

Intergenerational Differences and Psychological Well-Being among Catholic Nuns in Selected Monasteries in Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between intergenerational differences and psychological well-being among Catholic nuns in selected contemplative monasteries in Rwanda. The study was motivated by increasing generational differences resulting from rapid technological advancement, modern education, and socio-cultural transformation, which have influenced the perspectives of younger nuns, while older nuns continue to uphold traditional monastic values and practices. These differences may contribute to misunderstandings, emotional distress, and challenges to community harmony. Guided by Intergenerational Solidarity Theory (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991) and Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Model (1989), the study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. A census of 112 professed nuns and novices from four contemplative monasteries was undertaken using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 23, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings revealed a moderate level of intergenerational differences ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.34$) and a moderate-to-high level of psychological well-being ($M = 5.06$, $SD = 0.50$). Pearson's correlation analysis indicated a positive and statistically significant relationship between intergenerational differences and psychological well-being ($r = .254$, $p = .012$). The study concludes that fostering mutual understanding, respect, effective communication, and supportive leadership can strengthen community harmony and transform generational differences into opportunities for personal growth and communal flourishing within monastic life.

Keywords: Intergenerational differences, psychological well-being, Catholic nuns, contemplative monasteries.

INTRODUCTION

Monastic life, shaped by the ancient vows of obedience, stability, and conversion of life, calls men and women to a radical commitment to prayer, asceticism, and communal living. Under the guidance of an Abbot or Abbess, monks and nuns dedicate themselves to spiritual transformation and service, withdrawing from secular life to pursue a deeper union with God (AIM, 2021; Herrou, 2009). The vow of stability, which binds members to remain in the same monastery from entry until death, creates a permanent, intergenerational community where younger members benefit from the wisdom and continuity embodied by elders, while offering renewed vitality and fresh perspectives in return. Despite these mutual benefits, significant age differences and sometimes lead to tensions in communication, expectations, and attitudes toward change, and the caregiving needs of elderly members can place demands on the younger generation. Nonetheless, living together across a lifetime transforms the community into a "school of communion," where patience, mutual service, and enduring charity turn intergenerational coexistence into a meaningful path of spiritual growth.

The Intergenerational difference refers to the differences in attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors between older and younger members who live or work together (Beyers & Goossens, 2008). These differences may lead to misunderstandings, decreased communication, and tension within communal living settings. Worldwide, scholars have studied intergenerational dynamics among families (Zhang & Fuligni, 2006; Silverstein & Bengtson, 2020), in workplaces (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015), and in educational institutions (Schoon, 2015). Research findings consistently indicate that intergenerational differences can either enrich communities through various perspectives or create problems when not properly managed (Schoon, 2015).

Through the program organized by ASEC (2022), which brings together older and younger members of religious communities to foster intergenerational dialogue and mentorship, younger sisters report gaining valuable guidance, skills, and emotional support from their more experienced counterparts. This exchange not only promotes a smooth transition of leadership, but also helps preserve the community's traditions while allowing space for innovation. For older sisters, the presence of younger members serves as a source of hope and joy for the future of their congregations. However, the significant age gap between the two groups can make it difficult for older sisters to find peers with whom they can connect deeply, often resulting in feelings of isolation and, in some cases, depression.

Intergenerational differences have been widely studied in family and workplace settings, where they are often associated with differences in values, communication styles, and life experiences according to society development (Bengtson, 2001; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). To some degree, younger generations have always challenged and reshaped the existing culture, viewing older generations as old-fashioned, condescending, and out of touch. At the same time, older generations have consistently complained about "today's youth" and have looked at youth cultures with confusion and a sense of offense toward their own familiar generational norms.

