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ASSESSMENT OF LIFE SATISFACTION IN APOSTOLIC WOMEN RELIGIOUS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW INSTRUMENT

by

Maria Clara Kreis, M.A.

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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ABSTRACT
ASSESSMENT OF LIFE SATISFACTION IN APOSTOLIC WOMEN RELIGIOUS:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW INSTRUMENT

Maria Clara Kreis, M.A.

Marquette University, 2010

The trend in today's U.S. society is one of decreased membership within traditional civic/faith organizations and in particular within women's religious organizations. Women religious are known particularly for their historic contribution to the U.S. social capital (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993; Weakland, 1994). Thus, there is a need to study the motivational factors and life satisfaction levels across different generations of apostolic women religious within the Roman Catholic Church.

The purpose of the current study was to (a) develop an instrument specifically designed to assess the life satisfaction levels of the various generations of women religious, (b) establish preliminary psychometrics for this particular instrument, and (c) look for additional information related to motivations within and across generations of women religious that influence Sisters' satisfaction with religious life.

This study describes the stages of item development and the field testing of the LSSAWR (50 items). The quantitative data from a representative nation-wide sample of apostolic women religious (N = 1116) were analyzed and psychometric properties revealed the elimination of four items and the loading of 46 items on one factor of the LSSAWR. Estimate of internal consistency was examined for the LSSAWR and its one factor and indicated the alpha coefficient at 0.95. The construct validity of the LSSAWR was established with two measures; one designed to assess levels of general life satisfaction, Satisfaction With Life Scale (0.47), and the other to assess levels of optimism, The Life Orientation Test (0.21).

Applying the generation theory of Strauss and Howe (1991) to the current study revealed generational differences on the LSSAWR based on participants' responses. Finally, the findings of the qualitative research reasserted the content that originally emerged in the exploratory study. Overall, the results of this study suggest that the LSSAWR has the potential to be used as a screening tool useful to identify levels of satisfaction with religious life among apostolic women religious who have committed themselves to this way of life.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

GENERAL OVERVIEW

At the end of the twentieth century, Putnam (1995-2000) published alarming news about a steep decline over the past four decades of nearly all forms of U.S. social capital and civic participation within various traditional organizations such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Labor Unions, etc. (Galston, 2007; Skocpol, 2004; Stolle & Hooghe, 2005; Wuthnow, 2002). This active membership decline has also been observed within traditional faith organizations like that of the Roman Catholic Church (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, CARA, 2008; Galston, 2007; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2007) and, in particular, within vowed religious life (National Religious Retirement Office, 2008).

It is important to understand this decline because women religious have contributed significantly to the American society, particularly in the areas of education and health care (Ebaugh, Lorence, & Saltzman Chafetz, 1996). Therefore, the motivational force of this study is the decline of social capital in relation to membership within religious organizations, specifically the membership decline and its impact on Roman Catholic women religious.

Controversy exists among published authorities or experts living the vowed life as to how this membership decline is impacting the current well-being of women committed to religious life (Brennan, 1994; Brink, 2007b; Chittister, 1995; Jarrell, as cited in Sanders, 2007; Leddy, 1990; Schneiders, 1994). For example, Brink (2007b) and Leddy (1990) describe current behavior of women religious as an expression of a "malaise" or "vocational depression." On the other hand, Brennan (1994), Chittister

(1995), Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007), and Schneiders (1994) interpret the response of women religious to membership decline and other related losses as a spiritual crisis on the part of these women. These conflicting viewpoints highlight a need to examine this area among women who are committed to the vowed life by assessing the life satisfaction levels of this population. However, such an investigation warrants the development of an instrument that can assess the life satisfaction levels across generations of women religious. The development of such an instrument is the primary focus of this investigation.

U.S. Social Capital Decline.

Putnam (1996) defined social capital as "features of social life---networks, norms, and trust---that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (p. 34). Included in this definition of social capital are immediate and extended family, friends and neighbors, schools and local civic communities, political gatherings or speeches, and religious groups (Putnam, 1995, 1996, 2000). Through the aforementioned, social capital (particularly through religious organizations) contributes to the individual good and public social well-being. Putnam specifically stressed the importance of social capital for the democracy of U.S. civic life. Although Putnam is not the only one who described a decline in U.S social capital, he is certainly the most outspoken (Stolle & Hooghe, 2005).

To strengthen his argument, Putnam (1996) showed statistically the decline in membership across a variety of civic organizations to be about 25 to 50 percent over the past twenty to thirty years. He further stated that through these various volunteer organizations, people became knowledgeable about public events, skilled in leadership

abilities, as well as influential in the development of objectives and agendas within their local community and for society in general (Putnam, 1995, 1996, 2000).

Unfortunately, the exceptional growth period (prosperity and technological modernization), generational differences, and the influence of various cultural trends (e.g., Civil Rights, Peace and Women's movements, etc.) of the past four decades negatively impacted the participation rate of U.S. citizens in voluntary associations and traditional faith organizations (Galston, 2007; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2007). These cultural changes also affected impacted the membership in congregations of women religious (CARA, 2008; Ebaugh et al., 1996). Furthermore, in viewing this membership decline of religious organizations in a world-wide context, it is important to note that the U.S. ranks high as a churched society (Putnam, 1995).

In fact, Putnam (2000) argued that in America, religious associations are possibly the single most important source of social capital. Taking into account that a) membership in religious associations outnumbers all other groups among U.S. citizens (Smidt, 2003; as cited in Williams, 2007), b) historically, women have a strong tradition of involvement in voluntary work (Daniels, 1988; as cited in Rotolo & Wilson, 2004), and c) women express a stronger interest and commitment to church affiliated groups (Putnam, 1995), one can begin to understand the importance of a sustained or even renewed commitment to church-affiliated organizations for all U.S. citizens and, in particular, for lay women and women in Roman Catholic religious orders. According to Ebaugh et al. (1996) women religious have contributed significantly to the American society, particularly in the areas of education and health care.

In their literature review, Ebaugh et al. (1996) reported that Catholic orders of Sisters (or women's religious congregations) are among the oldest established communities in society. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Catholic Sisters were virtually the only women holding administrative and executive appointments in large institutions (Ebaugh et al., 1996). As such, during the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Catholic Sisters, with the support of the Roman Catholic Church, had established and/or taken over the administration of a variety of institutions such as schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, orphanages, and other charitable institutions (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993).

The fact that women's religious congregations had, and still have, a powerful impact on U.S. civic life is a strong argument to support continued investigations within this social group. Specifically, it would seem useful to examine the current life satisfaction levels of this population given the decline in membership and other losses of resources that this group has experienced within the last four decades (Brink, 2007a; Ebaugh et al., 1996). But before we can look at the issue of life satisfaction, we first need to look at the overriding issue: the historical context of declining membership numbers within this group of women religious.

Membership Decline among U.S. Women Religious.

Historically, religious life has repeatedly undergone epochs of membership decline followed by those of revival (Wittberg, 1994). The unusual high increase of membership numbers within religious life during the nineteenth and early twentieth century was related to prospects of social upward mobility for women who entered religious life (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Wittberg, 1994). Women choosing the vowed life

were given opportunities for higher education and/or professional positions in administration of institutions (e.g., hospitals, schools, universities, etc.) that were unavailable to lay women at that time (Ebaugh et al., 1996).

Increasing educational and occupational opportunities for women in general after World War II expanded career options and, with it, the attraction to join the vowed life began to decline (Ebaugh et al., 1996). The declining numbers within women's religious congregations were also substantially influenced by the diverse and contemporary cultural (and counter-cultural) events that took place in America from the mid-sixties to the late nineties (e.g., civil rights and peace movements, increased socioeconomic inequality, women moving into paid employment, etc.). It was a time in which traditional organizations and authoritative beliefs were questioned. Thus, these movements, and specifically the changes resulting from the second Vatican Council (Vatican II) of the Roman Catholic Church, contributed to the membership decline of various U.S. traditional and religious organizations during this time period (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Andersen, Curtis, & Grabb, 2006; Rotolo & Wilson, 2004; Williams, 2007).

In addition, U.S. women in particular seemed to have shifted their voluntary involvement toward newer forms, such as participation in a public-activist life (Rotolo and Wilson, 2004). Thus, this period of membership decline (mid sixties to the late nineties) among women within traditional organizations, ascribed as it was to contemporary cultural events (Andersen et al., 2006; Rotolo & Wilson, 2004; Williams, 2007), coincided with declining membership numbers (43 percent decrease over three decades) among women's religious congregations for similar reasons (Ebaugh et al., 1996).

Although a membership decline within religious life can be associated with certain contemporary cultural events, it still is relevant to consider if and how this steady decline is affecting the current life satisfaction levels of women religious. Because of their significant contribution to welfare of the American society, particularly in the areas of education and health care, it will be important to examine this aspect of their life.

In her keynote address, "A Marginal Life: Pursuing Holiness in the 21st Century," at the 2007 Assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), Brink (2007a) expressed with concern that new membership in religious life would never counterbalance past and current numbers of Sisters. She further stated that this membership decline has already affected the Sisters' ministries and personal and communal life, as well as the management (downsizing) of their assets. There are serious concerns in regard to the funds needed to provide these Sisters with a secure retirement (National Religious Retirement Office, 2008).

An even greater concern of women's religious congregations is that of attracting and retaining newer and younger membership to religious life (Johnson, 2001). More recently there has been an increase in newer membership among some congregations. Despite the declining numbers and higher median age of 69 (or higher), this increase in new and younger members is significant enough to be noted (Sammon, 2001), along with the fact that a majority of these newer members are from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds (Froehle & Gautier, 2000; as cited in Johnson, 2001).

According to Brink (2007b), the Millennial Generation is so far the most culturally diverse generation. In addition, both the Millennial Generation, born between the years of 1982 and 2001, and the Generation X, born between the years 1961 and 1981

(Strauss & Howe, 1991), provide a rich pool from which women can be attracted to religious life (Brink, 2007b). However, these two generations come to religious life from a very different historical, social and cultural context than women religious who belong to generations prior to 1961. Brink (2007b) further stated that these younger and diverse members will be attracted to religious life for different reasons and motivations than in past generations and are going to expect a different experience of what it means to live a vowed life.

Therefore, one could speculate about potential differences pertaining to (a) the motivational components for entering and committing to religious life, and (b) current life satisfaction among the older, middle aged, and the more recent diverse group of new and younger women of apostolic religious orders. However, anecdotal data states that younger women are more attracted to congregations that belong to the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR). The U.S. is the only country in which most apostolic religious congregations (only a few orders belong to both organizations) belong to one of two organizations: the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) or the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR).

Distinction between the Two Organizations of Women Religious Orders.

The LCWR is an organization consisting of the canonically elected leaders of a majority of apostolic women's religious congregations in the United States (Quinonez & Turner, 1992). During the 1960s, the LCWR put great efforts into responding to the challenges of Vatican II and to the social justice issues of the time. A different understanding of the call for a renewal in religious life from Vatican II led to the separation of a small group of congregations (later called the Council of Major Superiors

of Women Religious) from the LCWR. Disagreements between these two groups surfaced between 1969 and 1971 during the rewriting of the bylaws of LCWR. The differences in ideas centered on mission and structural relationship to the hierarchy in the Vatican (Quinonez & Turner, 1992).

The Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR) separated from LCWR because it was CMSWR's intention to reflect Vatican II's document, 'Perfectae Caritatis,' and to dedicate themselves to "authentic renewal" (Quinonez & Turner, 1992, p. 153). This renewal claimed to be in conformance with the Church directives and in contrast to the "aberrations" (p. 153) that the CMSWR perceived in some women's religious congregations, as well as in the positions taken by LCWR (Quinonez & Turner, 1992).

In keeping with the membership trends in U.S. society in general (decline in traditional organizational membership), a pattern is emerging in which one can see a decline in younger membership among most women's religious congregations (National Religious Retirement Office, 2008). However, congregations of women who follow what appear to be more "traditional models of religious life," (CARA, 2006, p. 12) are currently experiencing increased membership.

Since major and future life decisions within religious congregations are inseparable from various decisions related to the recruitment (and entrance) of new members into the community, as stated by Brink (2007a) at the LCWR National Assembly, it will be essential to determine and compare the motivational factors to enter and remain committed to a vowed life as well as levels of life satisfaction among

different generations of apostolic women's religious congregations who belong to LCWR or CMSWR congregations.

Motivational Factors of Women Religious Related to Life Satisfaction Levels.

Considering the controversy among experts of religious life (Chittister, 1995; Brink, 2007b; Jarrell, as cited in Sanders, 2007; Leddy, 1990; Schneiders, 1994) as to whether or not women religious are experiencing a malaise during this difficult time period of membership decline and other losses, it will be imperative to assess these women's (across generation cohorts) motivational factors for entering and remaining committed to a vowed life. While younger women's motivation for entering religious life and staying in religious life today may not be the same as compared to the motivations of older women religious, the younger women are, to some degree, indicators of aspects related to the satisfaction with religious life.

The limited research available in regard to motivational factors in entering and remaining committed within religious life includes two national studies (Wittberg & Froehle, 1998; Wolf, 1990b) and two dissertations, one written by Cooney (1988) and the other by Zajac (1999). An international study published by McKenna (2006) investigated the motivation to enter religious life of Irish women religious between the early thirties to the early sixties. A more recent study on younger German Sisters' motivation to enter and remain committed within the vowed life was conducted by Kluitmann (2008). However, no U.S. investigation has so far pursued a generational comparison by examining Sisters' reasons to enter and commit to a vowed life.

Due to the limited research available and the limited number of younger women who enter apostolic women's religious congregations, it will be imperative to examine

the motivational factors that encourage newer and diverse members to a) enter religious life, and b) commit to a vowed lifestyle within these congregations. It will also be important to assess whether these motivational factors are different among the most recent generational cohorts (Strauss & Howe, 1991): the Silent Generation (1925 - 1942), the Boom Generation (1943 - 1960), the Thirteenth Generation (1961 - 1981), and the Millennial Generation (1982 – 2001). Lastly, an examination of whether there is a desire for future changes to occur so that identified motivational factors are in place within religious life among these apostolic women's congregations is also needed.

While research addressing the reasons for leaving the vowed life (Ebaugh, 1984, 1980, 1978; Kluitmann, 2008; Modde, 1974; Rulla, Ridick, & Imoda, 1976; Van Merrienboer, 1997) can provide us with information useful for retention in religious life, the current study is more interested in the investigation of motivational factors that support a commitment to the vowed life among all generations of apostolic women's religious congregations.

Examining the motivational factors that support the commitment to a vowed life among current members of these apostolic women's congregations who are from different generations and entrance years will be informative in many ways. First, LCWR congregations can use the data for assessing the degree to which these motivational factors are in place within their own congregations. Second, the data could help those women currently in religious life to articulate their life satisfaction, and third, the data could inform others about the motivation and degree of satisfaction among women religious.

In order to better understand the Sisters' current reported levels of life satisfaction (as this variable is tied to the degree of motivation to stay committed) it would prove helpful to investigate the factors that a) motivated them to join religious life, and b) motivates them at the present to stay committed to this particular lifestyle. Further, it would be important to investigate the potential changes that Sisters are hoping for, as these might strengthen their commitment to work for a viable future for religious life. Therefore, an examination of Sisters' motivational factors that enhance their commitment to religious life as well as an assessment of their levels of life satisfaction has the potential to generate and contribute knowledge to the current literature, while identifying possible areas for future research.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Various investigations in the U.S. have identified a membership withdrawal from long-established civic organizations, including a decline in traditional faith organizations, which have affected the U.S democratic life (Putnam, 2000; Skocpol, 2004; Wuthnow, 2002). This decline occurred between the mid sixties to the late nineties due to contemporary cultural events and has specifically been observed among women in the U.S. (Andersen et al., 2006; Galton, 2007; Putnam, 1995; Williams, 2007). A membership decline, for similar reasons, within that same time period has also occurred within women's religious congregations (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Sammon, 2002; Wittberg, 1994).

Women religious belong to a traditional faith organization (the Catholic Church) and are known particularly for their historic contribution to the U.S. social capital (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993; Weakland, 1994). For instance, their

tremendous contribution to the U.S. social capital includes their ministries as founders and administrators of schools, colleges, hospitals, etc. (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993). Religious life provided women with access to higher education and professional positions long before women in general were given such opportunities in society. Women religious are further known for their collaborative abilities in their work with clergy in faith formation and with the laity who actively supported the Sisters' ministries with volunteer service and monetary contributions (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993).

Due to the long-standing and significant contribution to the U.S. social capital on the part of women religious, it seems more than justified that we would be concerned about the diminishment of their membership. As older Sisters are struggling with aging issues and with only a few newer members joining their congregations (Wolf, 1990a), one can expect that the far-reaching and active involvement of women religious to U.S. social capital is going to continue to decline. The negative implications of this decline in membership will not only be limited to decreased contributions to organizations that strengthen the U.S. social capital. Fewer numbers of Sisters also lessens opportunities for people to support the works of religious congregations with time and money. However, the decline in membership will have the greatest ramification on the underserved, such as the youth, the elderly, the sick, the poor, the homeless, etc.

Thus, an underlying motive for this study was to understand if women religious are personally affected by the membership decline and its resulting consequences (e.g., relinquishing ministries). In order to answer these questions, it was necessary to contact the Sisters themselves and find out if and how they are affected by this membership

decline. This could be done by investigating the Sisters' motivational factors to enter and remain committed to the vowed life in addition to assessing satisfaction with religious life across generational cohorts of women religious. Therefore, this study planed to investigate general patterns of motivational factors across the different age groups of apostolic women religious. However, it was not possible to conduct a comprehensive investigation of the assessment of satisfaction with religious life without first designing a sound measure that could assess the life satisfaction levels across the various age cohorts of women committed to the vowed life.

Extensive research has investigated the life satisfaction of elderly women religious, specifically in relation to the retirement of these Catholic Sisters (Bienenfeld, Koenig, Larson, & Sherrill, 1997; Kvale, Koenig, Ferrel, & Moore, 1989; Magee, 1984, 1987b; Melia, 2000; Soucek, 1994). A few studies have been directed toward age group comparative assessment of life satisfaction among women (Jacobson, 1993; McAdams, de St. Aubin, Logan, 1993; McCulloch, 1997; Schuster, 1990) but no such study has been conducted specifically among women religious.

Thus, there are instruments available that are designed to assess the life satisfaction of the elderly. For example, Bienenfeld et al. (1997) have used the Life Satisfaction Index A by Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin (1961; as cited in Bienenfeld et al., 1997) to assess the life satisfaction of elderly women religious. However, instruments that assess the life satisfaction of younger people tend to be more directed toward satisfaction with career decisions such as the Hall Occupational Orientation Inventory, Fourth Edition (Hall, 1968-2000). There are also a variety of well-established instruments that assess life satisfaction in regard to married life such as the Quality of

Life Instrument (Frisch, 1994) or the Global Satisfaction Scale (Kelly & Burgoon, 1991), but the content of some of these items assess areas (e.g., sexual intimacy, spousal relationship, children, etc.) do not apply to the life style of a woman religious.

There is an instrument that assesses general life satisfaction as a unidimensional construct consisting of only five items, namely the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), which was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). The SWLS has been used in various investigations to assess either for general life satisfaction levels (Leung, Moneta, & McBride-Chang, 2005) or to assess for concurrent validity (Ruehlman, L. S., Lanyon, R. I., & Karoly, P., 1999). The SWLS was also used to assess life satisfaction across different age groups (McAdams, et al., 1993).

However, the SWLS was later extended and thus has become a global life satisfaction subscale within the Extended Satisfaction With Life Scale (Alfonso, Allison, & Rader, 1994; as cited in Allison, 1995). The fact that the SWLS (Diener, et al., 1985) was extended by Alfonso et al. (1994; as cited in Allison, 1995) to assess for other areas of satisfaction (e.g., social life, sex life, marriage, etc.) indicates the need for instruments that assess specific components of life satisfaction (e.g., within a life style, or career related) beyond that of general life satisfaction. So far, there is no established instrument available for the assessment of life satisfaction across different generational cohorts of apostolic women religious. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to develop an instrument that could assess levels of life satisfaction among women from different generational cohorts who are committed to an apostolic vowed life.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Considering the fact that the trend in today's U.S. society is one of decreased membership within traditional civic and faith organizations and in particular within women religious organizations, there was a need to study the motivational factors and life satisfaction levels across different generations of apostolic women religious within the Roman Catholic Church. The current study sought to develop an instrument specifically designed to assess the life satisfaction levels of the various generations of women committed to an apostolic vowed life and to establish preliminary psychometrics for this particular instrument. In addition, this study planed to assess general patterns of motivational factors within and across generations of apostolic women religious. Of interest was whether the data could confirm the content analysis conducted for the development of this life satisfaction instrument designed for this population.

The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

Question 1: Do the initial items designed for the life satisfaction instrument demonstrate content validity based on professional ratings?

Question 2: Does the life satisfaction instrument generate empirically derived factors with high internal consistencies?

Question 3: Do the items comprising each factor of the satisfaction instrument correlate significantly with each other and with the total score on each factor?

Question 4: Do empirically derived factors on the life satisfaction instrument demonstrate construct validity (concurrent and discriminant) based on

correlations with the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and with the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R)?

Question 5: How does the general assessment, a rating from one (low) to ten (high), of satisfaction with religious life support the quantitative data resulting from the field-testing of the satisfaction with religious life instrument conducted within this study?

Question 6: What factors emerge related to satisfaction and motivation within and across generation cohorts of apostolic women religious? How do these data relate to the results of the content analysis acquired in developing the life satisfaction instrument?

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The method of the current study has the following limitations: First, the CMSWR decided to decline their participation in this study therefore the results of this investigation cannot be generalized to all U.S. apostolic women religious congregations. Second, this study included three self-selected processes in that (a) the invitation to participate in this investigation was sent only to those LCWR women's religious congregations that are known (based on previous research) to have at least one younger member born after 1960, (b) the recruitment of the sample depended on the openness and willingness of congregational leadership to distribute the study materials and encourage their Sisters to participate in this study, and (c) the response-rate of the Sisters depended on their openness and willingness to participate.

The restriction to include only LCWR congregations who have at least one younger member born after 1960 was chosen because a majority of LCWR congregations

have a median age of 69 (or higher). It was hoped that this selective process will allow for a greater possibility of reaching a greater number of younger members that could potentially participate in this research project. Thus, self-selected participation within this study has the disadvantage that it excludes information about those Sisters who did not volunteer to participate in this study, and thus, limits the ability to generalize the results of this specific population.

Third, because of the homogeneous (gender, occupational backgrounds, socioeconomic status, life style, etc.) group in the study, it is not possible to generalize the results to a broader spectrum of women religious such as women who belong to contemplative orders. Fourth, although self-report as a methodology for the data collection has several advantages, one disadvantage is that the results are dependent on the accurate responses of the participants. Temporary dissatisfaction within religious life (e.g., dissatisfaction with the present elected leadership) may lead to biased (such as non-disclosing) responses even among those Sisters who choose to participate.

In addition, the brief nature of the assessment instruments used for this study enables the author to screen this population with regard to the purpose of the study, but the results cannot be used to interpret the Sisters' well-being or make a clinical diagnosis of this population. The reliability and validity of the investigation can only be viewed within the context of this study and its purpose to design an instrument assessing the life satisfaction of apostolic women religious from different age groups.

Finally, with regard to the exploratory study that was conducted prior to this proposed dissertation study, it is important to remember that participation was limited to a small homogeneous group (women religious born between 1925 and 1942) in two

geographic areas. Therefore, common themes that emerged from this exploratory study might not represent all components of life satisfaction that are important to women religious of all age cohorts (especially younger women) represented in religious life. The results of this current study provide further data as it is directed toward the inclusion of a broader age range.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

The following brief definitions are provided for an increased understanding of this current study (Hardon, 1999, pp. 3-574).

Definitions.

Council of the Church. Authorized gatherings of bishops for the purpose of discussing ecclesiastical problems with a view to passing decrees on matters under discussion. In Roman Catholic terminology, if all the bishops are called to participate and actually represent the Christian world, the assembly is called ecumenical, which means universal; if only part of the hierarchy is invited, the council is particular (p. 135).

Second Vatican Council: The twenty-first ecumenical council of the Catholic Church, first announced by Pope John XXIII, on January 25, 1959. A combined total of 2, 865 bishops and prelates took part in the Councils proceedings, although 264 could not attend, mainly from Communist countries (p. 495).

Congregation Religious. Institutes of Christian perfection whose members take simple vows, as distinguished from religious orders in which solemn vows are made. The term “congregation” is also applied to groups of monasteries that have arisen since the Middle Ages to facilitate discipline and intercommunication. Such groups may be united under an abbot general (p. 125).

Institutes Religious. A society approved by legitimate ecclesiastical authority, the members of which strive after evangelical perfection according to the laws proper to their society, by the profession of public vows, either perpetual or temporary, the latter to be renewed after fixed intervals of time. The members also live in community (p. 281).

Constitution, Religious. The fundamental rule of life of a religious institute,…(p. 128).

Religious Rule. The plan of life and discipline, approved by the Holy See, under which religious live in order to grow in Christian perfection and perform the works of the apostolate proper to their institute (p. 462).

Apostolate. The work of an apostle, not only of the first followers of Jesus Christ but of all the faithful who carry on the original mission entrusted by the Savior to the twelve to 'make disciples of all the nations' (Matthew 28:19) (p. 35).

Charism and Mission. For an official definition of these terms see *The Modern Catholic Dictionary* (Hardon, 1999; p. 94 and p. 354). However, there is no official source for the use of these terms within religious life itself. It is based on the official definition of these terms within the Catholic Church as women religious use these terms. As such the charism of a religious congregation refers to the values that are born out of common visions from which mission and ministry flow. Charism refers to a particular gift that the congregation has (which distinguishes congregations from each other) and wants to offer to the church through their ministries (e.g., outreach to the poor) to others in the society by enhancing Christ's Mission (Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993). The distinguishing characteristics of a congregation's charism are identified by the founder of the congregation. Out of the congregation's charism flows the distinguished mission

(generally to respond to the signs of the time and more specifically e.g., "serving the elderly") and the ministries of congregations. For an understanding of the different "Charism" and "Mission Statements" of the various congregations one can go directly to the congregations' website.

Religious State. According to ecclesiastical tradition, a fixed or stable manner of life that people of the same sex live in common and in which they observe the evangelical counsels by means of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience (p. 462).

Solemn Vows. Public vows pronounced in a religious order and recognized as such by the Church. The term has become technical since the recognition of simple but public vows in religious congregations and societies of common life. In practice, a solemn vow of poverty means the actual renunciation of ownership and not merely the independent use of material possessions; and a solemn vow of chastity invalidates attempted marriage (p. 511).

Simple Vows. Every vow, whether private or public, that is not expressly acknowledged by the Church as solemn. The term came into use with the Church's recognition that religious congregations are authentic institutes of Christian perfection, as distinct from religious orders (p. 506).

Sisters. A popular term for religious women, whether cloistered nuns or members of congregations under simple vows. The title corresponds to "brothers" in men's religious institutes and signifies that they are all members of the same spiritual family, share possessions in common, and live together in Christ-like charity (p. 508).

Nun. In general, a member of a religious institute of women, living in a community under the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. More accurately, nuns

are religious women under solemn vows living a cloistered, contemplative life in a monastery (p. 382).

Active Life. Human life insofar as it is occupied with created things, as distinct from the contemplative life (p. 10).

Contemplative Life. Human life insofar as it is occupied with God and things of the spirit. Compared with the active life, it stresses prayer and self-denial as a means of growing in the knowledge and love of God (p. 129).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of two main parts. The first part reviews the literature on U.S. social capital decline and its potential relationship to the decline in religious orders' membership. It is comprised of three subsections. The first subsection will outline the definition, importance, and the decline of social capital. The second subsection will examine the influence of active membership decline in traditional organizations (particularly faith organizations) on social capital. It will further identify potential associations between the active membership decline in the Roman Catholic faith tradition and that of religious congregations (with a focus on orders of women religious). The concluding section provides a brief summary with some implications for women's religious orders drawn from this review.

The second part gives a review of the impact of social and religious movements on religious life in five subsections. The first three subsections review the pre-Vatican II, Vatican II (including the influences of social movement), and post-Vatican II vision of the Roman Catholic faith tradition and its impact on religious life. The fourth subsection reviews the literature on the motivational factors and life satisfaction of apostolic women religious. It also presents the justification for (a) an examination of general patterns of motivational factors across the various generational cohorts of women religious, and (b) the design of an instrument that can assess satisfaction with religious life across generations of women committed to the vowed life. The concluding subsection provides a brief summary of the literature review and a justification for the objectives of the study.

PART I: SOCIAL CAPITAL AND DECLINE IN RELIGIOUS ORDERS' MEMBERSHIP

Definition, Importance, and the Decline of Social Capital.

The concept of social capital is based on a theoretical framework developed by Coleman (1988). Within this theoretical framework, Putnam (1996) defined social capital as "features of social life — networks, norms, and trust — that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (p. 34). Included in this definition of social capital are immediate and extended family members, friends, and neighbors, schools and local civic communities, political gatherings or speeches, and religious groups (Putnam, 1995, 1996, 2000). More recently Wuthnow (2002) has also linked social capital to the social well-being of U.S. civic life.

Many researchers have pointed out that too many variables are used as indicators of social capital, and that this concept needs to be clearly defined in operational terms (Kaufman & Weintraub, 2004; Stolle & Hooghe, 2005). Some researchers had hoped for the development of a more rigorous definition, specifically in relation to aspects that would account for the contribution within the political arena. Although criticisms of this all-inclusive approach have been voiced, research pertaining to social capital continues to be based on this all-encompassing definition (Stolle and Hooghe, 2005).

Despite the criticisms of this non-specific approach to social capital research, Putnam (2000) appeared to provide a good understanding of the meaning and importance of social capital. He divided the second section of *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* according to different areas of research related to social capital. These areas include trends in the concept of social trust, membership within

political, community, religious and work associations, and membership within informal associations, voluntary associations and newer associations. Unlike Wuthnow (2002), Putnam's (2000) definition of social trust does not include trust in political or social institutions, but refers specifically to peoples' ability to have trust in each other: a state in which people can rely mutually on each others' trustworthiness. Political activities (e.g., networking among local and national officials and political organizations) are considered to account for political associations as they are directly geared toward the political process.

The three associations of community, work, and religious can be considered as American voluntary associations or as representative of U.S. citizen's civic participation (Putnam, 2000). For instance, organizations that are based on active membership participation (regular local meetings) and outreach activities which are addressing societal concerns (e.g., activities of Boy Scouts) are understood to be community associations. Union and professional organizations are thought of as work-related associations which provide members the opportunity to assist and benefit mutually from one another.

Of particular significance is Putnam's (2000) statement in regard to religious associations. He argued that, for Americans, these associations constitute the greatest single source of social capital. Members of religious organizations are known to congregate not only for their worship, but also to fulfill the commitment of being extensively involved in a variety of activities regarding social justice issues (Putnam, 2000). In addition, there has been a historical tradition of involvement of Roman Catholic clergy (including women and men religious) with people in need (Padberg, 1990).

The last three areas of research related to social capital reviewed by Putnam (2000) deal with the more informal and voluntary associations as well as newer associations. In contrast to the more formal associations described above, informal associations include social interactions that involve meeting after work for recreational activities. Volunteering one's time and resources together with others for those in need of service is, according to Putnam, a key assessment of social capital. This type of social capital (volunteerism) overlaps in some ways with some of the formal associations, in which members are strongly encouraged to volunteer for the well-being of others. Finally, Putnam's last research area of social capital, newer associations, addressed the expansion of three countertrends to membership in associations that include (a) new small groups focusing on reading, support, and self-help, (b) historical social movements like Black civil rights, women, peace making, and environmental issues, and (c) the cyber-space groups resulting from technological changes in communication and interaction among U.S. citizens.

The importance of social capital to U.S. democratic life, specifically the voluntary participation of U.S. citizens, has been stressed historically and currently by a variety of sociologists (Galston, 2007; Skocpol, 2004; Wuthnow, 2002). In pointing out a significant part of U.S. civic life, namely membership and involvement of American citizens within voluntary organizations and their strong contributions to the democratic life, social scientists like to quote Alexis de Tocqueville, a French visitor to the U.S. during the beginning of the nineteenth century (Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2002). In his analysis of the U.S. democracy, Tocqueville stated the following:

> Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types --- religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute . . . . Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America (Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 513-517; as cited in Putnam, 2000, p. 48)

In other words, the importance of understanding the contribution of American associations to civic life is not a new idea, as evidenced by Tocqueville's observation made approximately two hundreds years ago.

Skocpol (2004), who researched the historical importance of American associations, stated that the need for unpaid assistance within innumerable U.S. volunteer associations and religious institutions of various sizes led to the development of high volunteer participation between the early eighteen hundreds and mid-nineteen hundreds. He went on to argue that the development of high volunteer participation allowed U.S. citizens to build a strong foundation for democracy, in which people of all backgrounds had the opportunity to lead and influence community life and public agendas (Skocpol, 2004). This democracy was rooted in the active participation of citizens in organizations like the Young Men Christian Associations (YMCA), Jaycees, League of Women Voters, Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), and community soccer leagues (Wuthnow, 2002).

Through their volunteer services in the community, political and church organizations, U.S. citizens were able to acquire a number of leadership skills; in some cases volunteerism provided upward mobility to positions in leadership (Skocpol, 2004;

Williams, 2007). Specifically, the outstanding contribution of religious organizations to U.S. social capital and its democratic life has been asserted by Smidt (2003; as cited in Williams, 2007) and others (Eisgruber, 2006; Putnam, 1995-2000).

However, researchers have noticed a steep decline in the various areas of social capital in regard to U.S. citizens' social trust, membership within political, community, religious and work associations, and membership within informal, voluntary, and newer associations (Andersen et al., 2006; Eisgruber, 2006; Putnam, 2000; Skocpol, 2004; Stolle & Hooghe, 2005; Williams, 2007). A detailed account of the decline across the various areas of social capital can be found in Putnam (2000) and Wuthnow (2002). While the remarkable contributions across these different areas of social capital have declined, it is especially noteworthy to point out that the withdrawal of membership and/or active participation of women within the traditional associations and faith organizations is a contributing factor (Andersen, et al., 2006; Eisgruber, 2006; Putnam, 2000; Skocpol, 2004; Wuthnow, 2002).

The emphasis on active membership decline within traditional faith organizations is important because of (a) Putnam's (2000) statement that religious organizations constitute the greatest single source of social capital, and (b) the review of other researchers (Eisgruber, 2006; Williams, 2007; Wuthnow, 2002) who documented past and present contributions of faith organizations to social capital. This review focuses on the tremendous contributions to U.S. social capital of one particular faith organization, namely that of Roman Catholic women religious and the possible effects of societal and religious movements on the declining membership among these Catholic Sisters.

It is important to present a brief overview of the active membership decline (especially among women) within traditional faith organizations and particularly within the Roman Catholic Church and apostolic women religious. This review provides an understanding of how societal changes have an impact on active membership within traditional faith organizations (specifically the Roman Catholic Church) but in particular on membership numbers within Roman Catholic apostolic women religious orders. Thus, this overview provides the necessary context for a deeper understanding as well as a justification of why it is important to develop a life satisfaction instrument specifically designed for apostolic women's religious.

The Influence of Active Membership Decline on Social Capital.

The distinction between active membership (e.g., volunteering time) and passive membership (paying dues) within traditional organizations is important. There appears to be sufficient evidence to support the argument for the reported increase in passive fee-paying organizations between the 1960's and 1990s like that of the American Association of Retired Person (AARP) and other professional organizations (Galston, 2007; Putnam, 2000; Stolle & Hooghe, 2005). However, the decline in social capital is related to a decrease in active membership within U.S. traditional organizations (e.g., Red Cross, labor unions, parent-teacher associations, bowling leagues, etc.). This decline as described by various authors (Andersen, et al., 2006; Eisgruber, 2006; Putnam, 2000; Skocpol, 2004; Stolle & Hooghe, 2005; Williams, 2007; Wuthnow, 2002) has also occurred between the mid-sixties to the late nineties due to cultural events (e.g., feminist movement).

It was during this period of social upheaval that traditional institutions and authoritative beliefs were questioned (Skocpol, 2004; Williams, 2007). Thus, there was an obvious membership decline in organizations preferred by men, such as those involving sports and service clubs, labor unions, professional societies, fraternities, and veterans' groups (Putnam, 1995). For instance, union membership has decreased over a period of four decades and rapidly between mid-seventies and eighties (Putnam, 1995).

Although a decline in traditional organizations was apparent among men, it was particularly noticeable among women who used to be actively involved in school-based groups such as the parent-teacher association (PTA), sports associations, professional and literary societies, and in particular church-affiliated groups (Andersen et al., 2006; Putnam, 1995). Related variables that have been identified in regard to this active membership decline (specifically among women) within traditional organizations are factors such as divorce, less free time due to increased working hours, family obligations, low state support for child care and early childhood education, single-parent households, and younger children (Alexander, 2007; Andersen et al., 2006; Rotolo & Wilson, 2007; Wuthnow, 2002). Finally, the active membership decline that is of greatest concern is that within traditional faith organizations. Its importance to U.S. social capital will be explained in the next section. This section also provides further understanding of how membership decline within traditional faith organizations (e.g., Roman Catholic Faith) could be related to the membership decline within Roman Catholic women's religious orders.

Active Membership Decline in Traditional Faith Organizations.

