

ANNOTATION

Suplido, Raymond B., FSC. “A Mixed Methods Study of Teacher Commitment in Lasallian Schools: Concept, Indicators, and Predictive Factors.” PhD dissertation, De La Salle University, Manila. 2006. 242 pp.

The purpose of Brother Raymundo Suplido’s mixed-methods research study was to better understand teacher commitment as conceptualized by Filipino college teachers in Lasallian institutions of higher education in the Philippines. More specifically, Suplido sought to clarify what these teachers perceived to be indicators of commitment as well as the personality and work-related factors that were predictive of commitment (8).

This research study consisted of three sub-studies. The subjects for the study were full-time Filipino teachers in three Lasallian institutions of higher education in three cities in the Philippines. To be included in the study, teachers had to be full-time, permanent teachers who did not have any administrative assignment and were not on any kind of leave (63).

The first sub-study “examined the significance of some personality and work-related factors as predictors or correlates of occupational commitment” (57). More specifically, Suplido sought to articulate a profile of these teachers in terms of three facets of occupational commitment (derived from Meyer & Allen, 1991) – affective, continuance, and normative – and various personality and work-related factors. 330 teachers were invited to complete a questionnaire booklet that contained a number of sub-questionnaires. Out of the 216 questionnaires that were submitted, 184 of them were complete and were included in the study. (64) Descriptive statistics were used to create a profile of the group, and hierarchical regression was used to “determine the strongest predictors of the criterion variables: occupational commitment and its affective, continuance and normative components” (79).

The second sub-study used focus group interviews to explore how teachers from the same subject pool conceptualized occupational commitment, what they perceived to be indicators of their commitment, and the factors they considered to be important in the development of their commitment (58). Using stratified random sampling, Suplido invited teachers from the subject pool to participate in one of ten focus group discussions. In all, 51 teachers participated in the focus group discussions (66). Each focus group discussion was led by a team of experienced facilitators, one of whom took notes during the focus group discussion. These notes were analyzed by two expert judges to arrive at a preliminary set of categories and sub-categories. After meeting with the researcher and discussing the initial categorization, the set was revised into major and minor categories related to the three dimensions of commitment, indicators of commitment, and contributors to the growth of commitment (79).

The third sub-study used a semi-structured interview format to more deeply explore occupational commitment. A total of ten teachers were interviewed, representing one of two categories:

strongly committed teachers (who were either recommended by their peers or administrators or self-identified as such), or former teachers who had left the profession and were now engaged in another profession* (66-67). “Semi-structured Interview Guide for Strongly Committed Teachers” and a “Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Former Teachers” were used, with the framework for each guide coming from the questions discussed in focus groups (75-76). A content analysis was done on the interview reports, using the categories that emerged from the second study.

The results of the statistical analysis of the questionnaire data in study one revealed a picture of college teachers in Lasallian schools as, among other things, conscientious, dependable, responsible, self-disciplined, with a strong affective commitment to teaching (meaning that they teach because they want to) and “more than slightly committed to their occupation due to a sense of duty or obligation” (199). Hierarchical regression analysis indicated that the most reliable predictors of teacher occupational commitment were job satisfaction and perceived organizational support – both work-related predictors (201) that point more toward interdependence than independence.

Analysis of the Focus Group Discussion data from study two yielded three major categories of occupational commitment: motivational, affective, and behavioral (108). Within each category were a number of sub-categories (109, 113-1114, 116-117). The focus group data yielded this definition of occupational commitment: “The commitment of teachers to their occupation is a psychological state with three dimensions: motivational (‘why I am committed to teaching’), affective (‘what I feel as a committed teacher’), and behavioral (‘what am I doing or will do as a committed teacher’)” (119). The focus group discussion data also yielded a list of “attitudinal and behavioral indicators of strong commitment” (129). These indicators reflected and expanded upon each of the three dimensions of the model. Finally, the focus group discussions also yielded a list of factors identified by focus group participants as contributing to the development of their commitment. Suplido concluded his discussion of study two with this statement: “. . . the qualitative data showed that external or environmental factors played a very significant role in the development and persistence of occupational commitment. Internally held beliefs and convictions, interacting with interpersonal and socio-cultural factors, were strengthened or weakened by actual environmental conditions” (139).

For study three, the results of the semi-structured interviews of the strongly-committed teachers were presented as individual cases. Each case began with a brief bio of each person, a summary of his or her insights with regard to teacher occupational commitment, and a summary of the factors he or she identified as contributing to a deeper teacher commitment (140). These cases were followed by three cases of former teachers who had moved on to another occupation. These cases reported the following: what led each person to become a teacher, how they understood commitment to teaching and/or his or her present occupation, and what led him or her to leave education (157). A review of these cases revealed that the findings in study three were generally consistent with the findings in study two (175).

A general discussion that integrated the findings of the three studies highlighted some important findings: first, a three-dimensional model of teacher commitment, including its predictors and

indicators; and second, “the predominance of an interdependent cultural framework among Filipino Lasallian teachers” (177; discussion 187-191).

Suplido concluded his study with a series of recommendations based on the findings and conclusions of his study. These included recommendations for counselors of both students and teachers, for institutional policies and practices, and for future research.