian Mission)?” (p. 14)

Data analysis took place in four stages. The first stage of data analysis used open coding and constant comparison to yield a number of tentative categories. The second stage of data analysis consolidated categories. A third stage of data analysis further refined and confirmed categories. The fourth stage confirmed the core category of “being called to mission.”

Laguda then reviewed data as it related to the emerging core category. This allowed for the creation of a “main story line” which articulated a multi-stage process whereby Lasallians in the Philippines experienced being called to mission and how they engaged with the call. Laguda

identified five dimensions of this process: 1) “discovering of vocational consciousness” (gradually becoming aware of what the call is about vis-à-vis the Lasallian Family); 2) “unfolding, purifying, and cultivating the process of self-definition” (describes ways stakeholders attempt to live the call to Lasallian mission); 3) “contextualizing the process of being called to mission” (stakeholders grow in their vocational awareness); 4) “maturing consecrated witness” (deepening awareness of one’s vocational call leads to a more mature, personal commitment); and 5) “claiming the process of being called to mission” (refers to an informed, mature personal choice to commit to mission and a personal unfolding of what this vocational commitment looks like) (pp. 31-32).

In the “Results and Discussion” section of his dissertation, Laguda used the grounded theory process of “supplementation” to further elaborate the story of “being called to mission.” In doing this, he consulted existing literature and theories to “strengthen the theory’s explanatory power” (p. 34). He spent considerable time discussing each of the five dimensions of the experience of Lasallians in the Philippines being called to mission, breaking down each dimension into several subcategories to more fully and explicitly articulate the process involved in moving through each dimension. For example, for category 1, the discovering of vocational consciousness, Laguda noted that three elements of the process emerged from the data: exploring, crystallizing, and becoming. As he continued to analyze the interview data and his notes, each of these processes yielded several subcategories. For example, “exploring” is composed of several stages; curiosity, fantasy, interest, capacity, and choices (p. 37).

As Laguda continued use of the constant comparison method to analyze the interviews and notes, a description of characteristic kinds of stakeholders emerged. Laguda described stakeholders as belonging to one of six types (pp. 73-74): speedboats (“always on the go”), sailboats (those “who try to find their way in the scheme of things”), tugboats (those “who are thorough and persistent in their course of action”), fishing boats (those “who invite or make an appeal to others to join in the mission”), lifeboats (those who “act as bridgebuilders in situations of conflict and crises”), and rowboats (those “who steer others in a particular direction that furthers the purpose of the mission”).

In addition to the various types of stakeholders that emerged from the data, Laguda also discovered that stakeholders came to view their work in Lasallian schools as more than a professional career. He also identified and discussed three “predisposing factors” that impacted the extent of a stakeholder’s experience of and response to being called to mission: self-identity, passion, and commitment.

Laguda also spent time comparing John Baptist de La Salle’s experience of and response to his “call to mission” to that of the study participants. He found a number of interesting parallels between De La Salle’s journey and the journey of the study participants, including De La Salle’s experience of “exploring, crystallizing, and becoming” in his process of being called to mission. Further, in claiming his missional identity, De La Salle went through experiences of “positioning, re-membling, deepening, and interiorizing” (p.94).

In “Conclusions and Recommendations,” Laguda suggested that this grounded theory study yielded a way of understanding the meaning of being called to the Lasallian mission that could

help other Lasallians reflect on their own vocational calling, thus making better sense of their vocation and assisting in the process of vocational maturity. In addition, he suggested that the study's grounded theory of "being called to mission" had the potential to guide local school leaders in creating space and processes whereby teachers, staff, and administrators could reflect on and make better sense of their individual vocations and of a school community's collective experience of vocation, thus strengthening and guiding personal commitment and practice as well as nurturing the educational community as Lasallian educators.