Church-affiliated organizations within the U.S. are historically self-supporting and known to be vigorous social associations in which members acquired general civic knowledge and skills (Putnam, 2000; Williams, 2007). According to Williams (2007), it was Alexis de Tocqueville who identified the early beginnings of religious groups within the U.S. as the origins of political institutions. As such, religious organizations provided models for democratic government. However, the successful influence of religious organizations on American civic life went beyond the realm of politics, in that U.S. citizens found consistency between the practice of their faith and their national identities (Williams, 2007). According to Eisgruber (2006), religious organizations within the U.S. have been and are still known for their extended services to ethnic minorities and new immigrants, offering them individual and social support. This support allowed individuals to preserve their ethnic uniqueness as they were assimilating American principles (Eisgruber, 2006).

The historical accounts of various immigrations of groups of people from different parts of the world to the U.S. contributed to an increase of wide-ranging religious organizations within the U.S. It comes as no surprise then that the U.S., as compared to other countries, also has the highest numbers of believers as well as the most religiously diverse groups (Lipset, 1991; as cited in Putnam, 2000). According to Eisgruber (2006), this pluralistic base of religious groups within the U.S. provides two major advantages: (a) the constant work toward creative and effective ways of promoting membership, and (b) the gratification of needs of a wide-ranging population.

Furthermore, Eisgruber claimed that not one single religious group would ever be able to satisfy the range of diverse wishes of a population.

In fact, Eisgruber (2006) stated that it is an insurmountable task for any single religious group to be simultaneously inclusive of people's contradictory desires. In order to illustrate the impossibility of satisfying such diverse wishes he listed some of the wide-spread characteristics which would clash with each other such as "worldly and otherworldly," "strict and permissive," "exclusive and inclusive" (Finke & Stark, 2005 as cited in Eisgruber, 2006, p. 465). There will always be people who express a strong preference in favor of one side of the continuum over the other. These pluralistic preferences are more likely to be fulfilled within a diverse presence of religious affiliations than they would be within one or a few established churches (Eisgruber, 2006).

Taken from a historical perspective, Eisgruber (2006) argued that it was the separation of state from established churches within the U.S. that provided a fertile ground for the development of these new and diverse faith groups. Specifically, the independence from governmental support allowed these varied religions to promote membership without the concern of feeling obligated toward those occupying political positions. Furthermore, the divided power of the U.S. governmental structure opened possibilities for the diverse religious groups to actively voice and exert policy influence within the various governmental levels (Eisgruber, 2006). As such, Putnam (2000) pointed out, that religious organizations are not only known for their strength in supporting social connectedness among their members, but also, if not specifically

through this interconnectedness, members exercise positive influence on each other to become or stay involved in political and other community activities.

In fact, research has shown that the relationship between community involvement and the affiliation to a religious group was much stronger than with any other voluntary associations (Putnam, 2000; Williams, 2007). Thus, religious groups within the U.S. are known to provide an environment that (a) fosters growth opportunities of civic skills in individuals committed to a learning environment for improving administrative skills (Putnam, 2000) and, (b) is favorable in promoting civic involvement (e.g., voting and social contributions) (Putnam, 2000).

Furthermore, in comparison to other countries in the world, the U.S. has shown to maintain itself as "an astonishingly 'churched' society" (Putnam, 1995, p. 69). Specifically, women have expressed an interest in and commitment to church-affiliated groups (Putnam, 1995). Even other investigations have shown that in the past 50 years, more than 95 percent of Americans acknowledged belief in a God or higher power (Miller & Thoresen, 2003). In addition, research has also shown that 9 out of 10 people pray, and 67 percent to 75 percent do so daily (Gallup & Lindsay, 1999; as cited in Miller & Thoresen, 2003). Many Americans have stated that their faith is a central guiding force in their lives (Gallup, 1985, 1995; as cited in Miller & Thoresen, 2003). Nevertheless, this religious interest tends to take on an individual bent and is not as strongly connected to religious institutions as it used to be (Putnam, 1995).

Americans repeatedly express strong interest in and commitment to their faith but the considerable decline seen in the membership of church affiliated group activities, as well as in weekly church attendance, indicates a discrepancy between belief and practice

(Putnam, 1995). According to Williams' (2007) review, it was during the sixties that authorities of various social, political, and religious institutions were questioned and individual expression was given priority. This more general critical attitude toward authority became evident later in what Casanova (1994; as cited in Eisgruber, 2006) has come to name the "privatization hypothesis" in that U.S. people chose to individualize and privatize their faith.

On the other hand, Eisgruber (2006) argued that it is difficult to assess privatization, or the vigor of personal convictions, as shown in the following example: a decrease of 32 percent among U.S. citizens who consider the Bible as factually true occurred over a time period of 34 years between the mid-sixties and late nineties. While some researchers interpret these results as an indication of secularization, Greeley (1989; as cited in Eisgruber, 2006) considered it to be a result of the Second Vatican Council and its impact on Catholic theology.

Therefore, in regard to an active membership decline within religious organizations, researchers have experienced great challenges in attempting to assess the inclination of U.S. citizens toward their active involvement in church-affiliated organizations (Putnam, 2000; Wutnow, 2002). According to Wuthnow (2002), the membership of U.S. citizens in religious associations is extremely multifaceted and diverse. Church-related survey questions, of which some are included in the General Social Surveys (GSS), are sometimes too vague, allowing participants the opportunity to attribute different meanings to the same survey questions.

For example, in regard to membership, some individuals may limit their participation to membership in name only; for others, it could be participation in a variety

of activities (e.g., Boy Scouts, Church choir, etc.) which use the church facilities as a meeting place (Wuthnow, 2002). Thus, the confusion between an individual's church-specific membership and one's membership within groups that are associated with the church has contributed to the difficulty in determining the trend of the church participation rate (Hendricks & Cutler, 2001). However, more thorough investigations which inquired separately for official membership versus attendance of church services and activities indicated a greater decline in the latter (the more demanding part of membership) as compared to official membership (Putnam, 2000).

Due to these methodological challenges, as well as the limitations of records from church-affiliated groups, Putnam (2000) cautioned interpreting the current inconsistent data and the controversy related to the secularization debate. This debate of whether or not and by whom the U.S. could have been secularized became an important concern for politically engaged individuals, legal researchers and scholars within the field of the sociology of religion (Eisgruber, 2006). Whether or not secularization within the U.S. has occurred, the research related to a decline of active membership observed within one traditional faith organization, namely the Roman Catholic Church, is the focus of the next section. This information provides a deeper understanding of the membership decline occurring within Roman Catholic women's and men's religious orders.

Active Membership Decline in the Roman Catholic Church.

In regard to trends observed that pertain to the decline in church membership and faith practice, Putnam (2000) cautioned his readers, because he found that the report of membership statistics from the various religious organizations are, for a variety of reasons, not always as reliable as one might expect. One reason is that various faith

organizations apply more stringent requirements than others in defining the term "membership" (Putnam, 2000). For example, independent and evangelical churches focus more on church attendance than on membership (Wuthnow, 2002). Another reason is that Protestant and Catholic churches have deliberately underestimated their membership numbers so that the allotment that needs to be paid to the denominational headquarters is not as high (Wuthnow, 2002). In addition to the inaccurate reports (the over or underreporting of membership numbers), Putnam (2000) also pointed out that written records are not always updated.

The disadvantage of public surveys that inquire about religious membership is that former affiliates may continue to report themselves as members of religious organizations: "Presbyterian, or Jewish, or Catholic" (Putnam, 2000, p. 70), leading to higher membership numbers as compared to data available through church records. While Putnam's (2000) findings might apply to some religious organizations, it does not seem to be congruent with findings related to statistics within the Roman Catholic Church. Data gathered particularly from different reputable sources which pertain to the church attendance of members of the Catholic Church, appear to be consistent with each other (CARA, 2008).

In fact, according to CARA (2008), investigations regarding the church attendance of members belonging to the Roman Catholic faith conducted by CARA in 2004 and the 2003 Gallup Poll showed similar results. These results of the Catholic Mass attendance rate (in any given week) were calculated to be about 40 percent. This means that there has been a 34 percent decline in weekly church attendance among Roman Catholic members since the year of 1958 (CARA, 2008). This long-standing decline in

Mass attendance among Catholics appears to be a generational trend. The older population who regularly attend services is dying out and being replaced by a younger generation less committed to attend Mass as frequently (CARA, 2008; Wuthnow, 2007).

However, as Galston (2007) pointed out the decline in church attendance is less sharp when compared to the decline among secular associations. In addition, the participation in civic society (e.g., political) and especially in those newly evolving "'checkbook' organizations" (p. 634) is related to a person's social status which is an unrelated aspect to the participation in religious organizations. Despite the fact that the administrations of religious organizations are more hierarchically organized, their members still represent all socioeconomic groups. This impartiality of members of religious affiliated groups was observed over a period of three decades (Galston, 2007). One can see how the representation of all socioeconomic groups in the Roman Catholic Church could be related to its strong emphasis on social justice outreach that is rooted in the Catholic Church's teachings.

Nevertheless, similar to the trends in political participation, the participation rate at Catholic Masses has also been linked to cultural events. A decrease from 74 percent (in 1958) to 67 percent (in 1965) was noticed within a time period of seven years (CARA, 2008). This decrease in church attendance seems to coincide with the occurrence of Vatican II Council, which ended in 1965. On the other hand, an increase of 12 percent in Mass attendance was found between the late 90s (40 percent) and the turn of the century (52 percent). The increase to 52 percent occurred around the time that the Catholic Church announced 2000 as a jubilee year (CARA, 2008).

Unfortunately, the church-related membership decline, apparent since the 1960s, and pointed out by Putnam (1995) was paralleled by a decrease of membership among the Roman Catholic clergy, and in particular, among Roman Catholic women's religious congregations (Ebaugh et al., 1996). Thus, if an individual's engagement and commitment to a variety of social groups is very important for the U.S. democracy, and a decline in civic participation (including religious membership and activity) could have serious deterioration effects (Putnam, 2000), then one can assume that the membership decline among the Roman Catholic clergy and Roman Catholic women religious (Ebaugh et al., 1996; National Religious Retirement Office, 2008; The Official Catholic Directory, 2007) is especially disheartening.

But before a focused discussion on the membership statistics and dynamics of women religious is presented, it will be important to provide a brief overview on the definitions, most up-dated statistics and trends within the Roman Catholic Church, the denomination to which women religious belong. This information sets the membership decline of women religious within the broader context of trends occurring in U.S. society and the Roman Catholic Church.

Definition and Membership Statistics of Roman Catholics.

The definition of "Catholicism" can be understood as the Christians who are faithful to the Church of Rome (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). This church holds a common understanding of belief and teaching, a way of living and worshiping, regulations and church structures. Catholicism is occasionally used to refer to seemingly similar churches, such as the Orthodox and Anglicans Churches, whose traditions are quite similar. Characteristics of the Catholic traditions, not necessarily exclusive of others, are

its historical uniqueness, faithful respect for tradition, authority in teaching and ministry, theology of Incarnation, sacraments, liturgical traditions with Eucharistic centrality, devotion to Mary and the saints, strong spirituality and contemplative prayer, monasticism, religious orders, respect for religious art, conviction that faith and reason complement each other, common understanding of sin and redemption, high value for community, social teachings that highly respect the dignity of the human person, strong dedication to missionary service, and respect for the papacy (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004).

A genuine Catholic understands the Church as universal (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). Such a person sees the Church as neither limited to the local community nor to the combination of all the individual churches. But neither is it an institution that is single, worldwide, and monolithic. The "ecclesia catholica" (Catholic Church) comprises not only the whole Church, but also the communion of churches. The accepted symbol of Catholicism is the papacy (authority of the pope), and this symbol does refer to a specific, exclusive church, but, according to Vatican Council II, it refers to the complete church in all its fullness (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004).

The term "Catholic Church" does not infer a spatial or geographic church. Rather, the Church has an inclusive membership (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). It is a Church of reconciliation and communion in Christ and must include all peoples, classes, races, and cultures. Established on the first Pentecost, the Catholic Church is thus true to its origin as stated in the Bible (Acts 2:5-11). However, to say that the Church is Catholic is to confirm its reverence for truth in all its fullness. This is expressed clearly in the Greek "katholikos," meaning "whole or entire." In other words, the Catholic Church is not "practical" or "particular." It is therefore comprehensive, open to all truth. The Christian

history, in the period following the New Testament, indicates that the Catholic Church was not formed by an individual reformer or a historical movement (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004).

Further, Catholicism does not identify with any single doctrine, confession, liturgical text, or statement of scriptural interpretation (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). Therefore, it can encompass many different theologies, spiritualities, and characteristics of Christian life. Its pluralistic approach to truth is clear in that, unlike the "either/or" emphasis of the 16th century reformation, it stresses the "both/and." Thus, it stresses not scripture alone, but rather emphasizes the need for both scripture and tradition. It also speaks, not of grace alone, but of grace and nature. It does not isolate faith without action, but insists on faith and action (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004).

Therefore, during the Second Vatican Council, the integration of faith and action led to a shifting emphasis on world social justice issues. This was and remains a concern for all members of the Catholic Church, but especially for the clergy and women and men religious (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). According to the Statistical Yearbook of the Church (2007), the number of Catholics is 1,114,966,000 out of a world-wide population of 6,463, 234,000, whereas the total number of Catholics in the U.S. is 67,515,016 as compared to a population of 301,107,806 in the U.S. From World War II until the end of the 20th century, the general membership within the Roman Catholic Church has increased by about one to one point five percent per decade (Putnam, 2000). This increase is in contrast to the membership decline observed in (a) Judaism which has dropped about point five percent per decade, and (b) Protestant churches which fell about twelve to fifteen percent per decade (Putnam, 2000).

The major factor accounting for the increase of membership within the Roman Catholic Church is the immigration of people from Latin America to the U.S. As such, the Roman Catholic Church, historically as well as currently, has continued to support the immigration of people to the U.S. This involvement of the Catholic Church has become a vital part of the U.S. social capital (Putnam, 2000; Weakland, 1994). In regard to the observed increase of ethnic/racial diversity of newer members to religious life within Roman Catholic congregations (Froehle & Gautier, 2000; as cited in Johnson, 2001), one might wonder how many diverse members are actually from Latin America.

Nevertheless, the increase of immigrants to various denominations (including the Roman Catholic Church) obscures in some way the data related toward a tendency of decreased church involvement among native-born Americans (Putnam, 2000). This tendency toward a decreased participation rate is not exclusively about involvement within religious organizations, as it has also been noticed in the greater community and politics, especially among younger people (Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2007). In regard to the decreased involvement, which is more pronounced among people younger than thirty years of age, U.S. citizens of all age categories in today's society are less actively committed to religious organizations (Putnam, 2000) and to politics, as compared to Americans in the same age groups in generations past (Galston, 2007).

In fact, Wuthnow (2007) identified a multiplicity of social forces (to be discussed later in this chapter) that appear to be related to the decreased involvement of the younger generation, particularly those who are in their twenties, across the more common faith traditions like the Evangelical, Mainline [Protestant], Black Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. Thus, faith traditions, like the Evangelical, the Black Protestant, and Catholics,

have a larger percentage of younger people, as compared to Mainline [Protestant] and Jewish congregations, but their younger members are nevertheless in the age range between thirty and early forties (Wuthnow, 2007).

Interestingly, this 30 to 40 age range is not necessarily considered young in society. According to anecdotal data, the few newer members to apostolic religious orders who belong to LCWR are particularly from this age group (women in their thirties and forties), an important factor to keep in mind when recruiting members from different apostolic women religious congregations for the development of a life satisfaction instrument. There might not be enough young women under the age of thirty presently in apostolic religious life to norm the development of the life satisfaction instrument to this age group. If there are not many young people under the age of thirty actively involved in the Catholic Church, could this phenomenon be one factor that might help explain the decreased numbers of younger entrants to the Catholic priesthood and religious life? In order to understand the various kinds of membership that exist within the Catholic Church, as well as the fact that a membership decline is not only occurring within women's religious orders, it is helpful to look at the definition and statistics for priests and brothers. This overview can also help clarify the ratio between these types of memberships in the Catholic Church.

Definition and Membership Statistics of Priests.

The name "pastor" comes from the Latin word for "shepherd," referring to the responsibility of the priest to engage in the pastoral care of the parish (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). The priest's main duties are: (1) to carefully assure the preaching of the Gospel message in the parish, (2) to stress the essential need for Eucharist in parish life, and (3)

to minister to the sacramental needs of the parish. In addition, the responsibility for the administration of finances and any legal matters are assumed by the pastor. It is the bishop who appoints the pastors (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). In the world there are 269,762 diocesan priests, as compared to 136,649 religious priests (members of men's religious congregations) (The Official Catholic Directory, 2007). Within the U.S., there are 28,462 diocesan priests, 13,845 religious priests, 5, 095 religious brothers, and 64, 877 women religious (nuns and sisters) (The Official Catholic Directory, 2007).

On the other hand, these statistics indicate that women religious still outnumber the male clergy and religious in the U.S. Catholic Church. On the other hand, considering the fact that the median age of women religious is about 69 or higher, one can speculate that a larger number of these women religious in the U.S. are older and that further membership decline is yet to come. It will therefore be important to develop an instrument that will be able to assess these women's life satisfaction as they continue to experience diminishing membership numbers, changes, and loss of other resources in their congregations.

Furthermore, these statistics also allude to the fact that the presence of women religious among younger people is very likely to decrease as these women are getting older and diminish in membership numbers. A decreased presence of women religious among younger generations will make it difficult for these Sisters to be aware of and respond to younger people's interests and needs. Research indicates that religion has taken a different role among the various generations within the U.S. Thus, the changing role of religion across the most current generations and younger people's position and expectations toward the Catholic Church follows next. This review places the

membership decline within women's religious congregations in the context of the societal changes that are generally impacting younger people's attitudes and decreased religious commitment and possibly the consideration of religious life.

The Role of Religion in the Pre-Vatican and Vatican II Generations.

There has been much research with regard to the religious behavior and attitude of the G.I. (1901-1924), the Silent (1925-1942), and Boom (1943-1960) Generations (Putnam, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Wuthnow, 2007). The concept of generation is defined by Strauss and Howe (1991) as "a cohort-group whose length approximates the span of a phase of life and whose boundaries are fixed by peer personality" (p. 60). According to Strauss and Howe (1991) the span of each life stage, a sum of 22 years, is determined by the social responsibilities that individuals are expected to fulfill as they move from one stage to the next. Strauss and Howe (1991) separated the life stages into four phases based on historical observations within the U.S. While there have been times in which a specific generation cohort-group expanded or shortened a life phase due to external societal events (e.g.: war), for the most part each of the life phases have included about 22 years. These four phases are as follows: "Youth (age 0-21). Central role: *dependence*", "Rising Adulthood (age 22-43). Central role: *activity*", "Midlife (age 44-65). Central role: *leadership"*, "Elderhood (age 66-87). Central role: *stewardship*" (Strauss & Howe, p. 60).

Next, the term "peer personality" is defined by Strauss and Howe (1991) as "a generational persona recognized and determined by (1) common age location; (2) common beliefs and behavior; and (3) perceived membership in a common generation" (p. 64). In referring to Karl Mannheim's (1952) writing, Strauss and Howe (1991, p. 64)

defined "common age location" as a cohort group (restricted to a specific time period) who together, in one place and at the same time, experience the same occurring historical events or movements. Although each cohort group is going to be exposed to the same event or movement at the same time, it nevertheless seems to create a diverse impact on each cohort group (Strauss & Howe, 1991). For example, the social movements of 1960s affected the youngest cohort group, 13th Generation, in a way that pushed them into a fast and autonomous maturation process. In contrast, the Boomers appeared to become preoccupied with their inner self, the Silent Generation felt a desire to catch-up with a last minute chance for new opportunities, and the G.I. as the oldest generation felt the responsibility to protect the institutions from the younger cohort (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Thus, in regard to the role of religion, it was specifically the Boom Generation (Boomers) who were large in numbers and had a strong influence on religious trends within the U.S. (Wuthnow, 2007). During their childhood, their interest in religious activities and practices impacted the active and intense church involvement of their families (G.I. and Silent Generations). In contrast, as young adults, Boomers turned away from active church membership, as a majority of them became much involved in the social movements that occurred during the sixties (Strauss & Howe, 1991; Wuthnow, 2007). Interestingly, Catholic women and men religious (including priests) were also actively involved in the protest marches of the sixties (McAfee Brown, 1985). Nevertheless, in comparison to the strong and active commitment of the G.I. and the Silent Generations, the Boomers were the first cohort to obviously withdraw its membership from traditional faith organizations due to a stronger interest in the social movements of the time (Putnam, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Wuthnow, 2007).

As predicted, by scientists concerned with the U.S. trends in religion, during the eighties the Boomers did return to religion (Wuthnow, 2007). Their religious quests were satisfied either by developing their own private religion, experimenting with novel forms of meditation and New Age spirituality, or by gaining membership within the newer growing fundamental (evangelical) and charismatic religious movements (Putnam, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Wuthnow, 2007).

Overall, Boomers developed an individualistic but conservative style as they moved into their adult years (Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2007). The former self-focus turned into a hardworking attitude and commitment to their job, and a responsibility toward their own families (Wuthnow, 2007). Today, most Boomers are faced with their children's developmental step toward independent adult living, as they themselves are approaching their retirement age. In their retirement years they are now able to invest their time and money into church-related volunteer activity (Wuthnow, 2007).

In summary, this review shows a change in the importance of religion among the three different generations cited above, particularly between the Boom, the G.I. and the Silent Generation. A return to the importance of religion was observed in the Boom Generation. Since research has indicated that religion has taken a different role among and within generations (Putnam, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Wuthnow, 2007), one could assume potential differences in motivational factors and satisfaction among the various generations within religious life. This research also has implications for women religious' ministerial outreach to these different generations as will be seen in the next section.

The Role of Religion in the Post-Vatican II Generations.

Wuthnow (2007) has argued that as the Boomers are moving into their retirement years, it will be important for the U.S. society to understand the thoughts and behaviors of contemporary younger people. In contrast to the Boom Generation, the current younger generation (studied between 1998 and 2002) does not have a clear identity associated with historical events like that of the social upheaval during the 1960s. Based on Wuthnow's (2007) review, some researchers refer to this younger group as either the X or the Y Generation, or both. His review of research related to the younger U.S. population is based on data from the General Social Surveys (GSS). One third of this younger U.S. population was between twenty to forty-four years of age at the time the data of the GSS were collected between 1998 and 2002.

According to Wuthnow (2007), today's young adult years extend into the mid-forties, as people's life expectancy in the year 2000 is higher (74.3 years for men and 79.7 years for women), as compared to the 1950s in which the average life expectancy was much lower (65.6 years for men and 71.1 years for women). Although sexually active at an earlier age, young adults are taking more time to complete the developmental steps (e.g., delaying committed relationships and children) of early adult years (Wuthnow, 2007).

Today's younger people are also affected by a variety of uncertainties (professional, financial, and national security) and societal influences like that of advanced technology, immigration (increase in diversity), and globalization (competition). However, the family dynamic, social, and work environments have the most influential impact on people's lives and determine an individual's response to

societal trends as well as to religious behavior. The relationship of these changing societal influences and their impact on the decline in church membership and involvement among younger adults can be illustrated through seven main trends (Wuthnow, 2007).

The first observed trend in younger people is delayed marriage (Wuthnow, 2007). For example, 68 percent of the people who were 15 years or older were married during the 1950s, and by the 1960s this early marriage trend reached its peak at 69 percent. This coincides with the anecdotal data that during the 1950s and early 1960s young women, age 15 or older, used to enter and commit to religious life at this early age. Since the sixties, there has been a steady decline in marriages at this early age, and an increase of seven percent (from 20 to 27pecent) of people who have never been married (Wuthnow, 2007). At the same time, a steady decline in membership of voluntary organizations (Andersen et al., 2006) and membership decline within women's religious organizations (National Religious Retirement Office, 2008) has occurred during this period of social upheaval in U.S. society (Galston, 2007).

More recent statistics indicate that only 22 percent of women and 12 percent of men are married in their early twenties (Wuthnow, 2007). The percentage of marriages increases for both sexes as individuals get older; 68 percent of women and 67 percent of men are married by the time they reach their early forties. In addition, the divorce rate which was at 2.5 percent within the 1960s, has now increased to about 10 percent. The decline in early marriages and the increase in the number of single or divorced adults negatively affect the membership of younger people in church organizations. This is because women tend to be more interested in religion as compared to men, and it is

through their spouses that men get increasingly involved in church membership. But once committed, both men and women know that a marriage is usually followed by further responsibilities and conformity to traditional and conventional roles (Wuthnow, 2007).

Following this first trend, the second trend shows younger people not only postpone the time of marriage, but they also tend to wait to have children and have fewer children. The percentage of couples who have no children is increasing while the percentage of couples who have three or more children is decreasing. Once younger couples have children, they return to active involvement within their faith organization as they want their children to be exposed to the religious environment in terms of its values and social opportunities. Families who have one or more children attend church services more frequently as compared to couples who are childless or have only one child (Wuthnow, 2007).

Parents who have children out of wedlock or are divorced show a pattern of decreased church involvement the younger they are in age. However, compared to women and men without children, unmarried women and men with children are a bit more likely to attend church services. According to Wuthnow (2007), the restricted availability of time and finances as well as the dissimilar lifestyle (from congregational norms) may create some of the difficulty in regular church attendance among single parents.

A third trend is that concerns related to economic and employment instability has led to dual-income families which has also affected the church attendance of younger adults. Thus, there has been a decrease in church attendance among men who work full time. However, men who work full time are somewhat more likely to go to church than

those who work part time or are pursuing an educational degree. Compared to men, women show a different pattern as their entry into full time employment and the social circles related to their job, coupled with child care and household responsibilities, may contribute to their decreased active involvement in church organizations (Wuthnow, 2007).

A fourth trend observed (between 1972 and 2002) is a higher rate of church attendance among women and men with higher levels of education (bachelors and graduate degree) compared to those with lower levels. An exception is the more recent trend (between 1998 and 2002) in which women with a graduate degree show a lower church attendance. There was also a general decrease in church attendance among men of all levels of education from the previous years (Wuthnow, 2007). This would seem to indicate a change in the correlation between the pursuit of higher education and church attendance, particularly among women.

The fifth trend is the fact that younger adults have fewer relationships due to less involvement in traditional forms of civic organizations (including less political participation) and neighborhood activities. On the other hand, younger people are not less interested and committed to volunteer their time and energy within organizations (e.g., Habitat for Humanity, church, etc.) that provide them with the opportunity of contributing on a flexible time basis and less rigid commitment (Wuthnow, 2007).

The forces of globalization are yet another trend to which younger people need to adapt as they are increasingly exposed to a competitive environment in which they either compete with foreign workers (visitors and immigrants) at the work place, or are employed in occupations that are dependent on foreign markets. This globalization

requires younger Americans to travel abroad to other countries much more often than before. The exposure to new cultures and their values and lifestyles is becoming an increasing challenge which leads these individuals to reflect on their familiar worldview and standard of living (Wuthnow, 2007).

The seventh and last trend influencing younger people is that of the technological culture that has led to a wealth of diverse information with easier and sudden access, not only to factual information, but also to entertainment in art and music. This exposure may have contributed also to an even greater openness and tolerance of freedom of expression, civil rights, and diversity among the youngest U.S. generation, as compared to the already tolerant attitude of the Boom Generation. However, this younger generation is not more liberal in their personal life than the Boomers. In fact, in comparison to the Boomers, a majority of the younger people tend to be more conservative in their political as well as religious views (Wuthnow, 2007).

In summary, the time that younger people take to establish their careers, gain financial independence, and establish their own family impacts their involvement in religious activities (Wuthnow, 2007). Younger people seem to distance themselves from religious organizations and activities during their teenage years and return mostly during their parenting years. Thus, one could extend Wuthnow's (2007) findings by stating that these societal changes might even impact younger people's decision to enter and commit to a vowed life. It should then be no surprise that women who are deciding to join religious life enter at a later stage in their lives. While there are anecdotal data that show women who decide to enter women's religious congregations are older in age as

compared to previous generations (G.I., Silent, and Boom Generations), no current research is yet available within this area.

The review above of the current trends in church attendance might also explain the decrease in the number of young women who decide to join religious life. As such, women religious not only experience declining membership numbers but also the decrease of new and young vocations to religious life. One might wonder if and how this reality (declining membership and few vocations) is affecting the life satisfaction of women who are presently committed to the vowed life.

Finally, Wuthnow (2007) also stressed that the societal changes, described above, are impacting younger people's views and positions toward the traditions and practices within their particular church organization. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the views and positions of younger Catholic people as described in Hoge, Dinges, Johnson, and Gonzales (2001) will be introduced below. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the position and expectations that younger Catholics have toward their Church because this information will help (a) explain the decreased involvement of younger people within the Catholic Church, (b) allude to factors that could relate to the decreased number of young entrants to religious life, and (c) provide implications for women religious as they are facing declining membership numbers.

Position of Young People toward the Catholic Church.

Overall, younger Catholics are happy with their membership in the Catholic Church and cannot imagine themselves as a member of another church organization (Hoge et al., 2001). A majority view the sacraments and devotion to Mary as fundamental elements of the Catholic Faith (Hoge, 2006; Hoge et al., 2001). They express a genuine

identification with being Catholic, despite some of the opposing views they have regarding the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church (Hoge et al., 2001. They further see themselves as committed to a spiritual, prayerful, and social active life. They are proud of the Catholic Church's global dimensions and admire the Pope's personal integrity and values, as well as his visibility in the media (Hoge et al., 2001).

Nevertheless, these younger Catholics are to a lesser degree and more hesitantly affiliated with the institutional Church than any other generation before them, leading to the frequently used formula, "I am spiritual but not religious" (Hoge, 2006, p. 213). Although they do not feel alienated by the Church's teaching, they still express values and practices that are contrary to some of the Church's doctrine and act independently of Church authority (Hoge et al., 2001). Unfamiliar with the Catholic tradition, these younger people are less inclined to express a coherent sense of Catholic identity. While some younger Catholics feel restricted in their need for exploration, others evaluate the beliefs (e.g., role of women, marriage and divorce, sexuality, etc.) of the Catholic Church as arbitrary, inappropriate, and outdated. In their search for an experience of community and structures that are more participatory and democratic, some younger Catholics express that their frequent encounters with the Church seem dominated by its hierarchical structure (Hoge et al., 2001).

The fading of Catholic centrality is particularly evident in the younger people's attitude toward the Catholic Church (Hoge et al., 2001). Subjectively, they express that they like being a Catholic but, objectively, they express that the Catholic Church is only one among many other respectable denominations. Although not angry, these younger people are distanced and only hesitantly affiliated with the institutional Church, resulting

in a weaker commitment to the Church's mission. Another increasing phenomenon is the pick-and-choose mentality which is also a sign that the younger generation is less committed to work for reform in the Catholic Church. As such, numerous younger Catholics live according to a "religious individualism" (p. 224) in that they do not frequently attend church services. Instead, these younger Catholics live their own understanding of what it means to be a Catholic, independent of directions given by authorities within the Catholic Church (Hoge et al., 2001).

However, it is important to note that the alienation of authoritative institutions is a trend that is occurring across other U.S. religious organizations as well (Hoge et al., 2001; Wuthnow, 2007). Therefore, Wuthnow (2007) asserted that church leaders of various faith groups need to be aware of the societal influences on people's lives and realize how they directly impact people's faith observance and involvement. He particularly appealed to leaders of the various religious organizations to provide more outreach activities directed toward the needs of the young adult population (Wuthnow, 2007). One might wonder if Wuthnow's (2007) appeal could also be directed toward the leadership and formation directors of apostolic women's religious congregations, especially since women religious are not as involved in youth and young adult formation within the Catholic Church as they used to be in the past. A decreased involvement with younger Catholics will make it difficult for women religious to become aware of this generation's position, expectations, and needs.

Expectations of Young People toward the Catholic Church.

Already aware of the necessity to inquire about the needs of Catholic young adults, Hoge et al. (2001) conducted personal interviews and focus groups. The results of

this investigation led to the emergence of several common themes that Hoge et al. (2001) have summarized. First, the younger Catholics expressed a desire to be welcomed and heard by those who assume the leadership positions within the Catholic Church. They further would like to engage in egalitarian discussions pertaining to issues that are relevant to their lives. There is also the expectation among younger Catholics that leadership would listen and take seriously their concerns and view points. Secondly, there is a need for programs and outreach opportunities that are applicable to young adults and allow for their active involvement within the Catholic Church, particularly for those who are single (Hoge et al., 2001).

Thirdly, there is also a need for ongoing educational opportunities directed toward young adults in regard to the study of scripture and teachings related to the Catholic Faith and its tradition (e.g., Vatican II, Catholic social teaching). Lastly, it is important for the Catholic Church to review its teaching in regard to issues such as woman's role in the Church (including women becoming priests), the celibacy of priests, homosexuality, and birth control. The Catholic Church's unchanging stance toward these issues leads to further deterioration of its credibility among numerous younger Catholics (Hoge et al., 2001).

In conclusion, leaders of church organizations (including the Catholic Church) in the past were able to establish activities for youth and older people in response to the needs of this population (Wuthnow, 2007). However, more recent societal changes are impacting the lifestyles of the younger U.S. population. These societal changes have further negatively influenced the commitment of younger people to U.S. church

organizations. Particularly, the needs of the younger adult population have not been addressed among the various church organizations (Wuthnow, 2007).

It is therefore important for all church organizations, but especially the Catholic Church, to develop new programs and outreach activities by providing guidance and support in regard to career, life, and financial decisions for younger people between the ages of twenty and the forties (Hoge et al., 2001; Wuthnow, 2007). According to Hoge et al. (2001) there is a need within the Catholic Church to attend to the needs of younger Catholics through pastoral church members who commit themselves to a 'Preferential Option' for Young Adult Catholics" (p. 231). This could involve developing parish programs, ministries, and initiatives that focus on the faith needs of young adults (Hoge, et al., 2001). One might wonder if this could be a potential area in which women religious could step in by providing formation programs designed for this population.

Considering the decline in membership numbers and fewer young entrants to religious life, the need for youth and young adult formation programs might be an area that women religious would like to (or possibly need to) attend to. If women religious decide to respond to this need, then it would provide the youth and young adults exposure to the lifestyle and religious commitment of women religious which may lead some younger women to discern a vocation to religious life.

Finally, it is hoped that this brief overview on the membership types, statistics, and dynamics within church organizations and particularly within the Roman Catholic Church provided a context in which the membership types and statistics of women's and men's religious congregations (especially women's religious orders) can now be better understood.

Membership Decline in Apostolic Women's and Men's Religious Orders.

Although this section is going to discuss definitions and membership statistics as related to women's and men's religious orders the focus will be on women religious who, according to Wittberg (1991), are known as one of the oldest networks. In reading historical accounts of their lives (Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993; Padberg, 1990), one can begin to understand the tremendous contribution of women religious to the U.S. social capital by means of their networking and charitable works, in which they not only established norms and values, but also succeeded in instilling social trust among their people. Further, it was with the support of others, as well as the Roman Catholic Church members, that these women were able to establish religious health care, education, and social service systems throughout the U.S. (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993). Considering the great input to social capital by women religious, it will be important to review in more detail the definitions and statistics of this group.

Definition and Membership Statistics of Women and Men Religious

According to the Second Vatican Council, Christian discipleship embraced by women and men religious is a state of life which belongs to the life and holiness of the Church (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). The term "religious" refers to cloistered and contemplative communities (e.g., Poor Clare nuns), orders that are monastic (e.g., Benedictine nuns or monks), and active apostolic institutes (e.g., Franciscan sisters or brothers). They are women and men religious who freely take vows, live according to a specific constitution or rule of life, and live in community (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). However, for the purposes of this study, the term "apostolic women religious" will include all women religious who minister in an apostolate (e.g. teaching, pastoral work)

regardless of their designation as apostolic religious, evangelical (e.g., Franciscans) or monastic (e.g., Benedictines).

Further, commitment to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience is common to most religious institutes (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). Each one has its own authoritative documents and charism. Their documents (Rule or Constitutions) determine the life manner of the members and their mission in the Church. Religious institutes can be either diocesan or pontifical. Diocesan institutes are under the authority of the local bishop, while pontifical right institutes are subject to the Holy See, that is, to the Congregation of Religious and Secular Institutes (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004), now known as the Congregation for Institute of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL) (Sammon, 2002).

In a broad sense, however, the term "religious" also includes secular institutes (Ladies of Nazareth), whose members do not live in community but make vows and/or promises (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). In addition, societies of apostolic life, whose members do not make public vows, but live in community, as well as the consecrated virgins and newly organized non-canonical groups, are all included in the broader sense of the term "religious." Therefore, the term "religious life" usually refers to one of three types: the contemplative, the monastic, or apostolic (active religious). They are distinguished by their specific dedication or activity. Thus, "active religious" are dedicated to apostolic and charitable works. "Contemplative religious" are called to give their life to God in solitude, silence, prayer, and penance. Those following the ancient tradition of the Church in the "monastic life" are highly dedicated to stability, prayer, work, and monastic community life (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004).

According to the Second Vatican Council, religious are "active" when involved in apostolic activities that comprise the very nature of religious life (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). As the term implies, their dedication is expressed in action. They devote their lives to the apostolic work of the Church and carry it out in a dedicated manner for the Church. Active religious have a variety of lifestyles as necessitated by the range of needs resulting from their apostolic commitments. Apostolic life has as its basis a contemplative spirit, which presupposes union with God and service of neighbor. Motivated by the imitation of Christ, the active religious follow him in his mission of teaching, healing the sick, freeing those in captivity, nourishing the hungry, and announcing the reign of God (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004). The participants included in this study will be "active women religious."