Intergenerational tensions have always been a reality in the lives of religious communities. When vocations to the spiritual life are few, and the differences between generations proliferate, the intergenerational tensions are not just a psychological or sociological fact of the religious life, but a condition of its vital transformation for the service to the Kingdom. This article suggests that the key issue in intergenerational dynamics is the *cura personalis* (care for the person), beginning with religious superiors. It also offers basic guidelines for such care and for intergenerational dialogue: learning, empathizing, trusting, consoling, collaborating, planning, and celebrating. Thus, these attitudes become factors that may negatively affect mental health outcomes (Thomas, 2020; Meria et al, 2013).

According to Pope Francis (2024), in his homilies for the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, he reflects on the relationship between the elderly and the young in consecrated life, saying: "*It is good for the elderly to communicate their wisdom to the young, to share this wealth of experience and understanding, and to carry it forward, not to keep it in a museum, but to put it into practice in facing the challenges of life, for the benefit of all religious families in the Church.*" This highlights that, in today's world, religious communities are deeply affected by rapid cultural change, which often creates tension between generations within consecrated life.

According to Lehner (2013), Western societies face the challenge of an aging population, with birth rates declining and death rates rising, leading to increasing life expectancy. We see the effects of this every day. Historically, intergenerational relationships have raised many questions. Saint Benedict addresses this in his Rule, in chapters 4 and 64. The phrase "love the young and respect the elders" reflects his view. Youth is a powerful force; anything seems possible to those just starting their journey. This can sometimes lead to absolutism.

Differences between generations in monastic life across Europe illustrate the complex interaction between cultural change, religious identity, and historical memory. For example, Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries have experienced widening generational gaps, where older nuns and monks emphasize enclosure, silence, and obedience, and younger members seek collaborative leadership and a stronger social outreach (Beyers & Goossens, 2008; Schoon, 2015).

However, in religious communities, Intergenerational differences pose unique challenges. Research in Europe and North America shows that younger members of religious groups often adopt new forms of ministry, contemporary education, and technology, while older members prioritize continuity, obedience, and tradition (Wittberg, 2017; Pihlaja, 2014). These different expectations can affect community life and members' psychological well-being. Although some studies suggest that intergenerational diversity in religious settings can enhance community life (Carroll & Roof, 2002), others indicate that these gaps may create unresolved tensions, leading to stress, alienation, or reduced well-being (Cummings et al., 2017).

In Africa, research on intergenerational differences has mainly concentrated on family relations, aging, and social support systems (Aboderin, 2004). Specifically, studies highlight the weakening of traditional support structures due to modernization and urbanization, which creates new intergenerational tensions (Aboderin, 2012). However, there is limited literature on how these dynamics appear within religious institutions, despite the importance of monasteries and convents in African spirituality. This represents a notable gap for the researcher. AciAfrica community explored generational tensions among Catholic sisters in Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia, emphasizing differences in leadership expectations, spiritual expression, and vocational dedication. AciAfrica (2024), during an interview on April 8, 2024, with the executive director of CASAK, mentioned that religious women in Kenya face two major issues: the growth of new members, which strains their community resources, and the aging of current members without plans to support them in old age.

The study investigated the psychological well-being of professed consecrated women serving in Kakamega Diocese, Kenya. Guided by Social Support Theory and Existential Theory, it aimed to understand the levels of social support available to these women and how this support influences their well-being. Using a descriptive research design and a census of all 154 consecrated women in the diocese, data were collected through the Psychological Well-being Scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS. The findings revealed that the vast majority of participants (94.2%) reported moderate psychological well-being, while only a small number experienced low (5.2%) or high (.6%) levels of well-being. The study concludes that most consecrated women maintain moderate well-being and recommends that congregational leaders implement psychological and spiritual programs to further strengthen their members' overall well-being.

Statement of the problem

Following the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi, many religious congregations and monasteries in Rwanda faced significant disruptions, including a sharp decline in vocations. For years, some communities did not accept new members due to the internal consequences, creating a noticeable gap between older nuns who experienced life before and after the genocide, and younger nuns who joined much later, often after Rwanda had a period of rapid technological, educational, and social change.

