

Relationship between Personality Traits and Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationships among Consecrated Religious in Catholic Higher Education Institutions in Lang'ata Sub-County, Kenya

¹Ignatius Musambai, ²Dr. Daniel M. Kitonga, ³Dr. Phyllis N. Muraya

¹Master Student, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Tangaza University College, Karen, Nairobi.

²Director, Postgraduate Studies & Research Tangaza University College, Karen, Nairobi.

³Lecturer, Tangaza University College, Karen, Nairobi.

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have argued that there is a relationship between personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among individuals. As such, the current study sought to investigate the relationship between personality traits 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 results showed that majority (80.9%) of the participants had moderate level of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, compared to 18.1% who had high level of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, and 1.0% of the participants who had low level of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. In addition, the study found out that there is a statistically significant relationship between personality traits such as extraversion ($r=0.128$, $p=0.021$), agreeableness ($r=0.398$, $p=0.000$), conscientiousness ($r=0.281$, $p=0.000$), openness ($r=0.171$, $p=0.002$) and neuroticism ($r=-0.323$, $p=0.000$) and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among the respondents. The study concluded that there is a link between personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among the consecrated religious. The study recommended that counselors need to psycho-educate the clients especially those high in neuroticism on how to develop interpersonal skills.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationship, Consecrated Religious, Catholic Higher Education Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, studies have reported levels of interpersonal relationships with different populations. For instance, a study conducted by Furnharm and Crump (2015) reported that levels of interpersonal relationships in terms expressed control were high among managers who were social and outgoing. The same study also discovered low levels of interpersonal relationships in terms of wanted inclusion among the manager who had hostile and touchy tendencies. In addition, the study established that majority of its respondent had moderate levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships ($n=266$; 80.1%). Another study conducted by Tanibiaje and Tanibiaje(2014) among school-going adolescents in Nigeria found that participants scored

high in wanted inclusion and expressed control at a value of 31.4% and 33.3% respectively. Though studies on levels of interpersonal relationships have been conducted with various populations, there is lack of similar studies with consecrated religious men and women in institutions of higher learning and therefore, the current study seeks to fill this gap.

It is widely accepted that there is a relationship between personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relations and that understanding this relationship offers fundamental insights about individuals (Jeong et al., 2012). In other words, Jeong's argument posits that personality traits determine the level of satisfaction in a relationship. On the other hand, the levels of satisfaction in a relationship are always associated with peoples' predispositions. Jeong further postulated that the act of being aware of the relationship that exists between personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships is necessary in so far as the question of social interactions is concerned. Scholars such as Back et al. (2013) have affirmed the findings of Jeong, arguing that ability to recognize, for instance, that those high in agreeableness have been associated with more attentiveness, modest, friendly attitude, less arrogant and lastly less aggressive behaviours offers useful and desired insights among individuals in a social context. Tendencies such as the ones exhibited by the agreeable individuals symbolize satisfaction in a relationship.

Similarly, other researches that investigated the association between personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relations found out that individual dispositions or rather personality traits are associated either positively or negatively with people's relationship. Viswanath (2019) for example, contended that people who are extraverted are likely to be enthusiastic, energetic, confident, assertive, frank and daring. As such, the tendency to get along with others as well as involving other individuals in their own issues is a common characteristic of this personality trait. Based on the views of Viswanath (2019) inclusion and control is a basic form of relating with others that extraverts express in any social interaction. Due to their nature, extraverts are likely to be approachable, sincere and helpful beings which in turn contribute positively to their relations with others. In addition, extraverts are likely to experience high levels of satisfaction in a relationship.

In addition, a study conducted in order to grasp the relationship that exist between personality traits and interpersonal relationships among 128 participants from university of Helsinki, Finland found out that high conscientiousness individuals were more likeable, reliable, organized and less awkward in relationship than low conscientious individuals (Leikas et al., 2012). Leikas' argument indicates that personality traits and interpersonal competencies or rather skills are vital elements to be developed in any social setting. Developing these essential features in social interaction enables people to live in harmony and bear with one another despite differences in personal predispositions. Qualities of extraverts enable them to relate well with one another.

An empirical study conducted among 244 Chinese professionals established that openness to experience enabled individuals to adapt more effectively to new cultural settings (Li et al., 2016). In light of Li's study, it seems that people high in this trait have capacity to deal effectively with individuals from various cultural settings. The results of Li et al. (2016) imply that the qualities of open individuals such as curiosity and wide interests contribute to their manner of relating with one another. This enables them to flourish and co-exist with people in different setting. People who are open to experiences are likely to be curious in learning cultural norms and practices which facilitate their interaction and relationship with people of a particular culture.