In the world**,** the number of temporary and perpetual professed religious brothers is 54,708 and for religious priests it is 136,649 (Statistical Yearbook of the Church, 2007). However, the number of temporary and perpetual professed women religious (nuns and sisters) in the world is 760,529 (Statistical Yearbook of the Church, 2007). In the U.S., there are 5,095 religious brothers and 13,845 religious priests (ordained priests who belong to a religious community) (The Official Catholic Directory, 2007). On the other hand, in the U.S. the number of Catholic women religious (nuns and sisters) is 64,877 (The Official Catholic Directory, 2007).

Demographics on Roman Catholic Apostolic Women Religious

There are no conclusive data available regarding the current median age, or age range, ethnic racial background, highest degree earned, current ministry involved, or current median age of new members, etc. (LCWR, 2008). No official yearly census is

conducted for any of these demographic variables within these organizations. Each organization has its specific interest for collecting data and relies on the response rate of each of the individual women religious communities. Thus, it has been found that the data are incomplete and inconclusive, due to the fact that not every community responded or got involved (LCWR, 2008). Due to the former, there are no conclusive data available for the demographics related to this study.

Membership Decline among Women and Men Religious.

As a social group, women religious had their highest membership in the States between the years of 1950 and 1966; since then, however, they have experienced a steady decrease of membership (Wittberg, 1991). In fact, according to the research of Ebaugh et al. (1996):

> A substantial decline in the number of U.S. nuns has occurred in the past 30 years, from 179,954 in 1965 to 103,269 in 1990, a 43% decrease. The decline continued during the first half of the 1990s resulting in 92,107 U.S. nuns in 1995. (p. 175)

This decline in membership has been common knowledge among women religious at least since the beginning of the 1980s (NRRO, 2008). Furthermore, there are projected data (2003-2023) that this decline will continue even further among U.S. Roman Catholic women and men religious (NRRO, 2008).

Additional statistics showing that there is a decline among Catholic clergy and religious are provided by the Center for the Applied Research on the Apostolates (CARA) in which the Report 2000 showed that from 1965 to 2000, the number of religious dropped. For example, the number of priests in the U.S. dropped from 22,207 to 15,092; sisters from 179,954 to 79,814; and brothers from 12,271 to 5,662 (Sammon,

2002). More current data, posted by the NRRO (2008), show a decrease in membership of women and men in religious life (from 120,000 members to 60,000) between the late 1980s to the present time. The main reasons for this decline are that members of women's religious congregations are aging and also seem to be unable to recruit or retain the entrance of newer and younger members to their congregations (Sammon, 2002).

In terms of the impact of age within religious orders, current statistics of women and men religious within the U.S. indicate that approximately 35,000 members of this population are older than 70 (a majority of them women) and about 5,500 of these women need special nursing care (NRRO, 2008). The current number of younger women and men religious who are (a) under the age of 40 years of age is 1,798 (b) under 60 years of age is estimated to be about 15 percent of the total number of religious in the United States (NRRO, 2008).

Unfortunately, Sisters in the various women's orders are not only aging in years, they also seem unable to recruit or retain the entrance of newer and younger members to their congregations. For instance, the numbers of newer members were high during the 1960s in that about 7,000 new applicants for each year joined U.S. women's religious orders, and made up 17 percent of the congregation's annual membership (Sammon, 2002). Contrary to the expectation of many was the fact that religious congregations did not gain newer members from the large population of the Boom Generation. In fact, in the early eighties only four percent or less accounted for the newer members within congregations' annual membership, and by 1990 it decreased further to about one percent (Sammon, 2002). Exactly how these declining numbers are impacting current members

of religious congregations is currently a controversial topic to be discussed later within the second section of this paper.

Conclusion.

Part I of this paper has attempted to provide a concise overview of the historical and social effects related to the definition, importance and decline of U.S. social capital. However, the focus was on the decline of active membership within traditional organizations and in particular that of faith organizations. For the purposes of this investigation, emphasis was given to the active membership decline within the Roman Catholic Church. A broader context for this active membership decline across the varied membership groups of the Roman Catholic Church was offered in order to impart a deeper understanding of the current membership decline among women's religious congregations and its connection to movements in society.

Based on this review, one could assume that the tendency of younger people to consider themselves spiritual but not religious, their unfamiliarity with and decreased commitment to the Catholic teaching and tradition, and women religious' decreased involvement in the faith formation of younger people could all be factors that might explain decreased entrants of younger people to the Catholic vowed life.

Additional factors that could relate to the current membership decline within religious life will be found in the second part of this paper. In addition, the question of exactly how these declining numbers are impacting current members of religious congregations remains a controversial topic. Various experts in religious life (Brennan, 1994, Brink, 2000b; Chittister, 1995; Sammon, 2002, Schneiders, 1994, 2000b) are setting forth different explanations as to how members of declining congregations are

being affected, also an area to be discussed in the second part of this document. But before a discussion can be directed toward this particular controversy, it will be important to provide an overview of religious and social movements and their influence on the current state of religious life. One can only gain an appreciation of the changes within religious life and of the present situation within the vowed life after learning of the tremendous impact that these religious and social movements had on religious life.

A review of these movements provides the necessary context for understanding the current controversy among experts of religious life in regard to Sisters' response to the membership decline and other losses that they are experiencing. Nevertheless, without approaching Sisters themselves, there is no way to substantiate any position in the controversy. At present, no instrument exists that can do this. Therefore, there is a need for the development of a life satisfaction instrument designed for women religious which reflects some of the core values of religious life in its items. Once this instrument is established, its later use could be the beginning of determining how Sisters are actually dealing with this decline and loss of resources. Therefore, the review that follows in regard to (a) the influences of social and religious movements on the types and membership dynamics within the Roman Catholic women's religious orders, and (b) the need for transformation in religious life will serve to give background for further understanding of the controversy as it relates to the need to develop an instrument that can assess the impact of declining membership within women's religious orders.

PART II: RELIGIOUS/SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: THE IMPACT ON RELIGIOUS LIFE

Having considered the historical and social effects on the decline of U.S. social capital and its interdependent relationship to the decline within traditional church

organizations (emphasis on the Catholic Church), it is now important to provide a focused background on the historical, religious, and social dynamics and their relationship to membership decline within Roman Catholic religious life, particularly that of women religious.

According to Wittberg (1994) social movements take place in recurring sequences of "mobilization and demobilization" (p. 177). The concept of the recurring sequence of social movements, particularly well described in Strauss and Howe (1991), can also be applied to religious social movements (Wittberg, 1994). As such, the growth period and decline of institutions or organizations are influenced by their time in history which includes the influence of social movements (Wittberg, 1994). Thus, over the centuries there has been a consistent recurrence of membership decline and decrease in vitality among religious orders (Wittberg, 1994).

In fact, Padberg (1989; as cited in Sammon, 1994) showed that religious life has undergone three main eras of upheaval within the last 450 years. These movements include the Protestant Reformation, the French Revolution, and the most recent period following the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church (Sammon, 2002, 1994). Contrary to the first two upheavals which evolved through societal movements, Vatican II was summoned by the Catholic Pope, John XXIII (Sammon, 2002). This Pope was aware of the apprehensive relationship between the Catholic Church and society within America and the European countries (Sammon, 2002). At the time, the pre-Vatican II world view was based on "radical Christianity" (Niebuhr's, 1951; as cited in Philibert, 1999, p. 10), which meant that Christian beliefs were in conflict with the values lived within the culture.

According to Sammon (2002), Philibert (1999) used Niebuhr's (1951) model, which is based on the three poles of radical Christianity, cultural Christianity, and the transformative model, to explain the changing visions within Roman Catholic religious life occurring between the pre-Vatican II time period to the post-Vatican II time period. For instance, through the influences of Vatican II, the pre-Vatican II world view of Christians changed from a "radical Christianity" (Niebuhr as cited in Philibert, 1999, p. 10) to a "cultural Christianity" (p. 10), in which Christian traditions succumbed to the influences of the culture. The third pole of Niebuhr's model represents the "transformative model" (p. 10), in which a culture undergoes a transformative process through the influence of Christian traditions (Philibert, 1999).

Moreover, Philibert (1999; as cited in Sammon, 2002) took Niebuhr's model a step further by paralleling the three Catholic world views to the three most current visions of religious life: pre-Vatican II, Vatican II, and post-Vatican II. Paralleling the Catholic world views to the three visions of religious life (radical, cultural, and transformative) can explain how the latter and its resulting transformative changes coincide with the world views of the Roman Catholic Church. It further provides a framework out of which the changes and the current state within religious life can be understood.

Lastly, these three Catholic world views represent the diverse life experiences of different generations represented within the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University (CARA, 2008) has used these three Catholic world views to differentiate between different generations. As such, the Silent Generation (1925-1942) is considered to be the pre-Vatican II generation because the life experiences of this generation are based on a time period and

events (e.g., loyalty to institutions and Catholic Church) that were prior to the Vatican II. The Boom Generation (1943-1960) is categorized as the Vatican II generation, who reached their adulthood when the turbulent times (e.g., challenges of societal and cultural institutions) and the resulting changes of Vatican II took place.

The generation born after 1961 to the present is considered to be the post-Vatican II generation who lack any experience within the Catholic Church prior to Vatican II. CARA divided this generation into two age groups (from oldest to youngest). Those who are between the ages of 43 and 31 years represent the older post-Vatican II generation, and those between 30 and 18 years represent the younger post-Vatican II generation. CARA's (2008) generational categorization overlaps with those by Strauss and Howe (1991). As such, one can assume that the last two age groups represent the 13th Generation (1961-1981) and the Millennial Generation (1981- present).

The diverse world views and life experiences of the various Roman Catholic generations and their impact on (a) the changing vision within Roman Catholic religious life, (b) the development of the various religious organizations within religious life, (c) the current membership decline, and (d) the current tension between the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and some women's religious congregations will be presented next. These changing visions include a pre-Vatican, Vatican II, and Post-Vatican II vision of religious life. Being familiar with this background, helps one to understand the current state of women's religious organizations and leads to a justification for the development of a life satisfaction instrument for this population.

Vision and Renewal Efforts of Pre-Vatican II within Religious Life

Beginning with the world view of "radical Christianity" (Niebuhr, 1951; as cited in Philibert, 1999, p. 10), pre-Vatican II Catholics interpreted some of the influences of culture on people's lives as immoral (Philibert, 1999). As such, this model is based on a division of thought between the gospel (teachings of Jesus Christ) and society. Therefore, pre-Vatican Catholics felt a strong need (especially those who were strongly committed to Christian beliefs) to guard themselves from these societal trends (Philibert, 1999). For instance, American Catholics felt like strangers within their own culture, residing in a "religious ghetto" (Sammon, 2002, p. 45). Both the belief of these Christians that the world had become blemished and the cynical attitude toward people's accomplishments were rooted in the Old Testament narrative of the fall of man (Sammon, 2002).

Thus, a commitment to the "radical model of Christianity" was expressed "by a passion for order and uniformity [and] achieved through authority, law, and predictable expressions of tradition" (Sammon, 2002, p. 45). In response to this Catholic world view, the dynamics of pre-Vatican II religious life had taken on expressions that were radical and distinct exhibited through its standard requirements of living apart and according to the rules of the order which included wearing a religious habit (Sammon, 2002). This portrayal of pre-Vatican II religious life lived by "radical religious" (Philibert, 1999, p.12) has been described in more detail by Wittberg (1991, p. 11) who defined this kind of religious communal living as "intentional community," which will be explained later in further detail. In fact, this structure of religious life requested members to submit most, if not all, of their control over their civic and personal lives to the leaders of their congregations (Wittberg, 1991).

An essential virtue requested from religious superiors of women and men congregations at that time was the absolute obedience of its members (Sammon, 2002). For instance, independent of the Sisters' maturity, intelligence, and competence, leaders of congregations tended to treat them as if they were underage individuals and restricted normal adult development which included moral development. Therefore, in addition to the effects of other social movements, the Second Vatican Council's resolutions on the importance of a Christian's moral autonomy, active involvement in society, and the duty to acknowledge "the signs of the times" (Sammon, 2002, p. 45) had an irrevocable and transformative effect, not only on the entire Catholic Church, but in particular on the renewal process, resulting in a membership decline within religious life (Ebaugh, et al., 1996; Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993; Sammon, 2002; Wittberg, 1994).

However, the irrevocable and transformative changes within religious life had their early beginnings in 1950, almost a decade before Pope John XXIII (1959) called for an internal and external re-conceptualization of religious life (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Kolmer, 1984). According to Wittberg (1994), in order to guide the process of renewal within religious life, the Sacred Congregation for Religious (presently known as CICLSAL, an office within the Roman Vatican that communicates with religious congregations across the world (Wittberg, 1994), called together all the leaders of women's and men's congregations from around the world to the "First General Assembly of Religious" (Kolmer, 1984, p. 19) in November 1950.

During this "first international congress" (Kolmer, 1984, p. 20), Pope Pius XII emphasized the need for religious to relax their demand for isolation and to let go of out-of-date customs that posed an obstacle to the apostolic ministries of the Sisters (Wittberg,

1994). A year later in September 1951, the Pope repeated his concern for an appropriate adaptation of religious customs and habit (particular dress) to the needs of the time within their apostolate (Kolmer, 1984). In particular, he stressed the necessity for the younger teaching Sisters to receive an equal if not superior education than that of their colleagues, the lay teachers. Just about every year during the fifties the Pope issued a new directive for religious congregations (Wittberg, 1994). However, these directives did not seek to fundamentally change the ideological basis for religious life, but rather asked the religious to consider necessary changes in their customs that would support their response to the needs of the time. In addition, Pope Pius XII continued to hold chastity and religious life as more virtuous and holy than the state of marriage (Wittberg, 1994).

In September 1952, Pope Pius XII convened another international congress for major superiors in which he pointed to the vocation crisis in European countries (Kolmer, 1984). Seeing a connection between the vocation crisis and the need for (a) quality professional training, and (b) the renewal of outdated customs and dress, Pope Pius XII invited the leaders of the congregations to daringly follow his directives. Due to the large participation rate (about 4000) at the international congress, the Sacred Congregation asked that national congresses be organized (Kolmer, 1984). Therefore, the first U.S. "National Congress of Religious" (Kolmer, 1984, p. 24) was convened in 1952 at Notre Dame where the yearly vocation institute was held throughout the 1950s.

The focus of this assembly involved psychological screening and the formation and education of new and younger members (Wittberg, 1994). In response to Pope Pius XII's directives, a committee, formed at the yearly gathering of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) in 1952, decided to develop a survey of religious

congregations which could assist in the identification of obstacles that were hindering congregations from educating their younger members (Kolmer, 1984). The problems identified included (a) the length of degree programs (when bishops and priests expressed the great need for teaching personnel), (b) the cost of higher education (when living expenses outweighed the income), and (c) the absence of an appreciation for the need of higher education among clergy and the Sisters (Wittberg, 1994). Subsequent to the survey, was the establishment of the Sisters Formation Conference (SFC) among women's congregations in 1954, which, in addition to the establishment of the National Congress of Religious, were the first two responses to Pope Pius XII's directives (Kolmer, 1984).

According to Quinonez and Turner (1992), the influence of the SFC on religious life became the most important basis for proceeding toward the radical transformation in the post-Vatican II era. Through the initiative of and the informational resources disseminated (e.g., Sister Formation Bulletin) by the SFC, Sisters became the most highly educated women in the U.S. (Wittberg, 1994). In order to assist the renewal efforts, the Sacred Congregation further requested the establishment of national associations for leaders of women's and men's congregation (Kolmer, 1984).

Although the goal was to form one national association that would include the superiors of women's and men's congregations, it was through the persistence of the women that two associations were formed: one for the women's congregations, the "Conference of Major Superiors of Women (CMSW)," and one for the men's congregations, the "Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM)" (Wittberg, 1994, p. 213). At the time, the official rationale for the establishment of separate associations was

two fold: (1) women religious were more numerous than men religious, and (2) there was a different ministry focus among these two groups resulting in different needs. According to Wittberg's (1994) review, other evidence shows that women religious were concerned about the possibility of male domination if there were to be a unified association. Thus, CMSW was established in November of 1956 and the SFC asked to become a department of the CMSW at the suggestion of the Sacred Congregation (Kolmer, 1984).

In summary, this brief account shows how religious life was understood and lived out before it began to change as a result of the emerging pre-Vatican II influences. This information is important as it begins to delineate the transition of a majority of women's religious congregations from a pre-Vatican II to today's post-Vatican II vision of religious life. Only a small group of women's religious congregations chose not to participate in this transformative process and continue, to this day, to live out a more pre-Vatican II vision of religious life. More information on this small group of women's religious orders will be found in the next few sections that describe the Vatican II and post-Vatican II vision of religious life. In addition, the above section presented the reasoning behind the development of the women's religious (CMSW) and men's religious (CMSM) organizations. Women religious continue to outnumber men religious and due to the different needs of these two groups, the author of this current study decided to norm the development of an instrument assessing satisfaction with religious life only to women from apostolic religious congregations.

Vision of Vatican II of Religious Life.

Aware of the vocation crisis within religious life (particularly in Europe) and Pope Pius XII's past efforts in this regard during the 1950s, Pope John XXIII felt a need

to assemble in Rome "the first International Congress on Vocations" in December 1961 (Kolmer, 1984). During this meeting he asked vocation directors to promote vocations by gaining access to the media (Kolmer, 1984). Not even a year later, Pope John XXIII then declared the opening of the Second Vatican Council in October of 1962 (Wittberg, 1994). Considering the fact that women religious were not allowed to attend the meetings, the documents, in particular "Lumen Gentium and Gaudium et Spes" (p. 213), which emerged as a result of the Vatican II, had a great impact on women's religious congregations (to be discussed below). Also of significance was the document "Gaudium et Spes" which consisted of major key issues that insisted on the independent moral development of Christians, the collective participation in public life, and the responsibility to respond to cultural changes (Philibert, 1999).

Thus, the Vatican II time period, according to Niebuhr (1951; as cited in Sammon, 2002) was distinguished as "cultural Christianity" (p. 46). Based on this world view, individuals saw almost no separation between the gospel and society (Philibert, 1999). In fact, Vatican II's challenge to respond to the "signs of the time" was a call to acknowledge God's presence and action in the current world. It further convinced Catholics that (a) the previous world view was too rigid and archaic, and (b) the gospel was an invitation toward an egalitarian participation within the Church. Optimistic in their world view, "cultural Christians" saw God's grace in everything that came forth from their society (Philibert, 1999). Consequently, even women and men religious, specifically those in their thirties and forties, began to positively receive and embrace the changes within the culture (impact of social movements), as well as the changes of the world view within the Roman Catholic Church (Philibert, 1999).

In summary, the social movements of the 1960's and the shifting world view within the Roman Catholic Church contributed to a changed vision within religious life. It was particularly Vatican II and its documents that challenged the pre-Vatican II understanding, status, dress and life style of women religious. Additional information in this regard will be presented below.

Impact of Vatican II Documents on Religious Life.

Openness to a changed Roman Catholic world view and the call for transformation within religious life, expressed particularly in two documents from Vatican II (Lumen Gentium and Gaudium et Spes), prompted women and men religious to modify (a) their own governmental structures (participative leadership), (b) relationships and interactions with society in general, and (c) their customs and religious habit (dress) (Philibert, 1999; Wittberg, 1994).

However, the Vatican II document "Lumen Gentium, the Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (p. 8) stressed that all Catholics were called to a state of holiness based on the rite of baptism they received (Sammon, 2002). According to Wittberg (1994), as innocent as this statement may appear, its significance and impact on the religious needs to be recognized because it impinged on the long-standing meaning that religious life had had within the Roman Catholic Church

This ideological framework, which had existed over a period of eighteen centuries, was based on an elitist view which separated religious from lay people by attributing to the former the ability to attain a true spiritual perfection through their state of life. This traditional belief was based on a hierarchal framework in which the clergy were ranked first, followed by religious (men and women) and lastly by lay people.

Removed from their prior status (as stated in Lumen Gentium) within the Catholic Church, women and men religious found themselves classified among the laity (Wittberg, 1994).

The second council document "Gaudium et Spes, Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church" (Sammon, 2002, p. 8), in English known as "The Church in the Modern World" (Wittberg, 1994, p. 214), also had an impact on the state of religious life. While formerly, religious life was understood as a lifestyle in which one could seek holiness and perfection through separation from the distracting temptations of the material world, the Catholic Church's document now called its members to be one with the world (Wittberg, 1994). The encouraging stance of this document, to be in solidarity with the world, certainly was in opposition to the prior negative attitude toward the world which had stimulated and affirmed the persistent confinements applied to cloister and ministries. As such, the impact of these two church documents threatened the maintaince of a distinct ideology within religious life which was different from secular ideologies: (a) Lumen Gentium effected the removal of the separate status of religious life within the Catholic Church, and (b) Gaudium et Spes effected the lessoning of established cloister boundaries (Wittberg, 1994).

Although it is possible that neither Pope Paul VI nor his predecessor, Pope John XXIII (who died in 1963), or any of the bishops were aware of the full implications that these documents would have on religious life, it did erode former understandings of the meaning and purpose of religious life among women religious (Wittberg, 1994). It was not so much the loss of the traditional identity of a superior status to that of the laity (as this was positively acknowledge by most religious) that was sadly affecting vowed

members, but rather the lack of the Second Vatican Council to provide a basis on which the new identity could have been formed (Sammon, 2002).

Furthermore, despite the fact that these Council decisions were to significantly affect the identity and lifestyle of women religious, it was only during the years 1964 and 1965 that a few Sisters (among them one American Sister, the CMSW's president) received permission to be auditors at these council sessions (Wittberg, 1994). Therefore, in response to the Vatican II's call for adaptation and renewal, a sociologist, Sister Marie Augusta Neal, was asked to develop and distribute a survey to all vowed members who belonged to the CMSW (Sammon, 2002; Wittberg, 1994). This instrument was to assess information related to the Sisters' current vowed life and thinking (Sammon, 2002). If Sisters, at this point, had not already applied some of the renewal efforts, the questions within the survey itself (e.g., reading the works of a modern theologian) made many rethink and apply changes to their lifestyle as vowed members (Sammon, 2002). The purpose of the Sisters' Survey, conducted in 1967, 1980 and 1989, was to provide insights into the implementation of renewal efforts within religious life that had taken place over the past twenty-five years and the implication for the future (Neal, 1991).

However, the Second Vatican Council's lack to provide a basis on which religious could have developed a new identity led to a dispute about the contemporary meaning and function of religious life within the Roman Catholic Church (Sammon, 2002). According to Wittberg (1994) this confusion was even more exacerbated through two specific Vatican Council documents: Lumen Gentium (1964) and Perfectae Caritatis, the Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life (1965). On the one hand, the

document, Lumen Gentium (1964), accentuated the state of religious life, but at the same time, it also accorded the laity a more equal status.

Even more confusion was caused by Perfectae Caritatis (1965), in that its title indicated that the state of religious life was still viewed within the traditional ideological view as being superior to that of the laity, a contradiction to Lumen Gentium (1964) which had just classified religious to be among the laity (Wittberg, 1994). Furthermore, in regard to the vow of obedience, it was stated in Perfectae Caritatis that an individual's dignity was to be esteemed, but, at the same time, the leader's authority to decide and request action from its members was also stressed (Fink, 1971; as cited in Sammon, 2002). In general, the document Perfectae Caritatis, in addition to another document, Ecclesiae Sanctae II (general guidelines for the adaptation and renewal to religious life), seemed clear and direct.

Nevertheless, putting the directives and the resulting responsibility into action was a complex challenge faced by congregations, its leaders, and the delegates of General Chapters. Consequently, for religious members of orders, the document Perfectae Caritatis lacked the revolutionary and transformative theological insights that Lumen Gentium had for the laity (Sammon, 2002). In addition, while Lumen Gentium asked religious to perform their renewal based on the Gospels and on the spirit of those who had founded their orders, no further guidelines for the mandated renewal was given (Wittberg, 1994).

This lack of clear directions led to diverse renewal efforts, in particular among the various women's congregations (Wittberg, 1994). Great controversy developed between women's congregations and authority in Rome in regard to the changes that had taken

place in some of the orders and led to the suspension of a few women's congregations. Only later did it become apparent for the women's congregations that the renewal requested from the Vatican was only to entail minor changes. Meanwhile, the mandate for renewal (e.g., moving to an egalitarian versus a hierarchical model of leadership) had also extended to CMSW itself, who decided to change (a) its name from CMSW to a new name, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), and (b) the way in which the conference related to the Vatican. Having acted on these changes without consulting Rome resulted in a three-year withholding of approval from the Sacred Congregation for Religious (Wittberg, 1994). Disapproval of LCWR's autonomous action was not only expressed by the hierarchy of the Church, but also by a few members within LCWR.

In summary, the turmoil caused by the social movements and the Vatican II documents within religious life continues to this day in that a majority of women's religious congregations are still struggling to define their new identity within this post-Vatican II time period. Although clear and determined about their mission and effective in their ministries to those in need, these women nevertheless are insecure regarding the future of religious life as they face diminishing numbers in membership, fewer entrants of young and new vocations, and other losses of resources (e.g., closing of institutions, selling of properties, etc.). On the other hand, a smaller group of women's religious congregations who did not approve of the changes occurring within a majority of women's religious orders decided to follow their own understanding of the challenges presented by the Vatican II and its documents. The separation of this small group from LCWR will be described next. It is significant that the U.S. is the only country that has

two organizations representing women religious. A review of this separation will help clarify the differences between these two organizations and the focus of this study on women religious from congregations belonging to LCWR.

Founding of the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious.

In the nineteen sixties, a small group of Sisters in LCWR were not accepting of the change in direction LCWR was taking and its relationship with the Vatican (Wittberg, 1994). They decided in the early seventies to withdraw their membership from LCWR and established a group centered on the preservation of the traditions of religious life and named themselves the "Consortium Perfectae Caritatis" (Wittberg, 1994). The group's intention was to reflect on "Perfectae Caritatis," (Quinonez & Turner, 1992, p. 153) and to dedicate themselves to "authentic renewal." This renewal claimed to be in conformity with the Church's directives, in contrast to what were perceived as the deviations existing in other women's religious communities and LCWR (Quinonez & Turner, 1992).

The Consortium Perfectae Caritatis asked the Vatican to be accepted immediately as an organization to officially represent all U.S. religious congregations in place of the LCWR (Wittberg, 1994). However, they had to wait until June 1992 when the Sacred Congregation for Religious (now known as CICLSAL) officially declared them, analogous to LCWR, the "Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious" (CMSWR) (Wittberg, 1994, p. 221). The U.S. now had two organizations of women religious, both sanctioned by Rome. In comparison to the 90,000 women religious (in 1992) whose congregations were represented by LCWR, there were about 10,000 U.S. Sisters who belonged to the "more conservative communities" (Wittberg, 1994, p. 221) that formed the new CMSWR.

Contrary to LCWR, who did not have any specific criteria on which membership was determined, the membership in CMSWR was determined by loyalty to pre-established guidelines, as well as the approval by the council's board (Wittberg, 1994). It is assumed by many observers that direct contact with an Episcopal liaison in Rome was provided so that CMSWR could sidestep the U.S. bishops. Emphasizing their abiding support to LCWR, the U.S. bishops only halfheartedly gave their consent to the authorities in Rome in regard to the new CMSWR (Wittberg, 1994).

In summary, the review above provided insights into the differences between the two women's religious organizations. The CMSWR tends to live from a more conservative perspective (pre-Vatican II vision) of religious life. LCWR has applied a broader interpretation of the Vatican II documents in the renewal process of religious life. This has become a source of polarization between CMSWR and LCWR, and, between LCWR and the authorities in Rome. This polarization is discussed in the next section as it will provide a greater understanding not only of the polarization between LCWR and authorities in Rome but also of the impact this polarization may still have on women's religious satisfaction with religious life today.

Conflicts between Church Hierarchy and Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

The separation of the "most conservative" (p. 217) leaders from LCWR lessened the colliding viewpoints in the organization as they pursued their ideology and involvement in social movements (1960s) of the time (Wittberg, 1994). The LCWR was particularly concerned about women's position in the Church and became supportive of the first Women's Ordination Conference in 1975 (Sammon, 2002). Although asked by the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for Religious to distance themselves from the

conference and its objectives, the board of LCWR showed some resistance. The president of LCWR (Theresa Kane, RSM) at that time calmly asked Pope John Paul II, during his pastoral visit to the U.S. four years later, to put the Church's teachings (respect for the dignity of all people) into action by permitting the ordination of women within the Catholic Church (Sammon, 2002).

However, women religious' openness and involvement toward worldly issues was not just limited to the women's movement (Sammon, 2002). The beginning of renewal efforts within U.S. religious life took place during a time when a variety of U.S. social and political upheavals led to the rejection of all structures of authority, and exposure to ideologies such as individualism, materialism, consumerism, and a revised view of sexuality and relationships among others. Therefore, the internal changes in religious orders became sources of discord, not only within and between congregations themselves, but also between them and various bishops, as well as the "Vatican's Sacred Congregation for Religious" (now known as the CICLSAL) (Sammon, 2002, p. 21). These changes in response to Vatican II are well described in Wittberg (1991), who wrote about the transition in women's congregations that changed their structures from "'intentional communities' to more bureaucratic and associational forms" (Sammon, 1994, p. 25) of living.

According to Sammon (1994), who draws from Wittberg (1991), while the "intentional communities" (in pre-Vatican II understanding) place more demands on their members, the configurations of "bureaucratic and associational forms" of vowed life are more egalitarian. Members of intentional communities are, for the most part, expected to surrender their personal and public autonomy. Individuals, in a bureaucratic structure are

expected to relinquish only some control in their ministry setting and are relatively independent in regard to their private lives. Very different, from both the intentional communities and the bureaucratic structure, is the structure of associations. Individuals of an association determine the extent to which they want to be involved with the larger group. Absolute control over one's private life is maintained by those who belong to associations. These individuals join the larger group occasionally when prompted by similar interests, proceedings, or other related activities (Sammon, 1994; Wittberg, 1991).

Secondary sources of tension and conflict between the hierarchy of the Church and some women and men religious were the latter's political involvement, going as far as being arrested for their public demonstration in opposition to domestic and international government policies (Sammon, 2002). The concern expressed by the Vatican was that a great number of U.S. religious congregations were over-secularizing and too deeply invested in socio/political spheres. Accordingly, in the early eighties Pope John Paul II sent a letter to the U.S. bishops in which he asked them to conduct an investigation of religious life in the U.S. due to the declining vocations to religious life (Sammon, 2002).

At the same time as the American bishops received the Pope's letter, the document "Essential Elements in Church Teaching on Religious Life" was released by the "Congregation for Institute of Consecrated Life and Societies and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL)," a coincidence that raised many questions for religious congregations (Sammon, 2002, p. 22). The content of the "Essential Elements" was asserting the need for religious to be involved in corporate institutions, live communally,

and return to wearing a religious habit. Subsequently, U.S. religious felt that Rome was rejecting their adaptation of and renewal efforts in religious life (Sammon, 2002).

According to Wittberg (1994), the recurring and vague responses of the authorities in Rome toward the renewal efforts among religious congregations were persistent throughout the seventies and eighties. It is therefore no surprise that the contradiction between the Vatican's documents, emphasizing "decentralization and pluralism" (Wittberg, 1994, p. 219) and the Vatican's tendency to impose its policies on individual congregations had a profound impact on U.S. religious congregations who felt increasingly estranged from the authorities in Rome. In some cases, it led members of religious orders to leave their congregations. Overall, the seventies and eighties became a time period known for the small numbers of new entrants and the mass departure of religious from their communities (Wittberg, 1994).

The scarcity of new entrants and the departure of religious were not solely related to the changes and conflicts occurring between and within the Catholic Church and religious congregations (Philibert, 1999). As such, the changes that had occurred within the U.S. society due to the various social and political movements of the time also had an impact on the changing membership numbers within religious life (Philibert, 1999).

In summary, the tension between the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and women's religious orders belonging to the LCWR that emerged during and following the Vatican II periodically continues to arise (e.g., July 2, 2008-- the excommunication by Archbishop Raymond Burke in St. Louis of a woman religious who showed support of the women's ordination movement) is an important factor to consider in the development of a satisfaction with religious life instrument.

The periodically emerging tension between some hierarchy in the Roman Catholic and some women religious (individual or congregational) might have a negative affect on satisfaction with religious life for some women religious. Adding some items that could assess satisfaction in this area might shed light on age differences pertaining to views/attitudes among women religious. For instance, some younger women religious may indicate greater satisfaction with the Roman Catholic hierarchy due to less or lack of negative experiences in this regard. Another factor reviewed in the last section was the impact of the social movements in the 1960s. The changes resulting from the movements in the U.S. are an example of how society affected membership decline in women's religious organizations (Ebaugh et al., 1996) as will be discussed next.

Changes and Membership Decline of Women Religious in the U.S.

As a part of the social movements of the sixties, there were occurrences of structural changes which provided women the opportunity to enter (a) the field of higher education, and (b) the world of paid labor force (Andersen et al., 2006; Ebaugh et al., 1996). Until that time, U.S. women, except for women religious, did not have ready access to either higher education (at least not most of the women) or positions within professional settings (Ebaugh et al., 1996). Therefore, any young woman who desired to receive a higher education and have a professional career was often attracted to the lifestyle of women religious since it provided some opportunities for upward social mobility through the 19th and 20th centuries (Ebaugh et al., 1996).

Thus, women religious, whose education was usually higher in comparison to lay women, were able to be involved in education, nursing and social work in their own established Catholic institutions (Ebaugh et al., 1996). In fact, the powerful influence of

religious men's and women's congregations on U.S. Catholic life and society was tremendous (Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993; Weakland, 1994; Wittberg, 1994). According to Nygren, and Ukeritis (1993), with more than 800 hospitals, women religious established the second largest health care system in U.S. In addition, no other donor or institution could measure up to the influence of religious congregations who administered a large number (more than 10,000) of Roman Catholic owned institutions of learning on various educational levels (Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993).

The congregations were able to maintain their apostolic ministry within these large institutions through their own labor and the support of others (labor and monetary) (Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993). Due to the large membership numbers, leaders of these congregations did not see the need to request a higher financial compensation for the hard labor of their members. Looking to the future, continued income and resources for the Catholic Sisters' retirement were based on the assumption that newer and younger members would continue to take over the positions of older members who worked in these large corporate ministries (Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993). But this assumption turned out to be mistaken, evidenced now by the retirement appeals and the statistics related to the membership decline that are posted on the National Religious Retirement Office's website (NRRO, 2008; Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993). In fact, the elected leadership of religious orders has stated that most of their administrative tasks and time involve the concerns of (a) letting go of long established organizations, and (b) the older members and their needs encompassing all end-of-life issues (Sammon, 2002).

However, the decline in membership among women's religious congregations is not solely in the U.S.; decline in membership among the clergy and in women's and

men's religious orders has also occurred in European countries: Germany, Great Britain, Italy, France, Netherlands, etc. (Sammon, 2002). In fact, Ebaugh et al. (1996) and Wittberg (1991) are concerned that in contrast to religious orders serving in underdeveloped countries and gaining new entrants from those countries, some religious orders of developed countries might not be able to survive into the future.

Furthermore, the membership decline observed among women's religious orders (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Sammon, 2002) within a period of 30 years (60s to 90s) paralleled a similar membership decline in U.S. civic associations, particularly among women (Andersen et al., 1996). Andersen et al. (1996) and Rotolo and Wilson (2007) determined that, in part, this decline (particularly between the 60s and 90s) appeared to be related to the fact that women were able to enter the paid labor force. It is no surprise then that the membership decline among women's religious orders was also related to the availability of more striking opportunities, such as working in higher status professions or management which, for the first time, became increasingly available to women during that time period (Ebaugh et. al., 1996).

In contrast to the decline observed within religious orders located in Western societies, religious membership numbers in less industrialized countries from the 1960s to the 1990s has been either stable or growing (Ebaugh et al., 1996). As such, religious congregations who have provinces or regions in other parts of the world (e.g., Africa, Asia, etc.) are relieved about their international membership numbers (Sammon, 2002). Thus, one could assume that although the kind of life style and ministry opportunities provided by U.S. congregations is not as attractive to women from the U.S., it seems to be appealing to women in less developed countries (Ebaugh et al., 1996).

In summary, the occupational advancement within U.S. religious life was probably one among many socio/cultural factors related to the difficulty of women's congregations in recruiting and retaining new members. In the past, upward mobility opportunities afforded previously only in religious life are now available to women in the U.S. society in general. One might wonder then what aspects of satisfaction within religious life are needed to attract and retain new and younger members. But before research related to this question can be reviewed, it will be important to continue to look at the impact that societal forces and Vatican II had on the post-Vatican II world view, particularly on the organizational changes (including membership decline) within U.S. religious life.

Vision of Post Vatican II: The Need for Transformation within Religious Life.

Today women and men religious find themselves in the post-Vatican II time period (Philibert, 1999). Published authorities within religious life have repeatedly stated that religious life of the twentieth century has been exposed to a variety of influential and occasionally invisible forces (Gottemoeller, 1996; Philibert, 1999; Sammon, 2002; Wittberg, 1994). Gottemoeller (1996) in particular described the multiple influences on religious life by using a symbolic language of the "four winds of change" (p. 206) that have come forth from the four different directions. These winds of change have challenged religious life in its renewal process. Thus, she stated that there were messages, like Church documents in addition to local policies that came from the *East* through the institutional Church in Rome. These messages supported and justified the renewal process within religious life. On the other hand, these messages led to great differences of opinion between the authorities of the Church and women religious (Gottemoeller, 1996).