This historical and generational division has created a significant Intergenerational difference within many monastic communities. Older nuns often uphold traditional religious practices, cultural values, and structured communal life shaped by their past experiences, while younger nuns may approach religious life with perspectives influenced by modern education, digital exposure, and changing societal norms. As a result, tension, miscommunication, and mutual misunderstanding frequently arise, potentially impacting the psychological well-being of both older and younger nuns. Unresolved generational conflicts may instead foster emotional isolation, reduce communal cohesion, and psychological stress. Despite these realities, there is a lack of research exploring how such intergenerational dynamics affect the mental and emotional health of Catholic nuns in Rwanda.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the relationship between Intergenerational differences and the psychological well-being of the Catholic nuns in selected monasteries in Rwanda.

Scope and Delimitation

Specifically, the research was conducted in four monasteries: the Benedictine, Carmelite, Trappistine, and Visitandine communities. These monasteries were purposely chosen because they represent different religious

charisms, community structures, and generational compositions within the Catholic contemplative tradition in Rwanda. It involved the Superiors and nuns within these communities.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on two theories: Intergenerational Solidarity Theory and is complemented by Ryff's Psychological Well-being Model.

Intergenerational Solidarity Theory

Intergenerational Solidarity Theory was developed in 1991 by sociologists and psychologists Bengtson and Roberts. The mentioned model was empirically tested, and later, in 1994, it was supplemented and used as a model construction to study intergenerational solidarity in the family, which offers valuable insights for this study. Its major strength lies in its multidimensional conceptualization of intergenerational relationships, namely: affectual, associational, consensual, functional, normative, and structural solidarity (Steinback, 2007). This multifaceted dimension makes it specifically useful for understanding the complexity of communal living.

The Intergenerational Solidarity Theory is a justified and appropriate framework for studying the Intergenerational difference and psychological well-being of Catholic nuns. The theory is well-suited for analysing relationships in non-traditional family structures, like religious communities, where members are not biologically related but form deep, family-like bonds. It allows researchers to investigate how these chosen kinship systems function. The theory's multiple dimensions provide a holistic view of the community's health (Roberts & Bengtson, 1990). By examining the emotional, social, and functional aspects of their relationships, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of what constitutes a healthy and supportive environment within a convent. The theory provides a direct link between the quality of intergenerational relationships and psychological outcomes. This is particularly valuable for a population like nuns, where the community is a central source of support and identity. Studying how different types of solidarity (e.g., emotional closeness, shared values) impact their psychological well-being can provide insights for improving their quality of life and strengthening the religious community (Lee & Bengtson, 2017).

Ryff's Psychological Well-being Model

Ryff (1989) conceptualized psychological well-being through six distinct dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. These elements, when present, contribute to an individual's overall sense of happiness, contentment, and fulfilment in life. The theory also highlights the importance of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment in fostering a well-rounded sense of well-being (Pargament, 2011; Hefti, 2018).

Psychological well-being (PWB) theory is justified by its ability to explain and promote optimal human functioning and flourishing. It moves beyond simply addressing mental illness to encompass a positive view of mental health, focusing on how individuals can thrive and experience a sense of meaning and purpose in life. This theory is valuable because it highlights the importance of psychological resources and positive functioning in overall well-being, not just the absence of distress. Although system justification benefits the well-being of advantaged groups, its implications for disadvantaged minorities are considerably more complex (Pargment, 2011; Heft, 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several researches have been carried out on the relationship between intergenerational differences and the psychological well-beings. Among these, the study conducted in Poland, titled Investigating the Relationship Between Spiritual Transcendence, Personal Religiosity, and Mental Health in Roman Catholic Clergy and Nuns by Rogowska and Dolega (2022), expected to compare religious individuals based on gender and type of ministration, and to examine how spiritual transcendence and religiosity influence mental health. The cross-sectional study involved 140 Roman Catholic participants divided into four equal groups of 35: diocesan priests, religious order priests, convent nuns, and monastery nuns. The methodology included self-report questionnaires

measuring religiosity (PRS), spirituality (STS), and mental health (GHQ-28), and was grounded in the biopsychosocial model of health.

