

# Relationship between Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationships among Consecrated Religious in Catholic Higher Education Institutions in Lang'ata Sub-County, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

While the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship has been intensively and extensively investigated, literature review suggests that researchers have paid less attention on consecrated religious. As such, the current study sought to investigate the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among consecrated religious in Catholic higher education institutions in Lang'ata Sub-County, Kenya. The study employed a quantitative paradigm to collect data and analyze it. A correlational research design was utilized. Proportionate stratified random sampling method was used to select 329 participants that took part in the study. The study was based on the Big Five Model and the Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation theory. Data was collected using the Big Five Inventory and the Relationship Assessment Scale and analyzed using both descriptive and correlational analysis. The study found out a weak negative relationship between age and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships ( $r=-.025$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Similarly, there was also weak positive relationship between gender ( $r=.049$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), education level ( $r=.063$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), stage of religious life ( $r=.138$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), duration in religious life ( $r=.058$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship. The study concluded that there was no significant relationship between most of the socio-demographic factors and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. This is because only stage of religious life had a statistically significant relationship ( $r=.138$ ,  $p=.019$ ) with satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among the respondents. The study recommended that future researches can adopt qualitative research design approach to explore more of this phenomenon.

**Keywords:** Socio-Demographic Factors, Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationship, Consecrated Religious, Catholic Higher Education Institutions.

## INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal relationship is an important aspect across lifespan and it is a vital element in daily interactions. Through interpersonal relationships, individuals choose friends and partners, develop and preserve self-dignity, encounter emotional and practical support and finally experience and resolve problems. This in turn leads to satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among individuals. Scholars such as Nwinyokpugi and Omunakwe (2019) have affirmed this assertion by stating that interpersonal relations are social associations or affiliations between two or more individuals in a social setting. In accordance with Nwinyokpugi and Omunakwe, it is clear that individuals are expected to maintain positive interpersonal relations with others such as friends, family members, colleagues, superiors, subordinates and the society at large. From this stand point, it can be argued that social relations are crucial components of people's well-being and as having long lasting cumulative impact or influence throughout the course of a person's life.

Prior studies have established that interpersonal relationships can change or remain stable due to various

factors. Antonucci et al. (2014) for instance, found out that interpersonal relations can be influenced by personal factors such as age, gender, educational level or situation factors which includes one's roles and situational demands. In addition to this, Antonucci et al. (2010) noted that interpersonal or social relationships are contextual in nature and that they can be affected by changes in one's contexts across lifespan. Song and Olshfski (2008) also contended that factors such as family ties, educational level, geographical location and experience are highly associated with people's interpersonal relationships. In general, these findings posit that there is an association between individuals' socio-demographic characteristics and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships and that the type of relationship that one encounters may be due to personal or situational factors.

Empirically, there is growing evidence that socio-demographic characteristics may be positively or negatively related to satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among individuals. To justify this argument, English and Carstensen (2014) involved 184 Americans aged 18 to 94 years old to investigate social networks and emotional experience in daily life. Results revealed that social networks enlarged during young adulthood and steadily decreased into old age. As per the study, significant effect for linear age lied within middle age ( $y = -.0446$ ,  $p < .01$ ; outer:  $y = -.0302$ ,  $p < .05$ ) quadratic age (middle:  $y = -.0017$ ,  $P < .05$ ; outer:  $y = -.0012$ ,  $p = .07$ ). This suggests that as people age, there is a decline in social relatedness. This decrease in social interactions may be even greater when other demographic factors or characteristics such as gender or economic status are considered.

Likewise, a study of 62 participants aged 61 to 81 years established that elderly woman (61-70 years) reported high levels of interpersonal relationships (37.5%) as compared to men within age bracket of 61-70 years who had 35.5% in interpersonal relationships (Lee, 2020). In a similar study with 40 employees of various banks in Guwahati Assam India, a positive relationship ( $r = 0.369$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between gender and employees' interpersonal relationship was identified. These two studies demonstrate evidently the correlation between age, gender and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among individuals.

Kiviruusu et al. (2016) discovered that Finnish female participants had more interpersonal conflict at ages of 16 ( $M = 0.78$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) and 42 ( $M = 1.01$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) as compared to their counterparts male participants at the age of 16 ( $M = 0.60$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) and 42 years ( $M = 0.79$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ). Contrary to this reality, the study by Espinoza et al. (2014) found out that girls reported higher levels of friends' support than boys at value of  $F(1, 399) = 39.60$ ,  $p < .001$ , such that girls had a mean of 4.14,  $SD = .72$  while boys had a mean of 3.42,  $SD = .88$ . Relatedly, Dokuka and Mikhaylova (2023) confirmed findings of Espinoza and colleagues by establishing that social integration was more pronounced among female participants as compared to male participants in Russia. Overall, these findings suggest that satisfaction in interpersonal relationships were highly influenced by participants socio-demographic factor of gender.