The liberation theology from the *South* resulted in a variety of messages (from bishops and women religious in Latin America), with an emphasis on the need for a new understanding of being with the poor (Gottemoeller, 1996). However, while the commitment to the poor, or "the preferential option for the poor" (p. 18) has been integrated in Roman Catholic Church teachings, the "preferential option for the youth" (p. 18), a subsequent section within the Puebla document, was left out of further discussions (McAfee Brown, 1985).

One could make a connection between the past omission of continued discussions in regard to the "preferential option for the youth" and the current lack of commitment of youth as well as today's young adults toward the Roman Catholic Church (Hoge, et al., 2001; Smith & Lundquist Denton, 2005; Wuthnow, 2007). Hoge et al. (2001) and Smith and Lundquist Denton (2005) have argued the Catholic Church has lacked a commitment in outreach programming directed toward Catholic youth and young adults that now becomes apparent in the low numbers of this population who identify or commit themselves to a membership in the Catholic Church.

Aware of the higher rate of disengaged Catholic youth, as compared to teenagers of other religious denominations who are actively involved in their Church's youth programs, Smith and Lundquist Denton (2005) stressed the necessity for an investment in creative and institutional resources for today's Catholic youth in order to bring about viability for the U.S. Catholic Church's future. He further stated that the decline of priests, women and men religious who used to provide excellent Catholic formation and teaching within the Catholic schools is now particularly evident in the current lack of qualified personnel within the Catholic Church. However, one might wonder if the

decline in membership is the reason that prevents women religious from acknowledging and responding to the need for youth formation programs within the Catholic Church. Maybe women religious are not aware of this current particular need and its potential relationship to membership decline within religious orders. Adding some items in the development of a satisfaction with religious life instrument that could assess satisfaction with one's congregation visibility among and outreach toward youth and young adults might shed light on the views/attitudes among women religious.

This lack of qualified personnel within the Catholic Church could further be related to the lack of young adult formation programs as identified in Hoge et al. (2001, p. 231) who asserted the need for "a 'preferential option' for young adult Catholics" within the Roman Catholic Church. Although there are a few more reasons that can be associated with the estranged behaviors of Catholic youth and young adults toward their Church, the lack of qualified personnel and formation programs directed toward this population is definitely one to which church authorities and personnel need to attend to in the near future (Hoge et al., 2001; Smith & Lundquist Denton, 2005). As such, this could become an area in which women religious are challenged to develop contemporary and creative youth and adult formation programs that would respond to the needs and interests of this population.

On the other hand, more recently there has been a change in regard to the importance of a "preferential option for the youth," which seems to have been reawakened by the last two Popes in the Catholic Church. According to Brink (2007b), the previous Pope, John Paul II, who announced a "preferential option for the youth," has become a hero for the 13th Generation who until then was left without one. The former

Pope's successful outreach toward the youth has been continued by the current Pope, Benedict XVI. During his visit to the U.S., he expressed the necessity for the support of youth, and appeared to be touched by his experience with an audience of 25,000 young people at an American youth rally event (Rodgers, 2008).

Different in its impact from the wind of the *South*, the influence of *Western* U.S. society and culture (e.g., social/political upheaval and all the scientific/technological developments), as well as those of the Second Vatican Council, called for a response to the new needs of the times that consequently led to a revision of the lifestyle and ministries within religious life (Gottemoeller, 1996). Lastly, the influences that came from the *North* evoked the renewal attempts of religious congregations such as (a) the reclaiming and enlivening of the founder's charisms, and (b) introducing sensible traditions into modern day life. Gottemoeller (1996) concluded that the influences of these "four winds" were not only limited to the effects they had on the current state of religious life, but they also shaped some of the current profound questions about the future importance or witness of religious life (Gottemoeller, 1996) that are going to be discussed later in this paper.

As a result of these influential changes of the "four winds," women and men religious began to build up a strong commitment toward social justice issues (Philibert, 1999). In contrast to men religious (priests and brothers), women religious in particular developed a form of creative leadership in response to the call for renewal by the Church hierarchy (Philibert, 1999). Thus, the aforementioned changes provided women religious not only with growth opportunities in regard to their individual faith development, but also in regard to their group participatory leadership skills (Gottemoeller, 1996). It was

also during this time period that women religious were given the chance for higher education and professional training which provided them with successful professional development. In addition, women religious are now (in contrast to pre-Vatican II practices) much more rooted in their charism, more inclusive and diverse in their thinking, attentive to societal problems and to their role as women as they continue their outreach to those in need. These new changes and opportunities for women religious seem to have contributed to their satisfaction with religious life.

However, this period of tremendous change for women religious was also marked by some difficult times, some of which continue today: (a) living with a continuum of views about themselves from other religious, laity, and the church, (b) challenges in regard to personal and communal life, (c) disappointments in ministerial services, (d) challenges in encouraging and supporting leadership among younger members, (e) challenges to integrate individual spiritual journeys with communal ones, (f) individualized discernment in conjunction with communal discernment, (g) the failure to recruit and/or retain membership, (h) an increase of health concerns and the rise in numbers of older members, and (i) the struggles with decreased and/or loss of resources (Brink, 2007; Gottemoeller, 1996; Sanders, 2007; Wittberg, 1994).

This myriad of challenges that women religious currently experience appears to be a reflection of factors which could negatively affect satisfaction of religious life and, therefore, the future of some women' religious congregations. Therefore, it will be important that the development of the LSSAWR includes items that represent these aforementioned factors. In addition, a number of the implemented changes within the

vowed life were also affected by societal trends such as independence, consumerism, individualism, etc. (Chittister, 1995; Leddy, 1990).

Philibert (1999) takes it a step further by stating that apostolic congregations in particular reflect the features of the "cultural model" (p. 11) (increased adaptations to cultural trends) which has lost its attraction and appears to be evident in the decrease of new vocations to apostolic religious life. Like Chittister (1995), Philibert (1999) considered in his publication the post-Vatican II time period as a transitional time in which the "new" (p.12) has yet to be created. He expressed his disapproval of the direction of some of the newer or more "classical religious institutes" (p. 12) that have decided to live according to the previous radical vision (pre-Vatican II) of religious life. Instead, Philibert (1999) called for a new approach within religious life, away from resuscitating the radical pre-Vatican II vision of religious life and away from over accommodating to the cultural vision (Vatican II) of religious life to the "new" which has been repeatedly brought up within the various documents of Vatican II.

According to Philibert (1999) the "new" will need to be a transformative process in which there will be critical interaction with the culture based on Gospel teachings. Thus, this "transformative model" (Niebuhr 1951; as cited in Philibert, 1999, p. 10) is neither pessimistic like that of the radical model, nor is it optimistic like that of the cultural model, but it is rather realistic in that it recognizes the importance of a critical attitude toward the world and a commitment toward the Gospel as a hopeful and meaningful impetus (Philibert, 1999).

For instance, in order to assess the changes that women and men religious (including priests) have experienced within religious life (already described above), as

well as their understanding of these changes, Nygren and Ukeritis (1993) conducted a nation-wide investigation which included three major ways of data collection: personal interviews, questionnaires, and workshops. Based on the results of their national study with women and men of various religious congregations (e.g., contemplative, apostolic, etc.), Nygren and Ukeritis (1993) have identified eight interconnected important factors as essential if religious life is to transition into a meaningful future. They further stated that the interaction of these eight factors within the framework of individual and communal conversion of women and men religious will contribute to the desired goal of congregations who want to transition into a viable future.

These eight critical factors involve moving away from forces that are restrictive and toward forces that are motivating and include moving (1) from an assimilation of cultural trends (e.g., individualism) toward an awareness of the distinct vocation of a religious, (2) from ordinary to extraordinary leadership (visionary leaders who can execute group decisions and are able to get support for their ideas), (3) from deconstructive authority to legitimate authority, (4) from an over identification with individual work commitments to a focused and clear corporate identity, (5) from an affiliative focus to a role clarity and function with regard to church and mission, (6) from unconscious racism toward an openness in regard to multiculturalism, (7) from materialism toward Gospel values (e.g., simplistic lifestyle), and (8) from extensive adaptation within parochial contexts toward an acknowledgment of charism (a focused mission specifically among women religious) (Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993).

In their conclusion of this comprehensive study, Nygren and Ukeritis (1993) asserted that congregations who are rooted in a deep relationship with God, are faithful to

their original mission, and take action toward the essential needs of the society, will be able to revitalize their orders, if they critically approach the gap between the influences of the culture and the values inherited within the Gospel. Or as stated in a different way by Chittister (1995), who asserted that if women and men religious want to revitalize their congregations, then they will need to identify and reflect on the values and important needs within the culture that have been absent so that they can take appropriate action in this direction. In taking these actions, women and men religious are giving witness to the values that need to be cherished and the necessary actions that need to be taken so that others may both acknowledge and desire to respond to it in similar ways (Chittister, 1995).

In summary, this review has shown that religious life has been exposed to a variety of social and religious movements within the U.S. The impact of these movements has led to positive changes and growth experiences for women religious but also to new challenging issues that women religious need to face in order to transition religious life into a viable future (Chittister, 1995; Gottemoeller, 1996; Nygren & Ukeritis, 1993; Philibert, 1999). One could assume that these new challenging issues faced by women religious might possibly affect their life satisfaction with religious life. But until an instrument of satisfaction with religious life is developed it will be difficult to conduct an assessment within this area.

In addition, Philibert's (1999) interpretation of the post-Vatican time period as a transitional time (in which the "old" does not work but the "new" is yet not known) that needs to undergo a transformative process, presents an additional challenge for women religious who continue with strong determination to carry religious life into the new

Millennium. There are two questions one could ask: (a) what forms will this new transformative process take while leading religious life into a viable future?, and (b) what important components of religious life will it include? In response to the first question, will a newer trend of a celibate life style lived out within mixed groups (celibate women and men and families) replace the more traditional celibate life style of religious orders which are separated according to gender groups, or will both forms co-exist.

Furthermore, will the emphasis be placed more on contemplation or action, on what appears to be a more traditional (radical vision) or liberal (cultural model) expression of religious life, or will there be congregations that are able to transition religious life into a viable future while integrating the best of both "goods" inherent within each of those opposites? Maybe a more current assessment of life satisfaction with religious life can provide some answers to these questions.

A preliminary answer to the second question above ("What important components of religious life might this transformative process include?") that the author of this study raised as a response to reading Philibert (1999), appears to be found in the identification of the eight components in the conclusion of Nygren's and Ukeritis's (1993) investigation. In particular, some of these components might bear resemblance to factors that could assess satisfaction with religious life among women religious, an area to be discussed later within this paper.

Although the results of the national study by Nygren and Ukeritis (1993) identified these eight critical factors as pointing toward a viable and satisfactory future for women and men religious, one might wonder where these religious, in particularly women religious, find themselves 15 years later in regard to the renewal efforts in

religious life, in their congregation, and its effect on their satisfaction and motivation to stay committed to the work of transitioning vowed life into a viable future.

An important step toward an up-to-date assessment of the renewal efforts of apostolic women religious could be the study of motivational factors and life satisfaction within this particular population. Asking these women for the reasons that motivated them to join and stay in religious life and what changes are needed in this life form for it to have a viable future might lead to additional answers to the above stated questions. More importantly, a general assessment of patterns within these motivational factors could lead to indicators of components that are vital for the assessment of satisfaction with religious life.

The sparse research available in these two areas supports the need for an investigation of motivational factors and the development of a life satisfaction instrument particularly designed for apostolic women religious. A review of the limited literature available that pertains to motivational factors and life satisfaction for apostolic women religious is presented in the next section and will support the justification of the objectives of this study.

Motivational Factors and Life Satisfaction of Women Religious

Research on Motivational Factors of Women Committed to Religious Life.

The need to conduct a more current examination of the renewal efforts of women religious can be found among published authorities within religious life. For instance, only two years after Nygren's and Ukeritis's (1993) nation-wide investigation, Chittister (1995) stated that it will be imperative to pursue the renewal efforts of religious in order to see whether they can liberate themselves from societal influences while following an

innovative set of values. In addition, the need for contemporary research in this area is further validated in the statements by Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007), then the associate director of canonical affairs for the Legal Resource Center for Religious, which she expressed during an interview conducted by Sanders (2007) who is the communications director of LCWR.

In this interview Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007), stated that women religious have a need to continue the conversation of identifying values and their relationship to the future of their congregations. She further elaborated that, when asked by women's religious congregations to discuss with them the question of "What can we do to continue the life of a congregation?" (p. 3), it was noteworthy for her (Jarrell) to see that their conversation led to questions like, "What are our values?" and "What choices can we make?" (p.3). According to Jarrell, underlying the interest to discuss these questions is a concern for the survival of religious life.

Despite the fact that the concern for the survival of religious life has always been present, it is not a topic that women religious have chosen to discuss openly with each other (Jarrell; as cited in Sanders, 2007). In her personal reflection on the many current signs that resemble a process of dying, such as declining membership numbers, Jarrell admitted the experience of some feelings of sadness. She further shared that these signs evoked in her the following thought, "[T]his is not what I thought it would be like when I joined religious life" (p. 4), as well as the following question, "So why do I stay?" (p. 4). Jarrell's thoughts infer that the reasons for joining religious life are not necessarily going to be the same for staying committed to the vowed life. At the same time, her thoughts seem to point out the value for a concurrent reflection on questions in which one is

directed toward the past, "What motivated me to join religious life?," followed by a question that is directed toward the present and possibly the future, "What motivates me to stay committed to the vowed life." Thus, she pinpoints questions that need to be empirically investigated and that are not sufficiently answered if left to personal experience and/or the analyses of writers known to be published authorities within religious life.

A comprehensive literature review showed that Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007) is not the first one to ask questions pertaining to the motivation for entering and staying within religious life. However, an interesting pattern among the few publications and dissertations researched was that most authors have either focused their investigations on the motivational factors to enter or on the motivational factors to stay, but rarely on investigating both areas within one study.

Motivational Factors to Enter Religious Life.

For example, Wolf (1990b) interviewed thirty elderly Sisters regarding factors that motivated them to enter religious life. She presented her findings by discussing three life histories of Sisters which she claimed represent patterns found in the larger population. Among her findings were that these women entered religious life because of reasons related to their spiritual life or career options. What would be of interest is to know exactly the types of spiritual experiences and career options that were influential in motivating these women to enter religious life, as well as some empirical data on how prevalent these motivational factors are within the larger population. It would further be interesting to know the exact age range and year of entrance of the participants of her study, as well as if the results have generalizability across the various generations of

women who have entered religious life. Lastly, information on the significance of her study beyond the particular religious community that she examined with regard to these motivational factors would highlight the importance of this investigation.

In contrast to Wolf (1990b), McKenna (2006) does refer to the importance of understanding the motivation to join religious life within the context of the larger community. As such, she investigated the motivation of Irish women (participants of three consecutive generations) who entered religious life during the 1930s to 1960s while discussing the role of the vowed life within the historical changes of the Irish society. She obtained her data through informal interviews with 21 women religious and analyzed their narratives in terms of recurrent themes regarding reasons for entering the vowed life. These themes include "the desire for adventure and heroism" (p. 196), a lifestyle of "difference, perfection and purity" (p. 197), "professional advancement and personal achievement" (p. 198), "sacrifice" (p. 199), "vocation as 'religious calling'" (p. 199), as well as resisting and rejecting stereotypes through use of "oppositional terms and resistance" (p. 201). McKenna (2006) further analyzed data of factors that motivated women (e.g., taught by Sisters) to enter a particular congregation.

Her results indicate that four out of 21 women entered their particular congregation because they were taught by these Sisters (McKenna, 2006). Although she does not give frequencies, there were women in her studies who did not want to enter the congregations that they were familiar with because the congregations were too familiar and not exciting enough, they did not want to follow the or because they did not want to fit into stereotypes (e.g., being pushed into this lifestyle or not having had other options) that society had established. The data further revealed that these women stressed the

factor that the decision to enter was their own and independent of any other influence (McKenna, 2006).

However, McKenna's (2006) sample is small and her discussions are only based on the various case examples without any mention to frequencies of responses to the relative importance of the different motivational factors that she identified. Based on U.S. research related to generations (Strauss and Howe, 1991), a dividing of generational groups also used within religious life research (e.g., CARA), it seems as if McKenna's 21 participants are a representation of three consecutive generations: the G.I. Generation (1901-1924), the Silent Generation (1925-1942), and the Boom Generation (1943-1960). If there is some overlap between the U.S. and Irish generational research findings, then one could assume that this sample is far too wide-spread across generations and too small from which to draw conclusions. Since research indicated that religion has taken a different role within the different generations (Hoge, 2006; Putnam, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Wuthnow, 2007), one could assume potential differences in motivation to enter religious life among the various generations. Like Wolf (1990b), McKenna (2006) focused her investigation only on the Sisters' motivation to enter but not on their motivation to stay. Lastly, she also did not address the current issues of declining membership within religious life and its implication for the Catholic Church, Irish society, and the congregations themselves.

In summary, due to the limited factors identified in Wolf (1990b), there are only two motivational factors (religious experience and career possibilities) for joining the vowed life that emerged within Wolf (1990b) and McKenna's (2006) investigation. In order to gain more insights into the motivational factors of women religious, it will be

important to compare the additional themes that emerged in McKenna's study from similar research conducted (to be addressed in later sections of this paper).

However, the potential importance of a concurrent reflection on the two questions "What motivated me to join religious life?" and "What motivates me to stay committed to the vowed life" as raised by Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007) while she was pondering about the current state of religious life, has not been addressed in Wolf's (1990b) and McKenna's (2006) research. It will be interesting to see if research that addresses both reflective questions concurrently and across the various generational groups is able to provide insights into how these two questions might complement each other in a woman religious' reflective process about her commitment and satisfaction with religious life.

Motivational Factors to Enter and Commit to Religious Life.

An example of a dissertation study that examined the motivational factors of women who entered and remained committed to religious life is that of Cooney (1988). Interviewing 57 women from three different congregations, Cooney (1988) found that Sisters from two different congregations were attracted to religious life because they wanted to "be" (p. 454 and p. 456) nuns, while Sisters from a third congregation were attracted to the vowed life because they wanted to "do" (p. 455) the same works that one or a group of Sisters did. However, Cooney's (1988) investigation focused more on the reasons for remaining committed toward religious life, as she thoroughly examined the relationship of various variables (e.g., differences between age groups and three congregations, etc.) to the Sisters' reasons for staying.

Based on Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; as cited in Cooney, 1988), the results of Cooney's study indicated three common factors (fit, growth, and social

influence) that are impacting participants' decisions from all three age groups to stay committed to religious life. The first factor is the "fit" (p. 459) between individual and congregation, the second factor is the varied "growth" (p. 463) experience in oneself and congregation, and the third is "social influence" (p. 463) or the ability to give witness through the congregation's mission. Cooney (1988) stated that while there were no differences within and among the three different age groups in each congregation, differences between participants across the three congregations did emerge. This occurrence could be explained by the constellation and division of Cooney's (1988) sample.

For example, Cooney (1988) divided her participants who had entered religious life between 1945 and 1975 into three age groups with representation in each group from three different congregations: (1) 1945 to 1954; n = 7, n = 7, n = 6, (2) 1955 to 1964; n = 8, n = 5, n = 6, and (3) 1965 to 1974; n = 7, n = 5, n = 6. Based on the generation cohorts as defined in Strauss and Howe (1991) and also used in religious life research (CARA), one can assume that her sample only represented two generations, the Silent (1925-1942) and Boom Generation (1943-1960). Thus, organizing her sample by decades into three age groups instead of generational cohorts might explain her results.

While one could see that her sample was possibly large enough to conduct a comparison (>15) among the three congregations (22, 17, & 18 participants), her sample was definitely not large enough to compare for differences within and among the three different age groups. In fact, dividing her sample into three age groups possibly led to an overlap of two generations in these three age groups. On the other hand, if Cooney (1988) would have divided her entire sample of participants from all three congregations into

two generations (Silent and Boom), she could have prevented this overlap and it would have given her a large enough sample from which a comparison between two generations might have been possible.

In summary, Cooney's (1988) investigation among Sisters from different congregations indicated insights into the different reasons that emerged for the motivation to enter in contrast to the motivation for staying. It appears that women's motivation to commit to the vowed life changes over time, an important factor to keep in mind when (a) designing a satisfaction with religious life instrument, and (b) when assessing satisfaction with religious life across different age groups. In addition, Cooney's study also highlighted the differing emphasis that Sisters from separate congregations placed on reasons to enter ("be" a Sister versus "do" what a Sister does) but not on the reasons to stay committed (satisfaction factors) to the vowed life. Unlike McKenna (2006), who studied Irish women but similar to Wolf's (1990b) findings, were the results by Cooney (1988) in which only two factors emerged as the reasons to enter the vowed life (the latter two investigations included U.S. Sisters). It was unique that the Sisters' emphasis was on either one or the other of those two factors ("be" like a Sister versus "do" the ministry of a Sister) but not on both.

The factors "fit, growth, and social influence" identified in Cooney (1988) that motivated Sisters to stay are in some ways similar to the conclusion arrived at by Nygren and Ukeritis (1993). They stressed that congregations which are rooted in a deep relationship with God are faithful to their original mission and take action to meet the essential needs of society will be able to revitalize their orders. But to do this it is critical

that they address the gap between the influences of the culture and the values inherent in the Gospel.

The similarity that emerged in these two studies between the factors that contribute to commitment (based on satisfaction) and what is needed for a viable future within religious life was the emphasis on personal and congregational development (including spiritual growth) and expression of mission by the congregation in response to societal needs (critical approach to society) that is based on a fit between the individual Sister and her congregation. However, since Cooney's investigation is not based on a generational investigation (Wittberg & Froehle, 1998; Strauss & Howe, 1991), it will be important to explore these emerging insights in research that looks at motivational factors across different age groups in religious life.

Motivational Factors According to Age Groups.

Similar to McKenna (2006) and Wolf (1990b), Zajac (1999) focused her dissertation on the investigation of factors that attracted women to enter religious life but not on factors that motivated them to remain committed to vowed life. Interestingly, though not a woman religious, Zajac (1999) attempted to answer the following questions: (a) why women are interested in joining religious life, (b) why they are experiencing diminishment in numbers, and (c) what meaning the term "community" (p. viii) has for these women. For the purposes of this study, the review of Zajac's investigation will focus on her attempts to find answers to her first two questions. Her review of reasons related to the membership decline in women's religious orders centered on the changes within religious life as a result of the societal and religious movements that took place during the 1960s.

In contrast to McKenna (2006) and Wolf (1990b), Zajac (1999) further attempted to conduct her investigation based on age group comparison by studying 51 Sisters from one congregation in California. Thus, the age range of Zajac's participants was much more widespread. In fact, her participants ranged in age from the mid-thirties to over ninety (30+ years, *n* = 2; 40+ years *n* = 6; 50+ years, *n* =15; 60+ years, *n* = 14; 70+ years, *n* = 6; 80 + years, *n* = 6; and 90+ years, *n* = 2) with a mean age of 63. Using a qualitative approach and analyses (Grounded Theory), Zajac (1999) collected her data through in-depth interviews and participant observations.

Using this methodology, she found that the women's discernment to enter religious life included factors like "natural progression" (p. 55), as it was a natural thing to enter religious life, "friends going" (p. 55), as in friends decided to enter religious life too, "special holiness" (p. 55), as in acquiring a special state in life or personal qualities, "God's plan" (p. 55), as in fulfilling God's plan, "opportunities for service" (p. 55), as in being of service to others, "particular role model" (p. 55), as in the example set by Sister(s), "particular event or an aha experience" (p. 55), as in a retreat or a personal story, and finally "question posed" (p. 55), as being asked whether she had thought about this life form (Zajac, 1999).

In conjunction with these emerging factors, Zajac (1999) found that these women also talked about factors such as having had both "a 'good Catholic' family" (p. 55) as in Catholic upbringing, and the "development of Catholic ethic" (p. 55), as in being of service to those in need, in addition to "contact with Nuns" (p. 55), as in Sister's visibility, that influenced their decision to consider religious life. Surprisingly, Zajac (1999) further concluded that her results have generalizability, not only to this one

congregation but also to other U.S. congregations that resemble the one she investigated. But the very argument that she used to justify the generalizability of her study points out a major shortcoming in her methodology. First, there are generational differences that she could possibly have missed. For instance, she found that a majority of her sample were motivated to enter religious life because they had been taught by Sisters. However, Zajac (1999) did report one example in which an individual did not have these early influential experiences. In fact, this person attended neither a Catholic school nor a Catholic college.

Unfortunately, Zajac's (1999) result section did not provide demographic data for the reader to determine to which generational cohort this individual belonged. It is quite possible that one person's lack of exposure to Sisters in a Catholic school/college setting is due to generational differences as defined and described in Strauss and Howe (1991). Furthermore, it is not feasible to determine possible differences among cohorts from Zajac's (1999) data because she does not have a large enough representation of Sisters within the different age cohorts.

In summary, a parallel pattern for motivational factor to enter religious life can be found when comparing Zajac's results to those of Cooney's (1988). Despite a time difference of one decade between these two investigations, the visibility of or contact with Sisters was a motivational factor for women to desire to become a Sister and to be involved in ministries that would provide the opportunity to live out their Catholic ethic upbringing, namely to be of service to those in need. The similarity in motivational factors could have been based on the sample (a stronger representation of one or two age cohorts) that was included in both studies. In fact, the wide-range in age (30 to 90 +) yet limited numbers of participants in these age groups (particularly the younger age group)

leaves one to wonder about possible generational differences in childhood upbringing and motivation to enter religious life.

Furthermore, the question pertaining to generational differences is also justified by the fact that one participant in Zajac (1999) had never been exposed to Sisters throughout her academic education. A similar lack of exposure was observed in the literature (presented above) on the changing role of religion among generations and younger Catholics' position and expectations of the Catholic Church (Hoge, 2006; Hoge et al., 2001; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2007). The trends identified in this literature, namely (a) the lack of competent personnel for religious formation of youth and young adults, (b) the decreased affiliation of Catholic youth with the institutional Catholic and their decreased commitment to its mission, and (c) the decreased visibility and involvement of Sisters in the youth and young adult religious formation are very different from the religious experiences of those Sisters who participated in the above investigations (Cooney, 1988; Zajac, 1999).

In fact, the motivational factors of these participants to enter religious life were based on a consistent positive religious influence and commitment that was displayed at home, in the neighborhood and parish, as well as in school during these Sisters' childhoods and young adulthoods. The generational differences found pertaining to active involvement and commitment (based on satisfaction) in the Catholic faith tradition justify an examination now of generational differences as related to motivational factors to enter and commit to (be satisfied with) a vowed life.

Motivational Factors According to Generations.

An investigation, which used generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) when looking at motivation to enter religious life, was conducted by Wittberg and Froehle (1998). This study also investigated Sisters' beliefs regarding the reasons for membership decline. Wittberg and Froehle (1998) examined the results of two surveys conducted by CARA, one a nation-wide study that included women and men religious (the majority was women religious) and the other a nationwide study of only one large congregation of women religious. Sisters from three generations (Silent, Boomer, and 13th Generations) were asked to participate in this study.

The results of both surveys indicated that younger Sisters were more likely to enter religious life because of their attraction to community life and spirituality (Wittberg & Froehle, 1998). This younger group also placed much higher importance on working and living with the poor. In regard to the reasons for membership decline, younger Sisters in both surveys identified internal factors (e.g., community leadership, aging Sisters) as opposed to external (U.S. culture) as being crucial. This study revealed the importance of taking a generational approach to understanding motivational factors for entering the vowed life and recognizing the changes needed within religious life.

However, Wittberg and Froehle (1998) did not provide any information on the number of participants in each generational group, and their interpretation was limited to comparisons between the Boomer and Generation X (also known as the 13th Generation). In addition, because the two surveys were not based on open-ended questions, the answers of participants were restricted to the options provided on the surveys. For

example, from the survey results it is not possible to determine what motivational factors would have emerged as most important to each generation.

Unlike the investigation by Wittberg and Froehle (1998), a comprehensive German study, which included only young women either considering or committed to religious life, was conducted by Kluitmann (2008). A woman religious herself, Kluitmann conducted an extensive study with 150 women that used a detailed demographic questionnaire, a projective test "Imagining One's Future" by O' Dwyer (2000; as cited in Kluitmann, 2008), as well as personal interviews.

It was through the personal interviews that she inquired about the factors that motivated women religious to enter, stay or leave religious life, but she also asked questions pertaining to other aspects about their life. Prompted by the membership decline among women religious in Germany, Kluitmann (2008) inquired of her participants whether religious life has a future, and if so, how are they envisioning a viable future of religious life.

The purpose of her research was to examine the current situation of younger women within German apostolic women's religious congregations (Kluitmann, 2008). Therefore, only women who either were considering religious life, in formation, currently committed, or had left religious life qualified as participants for this study. No age requirements were attached to the participation of women who were considering entering religious life or in any stage of formation. However, women who had either professed their final commitment to the vowed life or decided to leave religious life within the last ten years could not to be older than 45. Another study criterion was the participants' racial/ethnic background. The women who volunteered their participation had to be

German or had to at least have been living for five years in Germany before they entered religious life (Kluitmann, 2008).

The results of Kluitmann's investigation (2008), presented a comprehensive review of the statistics as related to the demographic background (demographic questionnaire) and the maturity level (projective test) of the participants. She also provided a very thorough analysis of the participants' answers to the interview questions. Her findings indicated that German women joined religious life primarily because of their desire for a deeper relationship to God and secondarily for ministerial involvement. Kluitmann (2008) found a difference in the reasons for staying in religious life between women who were assessed to have a greater maturity level, as compared to those who did not. While the latter ones mentioned aspects of duty or not having any other alternative, the opposite was found among women with higher levels of maturity who expressed that their experiences have made them feel happy and satisfied with their chosen life form. They further shared that their decision to stay has been worthwhile, life giving and fulfilling for them (Kluitmann, 2008).

Among the changes that these women identified as necessary for the future of religious life in Germany is an increase in younger vocations, the ability to ask outsiders (facilitators) for help, and to face the reality of decline, instead of engaging in behaviors of denial or panic (Kluitmann, 2008). These women also spoke of the need to learn how to let go and how to grieve the losses that women religious are currently experiencing within religious life. The general need for an increase in facilitative/ supervisory support and for advice related to the areas of public relations and finances was also suggested for Sisters in leadership positions. The continuum of congregations with regard to their

openness toward supervisory support ranges from those who have not yet made use of these options to congregations who have gratefully taken advantage of these opportunities (Kluitmann, 2008).

Other themes that emerged regarding a viable future of religious life included a healthy balance between (a) an ability to respond to the needs of the times without fully assimilating to the societal trends contradictory to religious life, (b) an openness for new forms of living while retaining those traditions that have value today, and (c) an openness for change, but at the same time holding on faithfully to the true meaning of its purpose to love and deepen in the relationship to God and service to others.

Kluitmann (2008) further stated that the younger women religious expressed a need for religious to be a witness for others, live a simple life style and create smaller congregations, minimize self-focus and fear of change, do away with pessimistic attitudes, be less bound to institutionalized structure in favor of greater flexibility, be characterized by an intensive, radical, prophetic and spiritual life style, be open to inter-congregational collaboration and new forms of membership, in addition to being rooted in the values of the Gospel and oriented toward the example set by Jesus. According to Kluitmann (2008) most of these younger women religious thought that the "old" is not able to function anymore and the "new" has not yet become visible.

As can be seen from the results of Kluitmann's (2008) study, her investigation related to younger women's motivations and experience with religious life in Germany brought important and valuable information to the forefront. However, Kluitmann (2008) was not always consistent in presenting the prevalence of the common themes that evolved from the participants' answers to the interview questions. Keeping in mind

cultural and age differences, this lack of consistency adds an additional factor that makes it difficult to compare the prevalence of common themes across national as well international studies.

Overall however, Kluitmann's (2008) investigation with younger women religious about the future of religious life in Germany revealed data that are somewhat congruent with Jarrell's (as cited in Sanders, 2007) and Schneiders' (1994) observations about the state of religious life in the U.S. In fact, it seems as though women religious from all industrialized countries are experiencing a variety of changes and challenges in regard to ways and options of how they can or are required to live a vowed life within this post-modern time period. But before an international comparison can be made, more current empirical research addressing these questions to U.S. women religious is definitely needed. Therefore, it is imperative to examine the motivation of U.S. apostolic women religious who have chosen to enter and commit to a vowed life, as well as what changes these women envision for the future of religious life.

A recent investigation of the motivational factors of women who enter and commit to religious life was conducted by Kreis (2008a). In response to the limitations of previous studies (Cooney, 1988; Kluitmann, 2008; McKenna, 2006; Wittberg & Froehle, 1998; Wolf, 1990b; Zajac, 1999), Kreis (2008a) used a qualitative approach, but rather than interviewing her participants, she developed a survey that included a) questions about the participants' background, b) open-ended questions inquiring about the Sisters' motivation to enter and remain committed to religious life (and in their particular congregation), and c) inquiries pertaining to suggested changes in religious life (and their particular congregation) that would intensify the Sisters' commitment.

Using a questionnaire format, Kreis (2008a) received, for the most part, brief and concise statements from her participants. This type of data collection had the advantage of providing a workable amount of qualitative data that could readily be converted into quantitative data and analyses for the purpose of assessing and comparing the prevalence of common themes across future studies. The use of questionnaires also allowed for privacy and frank responses independent of the experimenter's expectation and influence (Kreis, 2008a).

A sample of 52 Sisters (born 1925-1942) from two congregations volunteered their participation (Kreis, 2008a). Using content analysis, common themes emerged from Sisters' responses of their reasons for entering religious life (Sisters' example and positive personal qualities, God centered family and neighborhood, and inner call) and remaining committed (ongoing formation and spiritual practices, balanced fulfilling life, opportunities to witness, minister, and evangelize, commitment to God and community, and inspired by charism and mission).

Additional themes emerged for Sisters' appreciation of changes that have occurred within their religious congregations (deeper commitment to God and community, contemporary response to the needs of society, possibilities for personal [including spiritual] development, greater emphasis on their congregation's charism and mission) as well as common themes for suggested changes that would intensify their commitment (renewed commitment to God, community, and the witness factor of religious life; simple, prayerful/spiritual, balanced life; response to signs of the time; relationship to hierarchy of the church). Interestingly, 16 out of 52 Sisters (30.8 percent) stated that their commitment is firm regardless of potential changes. The coding scheme

with the emerging categories, definitions, and example of responses can be found in Kreis (2008a).

A limitation of Kreis is that only two congregations were surveyed so that the results of this study may not have generalizability to other congregations. The use of a questionnaire rather than a personal interview to elicit participants' responses to open-ended questions had its advantages and disadvantages. A personal interview would have allowed the interviewer to question the participants for clarification or further information. However, in comparing the methodology of previous studies (Cooney, 1988; Kluitmann, 2008; McKenna, 2006; Wolf, 1990b; Zajac, 1999) to Kreis (2008a), it can be said with confidence that the intent of the study was not at all compromised.

In terms of the content generated by the questionnaire, it became evident that there are a number of areas that need to be explored further. For example, the responses to Question 3 indicated that there are two important areas that need to be investigated in greater detail: the commitment of Sisters, regardless of changes in religious life, and the changes that they consider necessary for its viable future. Further studies need to include questions that address these areas more specifically.

Finally, contrary to previous investigations, this study was driven by the generational theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) and therefore examined questions pertaining to motivational factors within one generation (Silent Generation) in order that future research can extend it to a generational comparison (Silent, Boom, Thirteenth, Millennial Generations). A generational comparison might elicit additional information (particularly from younger generation cohorts) that may be useful in helping these Sisters better

understand the process of change that they are undergoing at the same time they are challenged to face their current reality with great courage.

Motivational Factors as Related to Changes within Religious Life.

So far only Kreis (2008a) has extended her investigation of motivational factors to an inquiry about changes within religious life (or particular congregation) that could help a Sister to intensify her commitment to this form of life. However, Kluitmann's (2008, p. 240) question "How do you envision religious life so that it has a future" [Trans.] is based on a similar assumption, namely that changes are needed within religious life for it to have a viable future. While Kluitmann (2008) takes a very general approach to elicit suggestions for changes within this life form so that a future can be assured, Kreis (2008a) not only draws out ideas for changes, but also attempts to ascertain whether or not the participants' commitment to the vowed life is related to the possible changes that could be made in the future. Furthermore, Kreis (2008a) inquired about changes in process as well as changes that are in the planning stages within the Sisters' particular congregation and whether or not the participants' commitment to the vowed life is related to the changes that are occurring or could be made.

Considering the content similarity of responses pertaining to suggested future changes within religious life, the following common themes emerged within Kluitmann (2008) and Kreis (2008a): a healthy balance between (a) an assessment to respond to the needs of the times without fully assimilating to the societal trends contradictory to religious life, (b) an openness for new forms of living while retaining those traditions that have value today, and (c) an openness for change, but at the same time holding on faithfully to the true meaning of its purpose (to love and deepen in the relationship to God

and service to others). Further similarities in themes included the suggestion for religious to provide a witness of their life style and be more viable; to work for an increase in religious vocations; to possess a much simpler, purposeful, and more balanced lifestyle; to have an increased commitment to a spiritual and community life; to be radical and prophetic; to be open to inter-congregational collaboration and new forms of membership; to have wider participation in democratic governance; and to be rooted in the values of the Gospel and oriented toward the example set by Jesus.