Findings showed that 26% of participants reported mental health symptoms, with somatic complaints (31%), anxiety and insomnia (27%), social dysfunction (19%), and severe depression (10%). No significant differences were found between groups in overall mental health or spirituality, except for higher scores on the Transcendence Proper subscale among those ministering within congregations. Mediation analysis revealed that better mental health among highly religious individuals followed a path from personal religiosity through spiritual openness to transcendence proper, explaining 27% of the variance. The study recommends applying these insights to improve mental health among religious populations. However, in this current study, target was the Catholic nuns in the monasteries in Rwanda, how the Intergenerational difference can affect the psychological well-being among them.

Also, Rwanda's historical context, especially the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, has left deep emotional scars across generations. These scars are felt not just in families but also in religious communities. Nuns who lived through the genocide often carry trauma that is unspoken or repressed due to religious or cultural norms (Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008). At the same time, younger nuns and youth struggle to understand or emotionally connect with these traumatic pasts.

The recent global revalorization of Indigenous identities, however, has also led to situations in which representatives of younger and more acculturated generations of Indigenous peoples themselves strive to reconnect to older ethnic group members to regain their ties with the ancestral cultures, languages, and ways of knowing (Gabel, 2018). Although this drive embraces only a part of Indigenous youth and is unlikely to change their lifestyles sharply, it is emblematic in the sense that it underscores the value of traditional Indigenous knowledge in the modern industrialized world. Furthermore, it can boost the self-esteem of the aged populations who still preserve this knowledge (Acemoglu, D.2011).

METHODOLOGY

The current study used a mixed-methods research approach adopting the convergent parallel design. This design involves collecting qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously, analysing each separately, and then integrating, comparing, and interpreting the results to draw holistic conclusion (Egunjobi, 2024). A census method was used for the quantitative component, involving all members of the target population, while a purposive sampling approach was applied for the qualitative component to select key administrative leaders' in-depth interviews. This research was conducted in four selected monasteries in Rwanda: The Benedictines, Carmelites, Trappistines, and Visitandines. Out of the targeted population of 112 members, 97 participants responded fully to the quantitative questionnaires a response rate of 86.6%): 16.5% novices, 34% temporal professed, 49.5% final professed.

Additionally, four major superiors from the selected monasteries were selected for qualitative semi- interviews. Quantitative data was collected using Standardized *Uskudar XYZ* Generational Differences Scale (Tarhan, 2022) which assesses divergences across critical dimensions: belongingness, trust, individualism, self-esteem, social media use, emotion control, and desire control. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 23

Findings of level of Relationship for the Variables

Table 1 Overall descriptive of the Mean and Standard deviation of the Intergenerational difference and Psychological well-being of the nuns.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Uskudar XYZ Generational Differences Scale	2.8880	.34413	97
Psychological Well-Being Scale	5.0584	.49932	97

Table 1 provides the aggregate mean scores and standard deviations for the two primary variables of the study: Intergenerational Differences and Psychological Well-Being. These scores offer a bird's-eye view of the collective experience of the 97 participants.

The overall mean score for the Intergenerational Differences Scale was 2.88 (SD=0.34). Given that the scale typically ranges from 1 to 5 (where 3 is the midpoint), a mean of 2.88 suggests that the respondents perceive a "moderate" level of generational difference. The relatively low standard deviation indicates that there is a high level of consensus among the nuns; most participants share a similar perception that while generational gaps exist, they are not perceived as extreme or overwhelming within the community.

The aggregate mean for the Psychological Well-Being Scale was 5.06 (SD=0.49). On a 7-point scale where 4 is the neutral midpoint, a mean of 5.06 indicates that the group leans toward the higher end of the scale. However, it is vital to remember that on the Ryff scale, many items are reverse-scored. This mean suggests a "moderate-to-high" level of well-being, though the specific dimensions (as seen in previous tables) show significant variation between high interpersonal warmth and lower environmental mastery. The standard deviation of 0.49 reflects a consistent emotional climate across the sample.

