

ANNOTATION

Magbanua, Dennis M. “Accompervising: A Grounded Theory on the Lasallian Supervision of De La Salle Supervised Schools in the Philippines.” PhD dissertation, De La Salle University – Dasmariñas, 2015. 228 pp.

The De La Salle Brothers in the Philippines have a long history of responding to requests to supervise schools outside their network. Some requests come from the Church but most come from business companies or wealthy families, located in remote areas of the country. These companies and families have established schools for the children of their employees and desire that these children receive a quality education. Initially, an individual Brother was responsible to supervise one or more of these schools. Over time, as the number of schools increased, the Brothers established a Supervised School System with a central office and staff to oversee governance, curricula, formation and physical-facility needs for these schools.

This particular study sought to answer the question of how school supervision is understood and lived in the De La Salle supervised-schools system by its major stakeholders: the school owners, the De La Salle Brothers, the school boards and administrators. As no theoretical framework of supervision existed, the purpose of the study was to develop a grounded theoretical framework that could “guide the policymakers and the other stakeholders that govern the major goals, policies and practices of the supervised-schools system.”

The researcher utilized *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), B. Glaser and A. Strauss’ classical qualitative Ground Theory Method (GTM), and the constructivist approach of K. Charmaz in *Constructing Grounded Theory* (2006) to explore a potential framework for the De La Salle Supervised School System. According to Glaser and Strauss: “Grounded Theory is the process of generating theory from data in an organized and thorough manner in order to show the relationship between concepts. The purpose of the method is to generate a theory that is grounded from a set of data that has undergone rigorous coding and constant comparison. This method does not invent theory but rather theory is discovered by allowing its emergence” (31-32).

Charmaz (2006) defines constructivism in Grounded Theory as: “a social scientific perspective that addresses how realities are made. This perspective shows that people, including researchers, construct the realities in which they participate. Constructivist inquiry starts with the experience and asks how members constructed it” (31).

Combining the Glaser and Charmaz methods enabled the researcher to utilize “a priori concepts,” in this case Lasallian principles of education and other supervision models, in developing interview questions and data analysis. There are five principles of Lasallian Education in the Philippines. In summary, they describe Lasallian education as ministry at the service of God, imbued with the spirit of faith and zeal, exercised as a communion in mission

marked by a fraternal spirit and forms disciples and citizens, prophets and professionals who bring the transforming power of the Gospel to bear in order to realize the reign of God (49-51).

The four supervision models were classical supervision, central-control supervision, close-to-school supervision, and school-site supervision (42-49, 135-136). The researcher highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of each model.

The data gathering process involved a series of stages from which a theoretical framework could be generated. The purpose of the stages was to code and tentatively categorize the responses. The processes and instruments used to analyze and code data were open coding and axial coding, Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS), and Hyper Research Application software.

Data was gathered through a series of interviews, field observations and review of documents. Twenty-five stakeholders were interviewed. According to the researcher, they were selected not as representative of the population but for theory generation. The interview questions “sought data on participants’ understandings of supervision, general expectations from the supervised schools, why they chose to be in the supervised-school system and what meaning it has for them.”

Data collection included coding and tentatively categorizing the initial interview responses. During the first stage, nearly 800 codes were created and then grouped into 200 concepts or categories (71). A concept is understood as the result of repeated use by the interviewees.

In the later stages of the study, open and axial coding helped refined the concepts or categories. The researcher, citing J. Saldaña in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (2009), described coding in qualitative inquiry as “... a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (74). Axial coding helps the researcher see connections among the concepts leading to the construction of a theory.

The analysis of data led the researcher to “six distinct yet related categories of non-linear processes.” He listed them as: a) defining the divergent nature of Lasallian supervision, b) establishing the causal conditions which generated the divergence, c) contextualizing the interactions, d) determining intervening conditions, e) reconciling strategies that transform the phenomenon, and f) realizing the outcomes of the strategies (86-87, 95-96, 126). The study explains in detail each of the six areas.

According to the researcher, the discovery of the six categories called for a better understanding of the interactions of all involved in the supervisory process, recognizing the context where and when supervision was occurring and under what conditions. The two main interactions discovered were accompanying and supervising. From these a core category was selected, “*accompanying the school for it to run well*,” with the above six areas as sub-categories. From this, the researcher proposed a new term for his theoretical framework, “*accompervising*,” i.e. “Lasallian supervision as a phenomenon, can be understood as supervision in the form of accompanying a school in all its aspects of growth and development, for it to run well” (89, 95).

The discovery of the term “accompervising” has implications for the leadership style of the school head. Traditionally identified as administrator, manager, or instructional leader, in a supervised school, the school head is called to be a servant leader.

In the grounded theory model, the review of literature occurs after data gathering. The researcher offers a rich description of supervisory practices across the globe (137-142). To augment synthesis and clarity to the content, 31 tables and 16 figures are offered.

The research asserts that Lasallian supervision is not meant to make the school a La Salle school or even like a La Salle school. The end of Lasallian supervision is to be able to allow the school to reach a state of maturity. The researcher makes an important distinction of the ultimate goal: “The main purpose of ‘accompervising’ is for the school to run well so that it will achieve its own vision and fulfill its mission. Lasallian supervision is not meant to make the school a La Salle school or even like a La Salle school. The school has to develop its own identity apart from being a La Salle supervised school” (147).

The study concludes with a storyline. The storyline is a synthesis of the six sub-categories that underlie the theoretical framework of “accompervising” a well-run school. This will be a valuable resource for introducing new supervisors and prospective clients to the Lasallian model of supervision.

Among the study’s conclusions and recommendation were the need for formal training of supervisors (152) and the model’s potential for collaboration between the private and public education sectors, especially in countries lacking sufficient financial resources for public education (153-154). The researcher also believed this study may assist other religious congregations supervising a school network (156).

For this reviewer, who has some familiarity with the Philippine Supervised School System, the benefits of this study are several. The theoretical framework provides stakeholders, particularly new supervisors, a shared understanding of the purpose of supervision and the role of the supervisor. The model highlights the accompanying responsibility of owners, the De La Salle Brothers, and local administrators. It is a valuable resource for training supervisors.