There are differences between Kluitmann (2008) and Kreis (2008a) regarding suggested changes for a viable future of religious life. For instance, Kluitmann's participants spoke of the need for outside support for (a) those in leadership positions, (b) the congregation's approach to grieving losses, (c) congregations to face their reality of membership decline instead of perpetuating behaviors that are indicative of denial or panic, and (d) advice related to the areas of public relations and finances. Presently there appears to be a variety of congregations that are on different points along the continuum about to their openness for facilitative support. This continuum ranges from congregations who have not yet made any use of these options to congregations who have gratefully taken advantage of these opportunities.

The participants of Kluitmann's (2008) study further suggested that religious communities should (a) be smaller in size and fewer in number, (b) focus less on themselves and the fear of change, (c) refrain from an attitude of pessimism, and (d) be less institutionalized so as to be more flexible and able to move into the future. According to Kluitmann (2008), most of these younger women religious are aware that they have to risk living the future of religious while being in a transition state in which the "old" is not

able to function anymore and the "new" is not yet visible. These suggested changes that are particular to Kluitmann's (2008) study and may be related to factors of age and cultural background suggest the need for future research which focuses on trends across generation cohorts within a culture before attempting to understand cross cultural differences.

Changes that emerged within Kreis (2008a), but not in Kluitmann's (2008) likewise point to the need to investigate differences across generation cohorts within one culture. Thus, the changes seen in Kreis' (2008) study included a renewed commitment to each congregation's charism and an improved relationship between women's religious congregations and the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. Looking at the changes that have or are occurring within the particular congregations, the following categories emerged: a renewed commitment to God and community, revitalization of the congregations' charism and mission, positive view of congregations' renewal (i.e., being more multicultural and responsive to contemporary social justice issues), and lastly the continuation of ongoing formation.

In an earlier investigation, Nygren and Ukeritis (1993) asserted that congregations, who are rooted in a deep relationship with God, are faithful to their original mission, and take action toward essential needs of the society will be able to revitalize their orders, if they critically address the gap between the influences of culture and the values inherent in the Gospel. When comparing the changes that the Sisters in Kreis' (2008a) study acknowledged as taking place in their congregations to those changes necessary for a viable future of religious life identified in previous research by Nygren and Ukeritis (1993), one is justified in complimenting the Sisters in these two

U.S. congregations for the efforts they have invested in the future of their congregations based on their firm commitment to God, to their community and to being of service to others. This is particularly evident in the responses to Question number 3 in which Sisters stated that their commitment is firm regardless of changes occurring in religious life. These findings also stand in contrast to the grim picture painted by Brink (2007b) regarding the vocational depression and malaise that she associates with the current state of religious life, an area to be discussed in a later section of this paper.

In summary, the limitations of the studies introduced above hinder a comparison across these investigations primarily due to factors such as age (emphasis on different age groups versus generation cohorts) and cultural (U.S., Irish, and German Sisters) differences. Despite the limitation of age factor, noteworthy themes emerged in the U.S. investigations (Cooney, 1988; Kreis, 2008a; Wittberg & Froehle, 1998; Wolf, 1990b; Zajac, 1999) related to motivation for entering religious life: religious/spiritual upbringing and experiences, educational and career opportunities, Sister's positive example, and community.

Only two U.S. investigations (Cooney's, 1988; Kreis, 2008a) explored motivations to remain committed in addition to the motivation to enter. The results of Cooney's (1988) investigation identified that a fit between the individual Sister and the congregation, personal growth experiences, and social influences were the factors that motivated Sisters to remain in the vowed life. There was an overlap between Cooney's last two motivational factors and some factors that emerged within Kreis (2008a), namely, ongoing formation and witness, ministry, and evangelization. However, Kreis' (2008a) investigation identified additional themes that were motivating factors for Sisters

commitment to the vowed life such as spiritual practice; balanced fulfilling life; opportunities to witness, minister, and evangelize; commitment to God and community; and inspiration through congregation's charism and mission.

In comparing the results (while keeping in mind the limitations of the studies reviewed) between factors that emerged for reasons to enter and those factors that emerged for reasons to remain committed in the U.S. investigations (Cooney, 1988; Kreis, 2008a; Wittberg & Froehle, 1998; Wolf, 1990b; Zajac, 1999), one can see a leaning toward a strong emphasis on giving witness through their commitment to God, community, and their services and impact on society. For instance, the emphasis in the reasons for entering religious life tend to be directed toward factors that (a) initiated participants' (Sisters) interest to religious life (religious/spiritual background and experiences) and (b) met their expectations of religious life (spiritual/educational/ career development; community and opportunities for service). In contrast, the reasons for remaining committed were less self-directed and much more focused on the witness value of the vowed life in the church and society, important factors identified by Nygren and Ukeritis (1993) if religious orders want to transition into a viable future.

In regard to motivational factors that emerged from the two international studies, the study conducted with Irish Sisters by McKenna (2006) indicated that themes such as the desire for adventure/heroism/holiness, social influence, religious experiences, professional and personal achievements instilled motivations to enter. On the other hand, the German study by Kluitmann (2008) indicated that only two themes, a deeper relationship to God and service to others, were motivations to enter. Factors like duty and/or no other alternatives in life were motivations for staying among Sisters who

indicated low maturity levels, while Sisters who indicated higher levels of maturity said that their motivation to stay was based on experiences of the vowed life that made them happy and satisfied.

The results of Kluitmann's (2008) study, pertaining to factors (experiences within the vowed life leading to happiness and satisfaction) that motivated women religious with higher levels of maturity to remain committed to religious life, showed the connection between motivation to stay and satisfaction within religious life made by these participants. From the participants' responses in Kluitmann's (2008) investigation, it appears that a Sister's motivation to remain committed to religious life is based on her satisfaction (experiences) with this life form. One can then assume that motivational factors that emerge for reasons to remain committed to the vowed life are, to some degree, tied (indicators) to levels of satisfaction that women experience within religious life.

Based on this understanding, the author of this investigation used the common themes that emerged in Kreis (2008a) as the first step of item development for a satisfaction with religious life instrument to be field tested within this study. However, Kreis' (2008a) investigation was limited to the participation of only one generation (Silent Generation) leaving out younger generations, namely the Boom, Thirteenths, and Millennial Generations. Therefore, in order to confirm the content analysis, which will be conducted prior to field testing of the instrument, for the development of this satisfaction with religious life instrument, it is important to assess general patterns of motivational factors within and across generations of apostolic women religious.

Conducting a study across various generation cohorts might allow for an examination of potential generational differences in motivational factors, particularly for reasons to remain committed to the vowed life. In fact, it was the need for a U.S. investigation of motivational factors across generation cohorts of apostolic women religious that surfaced as an important implication within Kreis (2008a) and will be discussed next.

Justification for an Examination of Motivational Factors Across Generations.

As in the study by McKenna (2006), there is a need for a U.S. investigation that takes a broad perspective regarding social trends, not only within women's congregations, but also broader, as seen in the decline of social capital asserted in Putnam (2000). One important and supportive factor of social capital is the active membership in various traditional organizations (particularly religious organizations); that membership is now declining due to generational differences (Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2007).

An analogous decline for similar reasons has also occurred within the Roman Catholic faith tradition and within religious life (Hoge, 2006; Hoge et al., 2001; Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2007). McKenna (2006), in using a sample of Irish women religious, placed her study of the relationship between motivational factors and entrance to religious life within the broader context of women in society in Ireland. A similar study, but across various generation cohorts, has not been conducted in the U.S. Therefore, the examination of motivational factors across generation cohorts within religious life will be framed in a broader context.

In fact, Putnam's (2000) social capital decline theory provides this broader context. His review of research of active membership decline in traditional organizations

and faith organizations (e.g., Roman Catholic faith tradition) highlights that one cause of this decline arises from the generational differences that emerged over four decades within the U.S. society. Since religious life is situated in a societal context, one could expect the decline in religious life to parallel the decline in traditional organizations within the whole of society for similar reasons. Therefore, using his theory and observations as a framework to guide this assessment of motivational factors and the development of a life satisfaction instrument may provide some insights about the attraction and retention of new membership within religious life.

Furthermore, the aforementioned studies (Cooney, 1988; Kluitmann, 2008; Kreis, 2008a; McKenna, 2006; Wittberg & Froehle, 1998; Wolf, 1990b; Zajac, 1999) have surfaced some important insights, but before a cross cultural comparison can be made, there is a need for a national investigation across different generations of apostolic women religious. As of 2008, there is no current research conducted within U.S. religious congregations that has examined the motivational factors (pertaining to joining, committing, and viable future) of apostolic women religious across the youngest four generations (Silent, Boom, 13th Generation, Millennium). While we know from the CARA study (2006) some of the characteristics of the emerging communities that appear to be attractive to younger women, we cannot assume that these characteristics are the sole motivation for entrance. In addition, the informants of that study were the superiors of the communities, not the new members themselves who are an important population group to be investigated in this study.

These emerging religious communities which show an increase of new and younger members are characterized by the wearing of a habit, sharing with and

ministering to the poor, accentuating the importance of contemplation, spirituality, Marian devotion and Papal admiration, engaging in ministries that focus on catechesis and retreat work (CARA, 2006; Scholars Roundtable, 2007). Since these emerging communities, some belonging to the CMSWR, differ in several respects from most congregations who belong to the LCWR (as shown previously), it seems imperative to conduct current research on the motivational factors of women who belong to these two different women's religious organizations while comparing the results among them. Unfortunately, the congregations that belong to the CMSWR are not able to participate at this time of the author's research which will limit the investigation of motivational factors to congregations who belong to the LCWR.

Seeing the importance to assess whether Sisters' motivational factors are different across four different age cohorts (the Silent, the Boom, the Thirteenth, and the Millennial Generations) and the limited research available and the fewer entrants to religious congregations, it is imperative not to overlook the motivational factors that encourage newer, younger, and diverse members to join and remain committed to a vowed lifestyle. Furthermore, an investigation of whether there is a desire for future changes to occur so that identified motivational factors from the different generations can be set in place within religious life is also needed. This kind of investigation could inform and further strengthen Sisters' commitment to religious life.

In addition to studies (Cooney, 1988; Kluitmann, 2008) that provide us with information on motivational factors that support a commitment to religious life, research addressing the reasons for leaving the vowed life could also provide us with information useful for retention to religious life (Ebaugh, 1984, 1980; Kluitmann, 2008; Modde,

1974; Rulla, et al., 1976; Van Merrienboer, 1997). For example, while Ebaugh (1984) investigated the various stages pertaining to the decision to leave religious life among former members, Kluitmann (2008) also assessed the maturity level of former women religious in addition to their reasons for leaving religious life.

However, the focus of this study is the investigation of motivational factors that are promoting a commitment to the vowed life among the four different age cohorts who are presently members of LCWR religious congregations. Conducting a current examination of Sisters' motivational factors that could enhance their satisfaction within the vowed life among members of congregations that are from different generations and entrance years will be informative during this post-Vatican II time and will also add to the literature in various disciplines (e.g., psychology, religious studies, etc.).

Lastly, the importance of this research is affirmed very clearly in Chittister (1995) who stated that religious life is currently in a time of transition between an appreciated past and the new to come in which those religious who express their desire to transmit the vision of religious life, reflect on its meaning, blessings, and its influence, instead of engaging in the more current trend in which conversations tend to focus on its demise rather than on its revitalization (Chittister, 1995).

Research on Meaning and Life Satisfaction among Women Religious.

One current trend of thought that focuses on the demise within religious life is particularly apparent in Brink (2007b). Based on her personal experiences and conversations with women and men religious, Brink attempted to address the needs and suggestions for the revitalization of religious life. However, the focus in the beginning of Brink's article (2007b) is on the demise of religious life and the negative state in which

she currently placed many women and men religious. She referred to this negative state as a "vocational malaise" (p. 19) or "vocational depression" (p. 21). In support of her description of the demise in religious life, Brink quoted statements from religious themselves such as, "We are dying out anyway, why bother?" (p. 20) and from outsiders who approached religious saying "Why don't you sisters and brothers just close up shop? Religious life is dead and you don't have the decency to bury it" (p. 30). It is particularly this attitude of hopelessness and the withdrawal from the common responsibility for the recruitment of newer members that is, according to Brink, a sign of "vocational depression" (p. 21).

Although there is clearly a decline in numbers within religious orders, Brink's (2007b) use of the term "vocational depression" is not supported by empirical research, and she fails to clearly define her use of the term "vocational depression." Nevertheless, Brink continued to urge that this kind of depression becomes evident in the individualistic and consumerist attitude of women and men religious. She further asserted that this vocational depression becomes apparent in feelings of disappointment, alienation and anger that religious hold against the hierarchy of the Church about issues like women in the Church and the abuse and domination of diocesan priests. She also claimed that these negative feelings and disagreements go back to the conflicted relationship between women and men religious and the hierarchy of the church that emerged during Vatican II, when religious felt crushed in their attempts to respond to Vatican II's call for renewal within religious life (Brink, 2007b).

Prior to Brink's (2007b) publications, a number of other writers, such as Arbuckle (1988), Holland (1990), Leddy (1990), and the Sacred Congregation for Religious

(1983), also attempted to understand and explain the current state of religious life. Their work is summarized in Schneiders (1994) who uses a medical metaphor, "malaise and remedy," to describe the problems and solutions that these writers suggested regarding religious life at the end of the twentieth century. She defined the term "malaise" as "the pervasive sense of darkness" (Schneiders, 1994, p. 11). She continued to state that this darkness "is not gloom, pessimism, or self-pity" (p.11), but a type of suffering.

According to Schneiders (1994), Leddy's (1990) analysis is based on a political and philosophical framework, in which she asserted that religious were experiencing a dispersion of energy and depression due to their surrender to the cultural trends of individualism and consumerism. As such, Leddy's (1990) interpretation appears congruent with the more recent work by Brink (2007b). By comparison, Schneiders (1994) believed that Arbuckle (1988) takes a more historical approach in analyzing the trend of declining membership. Taking a cultural, anthropological viewpoint, he asserted that religious orders are undergoing the normal life cycle in which they tend to distance themselves over time from the inspiring thoughts and action of their founders. He further argued that this distancing from the founders' original ideas creates a social chaos that is in need of re-founding.

On the other hand, Holland (1990) is understood by Schneiders (1994) to have argued that religious life is at its end within church history. Thus, instead, of trying to revitalize religious life, he suggested that there is a need to focus on the re-establishment of Christian values within families and the workplace. Finally, Schneiders proposed that the Vatican II's interpretation of the malaise was that religious have been unfaithful and,

therefore, need to return to the pre-Vatican II lifestyle of religious life as outlined in the "essential documents."

Contrary to Brink (2007b) and others (Arbuckle, 1988; Holland, 1990; Leddy, 1990; Sacred Congregation for Religious, 1983), Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007) and Schneiders (1994), are of the opinion that this "malaise" among women religious is not necessarily a negative phenomenon. Instead, they interpret it as a time of enormous challenge that could positively impact the life of women religious. They further evaluated this transitional time as valuable because it could lead religious, individually as well as communally, into a wide-reaching process of life renewal. For example, Schneiders (1994) argued that these various interpretations of malaise as a negative phenomenon have in some ways broadened our understanding, but at the same time she asserted that they have missed being in touch with the deepest experience of the majority of religious, namely, the spiritual level that far outweighs any cultural impact. She further asserted that this "malaise" is a necessary spiritual journey which includes an experience of suffering while potentially leading believers (in this case, women religious) into a deeper and more mature spirituality (Schneiders, 1994).

Analogous to Schneiders' (1994) understanding of the reasons for this malaise are Jarrell's (as cited in Sanders, 2007) comments that she made during an interview conducted by Sanders (2007), the communications director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). In this interview Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007) stated that congregations are undergoing a tremendous experience of various painful losses which are calling them to deepen their spiritual life as they discern in a waiting and hopeful posture. She further explained that it is a time in which congregational leadership

is challenged to actively move (not with attitudes of denial and avoidance) their community into a transformative process that could lead them either into a renewal or a final letting go of their congregation (Jarrell; as cited in Sanders, 2007).

Similar to Jarrell's (as cited in Sanders, 2007) and Schneiders' (1994) interpretation is Brennan's (1994) viewpoint of this spiritual journey in which she asserted that "[t]he spiritual crisis is not to be understood primarily in terms of prayer and contemplation as it is with questions of ultimate meaning and value" (p. 98). That women religious are presently asking these questions is evident to Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007), who shared from her experiences of working with a variety of women's congregations, that these women are engaging in questions like "What are our values? What choices can we make?" (p. 3). She further stated that the painful losses and the resulting suffering among women religious cannot be interpreted as a sign of depression, since death does not resemble depression. Instead, Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007), like Schneiders (1994), stated that women and men religious are experiencing a variety of changes in regard to ways and options of how they can or are required to live a vowed life within this post-modern time period.

Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007) continued stating that the kind of longing and drifting that she has identified among women religious, which is not an indication of their wanting to leave religious life, is rather a sign that congregations are called to ask questions and pay attention to their current state of being within religious life. Thus, questions that Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007, p. 7) raised like "So what is happening that we need to pay attention to?" and "Is this calling us to live in a different way, or

perhaps acknowledge that the practices we have just do not fit who we are?" could be appropriate ones to ask during this time.

One might wonder if this longing and drifting as observed by Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007) is an expression of the desire that women religious have for something more or different in their lives than they are currently able to experience. One of the ways to address this issue is to investigate whether women religious are in, fact, currently satisfied with their lives. This question of current life satisfaction was also raised by Jarrell herself at the beginning of her interview with Sanders (2007).

In this same interview Jarrell (as cited in Sanders, 2007) shared her concerns regarding motivational factors pertaining to a commitment to religious life which she discerned at a personal and more general level by her conversations with other women religious. Jarrell's (as cited in Sanders, 2007) insights point to a need to concurrently conduct an assessment of women religious' life satisfaction across generations and to investigate the motivational factors among women religious from different age cohorts who entered, are committed to the vowed life and have particular thoughts regarding a viable future for religious life.

However, a literature review showed that there is first a need for the design of a satisfaction with religious life instrument before one can actually assess the levels of life satisfaction among women religious from different generation cohorts. While there are quite a few life satisfaction instruments normed on older women and men that have also been successfully applied to research with elderly Sisters, there is yet no life satisfaction instrument available that can assess the satisfaction levels across the various generation cohorts of women committed to the vowed life. Based on the available literature, a

justification for the development of such an instrument specifically designed for apostolic women religious will be presented within the next sections of this paper.

General Overview of Established Life Satisfaction Instruments.

An established instrument that has been used to assess general life satisfaction as a unidimensional construct consisting of only five items is that of Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). The SWLS has been used in various investigations to assess for (a) general life satisfaction levels (Leung et al., 2005), (b) life satisfaction across different age groups, and (c) concurrent validity (Ruehlman et al., 1999) in the establishment of another instrument.

However, the SWLS has been extended into a global life satisfaction subscale within the Extended Satisfaction With Life Scale (Alfonso et al., 1991; as cited in Allison, 1995) which now assesses additional areas of satisfaction (e.g., social life, children, marriage, etc.). It appears that the extension of the original SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) was based on the need for the development of instruments that can assess additional components of life satisfaction (e.g., within a life form or career path) beyond that of general life satisfaction.

While there are a variety of well-established instruments that assess life satisfaction in regard to married life, such as the Quality of Life Instrument (Frisch, 1994) or the Global Satisfaction Scale (Kelly & Burgoon, 1991), the content of some of these items assess areas (e.g., sexual intimacy, spousal relationship, children, etc.) do not apply to the life style of a woman religious. In addition, instruments that assess the life satisfaction of younger people tend to be more directed toward satisfaction with career

decisions as seen in the Hall Occupational Orientation Inventory, Fourth Edition (Hall, 1968-2000).

There are also instruments available that assess the life satisfaction of the elderly. For example, Bienenfeld et al. (1997) have used the Life Satisfaction Index A (Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1961; as cited in Bienenfeld et al., 1997) to assess the life satisfaction of elderly women religious. However, there is yet no established instrument available for the assessment of life satisfaction across different generation cohorts among apostolic women religious. Therefore, the purpose of this investigation is to develop an instrument that can assess levels of life satisfaction of women from different generation cohorts who are committed to a vowed life within apostolic women religious. In order to justify the need for the development of a satisfaction with religious life instrument, a review of the restricted literature available that addresses life satisfaction among women religious will be presented next.

Life Satisfaction Research of Women Religious.

Life satisfaction studies: Quantitative approaches.

Using Shin and Johnson's (1978) definition, Pavot and Diener (1993) stated that life satisfaction "refers to a judgmental process, in which individuals assess the quality of their lives on the basis of their own unique set of criteria" (p.164). A review of research indicated that life satisfaction has been assessed with individuals of diverse backgrounds like ethnic/race, age, gender, mental and physical health, etc. (Lettner, K., Solva, M., & Baumann, U., 1996; McAdams, 1993; Pavot & Diener, 1993; Singelis, Yamada, Barrio, Laney, Her, Ruiz-Anaya, & Lennertz, 2006).

However, only a small number of life satisfaction investigations have been conducted with women religious, and the focus of these investigations has been only on older members of women's religious congregations. Using life satisfaction assessment instruments (e.g., Life Satisfaction Index A) normed only for older people, these investigations have found that older women religious report higher life satisfaction a) as compared to samples drawn from the general population (Bienenfeld et al., 1997; Kvale, 1989), and b) as compared to men religious (Bishop, 2006).

For example, Bienenfeld et al.'s (1997) sample of 128 women religious (ranging from 65 to 92 years of age) was drawn from a nursing home and two retirement homes. The goal of Bienenfeld et al.'s (1997) investigation was to examine the factors that are mediating the effects of physical disabilities on elderly women religious' levels of life satisfaction and depression. The results indicated that factors like personal mastery, social support, physical functioning, and religious commitment are predictive of levels of life satisfaction within this sample of elderly women religious.

Although Bienenfeld et al.'s (1997) sample included women religious from two generations (G.I. and Silent), they did not investigate differences between the two cohort groups. This kind of investigation could be informative to research inquiring about levels of life satisfaction across the two generations of elderly women religious. It is also important to note that these components found in Bienenfeld et al. (1997) are predictive of life satisfaction in elderly women religious suffering from physical disabilities and sampled from a retirement setting. Thus, the result of this 1997 investigation cannot be generalized to be predictive of life satisfaction in active older, middle aged or younger women religious.

While Bienenfeld et al.'s (1997) sample consisted of two generation cohorts, the investigation by Kvale et al. (1989) provided only limited background information about their participants. Their sample contained a sub-sample of 183 Sisters out of a total of 836 participants. The investigators included elderly women and men as control groups. The sub sample of Sisters were 55 years and older who resided in two different congregational retirement centers.

The purpose of Kvale et al.'s (1989) study was to investigate the feelings and attitudes (through the use of a modified version of the Philadelphia Geriatric Morale Scale) of aging Sisters while using a control group of women and men of similar ages. Using this scale, the results indicated that Sisters almost consistently reported better adjustment to the aging process (e.g., better attitude toward aging) as compared to other elderly women their age. In particular, on the sub-scale of the Philadelphia Geriatric Morale Scale that assessed life satisfaction levels, women religious reported to experience less feelings of being lonely or dissatisfied when compared to elderly women. For example, older Sisters (M = 3.51) had a higher score (higher score indicates less agreement with the item) on the item "I sometimes feel that life isn't worth living" (p. 67) than elderly lay women (M = 3.19).

Compared to elderly men (M = 3.31) women religious (M = 3.51) also showed a higher score on the item "I sometimes feel that life isn't worth living" (p. 67). However, although women religious did show better adjustment on a variety of the sub-scales (e.g., attitude toward aging, less experiences of feeling lonely or dissatisfied), as assessed by the Philadelphia Geriatric Morale Scale, this was not consistent across all sub-scales when compared to elderly men. Thus, the differences across these sub-scales were not as

consistent and significant between women religious and elderly men as between women religious and elderly women. Unfortunately, the lack of clarity in regard to participants' age, age range, and the age distribution of the sample within Kvale et al. (1989) makes it difficult to determine the result's applicability to other cohort groups of elderly women religious. In addition, due to the focus on life satisfaction assessment among elderly women religious within a retirement setting, one can also not generalize the results of this investigation such as feeling less lonely or dissatisfied to active older, middle aged and younger women religious.

Finally, the study by Bishop (2006) consisted of a sample of 128 women and 107 men religious who ranged from 64 years of age to 80 and older and who belonged to Catholic monasteries. This sample was divided into two arbitrary age groups; those who were between 64 and 79 years of age were categorized in one group, and those 80 years of age and older into the other group. Using nine different instruments, Bishop (2006) assessed for possible age and gender differences among this sample of contemplative women and men religious. Four of these instruments examined the resources of well-being (life related stressors, close relationship to God and others, general and religious coping) available to the participants; the other four instruments examined the effects on individuals' levels of depression, life satisfaction, loneliness, and personal growth.

Among other results that are related to the adaptation and well-being assessed within this sample, this study did indicate that there are gender differences between contemplative women and men religious in regard to life satisfaction. The use of the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) indicated that contemplative women religious showed higher levels of life satisfaction (M = 28.97) as compared to

contemplative men religious (M = 27.35). However, the results of this investigation can not be generalized to women and men religious of apostolic congregations (participants to be included in this study) since this sample only included women and men from contemplative orders older than 65 years of age.

Furthermore, the division of the age groups is arbitrary and not guided by the generation research (Strauss & Howe, 1991). It seems that both groups, ages 64 to 79 (possibly Boom and Silent Generations) and 80 and older (possibly G.I. and Silent Generations), consisted of contemplative women and men religious who belonged to two generations (Strauss & Howe, 1991). This overlap would not allow for a comparison of older generation cohorts of contemplative women religious. If one wants to understand life satisfaction among contemplative women religious in a broader social context, then it will be important to study differences across age cohort groups, based on generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Very different from the studies by Bienenfeld et al. (1997), Bishop (2006), Kvale et al. (1989) in regard to the inclusion of age cohorts are the two studies by Magee (1984, 1987) whose participants ranged from 71 to 85 years of age and Wolf (1990a) whose participants ranged from 68 to 84 years of age. Based on the information and generational research by Strauss and Howe (1991), one can only tentatively classify Wolf's (1990a) and Magee's (1984, 1987b) participants as belonging to the G.I. Generation. It is not possible to classify participants in a particular generation without birth year information. In addition, both also used a very different methodological approach in their investigation of life satisfaction among elderly women religious.

For instance, Magee's (1984) intention was to identify variables that would enhance the life satisfaction of elderly retired women religious. It is not apparent from Magee's description of the sample if all the Sisters are retired or if some are still somewhat involved in active ministry even though they live in a retirement facility. He used a sample of 150 retired women religious from two congregations whose ages ranged from 71 to 85.

The results of Magee's (1984) investigation indicated that the empirically identified fourteen variables known to increase the life satisfaction of older people from the general population have also shown to enhance the life satisfaction of older Sisters. According to Magee (1987b) these fourteen variables include: (1) satisfactory peer relationships, (2) age of the Sisters, (3) social events and other recreational activities, (4) a Sister's own perception of her health condition, (5) previous congregational administrative position, (6) residence in congregational retirement housing, (7) satisfactory relationship with younger Sisters who are in active ministries, (8) satisfactory relationship with the Sister's family of origin, (9) involvement in decisions related to retirement, (10) the time span of retirement, (11) administrative position after retirement from active ministry, (12) involvement in activities pertaining to service, (13) previous active ministry, and (14) level of education.

However, in order to determine the importance of each of the fourteen variables that are known to predict older Sisters' life satisfaction, Magee (1987b) conducted a follow-up study in which he applied list-wise and step-wise multiple regressions. His results indicated that only seven (previous congregational administrative position, previous active ministry, perception of health, satisfactory peer relationship, social events

and other recreational activities, age, involvement in decisions related to retirement, and satisfactory relationship with the Sister's family of origin) of the fourteen variables seemed a contributing factor to enhanced life satisfaction of older Sisters.

The results might be explained by the fact that these fourteen variables have been empirically identified within the context of an assessment of life satisfaction as related to retirement. While these fourteen variables have shown to be predictive of higher life satisfaction among retired people they might not necessarily be predictive of all retired elderly women religious. One confounding variable could be the fact that some elderly women religious may live in a retirement facility but still be actively (fulltime, part time, a few hours) involved in ministry. The various levels of active involvement in ministries of elderly Sisters (age range of 66 to 83), of which some lived in a retirement facility, were evident in Kreis (2008a).

When Kreis (2008a) asked Sisters about motivational factors that are supportive of their commitment to the vowed life, common themes like ongoing formation and spiritual practice; balanced fulfilled life; opportunities to witness, minister, and evangelize; commitment to God and community; and congregation's charism and mission emerged from their answers. In fact, these themes are indicative of components that are increasing their satisfaction with the vowed life which in turn strengthen their commitment to the vowed life. When comparing these satisfaction components that emerged in Kreis (2008a) to those identified in (Magee, 1987b), one can see that components in the latter study are not only different from Kreis (2008a) but also much more geared toward satisfaction as related to "actual" retirement in the general population. Thus, one factor that might explain the limited number of components

predictive of retired Sisters' satisfaction within Magee's (1987b) results could be the various levels of active involvement that some Sisters still choose and can engage in while living in a retirement facility.

Nevertheless, due to the results in which only seven out of fourteen variables seemed to be predictive of satisfaction among retired Sisters, Magee (1987b) decided to extend his study and consulted the opinion of the leadership team in each of the congregations and the leadership of the retirement communities to which the older Sisters (participants of the study) belonged. A questionnaire asked them to identify factors that would predict older Sisters' life satisfaction based on those seven remaining conditions that did not receive much variance (high importance) within Magee's (1987b) first part of the study. The Sisters in leadership unanimously pointed out two main conditions, spirituality and security, of the seven remaining variables that would enhance older Sisters' life satisfaction.

Aware of the study's limited generalizability, Magee (1987b) concluded his investigation by stating that these two conditions identified by the leadership, as well as the seven previously identified conditions by elderly women religious themselves, should be further investigated with larger samples of women religious so that the results can be beneficial for the retirement planning of current and future retiring Sisters.

In summary, all the aforementioned investigations (Bienenfeld et al., 1997; Bishop, 2006; Kvale et al., 1989; Magee, 1987b) conducted an assessment of life satisfaction among elderly women religious. However, factors like contemplative versus active women religious, "really" retired versus actively involved retired Sisters, or arbitrary age groups versus generation cohorts hindered a comparison of results among

these investigations. Future research will need to give attention to these factors or otherwise they might continue to confound the results of investigations as well as hinder comparative research.

Unfortunately, no quantitative study was conducted within younger generation cohorts (Boom, Thirteenths, Millennial) of women religious. The absence of an instrument that is normed for either one of these generation cohorts or across generation cohorts is definitely one reason for a lack of research. However, there could be some other explanations for the lack of quantitative research in this area because qualitative research, as related to life satisfaction in women religious, has also been limited to elderly women religious. A review of qualitative approaches in research pertaining to the life satisfaction of women religious will be presented next.

Life satisfaction studies: Qualitative approaches.

Like Magee (1987b) and others (Bienenfeld et al., 1997; Bishop, 2006; Kvale et al., 1989), Wolf (1990a) also showed an interest in older Sisters' life satisfaction. However, using a qualitative approach (phenomenology), Wolf (1990a) conducted three interviews of one hour each with twenty Sisters whose ages ranged from 68 to 84. The purpose of this interview was to examine the Sisters' ability to integrate past and present life events as they experience their age-related physical limitations. In these interviews, Sisters shared a) earlier memories, b) their past and present personal history (including ministries), and c) the meaning they attribute to their own lives in the midst of congregational membership decline and cultural changes.

The women who participated in Wolf's (1990a) study viewed their current task as one of providing a witness of how to die gracefully. Although they were aware of the

cultural changes within the society and the membership decline within their congregation, their energy was not focused on the survival of their congregation. Instead, the older Sisters were guided by the example of their elders (already deceased) who taught them to concentrate on setting a legacy through their personal lives during their aging years. Based on these personal interviews, Wolf (1990a) determined that these older Sisters rated high in life satisfaction in regard to their health, their involvement with families, as well as their spiritual ongoing formation. It is not clear what criteria Wolf (1990a) used to rate older Sisters on these life satisfaction factors. However, these factors of health, relationship to family of origin, as well as spiritual development are components of life satisfaction among elderly Sisters that also have been identified by Magee (1987b).

Unlike Wolf (1990a), Melia (2000) described in detail the references and procedures used for the data collection and analysis process, and the interpretation of the personal interviews that she conducted with 40 Sisters (age 68-98) whom she recruited from three different religious congregations. The purpose of Melia's (2000) research was to examine the role of generativity of elderly Sisters' ability to experience life satisfaction and meaning in their later years. While biological and parental contribution to younger generations have been viewed as one form of generativity, the elderly and childless Sisters' understanding of their generativity extends to other various kinds of contributions. They believe that through their past and current ministries (service related works) as women religious, they are continuing to contribute not only to their religious congregation, but also to the Church, their own family of origin as well as society. It is through their service to others that elderly Sisters experience purpose and meaning in life, as well as great satisfaction (Melia, 2000). The factor of service and influence on society

was also a theme that emerged as a contributing factor to commitment and satisfaction with religious life among the elderly women religious who participated in Kreis' (2008a) investigation.

The results of Melia's (2000) investigation indicate that the lives of Sisters counteract the societal negative image of elderly women's limited abilities to contribute to society, an observation that is also apparent in Kreis (2008a). Further, more women religious also provide an example for other elderly people by showing that service (e.g., volunteer) provided to others can help one (a) to find more meaning in later years, and (b) not be too focused on one's aging process. Melia (2000) concluded that the positive relationship found by McAdams et al. (1993) between individuals' generativity and their life satisfaction and happiness in life has also been apparent in the shared life experiences of the older women religious who participated in her study.

In summary, only two qualitative studies were found that investigated life satisfaction among elderly women religious (Melia, 2000; Wolf, 1990a). Wolf's results showed that health, their involvement with families, as well as their spiritual ongoing formation are related to higher satisfaction in retired women religious. Melia (2000), on the other hand, stressed an important finding that was also apparent in Kreis (2008a), namely that elderly women religious indicated their continued interest to be of service to society despite living in a retirement facility and/or considering themselves as retired.

Again, no qualitative research is yet available on the life satisfaction among younger generation cohorts (Boom, Thirteenth, Millennial) of women religious. Considering the membership decline and other losses of resources that women religious are currently experiencing, there appears to be a need to assess the impact of these

changes among this population. So far, research has focused on assessing life satisfaction among elderly and retired women and men (including Sisters) but failed to recognize the need for a concurrent assessment of life satisfaction across generation cohorts of women, and particularly, women religious. Only one study was found that examined life satisfaction in women across a wider range of age groups (McAdams et al., 1993) *A Life Satisfaction Study According to Age Cohorts*.

The investigation by McAdams et al. (1993) is one of few age cohort comparison studies (Jacobson, 1993, McCulloch, 1997, Schuster, 1990) that pertain to women's life satisfaction. Although there are no age cohort studies specific to women religious, McAdams et al.'s (1993) study is different from the sparse number of other age cohort studies (Jacobson, 1993, McCulloch, 1997, Schuster, 1990) in that the age range of their sample is wider. However, none of these studies by McAdams et al. (1993), Jacobson (1993), McCulloch (1997), and Schuster (1990) was guided by the generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) when they divided their sample into age groups. Thus, dividing the sample into arbitrary age groups when conducting comparisons of life satisfaction levels (e.g., Schuster, 1990) might lead to contradictory results between research studies as observed by McCulloch (1997) or mask potential differences between some age groups (Schuster, 1990; Jacobson, 1993).

For example, in contrast to McAdams et al.'s (1993) study that compared two younger age groups with one older cohort group of woman and omitted the middle aged women, the studies by Schuster (1990) and McCulloch (1997) investigated the life satisfaction among older women born approximately between 1901 and 1942, while the study by Jacobson (1993) compared two middle-aged groups of women. When applying

generation cohort theory by Strauss and Howe (1991) to each of the arbitrarily assigned groups within the samples of these investigations (Jacobson, 1993; McCulloch, 1997, Schuster, 1990), one can categorize participants from these age groups into two different generations. Thus, the overlap of various generation cohorts within age groups may prevent the identification of possible cohort related differences. However, the larger age difference between the two younger age groups and that of the older age group within McAdams et al.'s (1993) study, as well as the variables they investigated, provide some insights into the purposes of this study.

McAdams et al. (1993) used specific tools to assess life satisfaction (Satisfaction With Life Scale by Diener et al., 1985), happiness (rating scale developed by McAdams et al., 1993), and generativity (Loyola Generativity Scale by Jackson & Paunonen, 1980 and other measures). More importantly, these researchers were unique in that they conducted an age cohort investigation by using Levinson's psychosocial categorizations to identify three groups: Young (22-27), Midlife (37-42), and Older (67-72).

In terms of life satisfaction, McAdams et al. (1993) did not find any age cohort differences in regard to life satisfaction and happiness, but they did find differences related to the participants' generativity (defined as the "goal of providing for the next generation," p. 221). Specifically, participants in "Midlife" showed higher levels of generativity than participants in the "Young" and "Older" group. In addition, generativity was positively correlated with life satisfaction and happiness. Thus, this study did find differences for generativity according to age cohorts (assigned according to life cycles), but additional difference as well as the interpretation of these differences (e.g., pertaining to life satisfaction) could have been found if McAdams et al. (1993) would have used

cohort groups based on Strauss and Howe's (1991) model of generation theory. Specifically, the way that McAdams et al. (1993) has separated and defined the age groups for their study contributed to the omission of an entire generation cohort, namely, that which would have been between their "Midlife" and "Older" groups.