Table 2 Pearson Correlation coefficient between the Intergenerational difference and Psychological well-being of the nuns.

		Uskudar XYZ Generational Differences Scale	Psychological Well-Being Scale
Uskudar XYZ Generational Differences Scale	Pearson Correlation	1	.254*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.012
	N	97	97
Psychological Well-Being Scale	Pearson Correlation	.254*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	
	N	97	97

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

Table 2 presents the results of the Pearson Correlation analysis used to test the relationship between perceived intergenerational differences and the psychological well-being of the participants.

The analysis yielded a Pearson Correlation coefficient of $r = .254$ with a significance value of $p = .012$. Since the p-value (0.012) is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between intergenerational differences and psychological well-being among the nuns.

The correlation coefficient ($r = .254$) suggests a weak-to-moderate positive correlation. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .0645$) indicates that intergenerational differences account for approximately 6.45% of the variance in the participants' psychological well-being. While significant, this suggests that other factors, such as spiritual life, community support, or individual resilience, likely play a larger role in determining the overall well-being of the community.

The qualitative component of this study was designed to explore the lived experiences of the participants through semi-structured interviews with the Superiors of the Visitandines, Benedictines, Carmelites, and Trappistines. The Superiors interviewed represent the "Older Adult" demographic, with most being sexagenarians (approximately 60 years of age). These leaders possess significant monastic experience, having served in their respective communities for an average of 30 years. Their educational backgrounds are diverse, ranging from primary education to university-level degrees. The monasteries included in this study consist of small-to-medium-sized communities of 15 to 37 nuns. These communities are characterized by a wide generational span,

with the eldest member being 97 years old and the youngest being 20 years of age. This 77-year age gap provides a rich context for examining the intergenerational themes identified in the following sections.

Any difference in the behavior or activities of the older nuns and the young ones

Response showed a significant difference between the behavior of the senior nuns and the young ones. This is due to modern lifestyle in modernization, technology, differences in age, self-acclaimed rights and respect and values, attached to individual life of the nuns.

According to participant 1, the older nuns are not much culturally respected as in the past. In addition, it seems that the young ones do not see respect as a value because of self-acclaimed rights.

Today, there are many differences. For example, in the past, we saw that an elderly person received the respect they deserved, as we were raised in the family. Today, that culture really seems to be disappearing; a concept called 'rights' appears and removes many values (Interview, 16th December, 2025).

In the words of participant 2, differences are mostly in age, socio-cultural wants, self-control and how respect is seen among the young and the old nuns.

Yes, there is an age difference. There are the older ones; the one who is older has tried, she is the mature person who wavers, you can see that she has self-control. When she doesn't understand certain things, especially those of the younger ones, she react quickly by telling you that not understanding doesn't mean it's bad, but just that it's not yet her age (Interview, 16th January, 2026).

Participant 3 explained that respect is different, due to age difference among the nuns. Also, the young ones see 'Rights' as important and parental upbringing equally contributed to the difference in their behaviour.

We talk about it a lot, and it also saddens us, because adults are often critical of young people, saying for example that today's youth are like this... For instance, adults say that songs in the past had melody and lessons, but today it's just noise. Regarding politeness, we used to respect adults; it was customary to let adults pass, and we see that many things have been lost. Today, this stems from what is called "human rights." We see that novice young people respect adults, whether out of honour or reverence or to ask for favours; this, nobody can know. But it also depends on the child, some have been well brought up by their parents, others because of their past, we cannot judge them, because what they do, we see that it is self-defence. (Interview, , 20th January, 2026)

Participant 4 portrays a similar scenario.