According to a survey carried out in Karnataka India which aimed at investigating the correlation between personality traits and interpersonal relations among college students, it was discovered that there was a significant correlation ($p=0.05$) between extraversion and interpersonal relations (Viswanath, 2019). In line with this, extraversion was identified as a predictor that enriched interpersonal relationships among learners. Given the fact that extraverted individuals tend to be assertive, frank, daring and outgoing (Viswanath,

2019), the findings of Viswanath are very relevant to the current study.

Vater and Schroder (2015) conducted a study in Germany among 137 couples to determine the role of emotional regulation on interpersonal relations. It was noted that couples who scored high in agreeableness had capacity to control their emotions. As a result, they experienced long term relationship satisfaction. In other words, couples who scored high in agreeableness knew how and when to express a particular emotion to their partners as opposed to their counterparts who scored low in agreeableness.

Critics to that study argue that sometimes people perceive suppression of certain emotions such as anger as a sign of being inauthentic which suggests low level of satisfaction in relationship (Impett et al., 2014). However, it is appropriate to note that there is a significant relationship between personality traits and the manner in which individuals regulate their emotions and this varies across people. For instance, those high in neuroticism may find it difficult to suppress their emotions. Furthermore, their manner of expressing emotions may still interfere with their relations with others.

In a similar study with 358 school-going adolescents in South Africa, it was established that extraverted individuals experienced better relationships with their peers while in school (Bester, 2019). The same study noted that sensing and judging oriented learners related well with their teachers while thinking and judging oriented learners encountered minimal stress (Bester, 2019). In conclusion, the study established that students' self-concept correlated positively with interpersonal relationships and stress. These findings postulated an interrelatedness between personality traits, interpersonal relations and the level of stress among people. In other words, the study attempted to outline the association between individual's predisposition and his or her relationships with others. The outcome of these interactions accounts adequately to one's level of stress.

Aderonmu et al. (2016) carried out a survey to learn more on the influence of extraversion and introversion traits on teachers' and students' behaviors in architectural designs in selected Nigerian universities. To take part in the study, 546 participants were sampled. The findings suggested that 44% of the respondents did not prefer projects that demanded interaction with the rest of the world. The study also noted that 56% of the participants felt deprived when they encountered projects that hindered them from interacting with the outside world (Aderonmu et al., 2016, p. 27). These findings indicate that among the participants, some were curious and easily motivated by the external world in the learning process. Similarly, the findings also pointed out a group of participants who did not prefer much collaborative activities. The variations revealed by this study were associated with the two personality traits namely extraversion and introversion.

A study to comprehend the influence of some selected personality variables such as introversion and extraversion on academic achievement was conducted among 170 high school students in Kakamega County, Kenya (Wawire, 2012). The findings showed that good study practices such as self-will, steadiness and determination, which were related to introversion, presented significant elements required in academic achievement in high school (Wawire, 2012). On the other hand, the study established that greater sociability by extraverted learners appeared to disrupt their relations with others and learning process. This work offers instructors significant knowledge with regard to individual uniqueness among learners and the need for them to develop effective means of helping learners achieve their goals despite their difference in personal predispositions.

Several studies have shown that consecrated religious men and women experience poor interpersonal relationship which affects their relationship with each other in community life and in their ministry (Kiplagat et al., 2019; Mutuku et al., 2021). Poor interpersonal relationship can easily lead consecrated religious men and women to mental health problems and fail to experience fulfillment in their calling to serve humanity in Catholic Church. Studies with different population have found relationship between personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. Some personality traits such as extroversion,

agreeableness and openness to experience have been found to have a positive correlation with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. On the hand, personality trait of neuroticism has found to have a negative correlation with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships (Wawire, 2012; Aderonmu et al. 2016; Bester, 2019). Though studies have reported relationship between personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships with different populations, there is lack of similar studies with consecrated religious men and women in the institutions of higher learning. Therefore, the current study had two objectives: to examine the levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among consecrated religious men and women from Catholic higher education institutions in Lang'ata Sub-County, Nairobi, Kenya; to establish the relationship between personality traits 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 personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among the respondents (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). The target population was 1862 consecrated religious men and women 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 ChemiChemiyaUzima 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 ChemiChemiyaUzima 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 men and women. 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 was used to examine the levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships and to summarize the socio-demographic of participants with frequencies and percentages. Correlational analysis was employed to establish the relationship between personality traits 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 out to examine the levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among consecrated religious in Catholic higher education institutions in Lang'ata Sub-County, Kenya. In addition, the study was to establish the relationship between personality traits 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 was provided.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Descriptive statistics was run and the demographic characteristics of participants such as age, gender, educational level, religious stage and duration in religious life are presented 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
	47-53	17	5.2
	Above 54	10	3
			329
Gender	Male	180	55
	Female	149	45
		329	100.00%
Level of Education	Secondary School	54	16.4
	Diploma	91	27.7
	BA	163	49.5
	MA	19	5.8
	PhD	2	0.6
		329	100.00%
Religious Stage	Temporary Professed	234	70.8
	Perpetually Professed	95	29.2
		329	100.00%
Duration in Religious Life	1-5	155	47.1
	6-10	110	33.5
	11-20	33	10
	21-25	16	4.8
	26 and above	15	4.6
	Total	329	100%