In addition, the use of a general life satisfaction instrument such as the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener et al. (1985) precludes assessing aspects of life satisfaction (e.g., marriage) which might also explain the fact that no differences in life satisfaction were found among these different age groups within McAdams et al.'s (1993) investigation. As research has shown, the SWLS has been extended and has become a global life satisfaction subscale within the Extended Satisfaction With Life Scale (Alfonso et al., 1991; as cited in Allison, 1995) in order to assess additional areas of satisfaction (e.g., social life, children, marriage, etc.). It appears that the extension of the original SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) was based on the need for the development of an instrument that can assess additional components of life satisfaction (e.g., within a life form, or career related) beyond that of general life satisfaction.

Nevertheless, McAdams et al.'s (1993) study provides insights regarding peoples' life satisfaction and happiness in the context of their commitment, concerns, and action regarding the next generation. Conducting a study similar to that of McAdams et al. (1993) among women religious could bring helpful insights into the current state of religious life (e.g., membership decline). But before such an investigation can be conducted, there is definitely a need for the development of an instrument particularly designed to assess the life satisfaction levels among apostolic among women religious which is the primary objective of this current investigation.

The Need for a Life Satisfaction Instrument for Apostolic Women Religious.

A justification for the development of a satisfaction with religious life instrument was found in the review of literature related to the assessment of life satisfaction. This review indicated that there are only a few quantitative and qualitative investigations conducted in the area of life satisfaction among women religious. Furthermore, the focus of these investigations has been on the examination of life satisfaction among elderly retired Sisters. For instance, a review of studies (Bienenfeld et al., 1997; Bishop, 2006; Jacobson, 1993) Kvale et al., 1989; Magee, 1984, 1987b; McCulloch, 1997; Melia, 2000; Schuster, 1990; Wolf, 1990a) that primarily examined life satisfaction among the two elderly generation cohorts (G.I. and Silent Generations) of women indicated the lack of cross generational investigations among women but in particularly among apostolic women religious.

So far, no research has yet examined the life satisfaction levels among younger generation cohorts (Boom, Thirteenths, and Millennial) of apostolic women religious. Considering the effects of membership decline, the controversy around the impact of this decline, and other losses of resources have on the lives of women religious (Brink, 2007b; Chittister, 1994; Schneiders, 1994), there is a need to examine the life satisfaction of these women across the different generation cohorts presently committed to the vowed life.

In addition, the above studies also did not investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and motivational factors, an important area because these two variables are in some degree tied to each other. Although McAdams et al. (1993) looked at some similar variables (life satisfaction, happiness, commitment, and concern) and their relationship to

each other, the authors of this 1993 investigation did not base their group categories on age cohorts based in generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

As stated earlier, another possible limitation of McAdams et al.'s (1993) investigation could have been the use of a general versus an extended life satisfaction instrument that would have allowed for the assessment of additional components of life satisfaction (e.g., within a life form, or career related) that are beyond that of general life satisfaction. The development of life satisfaction instruments (Frisch, 1994; Kelly & Burgoon, 1991) that assess general life satisfaction in addition to specific components related to a particular life form (e.g., marriage) justifies the development of a life satisfaction instrument specifically designed for apostolic women religious.

Final Conclusion.

In conclusion, the ongoing decline in religious life can be associated with cultural changes that have negatively impacted U.S. social capital in general. Therefore, in order to understand this decline, it was necessary to review the membership decline among women religious within a broader theoretical framework such as Putnam's (2000) theory of social capital decline. Putnam identifies various areas in society (e.g., political, traditional faith organizations) that have been negatively impacted by this decline.

Furthermore, Putnam (2000) stressed the contributions of traditional faith organizations and argued for the negative effect that this membership decline within these faith organizations has on social capital. A review of changes within the Catholic Faith Tradition and its membership decline, due to social and religious movements, showed a parallel membership decline within congregations of men and women religious in the Catholic Church, particularly among women religious (Ebaugh et al., 1996; Hoge, 2006;

Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2007). It is important to understand this decline because women religious have contributed significantly to American society, particularly in the areas of education and health care (Ebaugh et al., 1996).

This membership decline (among apostolic women religious) was studied by looking at generational differences with respect to motivational factors (reasons to enter and remain committed to religious life, and suggested changes to ensure a viable future for religious life). This research was important because it (a) led to information that can help women religious retain and attract new members to religious life, and (b) helped to confirm the content analysis conducted for the development of a life satisfaction instrument, specifically designed for apostolic women religious, which is the primary purpose of this investigation.

A justification for the development of a satisfaction with religious life instrument was found within literature that indicated that there are only a few quantitative and qualitative investigations conducted in the area of life satisfaction among women religious. However, the focus of these investigations has been on the examination of life satisfaction among elderly retired Sisters. In addition, the life satisfaction instruments available are either (a) developed to assess general life satisfaction (too broad to assess components related to a specific life form) or (b) exclusively normed to elderly people.

Finally, this sparse body of literature particularly indicated the lack of any research conducted toward the assessment of life satisfaction among younger generation cohorts of women religious (Boom, Thirteenth, and Millennial). Thus, there was a need for the development of an instrument that would allow the assessment of satisfaction with religious life across generations of apostolic women religious. The development of a

satisfaction with religious life instrument could help examine the satisfaction levels among women religious as they experience the decline of membership and many other related losses. The future of religious life is dependent on younger members replacing older members. Therefore, an assessment of the motivational factors for remaining in religious life in addition to satisfaction levels could contribute to the shaping of a viable religious life in the present and for the future.

In summary, the purpose of this study was to develop an instrument specifically designed to assess the life satisfaction levels of the various generations of women committed to an apostolic vowed life and to establish preliminary psychometrics of the apostolic women's religious life satisfaction instrument. In addition, this study also assessed general patterns of motivational factors within and across generations of apostolic women religious. It was hoped that these data will confirm the content analysis conducted for the development of this life satisfaction instrument. The methodology used in the current study is described in the next chapter of this paper.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

This chapter contains an overview of the methodology that was used in developing a life satisfaction instrument specifically designed for apostolic women religious. With the approval from the Institutional Review Board at Marquette University, the procedures included the initial development of the scale and the field testing of the Life Satisfaction Scale for Apostolic Women Religious (LSSAWR).

The three steps involved in the item development of the scale offered valuable insights. In fact, important information gained from the process of the initial development of the scale was the emergence of twelve domains and their respective items. These twelve domains and their respective items (total of 50 items) were used for the field testing of the LSSAWR, the instrument to be developed in this study. Therefore, this chapter briefly describes the completion of the stages of the initial development of the scale, followed by a report on the information regarding the procedures and measures that were used for the field testing of the instrument (LSSAWR). Finally, the chapter reviews the procedures used for the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data.

THE INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCALE

The process of initial development of the LSSAWR was based on a three-step process: (a) Exploratory Study, (b) Adaptation of the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS; Schumm, Nichols, Sheetman, & Grigsby, 1983), and (c) Content Analysis. First, it was through the exploratory study that the LSSAWR with its twelve overarching domains and 50 items emerged. Second, the scale design of the KMSS (with the authors' permission) was used and adapted for the purposes of the scale design for the 50 items of the LSSAWR. Third, in order to assess the content of the 50 items for their clarity and

relevance, content analysis was conducted. Next is a more detailed description of these three steps (the implementation of the exploratory study, the adaptation of the KMSS, and the implementation of the content analysis) on which the initial item development was based.

(a) Exploratory Study.

The first step was to conduct an exploratory study (Independent Research Project, IRP) with apostolic women religious. This investigation provided insights into specific components relative to life satisfaction within religious life that have supported the process of theme and item development. The methodology used for this exploratory study follows.

Method of the Exploratory Study.

Participants.

A sample of fifty-two women from two U.S. apostolic women's religious congregations was recruited for this investigation. These Sisters were from two different congregations located in the mid-west and east-coast regions. They were contacted about participating in the study via an e-mail sent by the conductor of the study to the superiors who then forwarded it to the Sisters of their congregations via e-mail. The only criteria for participation were that they were current members of their congregation and between the ages of 66 and 83.

Materials.

A questionnaire (Kreis, 2008a), consisting of two sections, was used to collect data from the Sisters. The first section included 14 questions. The first question, a closed category response, asked for participants' consent. The other 12 closed category

responses focused on demographic information, and a final question was open-ended and dealt with the different ministries that the Sisters had been involved in during their religious life. The second section consisted of six open-ended questions that asked the Sisters about their motivation to enter religious life, what keeps them committed, and what changes would help intensify their commitment to vowed life. It was hoped that the answers to these questions would provide common themes (domains) and help articulate what components determine satisfaction within religious life. These domains were then used to develop items in designing a life satisfaction instrument for women committed to a vowed life.

Procedures.

The project was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Marquette University. The major superiors in the two apostolic congregations belonging to the LCWR were contacted by phone regarding their willingness to distribute this questionnaire to members of their congregation who qualify for this study. Following their verbal consent, these two superiors received via e-mail a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and a copy of all study materials. The study materials included the cover letter for the participants, the consent form, and the questionnaire for the participants. The study materials were emailed by the superiors to all potential participants. Following the initial forwarding of the materials, the superiors sent an additional e-mail reminding the participants of the study. Participants were given a four week response time and asked to send their completed study materials through e-mail or USPS mail to the researcher.

When the completed questionnaires arrived, the consent forms from the participants were removed and completed questionnaires were coded numerically to insure confidentiality. Only the questionnaires (N = 52) received by the deadline were included in the final analyses.

Coding Procedures.

A qualitative approach was used to analyze the written materials of women religious in regard to motivational factors that are contributing to their satisfaction/dissatisfaction as they remain committed to their vowed life despite the diminishing membership numbers occurring within their life style. In particular, the qualitative approach of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss's, 1967), an adapted version of content analysis, was used to compress the large amount of written data (participants' responses on completed questionnaires) into categories. These categories (e.g., common themes) emerged by constantly checking back with the data (participants' written responses) while at the same time identifying repeatedly emerging keywords among participant's responses (Babbie, 2004; Stemler 2001). These emerging domains were then defined in their meaning by continually checking back with the data and helped to develop a coding scheme (Kreis, 2008a).

The development of this coding scheme helped to transform the textual data into quantitative data. As such, the demographic data of the closed responses as well as the defined categories that emerged while using content analysis were coded and transferred into SPSS. The use of statistical analysis imparted information on (a) participants' background, and (b) the frequency of motivational factors that emerged from the content analysis. In addition, the emergence of the motivational domains led to the identification

of areas of satisfaction/dissatisfaction among the participants' responses. Thus, participants' level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with aspects of their lives is a determinant of their level of motivation to remain committed to the vowed life. Lastly, using this coding scheme, an independent rater (not a woman religious) coded a randomly selected subset (five percent) of the completed questionnaires.

Results.

Inter-rater reliability was assessed for the coding of responses of each open-ended question. With the exception of one question, the reliability figures ranged from 82 % to 90%. Lower reliability (72%) for question number two was due to unclear definitions (inclusion versus exclusion criteria) related to the "Balanced Life" and "Inner Call" coding categories. Based on the results of inter-rater reliability, appropriate adjustments were made to the coding scheme. The adjusted coding scheme and a more detailed description of the results of this explorative study as compared to the brief version discussed next can be found in Kreis (2008a).

Coding of the responses revealed that almost all of the Sisters were initially involved in education. It was very rare that a Sister stayed in one ministry the whole of her active life. For the most part, the Sisters transitioned into other works and usually more than once. More than half were involved in administration or business/finance and almost half in social services and mental health. About a third were involved in leadership, religious formation, retreat and spirituality work and in diocesan parish or pastoral work. The ministries of only a few Sisters fit into the other category (e.g., internal ministries).

The most frequently cited reason (common theme) for entering religious life was the example and positive qualities of one or more Sisters, the experience of an inner call, and/or a God-Centered family and neighborhood. The Sisters' decisions to remain committed (common themes) to religious life are because of (a) the underlying commitment that they have made to God and their community, (b) their witness and relationship to church and society and their ministries and evangelization to others, (c) their ongoing personal development and spiritual practices, (d) their congregations' charism/mission, and (e) the balance in their life that they perceive to have within this form of life.

When questioned about the changes in religious life that would increase their commitment, many Sisters stated that their commitment was firm regardless of changes that might occur in the future. Additional inspirational factors included (a) the Sisters' increased commitment to God and their congregation, (b) increased viability and witness regarding community life, (c) a more simple, prayerful (spiritual), and balanced lifestyle, (d) an improved, collegial, and inclusive relationship to the administrators of the Church, and (e) congregational responses to signs of the times. Only a few Sisters declined to provide an answer to this question. The Sisters' reasons for entering their particular congregations are for the most part the same (except for the congregations' charism/mission) as those categories that emerged for Sisters' reasons to join religious life in general.

Sisters' motivational factors to join a particular congregation were narrower in scope when compared to the more varied reasons for entering religious life in general. Among the less varied motivational factors for joining a specific congregation were (a)

the Sister's definite commitment to God and her own community, (b) the congregation's charism/mission, (c) the congregation's more recent inclination to integrate women of multicultural/international background within their membership), (d) congregational response to contemporary social justice issues, and (e) ongoing formation. Only one person provided a response (among her other responses) that did not fit any of the categories that emerged for this question.

When questioned about the changes that are occurring in the Sisters' particular religious congregations that would intensify their commitment, the responses of the Sisters included (a) the congregation's more recent inclination to integrate women of multicultural/international background within their membership, (b) congregational response to contemporary social justice issues, (c) the positive changes they (Sisters) are experiencing in regard to their life commitment to God and community, (d) congregations' charism/mission, (e) and spiritual growth. However, only a small minority responded to this question, saying that their answers to this question could not add any more than in their previous responses, while a fourth of the total number of Sisters who completed this questionnaire declined to provide a response to this question.

Lastly, when questioned about the changes that Sisters would consider to be helpful in intensifying their commitment within their particular religious congregation, more than half of the Sisters did not provide an answer to this question (Kreis, 2008a). The most frequently suggested change, namely the need to respond to the signs of the times was cited by those Sisters who did respond to this question. This was followed by suggestions for (a) more democratic governance within the congregation, (b) a renewed commitment to God, community and the congregations' charism, and (c) the need for

change in the religious formation process of newer members. A few Sisters expressed either that their commitment is firm regardless of changes or that there are no particular changes occurring within their congregations that would intensify their commitment.

Conclusion.

An open-ended questionnaire was used to investigate the factors motivating 52 U.S. women religious between the ages of 66 and 83 to enter and remain committed to the vowed life. The analyses of responses showed that the main motivational themes (domains) for them to enter religious life are the example of Sisters and experiencing an inner call. The two major reasons for remaining in religious life are the Sisters' commitment to God and commitment to their community. Although the Sisters did identify future changes that could intensify their commitment to the vowed life, they also clearly stated that their commitment is firm regardless of whether or not these changes occur. It is most interesting to note that the implemented changes mentioned by the Sisters were identified by Nygren and Ukeritis (1993) as changes that are necessary for a viable future of religious life. These changes result in a firmer commitment to God, community, and the service of others.

Overall there were twelve overarching domains (themes) that emerged in this study as related to Sisters' motivational reasons to join and remain committed to their chosen life style as women religious. These are: (1) Direction of Congregation, (2) Diversity, (3) Community Relations, (4) Social Relations, (5) Church Relations, (6) Ministry, (7) Leadership, (8) God, (9) On-going Formation, (10) New Membership, (11) Institutional Validation, and (12) Overall Commitment. In terms of future direction, this study indicates the need for (a) the inclusion of a nation-wide sample before

generalizations can be made to this population, and (b) generational investigations conducted within cultures before cross cultural comparisons can be pursued.

(b) Adaptation of the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS).

The second step of the process of initial scale development was based on an adaptation of the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS) by Schumm, Nichols, Sheetman, and Grigsby (1983). The author of the KMSS (previously abbreviated as KMS) (Appendix A) and the publisher (Appendix B) gave permission to adapt the instrument. First, the KMSS rating scale which ranges from 1 (Extremely Dissatisfied) through 7 (Extremely Satisfied) was adapted for the LSSAWR to a rating scale that ranges from 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied). Since the exploratory study (already mentioned above) indicated a presence of general satisfaction with religious life among the Sisters, it was thought that participants' responses on the LSSAWR might reflect the higher end of the scale indicating high satisfaction with religious life. Thus, the range of the scale from 1-7 to 1-5 for the LSSAWR was decreased in order to prevent close ties in participants' responses "…which are more likely to occur when most item scores are in the 5, 6, or 7 range (Schumm, Paff-Bergen, Hatch, Obiorah, Copeland, Meens, & Bugaighis, 1986; p. 386)." Secondly, the KMSS was expanded with items pertaining to religious life based on the common themes that emerged from the exploratory study.

The KMSS was first normed on couples from two communities in Kansas in the fall of 1977 and spring of 1978 (Schumm et al., 1983). In addition, the KMSS, a self-report measure, was initially developed to assess three particular features of satisfaction

within marriage: (a) as an institution, (b) its relational aspect, and (c) the characteristics of one's partner (Toulitatos, Perlmutter, & Strauss, 1990).

While this scale (KMSS) has been tested using a 4, 5, and 7-point Likert scale, increased preference has been shown toward the latter one (Toulitatos et al., 1990). Thus, participants are asked to rate the statements of the KMSS on a scale from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 7 (extremely satisfied) (Schumm, et al., 1986). Respondents can receive a score that ranges from 3 (low satisfaction) to 21 (high satisfaction). Using Cronbach's alpha estimates of internal consistency, the reliability of this scale was about .84 or higher for husbands and about .91 or greater for wives (Schumm et al., 1983). A subsequent investigation in 1979 with 212 wives from the Kansas area indicated again the high internal consistency (.95 or greater) of this scale (Schumm et al.).

The purpose of Schumm's et al. (1983) investigation was to assess the internal consistency of the KMSS with a state-wide sample of 84 married mothers. The results showed that Cronbach's alpha estimate ranged from .81 to .98 with most alpha's being in the .90 range or above and test-retest reliability ranged from .62 to .72 (Schumm's et al., 1983). While the KMSS showed for the most part high convergent validity (ranging from .53 to .91) (Allison, 1995; Schumm et al., 1986), assessments of discriminant validity of the KMSS resulted in varied scores (Schumm et al., 1986). However, more recent research by Schumm, Crock, Likcani, Akagi, and Bosch (2008) using a sample of U.S. army personnel indicated strong reliability and validity for the KMSS.

The final step in the process of initial scale development for the present study was the content analysis which was based on the combined results from the exploratory study and the procedures of the adaptation and extension of the KMSS.

(c) Content Analysis.

Method of the Study.

Participants.

Twenty-two women from four U.S. apostolic women's religious congregations volunteered to participate. All 22 participants (experts) identified with a European American background and their congregations belonged to the LCWR. Participants were categorized into three generation groups: Silent (45.5%), Boomer (36.4%), and 13th Generation (18.2%). The majority of participants (72.7%) joined their congregation before 1968 while the remaining participants (27.3%) joined between 1968 and 2008. Every participant had an undergraduate degree, 31.8 percent had a Masters degree, 31.8 percent continued their education beyond their Masters, 18.2 percent had a doctoral degree, and 9.1 percent received post-doctoral education.

Materials.

One questionnaire (Appendix C) consisting of three sections was used to collect the data. The first section provided detailed instructions regarding how participants should rate the items. The second section included demographic items. The third section asked participants to rate the 50 items to be included into the development of the LSSAWR. The content of these 50 items was based on twelve major themes (motivational reasons) within the LSSAWR emerged from the exploratory study described above. In fact, the emergence of these twelve themes led to the identification of areas of satisfaction/dissatisfaction among the participants' responses.

Thus, participants' level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with aspects of their lives (areas of satisfaction) is a reflection of their level of motivation to remain committed to

the vowed life. It appears that satisfaction and motivation are two sides of a coin that are indicative of a Sister's level of commitment to remain committed to the vowed life. Therefore, these twelve core domains were used to develop and finalize the 50 items for the LSSAWR by (a) repeatedly checking back to the participants' written responses within the exploratory study, and (b) integrating a few items suggested by the dissertation committee members who are familiar with the Roman Catholic vowed life of women.

It was the task of experts (Sisters committed to the vowed life) to rate each of the 50 items for clarity (unclear; somewhat clear; clear) and relevance (not relevant, somewhat relevant; relevant) on a scale from one to three (e.g., 1 = unclear, 2 = somewhat clear, 3 = clear). These experts were also given a chance to provide written feedback below each item as well as any suggestions at the end of the instrument (fourth section) for the inclusion of items that would reflect important factors as related to satisfaction with religious life that are absent in the current version of the instrument (LSSAWR). The fifth and final section included a brief appreciation for participants' participation as well as the address (researcher's email and postal mail) for the return of completed questionnaires.

Procedures.

It was the researcher's attempt to increase the presence of diversity and competency factors among the experts as much as possible. Therefore, the selection of experts (Sisters committed to the vowed life) for this study was based on two steps. First, selected participants were not only familiar with and committed to the vowed life, but were particularly diverse in their background due to age, geographic location and charism/mission of their congregation. Thus, superiors of the four apostolic

congregations, located in the mid-west and the east-coast region, were contacted by phone regarding their willingness to distribute the questionnaire to members of their congregation (experts based on membership) who qualified by virtue of their age for this study. Following their verbal consent, these four superiors received, via e-mail, a cover letter (Appendix D) explaining the purpose of the study and a copy of all study materials.

Second, the researcher attempted to increase the competency factor by selecting 16 individual Sisters (experts based on membership and professional competency) who had published and/or are authorities in the area of religious life. These Sisters were also contacted by e-mail. The only criterion for participation was that these published authorities were current members of their congregation and were between the ages of 19 and 83.

For the purposes of this research, the 22 Sisters who participated in this study were divided into two groups, namely "participants" and "participant-experts." The first group "participants" were defined as "experts based on membership," and the second group "participants-experts" were defined as "experts based on membership and professional competency." The study materials included two separate cover letters (Appendixes E and F) for these two groups of Sisters (participants and participants-experts), a consent form (Appendix G), and the questionnaire (Appendix C). Participants were given three weeks to respond. They could return their completed study materials either through e-mail or postal mail. Upon return of the completed questionnaires, the consent forms of the participants were removed and the completed questionnaires were coded numerically to insure confidentiality. Only those questionnaires that were received by the deadline were included in the final analyses.

Results.

The data of sections two (demographic) and three (rating of participants) were coded and entered into SPSS. The potential revisions and modifications to the instrument were derived from a quantitative rating and written feedback provided by the two groups of participants (participants and participants-experts) of this study. The quantitative rating was based on the following criteria: (a) an item would be removed if 80 percent of the professional raters agreed on its irrelevance, and (b) an item would be revised if 75 percent of the professional raters deemed it to be unclear.

Based on this quantitative analysis of the 22 Sisters' ratings, none of the 50 items was removed or revised because (a) only 2.4 percent of 22 Sisters rated some of the 50 items as unclear and (b) only 1.5 percent of the 22 Sisters rated some of the 50 items as irrelevant. Therefore, the revisions or removal of some of the 50 items included in the content analysis was based on the additional written feedback of the participants (N = 22). The decision to revise some of the items was based on (a) how many respondents brought an item forward and (b) the nature of the problem identified by the respondents.

The final result was that a total of 26 out of 50 items were revised, two items were removed, and two items were added based on participants' written feedback. Eighteen items involved only a word or two. For example the word "freedom" was changed to "encouragement" in asking about the level of support a congregation provides for maintaining relationships with significant family members. Four items required a complete rewrite; for instance "…the contributions to your congregation of Sisters who come from different multicultural backgrounds?" was changed to "…your personal efforts to reach out to Sisters from diverse backgrounds?" Examples presented in

parentheses (pope, bishops, and clergy) were deleted in two items and added in two other items.

Finally, two of the total 50 items were removed. The first item "…your personal perception of the pope, bishops, and others in official church leadership?" was removed because respondents cannot be satisfied or dissatisfied with their own perception. A second item was removed because the construction of the question "…the amount of time you spend with God in prayer?" implies that time spent with God (in prayer) is quantifiable. Two items were added as suggested in the written comments: (a) "…the opportunities within your congregation to interact with others in your age group on a spiritual and social basis?" and (b) "…how you are maintaining a healthy balance between your ministry obligations and your responsibilities pertaining to your community life?"

Conclusion.

The content analysis in the final step of initial item development aided in the revision, removal, and addition of new items to the LSSAWR proposed to be field tested in this study. The current version of the LSSAWR has 50 items organized under twelve core domains (Appendix H).

FIELD TESTING OF THE LIFE SATISFACTION SCALE FOR APOSTOLIC WOMEN RELIGIOUS (LSSAWR).

The field testing the LSSAWR was based on the insights gained from the initial item development of the scale. This section describes the sample, materials, and procedures (including coding procedures) that were chosen to implement this stage of

instrument development. The coding procedures for the quantitative part as well as for the qualitative part of this study are provided separately.

Participants.

Generation Groups.

The leadership teams of forty-four Roman Catholic women's religious congregations (out of 142 who had been invited by the author of this study) consented to their participation in this study and forwarded the study materials to their members. Thus, the participants were a nation-wide, self-selected, and homogenous sample of 1116 apostolic women religious from each of the following age cohorts as determined by their birth year; 1925-1942 (63.4%), 1943-1960 (31.8%), 1961-1981 (4.7%), and 1982-1989 (0.1%). The numbers in these four generation groups reflects the national trend shown in previous research that there is a decline in women religious orders (National Retirement Office, 2008).

Race/Ethnicity.

Except for 8.0 percent, every participant in this research identified as European American (91.6%). Of the 8.0 percent, 1.5 percent of participants identified as African American (0.3%), Asian American (0.4%), Native American (0.4%), and Hispanic American (0.4%). Another 4.5 percent of participants was born in the U.S. but could not identify themselves with any of the aforementioned categories, and the final 2.0 percent identified themselves as individuals from other continents/countries.

Sacraments of Initiation.

A majority of participants (98.2%) received the sacraments of initiation (status of membership) either during infancy, early childhood, or adolescence within the Roman Catholic Church, while 1.7 percent received these sacraments during adulthood.

Consideration of Religious Life.

Two age groups emerged in which most participants first considered religious life: (1) Forty-three percent indicated they first considered this life style between the ages of six and twelve years, and (2) another 46.5 percent of participants indicated they first considered religious life between the ages of 13 and 19 years. A small group (6.5 percent) indicated they first considered religious life between 20 and 29, 0.8 percent considered religious life for the first time between 30 and 49, 0.2 percent at 50 years and older, and only 0.1 percent marked the response as not applicable.

Joining Religious Life.

Regarding entrance to religious life, 81.4 percent joined before 1968, 16.3 percent entered between 1968 and 2000, and 1.7 percent entered between 2001 and 2009.

First, Final, and Other Commitments.

A total of 74.3 percent professed their first commitment (temporary vows) before 1968, 21.6 percent did so between 1968 and 2000, and 2.2 percent between 2001 and 2008. A small number of participants, 0.7 percent, marked their response as not applicable, meaning that they had not yet taken their first commitment. A total of 54.6 percent professed their final commitment (final vows) before 1968, 38.7 percent did so between 1968 and 2000, and 2.2 percent between 2001 and 2008. A small number of participants, namely 3.6 percent, marked their response as not applicable, meaning that

they either had not taken their final commitment or that their congregation does not have the tradition of taking a final commitment. In addition, 5.3 percent of the total sample indicated they had been in a different religious congregation, 6.9 percent indicated they had left their congregation for a period of time, and 2.5 percent indicated they had been either married or in a committed relationship.

Current Living Arrangements.

The Sisters live with one other Sister (14.6%), alone (20.8%), with four or fewer Sisters (21.7%), or with more than 12 Sisters (25.5%). Of the Sisters living alone, several Sisters stated that (a) they are living alone because their ministry is located away from their congregation, (b) they live in an apartment building were other women and/or men religious live, or (c) their ministry dictates their current living situation (e.g., living in residence hall). A small number of Sisters live either with twelve or fewer Sisters (1.1%), with Sisters of another congregation (2.2%), or with eight or fewer Sisters (9.4%). In regard to current living arrangements, only 4.7 percent selected the "other category." These Sisters explained the "other category" by stating that they are living (a) with their own Sisters as well as with Sisters from other congregations, (b) in a house of hospitality, (c) with an associate/lay woman, or (d) their elderly/sick parents as their caretakers.

Levels of Education and Current Ministry.

Except for 2.6 percent, every participant had an undergraduate degree, 42.0 percent had a Masters degree, 30.4 percent continued their education beyond the Masters, 9.0 percent had a doctoral degree, and 3.3 percent received post-doctoral education. The Sisters are currently engaged in the following ministry: (a) education (15.2%), leadership or business/finances (28.4%), social, communication, and mental health services (14.0%),

diocesan, parish and pastoral ministry (11.6%), and religious formation and spirituality (6.6%). A small number of Sisters (21.0%) checked the "Other Category." Sisters who met this criterion were involved in ministry such as "Internal ministry (car driver, house cleaning jobs, gardening, cooking, etc.), Receptionist or Switchboard Operator, Volunteer, Student, Translator, etc." (Appendix P).

Overall, this self-selected sample is homogenous in regard to factors like socioeconomic status, lifestyle, educational and occupational backgrounds, etc. The participants included in this study are "active women religious." "Active religious" are women (and men) religious who specifically make a permanent commitment through their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to God within their respective congregations. They live according to a specific constitution or rule of life and live in a community dedicated to apostolic and charitable works (Glazier & Hellwig, 2004).

Measures.

This study was based on a questionnaire and included the following measures: (1) A questionnaire assessing demographic variables, (2) two instruments which assessed the construct validity through the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R), (3) Life Satisfaction Scale for Apostolic Women Religious (LSSAWR), (4) overall satisfaction rating, and (5) open-ended questions that elicited data pertaining to religious life.

Demographic Variables.

Section one of the questionnaire was specifically designed for this investigation (Appendix H). It was used to collect the following demographic information from the participants: name of the congregation, birth year, time period of sacraments of initiation,

if applicable the time period between conversion to the Roman Catholic Faith and entrance into religious life, the year when participants first thought about entering religious life, the year of entrance to religious life, the year of first (temporary) commitment; the year of final commitment, if applicable the time period within a previous congregation, if applicable the time period of a leave of absence or exclaustration, if applicable the length of marriage/partnership and the time period between married life/partnership and the entrance to religious life, racial/ethnic background, the level of education, local living situation, and the chronological listing of their ministries to the present (employment).

Collecting information on the time period of the sacraments of initiation and time period between conversion to the Roman Catholic Faith and entrance into religious life was a suggestion made by Kluitmann (2008) due to the diverse background of newer members who enter religious life. The collection of all the aforementioned demographic data helped to provide a more in-depth description of the sample. However, the demographic variable of age (categorization of Sisters into four generation cohorts) is particularly important to this study because it is the goal of this study to design an instrument applicable to the various generations of women committed to a vowed life.

Two Instruments for the Assessment of Construct Validity.

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS): Assessment of Convergent Validity.

The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) was administered to the participants of the study to determine convergent validity of the instrument (LSSAWR) to be developed within this study (Appendix H). The American Psychological Association's (APA) acknowledgement of the SWLS's public domain status can be found in (Appendix I). The

SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) is an instrument developed for the assessment of an individual's global judgment pertaining to their agreement of satisfaction in their life. The initial scale consisted of 48 self-reported items. Using factor analysis the initial scale construction was reduced to only a five item scale. Thus, the current SWLS includes five items with a 7-point rating scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) and a possible score that can range from 5 (low satisfaction) to 35 (high satisfaction). The scale was normed on two different college samples (N=176; N=163) and one sample of elderly people (N=53) (Diener et al., 1985).

Existing normative data (with a group mean ranging from roughly 12 to 28) for the SWLS are now also obtainable in regard to educational background (trade workers and doctoral students), cross-cultural groups (Chinese, Korean, French Canadians, Russian, Dutch, etc.), diverse mental health problems and physical disabilities, as well with active and contemplative women religious/nuns (Pavot & Diener, 1993). A more recent comprehensive literature review shows that the instrument has also been translated into several languages, including German (Lettner et al., 1996) and Spanish (Singelis et al., 2006).

Further, the SWLS showed an inter-rater reliability coefficient of 0.73., a coefficient alpha of 0.82., and a two month test-retest stability coefficient of 0.82 (Pavot & Diener, 1993). However, a decrease in test-retest stability (0.54) indicated that the temporal reliability of the SWLS is moderate. The SWLS also indicated an adequate convergent validity (e.g., 0.68; 0.58) with related measures of well-being. Future research is still needed to conduct a more in-depth assessment of SWLS's discriminant validity (Pavot & Diener, 1993).

Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R): Assessment of Discriminant Validity.

The Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) was administered to the participants of the study to determine the discriminant validity of the instrument (LSSAWR) to be developed within this study (Appendix H). Permission for the use of the LO T-R was received from the publisher, the American Psychological Association, (Appendix J) and from the author of the instrument (Appendix K). The LOT (Scheier & Carver, 1985) was initially developed as a self-report instrument (coefficient alpha of 0.82) with eight items (including four filler items) and with 5-point rating scale (0 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree) to assess an individual's level of optimism. The scores of the sample (total of 4,309 undergraduate students) on which the LOT was normed ranged from 0 (lower optimism) to 32 (greater optimism). Due to various justified critiques regarding its limited predictive validity, Scheier, Carver, and Bridges (1994) decided to address this issue.

The new version, Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R), which was normed based on a total of 2,055 undergraduates, was modified by Scheier et al., (1994). This revised form consists of 10 items (including the four filler items) and a 5-point rating scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The optimism sub-scale of this unidimensional scale LOT-R consists of three items that are positively formulated, and the pessimism sub-scale consists of three items that are negatively formulated (Leung et al., 2005). Respondents can receive scores that ranges from 0 (lower optimism) to 24 (greater optimism).

According to Spielberger (2004), the LOT-R is a respected instrument among research psychologists. In regard to its psychometrics, the LOT-R indicated a Cronbach's

alpha of 0.78 and internal reliability ranging from 0.43 to 0.63 (Scheier et al., 1994). The instrument also proved to be quite constant across a long time period (ranging from 4 to 28 months) as indicated in the test-retest reliability which ranged from 0.56 to 0.79. The LOT-R also indicated modest convergent validity (e.g., 0.48; 0.50) with related measures of well-being, and modest discriminant validity (e.g., -0.36; -0.43; -0.53) with unrelated measures (e.g., assessments of neuroticism) (Scheier et al., 1994). The LOT-R has been used with various and diverse samples nationally as well as internationally (Herzberg, Glaesmer, & Hoyer, 2006; Leung et al., 2005; McNicholas, 2002).

Life Satisfaction Scale for Apostolic Women Religious (LSSAWR).

The current version of the LSSAWR (Appendix H) field tested in this study consisted of a total of 50 items and a 5 point scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Instructions for the completion of this measure included a description of the directions with appropriate examples as well as the presentation of the 5 point scale at the beginning of each new page.

As already mentioned before, the content of these 50 items of the LSSAWR emerged from the exploratory study described above which supported the identification of twelve core domains related to satisfaction with religious life. The researcher developed the 50 items for the LSSAWR that tapped each of these twelve core themes (twelve domains) by (a) repeatedly checking back to the participants' written responses within the exploratory study and (b) integrating a few items suggested by the dissertation committee members who are familiar with the Roman Catholic vowed life of women. A content analysis conducted with 22 experts critically evaluated (written responses) and rated these 50 items according to clarity and relevance. Based on this analysis, the

suggested refinements (e.g., revisions, deletions, and design of new items) of the items were implemented and led to the current version of the LSSAWR that was field tested in this study. It was concluded that the twelve themes and their respective 50 items of the current version of the LSSAWR were an adequate representation of the domain of satisfaction with religious life, meaning that the computation of all the items (total score) would yield a good measure of overall satisfaction with religious life.

Overall Satisfaction Rating.

In order to assess participants' overall satisfaction (Appendix H) with their life as women religious over the last year, Sisters were asked to rate this area from one (low satisfaction) to ten (high satisfaction). The result of the Sisters' overall rating was included in the dissertation analyses to support the quantitative data of the field-testing of the life satisfaction instrument within this study.

Open-ended Questions Pertaining to Religious Life.

Seven open-ended questions (Appendix H) were included in this investigation to look for possible emerging new themes in the participants' responses. The first two open-ended questions inquired about factors that influence a Sister's satisfaction and/or lack of satisfaction. The impetus for the development of the remaining five questions was based on the literature about religious life (Brink, 2007b; Chittister, 1995; Jarrell, as cited in Sanders, 2007; Kluitmann, 2008; Sammon, 2002; Schneiders, 1994, 2000b). The first two questions of the remaining five inquired about the Sisters' motivation to enter and remain committed to religious life. The last three questions were translations of open-ended interview questions from Kluitmann's (2008) study. These last questions dealt with difficulties that Sisters experienced and their views on the future of religious life. Overall,

the purpose of these seven open-ended questions was to receive insightful data as related to Sisters' satisfaction with religious life. In addition, the data collected from these seven open-ended questions were to be used for an examination of new themes that might emerge within and across generation cohorts. The data were also collected to confirm the content of items included in the current version of the LSSAWR that resulted from the two previous studies (exploratory and content analysis) acquired in developing this instrument.

Procedures.

The field testing of the LSSAWR was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Marquette University. For the field testing of the instrument, a self-selected sample of 1116 women religious was recruited from apostolic women's religious congregations located across the United States. The researcher contacted the authorities of the organization of women religious known as LCWR and shared the purpose of the proposed study and elicited their support.