"I don't see that here, especially since our time for talking or being together aside from prayer and meal times is very limited, and in those moments we remain silent. Anyone who chooses to come here possesses a sufficient degree of discipline to avoid such "noise," and if someone falters, we remind them. I wouldn't say that the small issues that arise are caused by age gaps; rather, they stem from human nature, which is never without minor problems. Usually, it is a person's past experiences and personal history that have the strongest influence". (Interview, 15th February, 2026)

Discussion of the "Intimacy vs. Isolation" Anchor

The findings of this study can be understood through Erikson's (1950) concept of Intimacy versus Isolation, which emphasizes the importance of developing meaningful, trusting, and reciprocal relationships. This perspective is particularly relevant to Catholic nuns because monastic life involves long-term communal living across different generations. In the present study, the selected monasteries had a generational span of approximately 77 years, with members ranging from 20 to 97 years of age, creating opportunities for both connection and relational distance. The qualitative findings showed differences between older and younger nuns in areas such as respect, self-control, rights, values, modernization, and technology.

However, these differences did not necessarily result in isolation. The overall mean for intergenerational differences was moderate ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.34$), suggesting that although generational differences existed, they

were not perceived as extreme or overwhelming. This finding can be further explained by Intergenerational Solidarity Theory (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991), which emphasizes affectual, associational, consensual, functional, normative, and structural dimensions of relationships. In the monasteries, shared prayer, common vocation, community responsibilities, mutual care, and common spiritual values may provide a relational foundation that enables older and younger nuns to remain connected despite differences in age, experience, and perspectives. Thus, intergenerational solidarity may function as a bridge between generational differences and intimacy, allowing members to learn from one another and experience belonging rather than isolation.

The positive relationship found between intergenerational differences and psychological well-being further supports this interpretation. The study found a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .254, p = .012$), with intergenerational differences explaining approximately 6.45% of the variance in psychological well-being. Rather than indicating that conflict improves well-being, this finding suggests that generational diversity, when supported by solidarity and healthy relationships, may provide opportunities for learning, personal growth, mutual support, and adaptation. Older nuns can contribute spiritual wisdom, experience, stability, and continuity, while younger nuns can contribute new perspectives, education, technological knowledge, and renewed energy. This reciprocal exchange may strengthen intimacy and reduce the risk of isolation. The finding is consistent with the overall moderate-to-high level of psychological well-being reported by the participants ($M = 5.06, SD = 0.49$), including warm and trust-based relationships and a general sense of satisfaction with their life journey. At the same time, the relatively small contribution of intergenerational differences to well-being indicates that other factors, including spiritual life, community support, personal resilience, leadership, and individual experiences, also play important roles.

Therefore, the findings suggest that the goal of monastic communities should not be to eliminate generational differences, but to develop strong intergenerational solidarity, mutual respect, effective communication, and opportunities for dialogue, so that differences can become resources for intimacy, personal growth, communal harmony, and psychological flourishing. In this way, Erikson's concept of intimacy and Bengtson and Roberts' Intergenerational Solidarity Theory complement one another in explaining how Catholic nuns can live with generational differences while maintaining positive relationships and psychological well-being.

Interpretation of Findings

Hypothesis:

Null H_{01} : There is No significant statistical relationship between the Intergenerational Difference and the Psychological Well-being of the Nuns.

The decision rule is that if the P-value is less than the significance level (0.05), we reject the Null Hypothesis, else, we will fail to reject. So, since the P-value (0.012) is less than significant level (0.05), we will Reject the Null Hypothesis and conclude that there is significant statistical relationship between the Intergenerational Difference and the Psychological Well-being of the Nuns. Also, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient is 0.254, therefore, there is Positive Slight Correlation, with Weak relationship between the Intergenerational Difference and the Psychological Well-being of the Nuns. With this, the Coefficient of determination ($R^2 \times 100$) = $0.254^2 \times 100 = 6.45\%$. This shows that Intergenerational Difference contributes only 6.45% to the entire Psychological Well-being of the Nuns.