According to the study conducted in Netherlands among 402 employees, it was discovered that there is a positive correlation ( $\beta = 0.16$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ) between leader-member relation and increasing challenging work demands (Radstaak & Hennes, 2017). Findings of Radstaak and Hennes signify that employees and the supervisors did not experience good relationships hence frequent challenging job demands. This is likely to lead supervisors to focus solely on the company's quality of production which the employees may not be prepared to meet.

Ajayi et al. (2022) conducted a study in 17 African countries and found out that female participants with no formal education had lower returns to intrapersonal skills. The same study revealed that education increased men's level of expressiveness and interpersonal relationships. As per these findings, it can be concluded that the education-related changes shaped men's and women's social interactions. Nevertheless, considering the female population in the study of Ajayi and colleagues, it is necessary to re-echo Antonucci's et al. (2014) findings which held that women traditional gender duties and roles demands them to be expressive, dependent and have a nurturing behaviour. This is likely to influence their social emotional skills, thus low

returns in intrapersonal skills.

Abe and Mason (2016) carried out a mixed method study and establish a relationship ( $r=.122$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) between supervisors' interpersonal relationship and employee performance in South Africa. The relationship established in this study was weak which signify low levels of support, trust and interpersonal relationships. These findings indicate that individual's status such as position at work influenced the manner of relating with one another. Thus, leaders need to make their subordinates feel accepted and appreciated in order to enhance confidence and motivation in them.

In a qualitative study with 43 participants from Migori County, Kenya, it was noted that male participants were more confident, assertive and persuasive in interacting with others as compared to their counterparts the female participants (Awuor et al., 2018). These findings postulate that at times, women encounter difficulties during interactions with others. Nevertheless, some scholars have attempted explain this realty by arguing that women tend to be tentative, polite and cautious in expressing themselves in order to enhance interpersonal relationships while men tend to be more keen on assertiveness than interpersonal sensitivity (Basow & Rubenfeld, 2003; Leaper & Robnett, 2011). Considering these findings, it can be concluded that men and women differ in terms of interpersonal skills and this shapes the manner of relations among them.

Overall, studies have demonstrated that there is a relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships(Abe & Mason, 2016; Awuor et al., 2018; Changkakati & Kumar, 2020; Kiviruusu et al., 2016; Lee, 2020). Similarly, theories such as Selective Optimization with Compensation (P. B. Baltes & Baltes, 1990) and Socio-Emotional Selectivity (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980) have established that socio-demographic characteristic such as age is highly associated with reduced interactions among elderly people. Though studies have reported the correlation between these two variables, there is lack of similar studies with consecrated religious men and women in the Catholic higher education institutions in Lang'ata Sub- County, Kenya. Having known that individuals differ in term of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships which is as a result of socio-demographic factors, it was therefore necessary to investigate these variables with a population of consecrated religious. This is because, poor interpersonal relationships that emerge due to socio-demographic factors are likely to affect the well-being of the consecrated religious which in turn affects their ministries. Therefore, the objective of the current study was to establish the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among consecrated religious men and women from Catholic higher education institutions in Lang'ata Sub-County, Nairobi, Kenya.

## METHODOLOGY

The study applied a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between socio-demographic factors and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among the respondents (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). The target population was 1862 consecrated religious from four Catholic higher education institutions in Lang'ata Sub-County, Kenya. Namely: Tangaza University College, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Marist International University College and Chemi Chemiya Uzima College. A sample of 329 consecrated religious was reached using Yamane's (1967), formula. Proportionate stratified random sampling method was applied to include 159 participants from Tangaza University College, 109 participants from Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 38 participants from Chemi Chemiya Uzima College and lastly, 23 respondents from Marist International University College.

Two standardized questionnaires were utilized to collect data. That is, The Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999; Novikova, 2013; Srivastava, 2022) and the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988).The Big Five Inventory which is a forty-four-item scale was used to obtain data on personality traits of the participants. On the other hand, Relationship Assessment Scale collected data on satisfaction in

interpersonal relationship among the consecrated religious. The instruments were pre-tested before use and they reported internal consistency of 0.630 for the Big Five Inventory and 0.875 for Relationship Assessment Scale.