The recruitment of the sample was based on a list of LCWR congregations known to have both younger and older members. This list was obtained from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). However, the contact information for these congregations was taken from The Official Catholic Directory (2008) and from the web sites of these particular LCWR congregations. Because many of the women's religious congregations have a high number of older members and a smaller number of younger members, it was important to approach specific congregations, in order to ensure a sufficient number of participants for each age cohort group.

After the researcher identified the LCWR congregations that have younger members, the leadership of 142 apostolic women's congregations was contacted by phone and/or email regarding their willingness to distribute this questionnaire to the members of their congregation insuring the widest age representation possible. The leadership of 44 congregations who consented to partake in this research received, via e-mail, a copy of the cover letter (Appendix L) and agreement form (Appendix M) designed for the leadership, which described the purpose of the study.

Attached to this email was a copy of all study materials for the leadership to review before returning their signed agreement form to the researcher. Therefore, the researcher waited to send the official copy of all study materials via email to the leadership of these 44 congregations until their signed agreement had been received. These official study materials included the cover letter (Appendix N), consent form (Appendix O), and the questionnaire (Appendix H) for the participants. The leadership then forwarded the official study materials to the potential participants.

Participants were given a month's time to respond to the questionnaire. A total number of 1116 Sisters decided to participate. Of these 1116 respondents, 517 chose to send their completed study materials by USPS mail, and the remaining 599 participants returned their completed study materials via e-mail. Two reminder emails were planned but due to the high response rate only one reminder e-mail and an appreciation email were sent. Finally, upon arrival of the completed questionnaires, the consent forms were removed, and completed questionnaires were coded numerically to insure confidentiality.

Coding Procedures.

The implementation of this study was based on both quantitative and qualitative methods. The primary focus of this study was the development of LSSAWR based on quantitative analysis. However, seven open-ended questions were included to confirm and/or inform the quantitative results of the field testing of the instrument. Thus, the coding procedures were based on a two-step process and separately delineated starting with the coding procedures for the quantitative data before moving to the coding procedures for the qualitative data.

Quantitative Coding Procedures.

All the participants' closed responses in regard to the demographic data (e.g., "race/ethnicity) and responses to the measures (e.g., LOT-R) included in this study were coded and transferred into SPSS. Preceding the main analyses, all of the study's variables were examined for accuracy of data entry, missing values, normality of distributions, and outliers. Based on sociological research that suggested generational differences in society (Putnam, 2000; Wuthnow, 2007) and the possibility of generational differences in religious life (Wittberg & Froehle, 1998), the researcher decided to separately code participants into those four respective age groups (Group 1. 1925 -1942; Group 2. 1943 - 1960; Group 3. 1961-1981; Group 4. 1982 - 2001). The age range for each of these four generation groups was based on the generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) which is grounded in sociological research. Dividing participants into those four age groups changed "age" from a continuous to a discrete variable and allowed for comparisons among generational groups.

In regard to data entry, changes were applied to participants' self-selected categories for "current living situation" and "race" if more appropriate categories for their responses were identified. For example, some Sisters selected the "Other" category for their present "living situation" or in regard to "race" when in fact (based on their open-ended response) a more appropriate category could be identified among the choices that were provided in the questionnaire.

In addition, the determination of assigning a number for participants' overall satisfaction to cases in which the respondents marked an "X" on the line instead of writing a number (1-10) on the question pertaining to their overall satisfaction was made based on measurement with a ruler. Responses of participants to this overall satisfaction assessment (or on the other scales) that were expressed in decimal numbers (e.g., "3.5" = 4; or as 3-4; or 3/4) were accordingly rounded to the next higher number. There were no responses expressed in decimal number (e.g., "2.3" = 2) that needed to be rounded as a lower number. The missing code "99" was assigned to (a) missing data, (b) numbers that could not be identified, (c) responses that had two numbers next to each without clear identification for the final choice of a number (e.g., 3 4 instead of either the number 3 or the number 4), and (d) responses that were different from the choices provided (e.g., "6" to a rating scale that ranged from "0 to 4").

There were relatively little missing data among the completed questionnaires. Seven incomplete questionnaires were not included in the final analyses. The questionnaires of four participants were also excluded from the final analyses because the age of these Sisters did not meet the age criteria for this study as delineated in the consent form. Ten participants sent their signed consent forms but did not have a completed

questionnaire attached to it. Similarly, a total of 41 questionnaires needed to be eliminated from the final analyses because there was no consent form attached. Finally, there was one electronic questionnaire in which the participant typed at the end of the questionnaire her name and the following statement "I consent to the use of my response to this survey." However, this completed questionnaire was also eliminated because a formal consent form was not attached to this questionnaire.

Frequency tables and histograms were examined to identify unusual scores across all variables. Several miscoded scores needed to be recoded due to participants' error responses (response carry over effect) on the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) and the LSSAWR. While there were only a few miscoded scores among the responses on the LSSAWR, many more miscoded scores were found in the responses on the LOT-R in which participants continued to use the rating scale (wider responses range from 1 to 7) of the SWLS while providing their answers to the rating scale (only ranged from 0 to 4) of the LOT-R which immediately followed the SWLS on the questionnaire. These errors were corrected after examining the original responses from participants who provided numbers as a response to these two instruments that were not included in the range of the scales (response carry over effect from preceding scales within the questionnaire) of either of these two measures. The value for the skewness and kurtosis on the LSSAWR's total score was within an appropriate range (i.e., below the value of 2), indicating a normal distribution of scores across most of the variables of interest except for 8 items (3, 20, 23, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50). In fact, these eight items revealed kurtosis of greater than 2 on the LSSAWR.

Qualitative Coding Procedures.

Except for the variable "ministry" and the seven open-ended questions all other demographic variables and measures were used in the questionnaire to field test the LSSAWR elicited participants' closed responses. In regard to qualitative coding procedures, the author decided to be consistent and used the same qualitative approach, namely "Grounded Theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which was already introduced above in the exploratory study, to compress the large amount of written data into categories that pertained to the variable "ministry." Six major categories emerged for the areas of Sisters' past and current ministries. These areas included: (1) Social/Facilitation/ Services/Mental Health, (2) Education, (3) Religious Formation and Retreat/Spirituality Ministry, (4) Leadership/Administration & Business/Finances, (5) Diocese/Parish & Pastoral Work, and (6) Other Category (Appendix P). In the questionnaire used for this study, Sisters were asked to list their ministries chronologically beginning with their earliest ministry and ending with the current or most recent one. Coding Sisters' past ministries in six categories and using one extra code (out of these six established categories) for their most current ministry provided the opportunity to show that very few Sisters stayed in their initial ministry.

The guideline for coding Sisters' responses to the seven open-ended questions was based on the twelve core domains and their respective items (N = 50) that emerged from the exploratory and content analysis study (already described above) conducted prior to the field testing of this instrument. Thus, the coding scheme was based on the twelve core domains (including 50 items), and the Sisters' seven open-ended responses were evaluated and coded on the basis of whether or not a new theme (different from the

12 core themes) emerged within their written responses. The coding of the ministry variable and the seven open-ended responses provided the opportunity to translate the qualitative responses into quantitative data that were entered in SPSS.

The use of statistical analysis was used to impart information on trends of the participants' current ministry involvement. It was also hoped that the data emerging from the seven open-ended questions would help to confirm the results of the content analysis conducted prior to the field testing of the instrument. Lastly, using the coding scheme for the six ministry categories that emerged in this study and that the coding scheme based on the twelve major themes and their respective items (emerged from exploratory and content analyses studies), an independent rater (not a woman religious) coded a randomly selected subset (five percent) of the completed questionnaires.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter presents a description and summary of the quantitative and qualitative analyses that were used in evaluating the research questions presented in the previous chapters. It provides relevant information in regard to the results of the analyses that were carried out in this study. These analyses included internal consistency, exploratory factor analyses, construct validity, and analyses of variance procedures. Thus, the reports of the results of the analyses conducted support the evaluation of the initial psychometric properties of the LSSAWR and help to answer the research questions. Finally, the results of the qualitative analyses that were implemented regarding a confirmation of the content analyses of the LSSAWR (conducted prior to the field testing of the instrument) are reported.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Internal Consistency.

As already mentioned, the LSSAWR consists of a total of 50 items. Estimate of internal consistency was examined for the LSSAWR and indicated the alpha coefficient at .9487. Item total score correlations, correlations between each of the 50 items and the total score of instrument (LSSAWR) were examined in order to assess if the individual item is consistent with the rest of the items on the LSSAWR. The smaller the item correlation between the individual item and the total score of the LSSAWR, the less likely that item is able to measure the construct that all the other items assessed that have higher correlations with the total score of the LSSAWR. In fact, the item total score correlations showed a range from a low of 0.26 to a high of 0.67, indicating that some

items have a higher (or some items a lower) predictive value for satisfaction with religious life (Table 1).

Table 1 **Item Total Score Correlations (between Items 1 through 50 on the LSSAWR and the LSSAWR-Total Score)**

N= 1116

Items	**LSSAWR- Total Score**
Item 17 (Influence on Mission)	.26
Item 9 (Reach Out)	.36
Item 20 (Current Ministry)	.36
Item 19 (Relation to Believers)	.41
Item 21 (Local Living)	.42
Item 35 (Local Prayers)	.42
Item 39 (Personal Efforts)	.42
Item 33 (Relation to God)	.43
Item 12 (Close Friendship)	.44
Item 18 (Relation to Hierarchy)	.44
Item 30 (Professional Growth)	.44
Item 22 (Balance)	.46
Item 32 (Spiritual Growth)	.46
Item 3 (Mission)	.48
Item 46 (Vocation)	.48
Item 10 (Quality of Relationship)	.49
Item 5 (Future Planning)	.50
Item 40 (Opportunities/Vocation)	.50
Item 42 (Visibility)	.50
Item 4 (Social Justice)	.51
Item 14 (Family Relationships)	.53
Item 31 (Personal Growth)	.53
Item 41 (Recognition)	.54
Item 13 (External Friendship)	.55

Item 15 (Professional Relationships)	.55
Item 16 (Inclusion of "Others")	.55
Item 38 (New Forms)	.55
Item 8 (Acceptance of Diversity)	.56
Item 43 (Initial Formation)	.56
Item 7 (Discuss Diversity)	.57
Item 11 (Interact with Peers)	.57
Item 44 (Involvement/Formation)	.57
Item 29 (Exercise Leadership)	.59
Item 6 (Future Viability)	.60
Item 45 (Welcoming Environment)	.60
Item 2 (Charism)	.62
Item 24 (New Ministries)	.62
Item 23 (Support)	.63
Item 26 (Sisters/Leadership)	.63
Item 34 (Congregational Prayers)	.63
Item 47 (Gifts/Talents)	.63
Item 50 (Congregation)	.63
Item 1 (Direction)	.64
Item 27 (Administrative Skills)	.64
Item 37 (Ongoing Formation)	.64
Item 28 (Personal/Leadership)	.65
Item 25 (Governmental Structure)	.66
Item 36 (Spiritual Programs)	.66
Item 48 (Belonging)	.67
Item 49 (Respect/Validation)	.67

Note. Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ level (2-tailed)

Initial Exploratory Factor Analysis.

An initial principal components factor analysis with an orthogonal varimax rotation was conducted in order to identify the underlying structure among the 50 items of the LSSAWR (N = 1116). The estimation of the number of factors and the reduction of

the number of items with a minimum loss of information was determined by using this analysis. Twelve components (or factors) with a Kaiser-Guttman criterion of eigenvalue greater than 1.00 were extracted. The total variance explained by the 12 factors was 29.8%. Since the general criterion of eigenvalue greater than 1.00 may misjudge the most appropriate number of factors (Gorsuch, 1983), a second criterion looked at was the scree plot (see Figure 1) which indicated three factors.

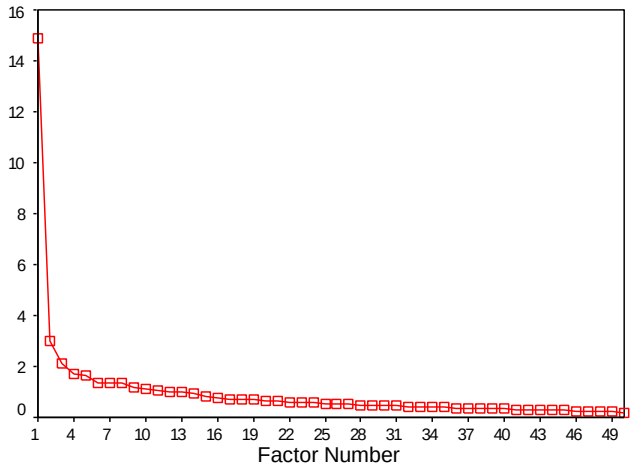


Figure 1. Scree Plot for the Life Satisfaction Scale for Apostolic Women Religious (N = 1116)

The scree plot indicated that the majority of the variance was accounted for by the first two factors (e.g., 29.76, 6.04, 4.27, 3.39, etc.) which had factor loadings that contributed a variance of 5 or more percent (Hair et al., 2006). However, only three items, item 30 "professional growth (.43)," item 31 "personal growth (.47)," and item 32 "spiritual growth (.42)" obtained loadings on the second factor and the loading of these three items was lower than .5, indicating that the second factor was relatively weak and needed to be eliminated. However, these three items that loaded below .5 on the second factor did indicate a somewhat higher loading on the first factor so that the author of the study decided to keep these items in the first factor (Table 2). In fact, on the first factor

"item 30" loaded at .44, "item 31" loaded at .54, and "item 32" loaded at .46. Furthermore, in retaining items that loaded significantly at .40 and above, the final number of items on the first factor included 46 items and the factor loadings of these items ranged from .40 to .70 (Table 2). Following these guidelines led to a deletion of the following three out of 50 items: "reach out to Sisters from diverse background (item 9)," "personal involvement with community of believers (item 19)," and "satisfaction with current ministry (item 20)" (Table 1). A fourth item, "hierarchy of Catholic Church and its influence on mission of religious life (item 17)," was also eliminated because it did not load on either of the two factors whose loadings contributed a variance of 5 or more percent.

The new model reduced the 50 item set to a 46-item set with one factor. The items that comprise the one factor, the factor loadings, communalities (h2), means, and standard deviations are presented in table form (Table 2).

Table 2 **Items, Component Loading, Communality Estimate, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Initial Exploratory Factor Analysis of the LSSAWR**

N= 1044

Items	**Factor Loading**	**h2**	**M**	**SD**
Factor 1: (Vowed Life Satisfaction)				
Item 1 (Direction)	.65	.71	4.02	.88
Item 2 (Charism)	.62	.72	4.03	.80
Item 3 (Mission)	.48	.60	4.13	.66
Item 4 (Social Justice)	.51	.59	4.24	.87
Item 5 (Future Planning)	.51	.65	3.89	.86
Item 6 (Future Viability)	.60	.55	4.07	.90
Item 7 (Discuss Diversity)	.56	.67	3.61	1.00
Item 8 (Acceptance of Diversity)	.56	.71	3.78	.90
Item 10 (Quality of Relationship)	.50	.49	4.24	.64
Item 11 (Interact with Peers)	.58	.54	3.99	.87
Item 12 (Close Friendship)	.44	.51	4.45	.66
Item 13 (External Friendship)	.56	.65	4.16	.79

Item 14 (Family Relationships)	.54	.68	4.47	.69
Item 15 (Professional Relationships)	.56	.67	4.30	.74
Item 16 (Inclusion of "Others")	.56	.52	4.17	.83
Item 18 (Relation to Hierarchy)	.42	.60	3.43	.83
Item 21 (Local Living)	.41	.74	4.27	.84
Item 22 (Balance)	.45	.50	3.96	.82
Item 23 (Support)	.65	.63	4.45	.77
Item 24 (New Ministries)	.62	.54	3.97	.92
Item 25 (Governmental Structure)	.66	.61	3.88	.93
Item 26 (Sisters/Leadership)	.64	.72	3.97	.90
Item 27 (Administrative Skills)	.65	.73	4.07	.92
Item 28 (Personal/Leadership)	.67	.70	4.16	.83
Item 29 (Exercise Leadership)	.60	.64	4.15	.87
Item 30 (Professional Growth)	.44	.54	4.28	.69
Item 31 (Personal Growth)	.54	.72	4.26	.68
Item 32 (Spiritual Growth)	.46	.75	4.13	.78
Item 33 (Relation to God)	.42	.65	4.16	.75
Item 34 (Congregational Prayers)	.63	.58	4.27	.81
Item 35 (Local Prayers)	.40	.66	3.85	.88
Item 36 (Spiritual Programs)	.67	.71	4.04	.87
Item 37 (Ongoing Formation)	.65	.65	4.18	.80
Item 38 (New Forms)	.54	.44	3.39	.90
Item 39 (Personal Efforts)	.41	.45	3.77	.85
Item 40 (Opportunities/Vocation)	.49	.54	3.95	.81
Item 41 (Recognition)	.53	.76	3.79	.92
Item 42 (Visibility)	.48	.72	3.32	.95
Item 43 (Initial Formation)	.54	.70	3.74	.92
Item 44 (Involvement/Formation)	.56	.71	3.80	.87
Item 45 (Welcoming Environment)	.59	.65	4.00	.82
Item 46 (Vocation)	.49	.64	4.63	.56
Item 47 (Gifts/Talents)	.65	.66	4.38	.79
Item 48 (Belonging)	.70	.79	4.52	.74
Item 49 (Respect/Validation)	.69	.76	4.41	.79
Item 50 (Congregation)	.65	.73	4.61	.59

Note. Life Satisfaction Scale for Apostolic Women Religious (LSSAWR). Items are presented according to the two factors that emerged from the Initial Exploratory Factor Analysis; h2 = communalities estimates.

A total of 46 items is contained in the one factor of the LSSAWR. This one factor represents the satisfaction (Table 2) with a vowed life (also known as religious life) and it was named "Vowed Life Satisfaction (VLS)." The VLS had an eigenvalue of 14.88, accounting for 29.76 % of the total variance.

Internal Consistency of the LSSAWR and its One Factor.

In addition, estimates of internal consistency were examined for the LSSAWR and its one factor and indicated the alpha coefficients at: .9495 (= .95). The initial estimates of reliability imply that the LSSAWR with its one factor has high levels of internal consistency in the nation-wide sample of Roman Catholic women religious.

The item total score correlations, correlations between each of the 46 items and the total score of instrument (LSSAWR), showed a range from a low of 0.41 to a high of 0.68, indicating that some items have a higher (or some items a lower) predictive value for satisfaction with religious life (Table 3).

Table 3 **Item Total Score Correlations between Items (46) and the LSSAWR-Total Score**

N= 1116

Items	**LSSAWR-Total Score**
Item 21 (Local Living)	.41
Item 39 (Personal Efforts)	.41
Item 35 (Local Prayers)	.42
Item 33 (Relation to God)	.42
Item 18 (Relation to Hierarchy)	.42
Item 12 (Close Friendship)	.44
Item 30 (Professional Growth)	.44
Item 22 (Balance)	.45
Item 32 (Spiritual Growth)	.46
Item 3 (Mission)	.47
Item 46 (Vocation)	.47
Item 10 (Quality of Relationship)	.49
Item 40 (Opportunities/Vocation)	.50

Item 42 (Visibility)	.50
Item 5 (Future Planning)	.51
Item 4 (Social Justice)	.52
Item 14 (Family Relationships)	.53
Item 31 (Personal Growth)	.53
Item 41 (Recognition)	.55
Item 38 (New Forms)	.55
Item 43 (Initial Formation)	.55
Item 13 (External Friendship)	.56
Item 15 (Professional Relationships)	.56
Item 16 (Inclusion of "Others")	.56
Item 8 (Acceptance of Diversity)	.56
Item 7 (Discuss Diversity)	.57
Item 44 (Involvement/Formation	.57
Item 11 (Interact with Peers)	.58
Item 29 (Exercise Leadership)	.60
Item 6 (Future Viability)	.60
Item 45 (Welcoming Environment)	.60
Item 2 (Charism)	.62
Item 24 (New Ministries)	.62
Item 50 (Congregation)	.62
Item 23 (Support)	.63
Item 34 (Congregational Prayers)	.63
Item 47 (Gifts/Talents)	.63
Item 26 (Sisters/Leadership)	.64
Item 1 (Direction)	.65
Item 27 (Administrative Skills)	.65
Item 37 (Ongoing Formation)	.65
Item 28 (Personal/Leadership)	.66
Item 25 (Governmental Structure)	.66
Item 36 (Spiritual Programs)	.67

Item 48 (Belonging)	.68
Item 49 (Respect/Validation)	.68

Note. Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ level (2-tailed)

Construct Validity.

To assess the construct validity (convergent/discriminant) of the LSSAWR and its one factor, the correlation coefficients between the LSSAWR and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; a global life satisfaction instrument), and between the LSSAWR and the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R; a global optimism instrument) were analyzed. The results provided evidence for the measure's (LSSAWR) convergent validity of a moderate correlation of 0.47 (significant at 0.01 level- two tailed) between LSSAWR and its one factor and SWLS as well as the measure's discriminant validity of a somewhat lower correlation of 0.21 (significant at 0.01 level- two tailed) between LSSAWR and its one factor and LOT-R.

The somewhat lower but significant correlation between the LSSAWR and the LOT-R might be explained by the fact that previous research has found an association between the two variables life satisfaction and optimism (Leung et al., 2005). In fact, based on the sample included in this study, the results showed a somewhat low correlation of 0.27 (significant at 0.01 level- two tailed) between the SWLS and LOT-R. Lastly, there was a high correlation of 0.571 (significant at 0.01 level- two tailed) between the LSSAWR and its one factor and participants' overall satisfaction rating on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = low; 10 = high).

Group Generational Differences.

Analysis of variance procedures (ANOVA) were conducted in order to investigate possible relationships between age and length of time in religious life with factor and

total scores. However, the results of these analyses showed not much difference in the results between the two variables (age and length of time in religious life) and their relationship to factor and total score. A majority of the participants in this study joined religious life at a very young age. Thus, participant's increase in length of time in religious life coincided with participant's increase in age. Therefore, the focus of the results in this section will be limited to the analyses pertaining to mean differences between generation groups on the LSSAWR.

As already mentioned before, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) ($p < .01$) procedures were conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on the LSSAWR (and its one factor) among the three generation groups (Group 1. 1925-1942; Group 2. 1943-1960; Group 3. 1961-1981). The results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on LSSAWR among the three generation groups, $F (2, 1042) = 21.08$, $p < .000$. Post hoc comparisons with Scheffé's ($p < .05$) statistics of the LSSAWR showed that statistically significant mean difference among these three generation groups existed between the oldest generation group (Group 1. 1925-1942) and the middle group (Group 2. 1943-1960), the oldest and the youngest group (Group 3. 1961-1981), and between the middle and the youngest generation group (Table 4).

Table 4 **Post Hoc Comparison with Scheffé's Statistics of the 3 Group Generation Differences on the LSSAWR**

N= 1042	**Group 1 (G1)** (1925-1942)	**Group 2 (G2)** (1943-1960)	**Group 3 (G3)** (1961-1981)	**Post Hoc Comparison** Scheffé (p)
	N = 662 M = 189.89 SD = 19.67	N = 332 M = 184.73 SD = 21.08	N = 52 M = 172.77 SD = 25.42	
Total Score LSSAWR	**Mean Differences**		**Standard Error**	**p**
G1 and G2:	5.16*		1.38	.001
G1 and G3:	17.13*		2.94	.000
G2 and G3:	11.96*		3.05	.000

Note. Scheffé's ($p < .05$) Groups: G1 = Group 1.; G2 = Group 2.; G3 = Group 3.

The group differences noted on Factor 1 (VLS) of the LSSAWR indicated the need for an appropriate norming of the LSSAWR according to those three generation groups (Group 1. 1925-1942; Group 2. 1943-1960; Group 3. 1961-1981) when using this instrument. Finally, due to a limited number of participants (N = 1), no analyses were conducted between the youngest generation group (Group 4. 1982-2001) and the other three older generation groups (Group 1. 1925-1942; Group 2. 1943-1960; Group 3. 1961-1981). Thus, the absence of this youngest generation group (Group 4. 1982-2001) in this current study has implications for the future use of this instrument.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Participants' responses to the seven open-ended questions pertaining to the vowed life were reviewed to assess whether any new insights would emerge that would differ from the information already included in the LSSAWR which was field tested in this study. However, no additional information was identified. Inter-rater reliability was assessed for the coding of responses for each open-ended question. Using the information

included in the LSSAWR (Appendix K), an independent rater (not a woman religious) coded a randomly selected subset 56 (5%) out of the total number of 1116 questionnaires and no additional information was found.

The findings of the qualitative research reasserted the content originally emerged in the exploratory study. Thus, based on participants' responses to the seven open-ended questions, the information as related to Sisters' satisfaction with religious life is already expressed in the LSSAWR (Appendix K). Or stated differently, participants' answers to the seven open-ended research questions did not elicit any additional information. The exploratory study was based on a small sample (N = 52), only one generation (1925-1942), and two congregations (located in the Midwest and East coast). Thus, despite the fact that the nation-wide sample of this study (a) was larger in size (N = 1116), (b) was a representation of three generation groups (1925-1942; 1943-1960; 1961-1981), and (c) included 44 congregations (nation-wide), participants' responses were reflective of the information already included the LSSAWR which was field tested in this study.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to design a life satisfaction instrument for apostolic women religious. This chapter will discuss the findings presented in Chapter 4. First, this section will discuss the results of the six research questions that were guiding this study while also reviewing these results in light of previous research. This will be followed by an evaluation of the study's practical and research implications. Finally limitations of this study will be discussed and recommendations for future research will be made.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In view of the fact that the trend in today's U.S. society is one of decreased membership in traditional civic and faith organizations and in particular in women's religious organizations, there is a need to study the motivational factors and life satisfaction levels across different generations of apostolic women religious in the Roman Catholic Church. A review of literature has indicated that the development of the LSSAWR further contributes to the literature of life satisfaction as it is the first instrument designed to assess satisfaction with religious life cross three generation groups (born between the years of 1942-1981) of Roman Catholic women religious.

The contemporary value of this research is demonstrated by the most recent attempt of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church (Vatican) to investigate through personal interviews and questionnaires the "quality of life" among apostolic women religious within the United States. The study was announced in December of 2008 by Cardinal Franc Rodé, head of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (Fox, 2009). The controversy surrounding this investigation has been amplified in the media over the past year. According to Fox (2009), a major

criticism has been the lack of transparency related to the purpose and future use of the study's results. In fact, the implementation of this research process by the Vatican was felt to be demeaning and intrusive by participants resulting in a degree of non-compliance (Fox, 2009).

In contrast to the Vatican's investigation, the research of the current study was based on a questionnaire and resulted in the participation of 1116 Sisters from 44 women's religious congregations located nation-wide in the U.S. The purpose of this study was to develop an instrument specifically designed to assess the life satisfaction levels of the various generations of women committed to an apostolic vowed life and to establish preliminary psychometrics for this particular instrument. In addition, this study also planned to look for additional information as related to motivations within and across generations of apostolic women religious that influence Sisters' satisfaction with religious life. Thus far previous research has not explored this area across generation groups and within a larger sample of women religious. It was hoped that these data would confirm the content analysis which had been conducted prior to field testing the LSSAWR within this study.

Research Questions

First Research Question.

This section will discuss the results of the six research questions that were guiding this study. The first research question investigated whether the initial items designed for the LSSAWR demonstrate content validity based on professional ratings. The results of the content analysis were based on two step process and elicited (a) quantitative responses of the participants, and (b) qualitative responses of the participants.

There was a difference in how the professional raters (22 Roman Catholic apostolic women religious) responded to those two steps. Based on the quantitative analysis of the professional raters' ratings, none of the 50 items needed to be removed or revised indicating that the raters, for the most part, deemed the items to be clear and relevant. On the other hand, some of the 50 items were revised or removed based on the qualitative responses (additional written feedback) of the professional raters. It is not clear why the respondents showed a stronger preference to provide their critique of the items through their written feedback. Maybe it was the participants' way of indicating that the items are for the most part clear and relevant except for a few minor changes which participants' chose to point out to the researcher via their written feedback. Participants might have sought the written feedback method in order to be more clear, specific, and supportive in why and how the item could be revised for future research purposes.

Considering participants' constructive and detailed feedback, the changes indicated were negligible in that the content across the items remained stable except for the two items that were removed because of a mistaken meaning they seemed to imply to the reader (e.g., satisfaction with one's own perception, spending time in prayer is quantifiable). However, two items were added (interaction with peers, balance between ministry and community life) which provided an additional item under the theme "Social Relations" and one under the theme "Ministry." The additional changes that were implemented based on this constructive feedback mainly involved minor grammatical as well as wording changes. Overall the content analysis supported the progress of initial

item development which aided in the revision, removal, and addition of new items to the LSSAWR proposed to be field tested in this study.

Second Research Question.

The second research question inquired about the life satisfaction instrument's (LSSAWR) ability to generate empirically derived factors with high internal consistencies. This question will be answered by a discussion of the high internal consistency in the LSSAWR and its one factor. The LSSAWR, which was field tested in this study, consisted initially of a total of 50 items and indicated a high level of internal consistency. Accordingly, the scores on the 50 item instrument (LSSAWR) have been consistent across the sample of 1116 Roman Catholic apostolic women religious.

However, after conducting a factor analysis, the new model reduced the 50 item set to a 46-item set with one empirically derived factor (VLS). All of the 46 items of the LSSAWR are contained in the first factor (VLS) which assesses a Sister's satisfaction with the vowed life. There were three items that emerged under a potential second factor, but because this potential second factor was too weak and therefore eliminated, the three items were kept under the first factor of the LSSAWR. These three items (30, 31, and 32) assess a Sister's satisfaction with her opportunities for holistic growth (professional, personal, and religious/spiritual growth) in her commitment to the vowed life. The decision to keep the three items under the first factor was based on two reasons. First, these three items loaded higher under the first factor as compared to their loading on the second factor. Second, keeping the three items within the first factor indicated a slight increase in the results of the internal consistency of the LSSAWR as compared to the alpha coefficient that did not include these three items.

In addition, the LSSAWR's ability to generate one empirically derived factor with high internal consistency can also be explain by the fact that the 46 items that loaded highly on this first factor (VLS) are very much insightful of a Sister's motivation to join and stay committed to the vowed life within her particular congregation. As stated by O'Murchu (1999) "Religious life is not about religion. It is a value radiation witness at the service of humanity (p. 39)." He continues to explain that central to such values is the yearning to live harmoniously and creatively with ourselves, with others, with nature, and with our God (p. 15)." According to O'Murchu, these values are traditionally known in the West as the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In reading his concise description of each of the three vows, one can see a parallel between their meaning and the content contained in the 46 items that correlated highly under the first factor (VLS) of the LSSAWR.

For instance, item 2 (the way your congregation is living out the charism today), item 3 (living out the mission of your congregation), item 4 (efforts to respond to social justice issues), item 16 (inclusion of "Others" in mission activities), and item 24 (new ministries in response to needs of the times) are representative of a Sister's value to live out the vow of poverty as defined in O'Murchu (1999, p. 16) who stated, "Poverty is not about sacrificing material goods but about exercising stewardship over the goods of creation according to the equality and integrity of the gospel."

Furthermore, "Chastity is not about abstinence from sexual thoughts and acts but about engaging with the daily struggle and challenge of authentic sexual and relational growth (O'Murchu, 1999, p. 16)." Thus, O'Murchu's description of the vow of chastity is reflected in items 10 through 15 as well as in 30 and 33 of the LSSAWR. These items are

a representation of a Sister's relational opportunities in religious life to grow in intimacy with God, family of origin, Sisters of her congregation, professionals and other people whom she encounters on her life journey. Taking it a step further, items 38 through 45 of the LSSAWR are reflective of a Sister's interest in and generative maturity of nurturing the vocation of new members while supporting in a constructive manner the progression of her congregation into a viable future.

The third vow, obedience "is not about submitting our will to a higher authority . . . but about exploring and proffering ever new ways to engage responsibly, collaboratively, and creatively with the issues of power and powerlessness that we encounter in daily life (O'Murchu, 1999, p. 16)." This particular challenge of keeping an appropriate balance between the personal power that a Sister holds and her collaborative engagement with the power of others is reflected in items 25 through 29 on the LSSAWR.

Importantly, O'Murchu (1999) reminds the reader that "[t]he engagement with values, and not the observance of laws, is what the vowed life entails in its primary and pristine meaning (p. 16)." Thus, if women religious are to engage with these values (three vows) that are reflected in the items of the LSSAWR, then it might be beneficial to norm this instrument according to the three age groups (born between 1925 and 1981) so that it could be used in women religious congregations to periodically assess their engagement with these core values which are reflective of their satisfaction with and commitment to the vowed life.

Finally, the results of the factor analysis indicated that the LSSAWR has one factor and needed to be reduced to a total of 46 items. It appears that the areas targeted

through the four items that were deleted are much more removed from a Sister's personal life experience and/or interpretation of the meaning of the vowed life such as "reaching out to Sisters of diverse background (item 9)," "hierarchies' influence on the mission of religious life (item 17)," " involvement with the Catholic Church as a community of believers (item 19)," "involvement with the Catholic Church as a community of believers," and "current ministry (item 20)."

For instance, a variation in the meaning that some items represent in regard to satisfaction with religious life is particularly evident when comparing the difference in factor loading on the two items (items 20 and 23) that are assessing a Sister's satisfaction with her current ministry (Table 4). Compared to item 20 (assessing a Sister's current satisfaction with her ministry) which indicated a lower factor loading and needed to be eliminated, item 23 (congregation's affirmation and support of a Sister's ministry) indicated a higher factor loading on the first factor of the LSSAWR.

This might be explained by the fact that a Sister's satisfaction with religious life is not dependant on how satisfied she personally is with her ministry (personal fulfillment) but rather on how much affirmation and support (congregational ownership of a Sister's ministry) she receives from her congregation while engaging in her current ministry. In other words, a woman religious understands her ministry as partaking in the congregation's charism/mission to be of service and be responsive to the needs of the times (item 24), a value reflected concurrently in the vow of poverty and obedience (O'Murchu, 1999). Thus, a Sister's concern as related to the kind of ministry she holds is not so much focused on self-actualization but rather in how she can best use her God-given talents to be of service to those most in need. In doing so, a Sister partakes in the

process of working towards and/or assuring the empowerment and equality of all of creation. The congregational support of a Sister's ministerial engagement is also exemplified in the custom of most women's religious congregations who officially appoint, affirm, and support a Sister's ministry through a celebration at their annual gatherings.

In addition, eliminating the four items ("reaching out to Sisters of diverse background," item 9; "hierarchies' influence on the mission of religious life," item 17; "involvement with the Catholic Church as a community of believers," item 19; "involvement with the Catholic Church as a community of believers"; and "current ministry," item 20) increased the internal consistency of the LSSAWR and its one factor. In fact, estimates of internal consistency were analyzed and indicated that the LSSAWR with its reduced items and its one factor (VLS) continues to indicate a high level of internal consistency. Thus, the deletion of the four items increased the alpha coefficient slightly, implying a somewhat greater degree of homogeneity of the 46 items in the LSSAWR. Finally, future research on the LSSAWR and its one factor could establish alternative estimates of reliability (e.g., test-retest reliability). Overall, despite the elimination of the four items, the LSSAWR with its one empirically derived factor (VLS) has high levels of internal consistency in the nation-wide sample of Roman Catholic apostolic women religious and potentially could be used as an instrument to assess a Sister's satisfaction with the vowed life.

Third Research Question.

The third research question examined whether the items comprising each factor of the LSSAWR correlate significantly with each other and with the total score on each

factor. The estimates of reliability indicated that the LSSAWR with its one factor has high levels of internal consistency in the nation-wide sample of Roman Catholic women religious, which implies that the items on the LSSAWR are reflective of the construct "satisfaction with religious life." Thus, the LSSAWR with its 46 items has demonstrated its ability to assess satisfaction with religious life among Roman Catholic apostolic women religious.

The results of analyses conducted to answer the question about the total score correlations on the LSSAWR showed that depending on various contextual factors (e.g., age), there are some items of the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) which designate a higher (or on some items a lower) predictive value for satisfaction with religious life. Therefore it will be important to present the findings of this study which indicated mean differences that emerged on the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) based on the responses of the three age groups that participated in this study. Thus, this section will first discuss the predictive value of the items of the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS). This will be followed by a discussion of the mean differences on LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) based on participants' age differences.

Item Predictability of Satisfaction with Religious Life.

The results of the field testing of the LSSAWR indicated that the item total score correlations between each of the 46 items and the total score of instrument (LSSAWR), showed a wide range, demonstrating that (a) some items have a higher (or some items a lower) predictive value for satisfaction with religious life. For example, a Sister's satisfaction with her present local living situation (e.g., item 21 which has the lowest predictive value) is not as predictive of a Sister's satisfaction with religious life when

compared to a Sister's personal sense of belonging to her religious congregation (e.g., item 48 which has the highest predictive value of satisfaction with religious life). The variation that some items have higher (or some items a lower) predictive value for satisfaction with religious in these item total score correlations (Table 3) indicates that although all the 46 items are assessing satisfaction with religious life, the items are nevertheless different from each other in their ability to assess the satisfaction with religious life.