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.

Levels of Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationships among Consecrated Religious

The study sought to examine the levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among consecrated religious in Catholic higher education institutions in Lang’ata Sub-County, Kenya. Descriptive statistics was carried out and the results are reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Levels of Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationships

Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Low	6	1.0
Moderate	266	80.9
High	57	18.1
Total	329	100.0

The results in tables 2 showed that majority (80.9%) of the participants had moderate level of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, 18.1% were within high level of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, and 1.0% of the participants were within low level of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. These findings could be interpreted that majority of the consecrated religious in Catholic higher education institutions in Lang’ata Sub-County are able to establish and maintain mutually satisfying relations with one another.

Personality Traits and Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationships among Consecrated Religious

The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted establish the relationship between personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among consecrated religious in Catholic higher education institutions in Lang’ata Sub-County, Kenya and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis between Personality Traits and Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationship

		Interpersonal Relationship	Agreeableness	Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Interpersonal Relationship	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	329					
Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	.398**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
	N	329	329				

Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	.128*	.123*	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.021	0.029				
	N	329	329	329			
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	.281**	.483**	.199**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000			
	N	329	329	329	329		
Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	-.323**	-.493**	-.200**	-.402**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N	329	329	329	329	329	
Openness	Pearson Correlation	.171**	.165**	.247**	.272**	-0.082	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0.004	.000	.000	0.154	
	N	329	329	329	329	329	329

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

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

Results showed in Table 3, findings indicate that Agreeableness had a weak positive relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships ($r=0.398$; $p=0.000$); extraversion also had a weak positive relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationship ($r=0.128$; $p=0.021$). Similarly, conscientiousness had a weak positive relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships at a value of $r=0.281$; $p=0.000$ and openness to experience had a weak positive relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships at a value of $r=0.171$; $p=0.002$. In general, these findings indicate that the Big Five personality traits are associated with individuals' interpersonal relationships. However, neuroticism had a weak negative relationship ($r=-0.323^{**}$; $p=0.000$) with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships.

DISCUSSION

Levels of Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationship among Consecrated Religious

The study investigated the levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships among its participant. Relationship Assessment Scale was employed to measure this objective. The levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships ranged from low (1%; $n=6$), moderate (80.9%; $n=266$) and high (18.1%; $n=57$). These findings indicated that most of the consecrated religious (80.9% and 18.1% respectively) experienced moderate and high levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships with one another. These results could be due to community life where support and care for each other is highly valued among consecrated religious.

Several studies had findings which are similar to those of the current study. Yadav et al. (2021) for example, reported that employees from education industry in India scored high in expressed inclusion, control and

affection. From this standpoint, it can be argued that the similarities of these studies are due to the assumption that individuals are social creatures and that the most important goal in life is to co-exist in harmony with one another.

Similarly, the study by Furnham and Crump (2015) reported that levels of interpersonal relationships in terms of expressed control were high among managers who were social and outgoing. The same study also discovered low levels of interpersonal relationships in terms of wanted inclusion among the manager who had hostile and touchy tendencies. These findings concur with the findings of the current study which established that some consecrated religious ($n=6$, 1% and $n=57$, 18.1% respectively) had low and high levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships.

Although this study established that majority of its respondent had moderate levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships ($n=266$; 80.1%), findings of some studies in the field of education disagree with the findings of the current study. Tanibiaje and Tanibiaje(2014) for example, discovered that school-going adolescents in Nigeria scored high in wanted inclusion and expressed control at a value of 31.4% and 33.3% respectively. The differences between the two studies could be due to age differences and the nature of work of the respondents. Unlike the adolescents who are still young and are not necessarily entrusted with roles to accomplish, consecrated religious have variety of apostolate to take care off.