The researcher sought permission from Tangaza University College, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), University Review Board for each research site and the individual participants. The researcher used codes and numbers in order to ensure anonymity and privacy of respondents is maintained. Anything that intended to put participants at risk was closely guarded (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, participants were not allowed to disclose their identities.

Descriptive statistics and correlational analysis with SPSS version 22 was employed in analysis of the findings. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the socio-demographics of participants with frequencies and percentages. Correlational analysis was employed to establish the relationship between socio-demographic factors and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among consecrated religious in Catholic higher education institutions in Lang’ata Sub-County, Kenya.

## RESULTS

The current study was set to establish the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among consecrated religious in Catholic higher education institutions in Lang’ata Sub-County, Kenya. Before presenting the findings of the study, the demographic characteristics of the participants such as age, gender, educational level, religious stage and duration in religious life were provided.

### Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Data was gathered based on age, gender, educational level, religious stage, and duration in religious life of study’s respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and present it in frequencies and percentages as reported in Table 1.

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Variable	Item	Frequency(n)	Percent (%)
Age	18- 25	52	15.8
	26-32	175	53.2
	33-39	52	15.8
	40-46	23	7.0
	47-53	17	5.2
	Above 54	10	3.0
		<b>329</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Gender	Male	180	55.0
	Female	149	45.0
		<b>329</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Level of Education	Secondary School	54	16.4
	Diploma	91	27.7
	BA	163	49.5
	MA	19	5.8
	PhD	2	0.6

		<b>329</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Religious Stage</b>	Temporary Professed	234	70.8
	Perpetually Professed	95	29.2
		<b>329</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Duration in Religious Life</b>	1- 5	155	47.1
	6- 10	110	33.5
	11-20	33	10.0
	21-25	16	4.8
	26 and above	15	4.6
	Total	<b>329</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 indicates that participants within age range of 26-32 years old were 175(53.2%) while participants within age range of 18-25 and 33-39 years old were 15.8% (n=52) each. The participants within the age range of 40-46 were 7.0% and those within age bracket of 47-53 years old were 5.2%. Lastly, respondents who were minority (3.0%) were aged above 54 years old. Male participants were 180 (55.0%) while female participants were 149 (45.0%). Participants with BA degree were the majority (n=163, 29.5%), followed by Diploma holders (n=91, 27.7%). Master’s holders were 19 (5.8%) and lastly participants with PhD degrees were the least (n=2, 0.6%). Most of the participants were temporary professed (n=234, 70.8%) while 95 (29.2%) participants were perpetually professed. Participants within 1-5 years duration in religious life were 47.1% (n=155), 33.5% (n=110) of the participants were 6-10 years duration in religious life, and 10.0% (n=33) of the participants were at 11-25 years duration in religious life. Respondents who have been in religious life for about 21-25 years and above 26 years were the least (n=16; 4.8%) and (n=15; 4.6%) respectively.

**Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationships among Consecrated Religious**

The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among consecrated religious in Catholic higher education institutions in Lang’ata Sub-County, Kenya. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Correlation Analysis Between Socio-Demographic Characteristics and satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationship**

		<b>Interpersonal Relationship</b>	<b>Age of Participants</b>	<b>Gender of Participants</b>	<b>Education of Participants</b>	<b>Religious Stage of Participants</b>	<b>Duration in Religious Life</b>
<b>Interpersonal Relationship</b>	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	329					
<b>Age of Participants</b>	Pearson Correlation	-0.025	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.762					
	N	329	329				



Gender of Participants	Pearson Correlation	0.049	-.499**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.631	.000				
	N	329	329	329			
Education of Participants	Pearson Correlation	0.063	.177**	0.083	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.287	0.003	0.159			
	N	329	329	329	329		
Religious Stage of Participants	Pearson Correlation	.138*	.715**	-.576**	.192**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.019	.000	.000	0.001		
	N	329	329	329	329	329	
Duration in Religious Life	Pearson Correlation	0.058	.851**	-.490**	.230**	.798**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.323	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	329	329	329	329	329	329

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Findings showed in Table 2, indicate that Age of participants had a negative relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships ( $r=-.025$ ;  $p>0.05$ ); gender of participants had a weak positive relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationship ( $r=.049$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). Relatedly, education of the participants had a weak positive relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships at a value of  $r=.063$ ;  $p>0.05$  and stage of religious life had a weak positive relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships at a value of  $r=0.138$ ;  $p<0.05$ . Lastly, duration in religious life had a weak negative relationship ( $r=0.058$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships.