Prevalence of Intergenerational Differences

With respect to the concerning of the prevalence of intergenerational differences, the findings highlight several key dimensions. In relation to the sense of belonging, the majority of the nuns perceive their apostolate or education as moderately suited to their lives. Nevertheless, they demonstrate a strong institutional commitment, fully accepting to work diligently for the success of their group, regardless of financial considerations.

In the domain of trust and authority, the respondents largely reject the idea of acting against the directives of their superiors. They place great importance on authority that is perceived as fair and reassuring, and they show considerable attentiveness to the rights and needs of others in interpersonal relationships.

Regarding individualism and autonomy, the results are more nuanced. Although the nuns do not perceive the maintenance of close relationships as a source of frustration, they express some difficulty in feeling fully in control of their current life situation. A tendency toward self-criticism also emerges, as many do not consider themselves particularly skilled in managing daily responsibilities, even though they retain a strong desire for personal growth. These findings are consistent with Dalibor (2020), who suggests that younger nuns possess an ability to adapt to lifestyles and experiences established by previous generations.

Psychological Well-Being of the Nuns

The assessment of psychological well-being reveals a tension between overall satisfaction and self-acceptance. A considerable proportion of respondents express reservations about certain aspects of their personality. However, when reflecting on their life narratives, they generally report satisfaction with their life journey and do not express major disappointment regarding their achievements.

Although the demands of daily life may sometimes weigh on their morale, the nuns do not perceive the maintenance of interpersonal relationships as particularly burdensome. On the contrary, they report having experienced many warm and trust-based relationships. In terms of intellectual autonomy, the findings indicate a certain dependence on the opinions of others, with limited confidence in their own judgments when these differ from collective norms. As noted by Fingerman et al. (2020), intergenerational tensions or divergences can influence psychological states such as anxiety or life satisfaction, underscoring the importance of community harmony in maintaining mental health within monastic settings.

The Relationship between Intergenerational Differences and the Psychological Well-Being of the Catholic Nuns.

A statistically significant positive relationship was found between intergenerational differences and psychological well-being ($r = .254, p = .012$), suggesting that generational diversity actually enhances communal health. This supports Intergenerational Solidarity Theory and mirrors Rogowska and Dolega's (2022) finding that spiritual openness bridges mental health gaps. Unlike Western models where generational rifts lead to isolation (Arnett, 2000), the Rwandan monastic structure utilizes "filial piety" and collectivism to moderate tensions (Triandis, 1995). By navigating a "post-figurative model" where elders and youth engage in mutual learning (Mead, 1970), the community transforms potential "ideological friction" into a source of generative energy and collective healing (Pargament, 1997).

LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the scope is restricted to only four monasteries, expanding this sample to a larger number of institutions would provide more comprehensive coverage and a broader range of perspectives. In addition, as the research was conducted exclusively within Rwanda, the findings may not be adequate for broader generalization, given the specific cultural, environmental, and political particularities of the region. Finally, the study focuses solely on women religious, meaning the results may not be perfectly representative of the entire Catholic entity or the experiences of other groups within the Church.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further research should explore:

1. Digital interconnectivity generation and on the integrity of the Monastic Cloister among Catholic Nuns and Monks in the Monasteries in Rwanda.
2. Impact of virtual communication platforms on the Monastic Charism of the Catholic Nuns and Monks in Rwanda

3. The Digital generations' influence on the Traditional Practice of Sacred Silence among the Catholic Nuns in the monasteries in Rwanda.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that intergenerational differences among Catholic nuns in the selected monasteries in Rwanda exist at a moderate level and are significantly, though weakly, associated with psychological well-being. Rather than being a source of conflict, generational diversity can contribute positively to community life when supported by mutual respect, effective communication, supportive leadership, and shared spiritual values.

The findings suggest that strengthening intergenerational understanding and fostering opportunities for dialogue and collaboration can enhance both individual psychological well-being and communal harmony. Although intergenerational differences contribute to well-being, other factors such as spiritual life, community support, and personal resilience also play an important role in promoting flourishing within monastic communities.

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