Finally, the findings of Aomo et al. (2015) also contradicted the results of this study. The study found out that secondary school student scored high in expressed inclusion with a mean of $m=67.7$, $SD=1.62$. The two studies could also differ due to age differences. Unlike most of the secondary school students who are concerned with establishing a sense of identity within the society, most of the consecrated religious are focused on social interests and community involvement. Bearing in mind that majority of the consecrated religious fall within the category of young adults and middle age, acquiring the sense of belonging and contributing to the society is fundamental. Furthermore, community feeling for individuals in this stage of life encompasses the feeling of being connected to their past, present and the future.

Relationship between Personality Traits and Satisfaction in Interpersonal Relationships

The study also sought to establish the relationship between personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among the respondents. The results revealed a significant relationship ($p<0.05$) between personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. For example, the findings from Pearson correlation statistics showed a weak positive correlation ($r=0.128$; $p=0.021$) between extraversion and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among consecrated religious in this study. These results are in line with Morse et al.(2015) study findings which discovered a significant relationship ($r=0.454$; $p<0.01$) between extraversion and socially desirable behaviors among 256 undergraduate students in California.

Along the same lines, agreeableness had a weak positive significant relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships at a value of $r=0.398$; $p=0.000$. This means that agreeable individuals found it easy to relate well with one another in various social settings. This could be based on the assumption that agreeable people are co-operative, warm and tender-hearted as pointed out by Ali et al.(2017) study results. In support of the current findings, Hassan's et al. (2019) study found a positive correlation ($r=0.482$; $p=0.001$) between agreeableness and communication competencies among Malaysian undergraduate students. In light of Hassan's et al.(2019) report, it appears that agreeable students were modesty and co-operative in their manner of communication.

Similarly, Pearson correlation analysis pointed out a weak positive relationship ($r=0.281$; $p=0.000$) between conscientiousness and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship. These findings could be due to the nature of conscientious individuals who tend to be very diligent and reliable. Hence, they are likely to be satisfied in their relationships with others. These findings concur with those of Ayodele (2013) who established that

conscientiousness determined individuals level of interpersonal relationship among lecturers and students in Nigeria. Ikpi et al.(2014) study findings also agree with the conclusions of this study. Their study revealed that conscientious students were straight forward, accommodative and organized and this influenced their levels of relationships with others. In the same breath, Rushpa and Rajakumar(2017) re-echoed the same sentiments by reporting that the nature of conscientious women in Makurdi Metropolis made them to be preferred or rather liked by others.

There was a negative association or rather correlation ($r=-0.323$; $p=0.000$) between neuroticism and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship among consecrated religious in the present study. This shows that neurotic individuals are likely to experience low levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. These findings concur with Hassan et al.(2019) study findings which revealed a negative correlation ($r=-0.175$; $p<.05$) between neuroticism and relational competencies among learners. Ali et al.(2017) also reported that individuals who possess this trait easily experienced unpleasant feelings such as anger and depression. These findings could be interpreted based on the nature of neurotic individuals which is characterized by worry and nervous attitudes.

Lastly, the current study established weak positive correlation ($r=0.171$; $p=0.002$) between openness to experience and satisfaction in interpersonal relationship. In other words, individuals with this trait are likely to experience high levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationship. This is because people who are open to experience find it easy to relate and learn from others. As a result, inclusion for them is common attitude. Findings of Nurhazirah et al.(2013) agree with the finding of the present study. The study reported that married women who were open to experience exhibited tendencies of being curious, open-minded and ready to encounter new situations. As such, this is likely to have a significant contribution to their manner of relating with one another.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that majority of the participants had moderate level of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships compared to few who had high and low levels of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. These findings could be interpreted that majority of the consecrated religious in Catholic higher education institutions in Lang' ata Sub-County are able to establish and maintain mutually satisfying relations with one another. Also, the study concludes that there was a weak positive relationship between the personality traits of agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. In general, these findings indicate that the Big Five personality traits are associated with individuals' interpersonal relationships. However, neuroticism had a weak negative relationship with satisfaction in interpersonal relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study indicated that there is a correlational between personality traits and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. Thus, this information could be helpful to counselors in helping clients realize how individuals' predispositions are associated with their manner of relating with one another. For instance, findings suggested that there is a weak negative relationship ($r=-0.323$, $p=0.000$) between neuroticism and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. Thus, practitioners need to come up with interventions such as counseling services in order to help individuals in this category improve in interpersonal skills.

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