## DISCUSSION

### Relationship Between Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationship

The study investigated the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among its participant. The study found out that there was a weak negative relationship between age of participants and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships ( $r=-.025$ ;  $p>0.05$ ); gender of participants had a weak positive relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationship ( $r=.049$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). Similarly, education level had a weak positive relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships at a value of  $r=.063$ ;  $p>0.05$  and stage of religious life had a weak positive relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships at a value of  $r=0.138$ ;  $p<0.05$ . Finally, duration in religious life had a weak negative relationship ( $r=0.058$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) with satisfaction in interpersonal.

Several studies have established findings which are similar to those of the current study. English and Carstensen (2014) for example, discovered that there was no significant effect of age on positivity of social

network among African-American in the U.S.A (linear age,  $\beta = .02$ ,  $p = 0.83$ ). According to the findings of English and Carstensen it appears that age was not associated with individuals' levels of interactions in various social settings. Although scholars have argued that increase in age is associated with decline in interpersonal relationships (Ajrouch et al., 2005; P. B. Baltes & Baltes, 1990), the current study and that of English and Carstensen holds that social relatedness are basic characteristics that every individual yearns to obtain regardless of socio-demographic characteristics such as age.

Similarly, Luhman and Hawkley, (2016) established that education levels of German households was not associated with loneliness ( $p = .062$ ), as well as work status and household size were not statistically significantly associated with loneliness among the respondents. According to these two studies, interpersonal interactions among individual are not necessarily dictated by individuals' level of education. In other words, social contacts do not solely depend on education levels in order to form and sustain diverse ties.

Relatedly, Radstaak and Hennes (2017) noted that there was no association between leader-member relationship and work engagement ( $\beta = -0.00$ ,  $SE = 0.00$ ,  $p = 0.09$ ) among supervisors and employees in various companies in Finland. Although studies argue that good leader-member relationship facilitates cooperation, skill development and it enhances confidence and feedback in workers (Jones et al., 2007), nevertheless, it should be noted that there are other factors that influence performance and engagement in work such as creativity and satisfaction in one's job.

This study contradicted the findings of Jenkins et al. (2013) which found out that women participants in the U.S.A reported high levels of interpersonal relationships for with their friend ( $M=22.38$ ,  $SD=5.2$ ) as compared to male participants (friends  $M=21.22$ ,  $SD=5.8$ ). The study's findings also differed with those of Espinoza et al. (2014) which revealed that girls had higher friends support than boys at a value of  $F(1, 399)=39.60$ ,  $P<0.01$ . These findings simply depict gender differences between men and women on how they influence, interact and involve others in their lives.

Findings of Lee, (2020) also contradicted the results of the current study by stating that elderly women (61-70 years old) had higher interpersonal relationship as compared to male counterparts in the same age. The two studies could differ due to situational differences. Most of the lay people within the age bracket of 61 to 70 are usually distanced from others through circumstances such as retire from jobs, neglection or abandonment. This blocks them from access to new people, or rather expanding their social networks. Unlike them, consecrated religious individuals exercise community life in which everyone is cared and exclusivity is not tolerated. This justifies the disparity that exist between the two studies.

Concerning stage of religious life, findings demonstrated that this variable had a weak positive relationship ( $r=0.138$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. These results resonated those of Song's and Olshfski's (2008) study which noted that relationships are influenced by an individual's class or position in life. In light of Song's and Olshfski's study, it appears that belonging to a particular social group is associated with increase in social ties among individuals. However, across literature review, no known study has investigated the relationship between stage of religious life and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship. Thus, these results addressed the existing gap.

With regard to duration in religious life, the findings of this study were in line with those of Xu et al. (2019) which found out a positive relationship ( $t=2.98$ ,  $p=0.01$ ) between employees' duration in industrial banks in China and interpersonal relationships. In general, the amount of time that individuals spend together influences their interactions, persuasions, control, affection and domination. Nevertheless, just like socio-demographic characteristic of stage in religious life, no known study has investigated this variable with regard to satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. Thus, these findings responded to the existing gap.

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there was no statistically significant relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of age, gender, education level and duration in religious life in relation to satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among consecrated religious in Catholic higher education institutions in Lang' at a Sub-County, Kenya. However, a significant relationship was detected between stage of religious life and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship. These results could be attributed to the target population of the study who were consecrated religious. As already portrayed in the introduction section of this paper, studies that attempted to investigate relationship between socio-demographic variables and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships dealt with students, superiors and employees from various companies. This could explain the disparities due to unique lifestyle among the target populations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study indicated that there is no association between socio-demographic characteristics of age, gender, education level and duration in religious life in relation to satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among the respondents. Thus, this information invites future researchers to adopt a qualitative research design approach in order to explore more on the phenomenon that was addressed in this study.

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