In fact, items that have a higher predictive value of satisfaction may be reflective of particular vital areas or core components of religious life, such as represented in item 1 ("future direction of congregation"), item 45 ("providing a welcoming environment"), and item 49 ("institutional validation"). On the other hand, it is possible that items that have a lower predictive value assess areas of religious life that might be influenced by contextual and elusive factors and therefore (a) have more of a secondary or external meaning, (b) are too specific and may not be in every Sister's daily life experience, (c) are more intangible and personal in nature, and (d) are prone to changes according to a Sister's life circumstances and/or age. For example, in regard to the impact of life circumstance and/or age on satisfaction with a local living situation, it would appear that a new and younger member will place different expectations on a local living situation as compared to (a) a Sister who has been more than a decade in religious life and currently needs to live alone due to professional reasons and/or personal development, (b) a Sister who is beyond the societal retirement age but still engaged in a full time and paying ministry, (c) a Sister who is retired and engaged in internal or volunteer ministry. Despite their low predictive value, these items appear nevertheless to be important as they are

more personal in nature and/or revealing of some secondary areas of satisfaction as related to religious life.

Overall, the variation that some items have higher (or some items a lower) predictive value for satisfaction with religious life in these item total score correlations (Table 3) indicates that although all the 46 items are assessing satisfaction with religious life, the items are nevertheless different from each other in their ability to potentially assess core areas as well as situationally bound areas of satisfaction with religious life.

Establishing Norms for Different Age Groups.

The fact that some of the items on the LSSAWR have a lower predictive value and potentially assess areas of religious life that might be influenced by contextual and elusive factors infers the possibility that a Sister's satisfaction with some areas of religious life might be dependent on a contextual factor like a Sister's age, in particular her belonging to a certain age cohort group. As already mentioned, in referring to Karl Mannheim's (1952) writing, Strauss and Howe (1991, p. 64) defined "common age location" as a cohort group (restricted to a specific time-period) who together, in one place and at the same time, experience the same occurring historical events or movements. Although each cohort group is going to be exposed to the same event or movement at the same time, it nevertheless seems to create a diverse impact on each cohort group (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Due to these varied responses to societal events among the various generation cohorts, Strauss and Howe (1991) argued that generation cohorts are separated according to various life stages through which each generation moves through in their life time. The span of each life stage, a sum of 22 years, is determined by the social responsibilities that

individuals are expected to fulfill as they move from one stage to the next. Strauss and Howe (1991) separated the life stages into four phases based on historical observations within the U.S. While there have been times in which a specific generation cohort-group expanded or shortened a life phase due to external societal events (e.g., war), for the most part each of the life phases has included about 22 years (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

In fact, applying the generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) to the current study, a major finding of this research is the mean differences on the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) based on participants' responses of the three generation groups (Table 4). These differences could be explained by the fact that it appears reasonable that the youngest age group (1961-1981) and the middle age group (1943-1960) of this current study are less satisfied with their opportunities to interact with others of their age group (see item 11 on the LSSAWR) when there are fewer younger and middle aged members in religious life in general (National Religious Retirement Office, 2008) as compared to the larger representation of women religious who belong to the oldest age group (1925-1942).

Thus the mean differences on the LSSAWR that were found among the three age groups provide a justification for the norming of the LSSAWR according to these three different age groups among women religious. Furthermore, the finding of age group differences on the LSSAWR has an important implication for the life satisfaction literature within the field of psychology which thus far has been negating the presence of age differences on life satisfaction levels in previous research (Bienenfeld, et al., 1997; Bishop, 2006; Jacobson, 1993; Kvale, et al., 1989; McCulloch, 1997; Schuster, 1990). Contrary to that research, the results of this study indicated age differences in the life

satisfaction levels of this sample of women religious. It appears that the application of generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) which guided the sampling methodology and the assignment of cutoff scores in regard to age ranges for the various comparative research groups in this study can explain these findings. Accordingly, the assignment of an arbitrary age range to comparative research groups in previous research could have prevented the emergence of this finding.

In fact, taking an interdisciplinary perspective based on generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) which is grounded in sociological research, a review of the sampling methodology applied in the satisfaction literature within the field of psychology indicated that the age ranges of participants assigned to group comparisons were either too small (e.g., between 5 to 15 years) as evident in previous research (Bishop, 2006; McAdams et al., 1993), or too large (e.g., 25 to 30 years) as in the study by (Palmore & Kivett, 1977). A small age range may have not been sufficient to reach the accurate cutoff score for the emergence of age differences in this research due to the concurrent assignment of participants belonging to one generation group in the various comparative research groups. On the other hand, a large age range may have exceeded the cutoff score for the emergence of age differences by blending generational groups due to the mixed assignment of participants from different generation groups in the various comparative research groups.

Consequently, comparing groups of participants belonging to one generation group (use of small age range) and/or comparing mixed generation groups (use of large age range) of participants may confound the results for inquiry of age differences in these studies. Therefore, future research will need to determine the accurate cutoff score so that

distinct age groups can be assigned to the comparative research as related to life satisfaction before inquiry of age differences within this area can be conducted.

The current study has been informed in the sampling methodology by generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) based on sociological research and has identified generational differences in participants' responses on the LSSAWR. Therefore, the sampling methodology and assignment of comparative research groups of this study (based on sociological generation theory) could be used as a baseline until future research is able to either confirm this baseline, or to determine more accurate cutoff scores for distinct age groups when (a) conducting comparative life satisfaction research and, (b) developing and norming a new life satisfaction instrument such as the LSSAWR and its one factor.

Overall, the knowledge and periodic assessment of satisfaction with religious life among the different age groups of women religious could be beneficial to women religious congregations who are determined to move their congregation into a viable future. In fact, a periodic assessment of satisfaction with religious life could help women religious in their individual, separated by peer groups, and congregational discernments as they attempt to identify areas of strength as well as areas in need of growth while they establish and prioritize their goals communally during their annual assemblies. However, the establishment of age appropriate norms for the LSSAWR will be necessary before such varied assessments can be informative for the discernment process of women religious congregations.

Fourth Research Question.

The fourth research question examined the construct validity (concurrent and discriminant) of the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) based on correlations with the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and with the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R). The correlations between LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS), and the SWLS were moderate indicating that both measures are assessing a similar construct of life satisfaction. However, the moderate but significant correlation might be explained by the fact that the SWLS was developed to assess any person's general life satisfaction whereas the LSSAWR and its one factor was designed to assess the satisfaction of a particular population (apostolic women religious) and their particular life style.

In addition, the correlation between LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) and LOT-R were low but also significant, indicating that both measures are somewhat assessing a similar construct. However, these two instruments were designed to assess dissimilar constructs in that the LOT-R was developed to assess the construct of optimism whereas the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) was constructed to assess satisfaction with religious life. An understanding about the somewhat lower but significant correlation between the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) and the LOT-R might be gained from previous research which has found an association between the two variables life satisfaction and optimism (Leung et al., 2005). Thus one could conclude that this low but significant association indicates the LSSAWR's strength to confirm previous research that there is an association between the two constructs life satisfaction and optimism.

This interpretation is further supported by the results of this study which also showed a low but significant correlation between the SWLS and LOT-R Further, which

was about 0.05 higher as compared to the lower significant correlation between the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) and the SWLS. This observation could imply the strength of an instrument that is designed to assess life satisfaction within a subpopulation (e.g., women religious) such as the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) in that it appears as if the LSSAWR has a greater likelihood to indicate lower significant correlations with other instruments that assess closely related constructs as compared to an instrument that assess general satisfaction (e.g., SWLS) in the general population.

Fifth Research Question.

The fifth research question examined how a general assessment, a rating from one (low) to ten (high) of satisfaction with religious life, does support the quantitative data that resulted from the field-testing of the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) conducted within this study. The results of the significant correlations between the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) and participants' overall satisfaction rating on a scale from 1 to 10 were high and demonstrated the LSSAWR's ability to assess satisfaction with religious life among apostolic women religious.

Sixth Research Question.

The sixth research question examined (a) whether the participants' answers to seven open-ended questions elicited additional information as related to satisfaction and motivation within and across generation cohorts of apostolic women religious, and (b) how these data (participants' answers) relate to the results of the content analysis acquired in developing the LSSAWR. The interpretation of research shows that participant responses' (within and across the three age groups) to the seven open-ended research questions, which pertained to satisfaction and commitment to the vowed life, did

not bring forth any additional information beyond those already integrated in the LSSAWR.

The fact that no additional information emerged from participants' responses to the seven open-ended questions shows that the information that emerged from the exploratory study and confirmed in the content analysis was thorough and representative of the component of satisfaction with religious life. Thus, the data resulting from all the responses to the seven open-ended questions were used to support the quantitative data resulting from the field-testing of the LSSAWR. It also indicates that the information included in the LSSAWR, prior to the field-testing within this study, already sampled the domain of satisfaction with religious life.

Future Directions

There are two main directions that have emerged from the results of this study for future research. The first pertains to suggestions for the future direction of the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) in regard to its appropriate application within women's religious congregations. The second direction points to implications for future research in the field of life satisfaction. These two propositions are going to be discussed next.

Future Directions for the LSSAWR and its One Factor (VLS).

The initial items designed for the LSSAWR demonstrated content validity based on professional ratings and were affirmed through the qualitative analysis of the seven open-ended responses included in this study. These responses did not provide any additional information. Thus, the quantitative and qualitative results of this study revealed that the initial information which originally emerged in the exploratory study,

was confirmed in the content analysis and finally field tested in this study, did sample the domain of satisfaction with religious life.

On the other hand, there was only one factor that empirically emerged during the exploratory factor analysis even though there were twelve domains (represented in the 50 items of the LSSAWR) that initially emerged in the exploratory study (qualitative analysis). Thus, it is possible that there are other factors that are contributing to satisfaction in religious life which might explain the remaining variability not accounted for by that one factor of the LSSAWR. Additional statistically significant factors may not have emerged in the field testing of the LSSAWR because a sufficient number of items tapping into those factors may not have been present. Future studies could revise the items in terms of their content and number so that they better reflect the twelve domains identified earlier in the exploratory study.

The mean differences on the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) that were found between the three age groups (1925-1942; 1943-1960; 1961-1981) provide a justification for the norming of the LSSAWR and its empirically derived factor according to these three different age groups among women religious. Unfortunately, the sample of this study did not have a sufficient representation of the youngest age cohort group (1982 – 2001) which is beginning to join religious life. Thus future research will need to inquire about age cohort differences between this youngest age group and the three older age groups included in this study so that the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) can be normed accordingly.

Future research on the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) could also establish estimates of test-retest reliability. Despite the elimination of four items, the LSSAWR

total and its one factor (VLS) have high levels of internal consistency in the nation-wide sample of Roman Catholic apostolic women religious and potentially could be used as an instrument to assess a Sister's satisfaction with the vowed life.

The LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) could become a very useful tool for assessment of satisfaction with religious life. A periodic assessment of satisfaction with religious life among women religious could elicit valuable information for leaders of women's religious congregations. In fact the distribution of this knowledge among leadership and their members within U.S. women's religious congregations could facilitate discussion, periodic assessment, and the establishment of goals that would implement or strengthen the presence of the areas that are reflective of satisfaction with religious life within these women's religious congregations.

The LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) indicated a significant high convergent validity with the overall satisfaction rating on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = low; 10 = high) and with the SWLS (global life satisfaction instrument). However, the discriminant validity between the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) and the LOT-R (a global optimism instrument) indicated low but significant correlation, which might be explained by the fact that previous research has found an association between the two constructs, life satisfaction and optimism (Leung et al., 2005). In fact, based on the sample included in this study, the results showed a somewhat low correlation between the SWLS and LOT-R. Future research may want to establish the discriminant validity of the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) with an instrument representing a construct (e.g., depression) that is very dissimilar to the construct of life satisfaction.

In summary, the development of the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) is thus far the only instrument designed to assess satisfaction with religious life among Roman Catholic apostolic women religious. Therefore, in addressing the areas mentioned above, this instrument has the potential to begin research on satisfaction with religious life among apostolic women religious as well as to advance research on life satisfaction within the general population.

Future Directions in Regard to Research on Life Satisfaction.

Earlier research has already pointed out the conflicting results in whether or not age differences emerge in age cohort comparative research groups when assessing levels of life satisfaction (George, Okun, & Landerman, 1985; Herzog & Rodgers, 1981) and this inquiry continued into the new millennium. In fact, the result of the current study indicated generational differences on life satisfaction levels among apostolic women religious based on their responses on the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS). This is contrary to previous research related to the assessment of life satisfaction (Bienenfeld, et al., 1997; Bishop, 2006; Jacobson, 1993; Kvale, et al., 1989; McCulloch, 1997; Schuster, 1990). However, the findings of age differences among apostolic women religious based on their responses on the LSSAWR and its one factor (VLS) challenges researchers to rethink the implication of the variable age on the assessment of life satisfaction in the general population.

The current study has been guided by generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) in the recruitment and assignment of age comparative research groups. Therefore it might be helpful for future research on age differences in the assessment of satisfaction to be guided by a theory that will determine the cutoff scores for age ranges assigned to

comparative research. For example, it might not be enough to control for the variable age through an arbitrary assignment (based on decades or equal distribution of sample in the research groups) of age range to research groups on a factor like varied eyesight status and its impact on life satisfaction when conducting an age comparative research study in the general population. Instead it might be more reasonable to assign a particular age range to comparative research by being informed through theories that determine a certain age range for the construct (e.g., varied eyesight status) of interest when assessing its impact on life satisfaction. Thus, in this case it will be important to be informed by a medical progression disease theory when controlling for the variable "age" while assessing varied eyesight status and its impact on life satisfaction.

Similarly, the theory of Erikson's (1959) stages of psychosocial development or Levinson's (1978; 1996) stages of adult development can inform the assignment of certain age ranges to age group comparisons when assessing for differences in life stages and their impact on career development or job satisfaction. A unique example of a study using Levinson's (1978; 1996) stages of adult development in the assignment of age comparative research groups (Young: 22-27; Midlife: 37-42; and Older: 67-72), is the study by McAdams et al. (1993). In terms of life satisfaction, McAdams et al. (1993) did not find any age cohort differences in regard to life satisfaction and happiness, but they did find differences related to the participants' generativity (defined as the "goal of providing for the next generation," p. 221). Specifically, participants in "Midlife" showed higher levels of generativity than participants in the "Young" and "Older" group. In addition, generativity was positively correlated with life satisfaction and happiness. Thus, this study did find differences for generativity according to age cohorts (assigned

according to life cycles), but additional difference as well as the interpretation of these differences (e.g., pertaining to life satisfaction) could potentially have been found if McAdams et al. (1993) would have used cohort groups based on Strauss and Howe's (1991) model of generation theory.

Thus, if the purpose of a study is to examine the construct "age cohort" and its impact on life satisfaction, then it will be important to define the construct "age cohort" in terms of a theory as evident in McAdams et al. (1993). This particular theory will then guide the cutoff score for the age range of the comparative research groups within that study. In other words, "age cohort" will be defined in terms of stage of human development (e.g., Erikson or Levinson) or in terms of generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991). It is the use of a particular theory that can determine the age range for the assignment of research comparative groups instead of arbitrary assignments of age ranges to comparative research groups. In fact, the variable "age" in and of itself is an endless continuum of arbitrary numbers that can be separated by a cutoff score. However, that cutoff score will need to be based on a theory that defines the variable age and delineates the age range for the purposes of the investigation.

Otherwise, arbitrary age range assignments of comparative research groups might first lead to various error trails before an actual finding will inform the development of new theory. In fact, future research could use the cutoff scores of established theories (Erikson, 1959; Levinson, 1978; 1996; Strauss & Howe, 1991) as a baseline while exploring alternative age ranges for comparative group research design within the field of life satisfaction. Another option of determining age differences on life satisfaction was demonstrated in Herzog and Rodgers (1981).

Hoping to contribute to a resolution to previous contradictory research results as to whether the construct life satisfaction remains stable across different age groups, Herzog and Rodgers (1981) employed a reanalysis (three age specific structural analyses) on the data of two nationally conducted life satisfaction studies. The results of their investigation indicated differences across age groups within the data of these satisfaction studies. Based on these findings the author assigned cutoff scores for the age range (22–44; 45–64; 65 +) of three age groups that are somewhat similar to the cutoff scores for the age ranges assigned to the comparative research within the current study (27-47; 48-65; 66-83) which were based on generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

While the author of the current study excluded the participation of anybody older than 83 years, Herzog and Rodgers decided to collapse two age groups (65-74; 75 and older) into one group due to a small sample size of the oldest age group. Herzog and Rodgers (1981) stated that their findings indicated the presence of "divergent set latent factor (p. 478)" particularly within their youngest and within their oldest age groups due to very specific age tasks within those groups. The authors' (1981) explanation of their findings is confirmed by Strauss and Howe's (1991) generation theory who defined their age groups by stating that the span of each life stage, a sum of 22 years, is determined by the social responsibilities that individuals are expected to fulfill as they move from one stage to the next. In fact, based on generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991), the differences found in the current study can be explained by the varied impact that societal influences had on the three generation cohorts (Silent, Boomer, and 13 Generation) before and during their commitment to a vowed life. In addition, the social

responsibilities (societal as well as congregational) that need to be carried out are different for each of the participants in this study depending on their respective life stage.

In summary, all of the aforementioned indicates that regardless of whether research is theoretically-based or explorative driven, both approaches will need to accurately document their findings. For instance, a general statement that the finding of the study did not indicate age differences in the assessment of life satisfaction levels within the sample of the study would not be sufficient. Instead, findings will need to be precisely stated either like (a) based on the assignment of these particular cutoff scores (identification of how it was determined) for age ranges to comparative research groups within this study, the results indicated that there are no age differences in life satisfaction levels assessed within this sample or (b) based on this particular theory (e.g., medical, psychology, sociology, etc.) the cutoff score assigned to the comparative research groups indicated that there are no age differences in life satisfaction levels within this sample.

Finally, a theory based cutoff score for age ranges assigned to comparative research has its own value and is a different approach from dividing the sample into arbitrary age groups (group assignment is based on sample size or age decades) when conducting comparisons of life satisfaction levels (e.g., Schuster, 1990). The later approach might lead to contradictory results between research studies as observed in McCulloch (1997) or mask potential differences between some age groups (Schuster, 1990; Jacobson, 1993). However, being informed by generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) prevented the overlap of various generation cohorts within age groups and allowed for the identification of age cohort related differences among the responses of this sample on the LSSAWR and its one factor.

Limitations and Strengths

There are several limitations inherent in this study. In fact, the method used in this study has some limitations which affect the generalizability of the results. First, the results of this investigation cannot necessarily be generalized to all U.S. apostolic women religious congregations due to the fact that the CMSWR, to which a smaller percentage of U.S. apostolic women religious congregations belong, declined participating in this study.

Second, this study included three self-selected processes in that (a) the invitation to participate in this investigation was sent only to those LCWR women's religious congregations that are known (based on previous research) to have at least one younger member born after 1960, (b) the recruitment of the sample depended on the openness and willingness of congregational leadership to distribute the study materials and encourage their Sisters to participate in this study, and (c) the response-rate of the Sisters depended on their openness and willingness to participate. Only 44 of a total of 142 apostolic women religious congregations, who have at least one younger member born after 1960, volunteered to participate in this study. Thus, the results of this study might also not apply to the other apostolic women's religious congregations who have at least one younger member born after 1960 but were unable or chose not to participate in this research.

The restriction to include only LCWR congregations who have at least one younger member born after 1960 was chosen because more than 85 percent of Roman Catholic women and men religious are older than sixty years of age (National Religious Retirement Office, 2008). Since the purpose of this study was to develop an instrument

across age groups of apostolic women religious, it was hoped that this selective process would provide the possibility of reaching a greater number of younger members that could contribute to this research project. However, despite the effort to reach out and invite the participation of younger members within the two younger age groups (1961-1981; 1982-2001), there was only one participant in this study that belonged to the later of these two groups. Therefore, as of now the norming of the LSSAWR with its one factor can only be based on the three older generation groups (1925-1942; 1943-1960; 1961-1981).

Third, because of the homogeneous (occupational backgrounds, socioeconomic status, ministry, life style, etc.) group in the study, it will not be possible to generalize the results to a broader spectrum of women religious such as women who belong to contemplative orders. Fourth, although self-report as a methodology for the data collection had several advantages, one disadvantage was that the results are dependent on accurate responses from the participants. Aspects of temporary dissatisfaction within religious life (e.g., dissatisfaction with the present elected leadership) may have led to biased (e.g., non-disclosing) responses even among those Sisters who chose to participate. It might have been beneficial to include women religious who have left religious life for another life style (e.g., single or married) because they could have contributed to greater variance on the items of the LSSAWR and/or provided new information in the seven open-ended responses.

Fifth, the brief nature of the assessment instruments used for this study enabled the author to screen this population with regard to the purpose of the study, but the results cannot be used to interpret the Sisters' well-being or make a clinical diagnosis of this

population. The reliability and validity of the investigation can only be viewed within the context of this study and its purpose to design an instrument assessing the life satisfaction of apostolic women religious from the three different age groups.

Sixth, the format of the questionnaire and the guidelines that were provided for participants to return their completed questionnaire through email seemed to have caused some difficulty for some participants. The use of an internet established software program for completing questionnaires online such as Survey Monkey would have made it easier for participants to follow the steps of filling out and returning the questionnaire to the researcher of this study.

On the other hand, sending the questionnaire through email furthered the nation-wide distribution as well as supported the participation of Sisters of all ages. The researcher of this study received a few thank you emails from leadership of local houses who appreciated the opportunity to print out copies for their Sisters who did not have access to the internet or who preferred to fill out their questionnaire on a hard copy. Of the 1116 Sisters who volunteered their participation, 599 completed their questionnaire on a hard copy. An additional strength of this study appeared to be its content which (a) elicited an overwhelming response of a large number of Sisters who volunteered their participation, and (b) provided a guided tool for the Sisters to reflect on their commitment to religious life in general and their commitment to their specific congregation. In fact, many Sisters wrote in their email or at the end of the questionnaire how meaningful and enriching an experience it was to respond to the questionnaire. Finally, the LSSAWR is the first instrument designed to assess satisfaction with religious life across three generation groups (born between the years of 1942 to 1981).

Final Conclusions

The quantitative and qualitative results of this study showed that the initial information which originally emerged in the exploratory study, was confirmed in the content analysis and finally field tested in this study, did sample the domain of satisfaction with religious life. In fact, despite the inclusion of a larger sample (N = 1116) that was representative of three age groups (1925-1942; 1943-1960; 1961-1981), no additional information emerged during the field testing of the LSSAWR. However, future work can help us to identify other factors that contribute to satisfaction in religious life. That additional factors with statistical significance did not emerge in the larger study might be due to an insufficient number of items tapping into those factors. Future studies might look at revising the items for content and number so that they better reflect those twelve domains identified earlier in the exploratory study. Or perhaps there are other variables that need to be controlled for which would contribute to variance on the items loaded onto the factors. As it stands, factor two was eliminated because it was too weak. Future research could determine whether or not treating variables such as education, race/ethnicity, etc. as co-variants could account for more variance on the LSSAWR.

Furthermore, important findings of this research were the mean differences on the LSSAWR and its one factor based on the responses from participants from the three age groups. The age range for the comparative research groups of the study were determined based on generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Future research can use the cutoff scores (based on generation theory) for comparative age groups studies as a base line to confirm the accuracy of these cutoff scores or to explore the potential of more precise age range cutoff scores so that the exact age range that brings forth age differences on the

LSSAWR can be normed accordingly. The establishment of norms according to the varied age cohorts included in this study of the LSSAWR and its one factor will provide the opportunity for women religious congregations the periodic assessment of satisfaction with religious life among their membership.

Future research will need to establish the norms for the most recent generation that is currently joining religious life. In addition, including former members of religious life in a future study might contribute to greater variance on the items of the LSSAWR and/or provide new information in the seven open-ended responses. Furthermore, the LSSAWR and its one factor can advance research of life satisfaction in the field of psychology. In fact, it will be important to assess if the age difference (three generation groups) found on the LSSAWR based on responses from women religious can be generalized to the general population and their responses on established life satisfaction instrument.

Finally, it would be important to make sure that any adaptation (either to other populations or other age groups) that may be applied to the LSSAWR is based on generation theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) for the integrity of the LSSAWR. The power of this instrument is rooted in the fact that it is driven theoretically by the work of generation theory. This means that the result of any research using the LSSAWR has relevance for the society at large.

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manipulation of ritual and symbol. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Riverside.

APPENDIX A: AUTHOR'S PERMISSION EMAIL FOR THE ADAPTATION OF THE KMSS

Re: Permission for adapting the KMSS to assess satisfaction in religious life

Thursday, September 11, 2008 10:54 AM

From:

"Schumm, Walter" <schumm@k-state.edu>

View contact details

To:

clarakreis@yahoo.com

Cc:

schumm@k-state.edu

Dear Clara,

You are welcome to adapt the KMSS however you wish. I'd be glad to take a look at your revised scale, if you wish. You may use the KMSS or the revised version at no cost. My only requirement is to cite appropriate references. I can send a summary of work on the KMSS that was current to about 2000 if you'd like.

Walter

APPENDIX B: PUBLISHER'S PERMISSION EMAIL FOR THE ADAPTATION OF THE KMSS

RE: Requests for permission to adapt the KMSS

Thursday, January 15, 2009 8:57 AM

From:

"Waters, Jessica - Oxford" <jwaters@wiley.com>

To:

"clarakreis@yahoo.com" <clarakreis@yahoo.com>

Dear Clara Kreis,

Thank you for your request. Permission is granted for you to use the material you specify below subject to the usual acknowledgements (author, title of material, title of book/journal, ourselves as publisher) and on the understanding that nowhere in the original text do we acknowledge another source for the requested material. Non-exclusive World English Language, one edition, print and electronic version of publication only.

This permission is granted on the condition that you contact the author for consent should you wish to adapt/modify the material. This is not the responsibility of Blackwell Publishing.

With best wishes,

Jessica Waters

On behalf of the Wiley-Blackwell permissions team,

jwaters@wiley.com

APPENDIX C: CONTENT ANALYSIS-RATING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS

RATING FORM

Section I: Instructions

You have been asked to complete the following research survey. It should take approximately 15 to 30 minutes for you to complete the survey. The purpose of this survey is to rate items (for their clarity and relevance) that are designed to assess life satisfaction in women religious. **Please be aware that you can choose to either (a) print a copy of the consent form and this rating form or (b) save a copy of the consent form and rating form on your hard drive before completing these two forms.**

In regard to clarity (do I understand what is being asked in this item) you will be asked to rate each item on a scale from one to three (1 = unclear, 2 = somewhat clear, 3 = clear). In regard to relevance (does this item have relevance to its purpose of assessing life satisfaction in apostolic women religious) you will also be asked to rate each item on a scale from one to three (1 = not relevant, 2 = somewhat relevant, 3 = relevant).

Your responses are strictly confidential and your participation is completely voluntary. By completing the survey and signing the attached consent form, you are giving your permission to the researcher to use your responses for use at professional meetings and in research publications. Thank you for your participation.

Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A.

Graduate Student in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology at Marquette University.

Section II: Demographic Information

Responses in this section will be used for descriptive purposes only, and will be reported only at a group level. Demographic data are useful because they facilitate comparisons of the results when surveys are replicated with different groups of people. RESPONSES TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL **NOT** BE USED OR REPORTED **IN ANY WAY** THAT ALLOWS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF AN **INDIVIDUAL** OR A COMMUNITY. We encourage you to answer **all** the questions. Please mark all "Yes/No" questions with an "**X**".

1. Please indicate your congregation's membership by placing an "**X"** on the line preceding that item.

My congregation belongs to …

____ (a) the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR)

____ (b) the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR)

____ (c) both the LCWR and the CMSWR

2. In what year were you born?

   19_____

3. In what year did you enter religious life?

   _____

4. What is your racial/ ethnic background? (Please put only **one** X behind a number)

   1 ___ African American
   2 ___ Asian American
   3 ___ European American (e.g.: Irish, Italian, French, German, etc.)
   4 ___ Native American (Indian, Eskimo, etc.)
   5 ___ Hispanic American
   6 ___ Other or no single category applies (Only for individuals who were **not born** in the Unites States. Please indicate below: e.g.: *European from Poland* or *Asian from Korea)*

   _____

5. What is the highest level of education that you have attained? (Please put only **one** X behind a number)

   1 ___ High school diploma
   2 ___ Associate Degree
   3 ___ College degree
   4 ___ Master degree
   5 ___ Post-masters education
   6 ___ Doctoral degree
   7 ___ Post-doctoral education

Section III: Ratings of Items for the Development of a Life Satisfaction Instrument Designed for Apostolic Women Religious

Below you will find items for the development of an instrument specifically designed to assess life satisfaction in apostolic women religious. Remember you are **not asked** to indicate your levels of satisfaction but you are **asked to rate each item** according to its clarity and relevance. Please follow the directions of the example provided below. Thank you.

Example:

1. How satisfied are you with the CD player installed in your car?

_____1.	_____2.	____X___3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear

_____1.	___X_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional): I think that the item is clearly stated but I do not think that the item is that relevant because the safety of my car is more important to me.

PLEASE BEGIN HERE:

How satisfied are you with …

1. the direction of your congregation as you understand religious life today?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

2. your active contribution to the future planning of your congregation?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

3. the way your congregation is living out its charism today?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

4. your understanding of the mission statement of your congregation?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

5. your congregation's efforts in response to social justice issues?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

6. your congregation's planning efforts for ensuring future viability?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

7. your current local living situation?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

8. your relationships to the Sisters of your congregations that you consider close friends?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

9. the quality of relationships that you have with Sisters in general who belong to your congregation?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

10. maintaining a healthy balance between your ministry obligations and your responsibilities pertaining to your local community life?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

11. your congregation's ability to invite discussion of multicultural (e.g., psychological/physical disability, ethnicity/race, cultural world view, sexual orientation, etc.) issues among its own membership?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

12. your congregation's ability to show acceptance of the multicultural (see question 11) needs of individuals in the community?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

13. the contributions to your congregation of Sisters who come from different multicultural (see question 11) backgrounds?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

14. community prayer and/or rituals in your congregation (e.g., at congregational assemblies)?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

15. community prayer and/or rituals in your local community living situation?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

16. the level of freedom your congregation provides for maintaining relationships with significant family members?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

17. the level of freedom your congregation provides for maintaining relationships with significant friends outside of your community?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

18. the level of freedom your congregation provides for maintaining professional relationships to co-workers/colleagues?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

19. the way the congregation includes families, friends, co-workers, etc. in the religious, social or mission activities of the congregation?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

20. the hierarchy of the Catholic Church (pope, etc.) regarding its influence on the prophetic mission of religious life (e.g., to give voice to those who do not have a voice)?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

21. your community's relationship to the bishops and others in official church leadership?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

22. your personal perception of the pope, bishops, and others in official church leadership?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

23. your personal relationship toward the people of God (the Catholic Church as a community of believers)?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

24. your congregation's moral support of your current ministry?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear
_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

25. your current ministry?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear
_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

26. your congregation's development of new ministries in response to the needs of the times?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear
_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

27. the governmental structure (e.g., team model with shared authority, or major superior and council, etc.) of your congregation?

_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Unclear	somewhat clear	clear
_____1.	_____2.	_____3.
Not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

28. the quality of relationship between Sisters in your congregation and the canonically elected leadership?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

29. the way your canonically elected leadership carries out its administration?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

30. the quality of relationship between you and your canonically elected leadership?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

31. the opportunities you have to exercise leadership in your congregation?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

32. your professional growth?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

33. your personal growth (human development)?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

34. opportunities your congregation offers for ongoing formation/education?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

35. your community's programs or other forms of spiritual development?

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Unclear somewhat clear clear

_____1. _____2. _____3.
Not relevant somewhat relevant relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

36. the amount of time you spend with God in prayer?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

37. your own religious/spiritual growth?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

38. your personal relationship to God?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

39. your congregation's presence (visibility) among youth/young adults?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

40. your congregation's outreach/programming to youth and young adults?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

41. the opportunities your congregation offers to participate in vocation ministry?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

42. your personal efforts to provide a welcoming environment to women interested in religious life?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

43. conversations in your congregation that focus on new forms of membership?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

44. your congregation's initial formation process?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

45. the efforts that have been made by the congregation to involve the membership in initial formation of new members?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

46. your commitment to your religious vocation?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

47. your opportunities to contribute your gifts and talents to the congregation?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

How satisfied are you with …

48. your sense of belonging to the congregation?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

49. the overall respect and validation you feel from your congregation?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

50. Overall, how satisfied are you with your commitment to your particular congregation?

_____1. Unclear _____2. somewhat clear _____3. clear

_____1. Not relevant _____2. somewhat relevant _____3. relevant

Comment (optional):

Section IV: Participants' Suggestions

Please could you share if there are any other items that would be able to assess life satisfaction in apostolic women religious that have not already been mentioned above? Thank you.

Section V: Participants' Comments

Please use as much space as needed to make any comments about this survey.

Section VI: Returning your Survey

Thank you for completing the survey. Please send your completed survey either through e-mail

Sister Maria Clara Kreis

Maria.kreis@marquette.edu

Or to the attention of:

Sister Maria Clara Kreis
Sisters of Divine Providence
9000 Babcock Blvd.
Allison Park, PA 15101

As already mentioned, your signed consent form and completed rating forms will be kept confidential and stored separately and securely. If you do not wish to send your **signed consent form** (type your name if returned via e-mail) and **completed rating form** through e-mail then it would be appreciated if you could send it through postal mail. MOST IMPORTANT, **please return the completed rating form to me IMMEDIATELY. Any completed surveys received after December 2, 2008 cannot be included in the final analyses. THANK YOU for your participation and generous support.**

APPENDIX D: CONTENT ANALYSIS-COVER LETTER FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS

Cover Letter for Women Religious Superiors

Dear Sister XYZ,

My name is Sister Maria Clara Kreis and I am a Sister of Divine Providence. Currently I am a doctoral student at Marquette University (Milwaukee, WI) in the department of Counseling and Educational Psychology. As a part of the doctoral degree requirement, I need to conduct a study and I have chosen to develop an instrument for the assessment of life satisfaction in apostolic women religious. Three professors from Marquette University, Dr. Rebecca Bardwell (chair of my dissertation), Dr. Robert Fox, and Dr. Kathleen Cepelka, as well as Sister Janet Mock, the Director of the Jubilee Institute in Washington Theological Union; Washington, DC, all have agreed to serve on my dissertation committee.

As part of developing an instrument, I will need to consult with experts (women religious themselves) on the items that I will include in the instrument. The median age of women religious is in the seventies and the purpose of this study is to develop an instrument that can assess the life satisfaction of apostolic women religious across various age groups (age range between 19 and 83). In particular, I am looking for Sisters born between 1925 and 1989. To further present a greater diversity among the participants, I would like to ask for the participation of congregations who belong to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and/or to the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR).

Sisters who will volunteer their participation will be asked to rate each item in term of its clarity and relevance on the current version of the instrument designed to assess life satisfaction levels in apostolic women religious. In fact, in regard to clarity (do I understand what is being asked in this item) the Sister will be asked to rate each item on a scale from one to three (1 = unclear, 2 = somewhat clear, 3 = clear). In regard to relevance (does this item have relevance to its purpose of assessing life satisfaction in apostolic women religious) the Sister will also be asked to rate each item on a scale from one to three (1 = not relevant, 2 = somewhat relevant, 3 = relevant).

With this letter I am asking for your permission to conduct <u>only the first</u> part (two other parts will follow at a later point) of this study with about 4 to 5 Sisters of your congregation who were born between 1925 and 1989. In order to conduct this research, I would need your written permission as well as your support in distributing the study materials (attached to this e-mail) to Sisters of your congregation who were born in this specific time period. For your own review, I have attached the study materials (participant's cover letter, consent form, and rating form) that your Sisters would receive if they volunteer to participate. What would be asked of a Sister who participates in this

study is described in the participant's cover letter. Sisters who volunteer to participate would need to sign to consent form and complete the rating form and send it back to me by either e-mail or regular mail. The first 10 to 20 completed responses will be included in the final interpretation and revision of the instrument.

In regard to maintaining the confidentiality of each Sister who participates only I, the conductor of the study, will have access to the correspondence with the Sisters who will send their completed materials by e-mail. Any identifying information associated with a Sister will be removed immediately upon my receiving the signed consent form and completed rating form. This procedure will ensure that neither the conductor of the study nor her advisor will be able to identify the Sister from the signed consent forms and the completed rating forms. Please note since this study will be the first of three steps yet to be conducted for the dissertation study, a final summary of the dissertation results will be sent to superiors of all participating congregations at the conclusion of this project for the distribution to the Sisters within these congregations. Please feel free to contact me or my advisor at any time if you have any questions about this study (see contact information at the end of this letter).

If you approve of this study within your congregation, please sign the "superior's permission form" and return it to me by postal mail or e-mail. Lastly, I would like to express in advance my gratitude for your openness and support in regard to this investigation. It is hoped that the results of this study and the other two following this project will together provide apostolic women religious congregations with an instrument to be used for the assessment of life satisfaction levels in apostolic women religious of different age groups.

Sincerely,

Sister Maria Clara Kreis — November, 11 2008

---------- ----------

Signature Date

Contact Information:

Doctoral Student

Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A.
Sisters of Divine Providence
9000 Babcock Blvd.
Allison Park, PA 15101

Phone: 414-232-1334
e-mail: maria.kreis@marquette.edu

Advisor

Rebecca Bardwell, Ph.D.
Counseling and Educational Psychology
Marquette University
140 Schroeder Complex
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881
Phone: 414-288-1430
e-mail: rebecca.bardwell@marquette.edu

Superior's Permission Form

I

_____

(Name of the superior)

_____

(Congregational title; e.g.: Provincial of the Sisters of ….)

give Sister Maria Clara Kreis permission to conduct an investigation with the Sisters of our congregation. I understand that this study meets one of the three steps of her dissertation study, titled "Assessment of Life Satisfaction in Apostolic Women Religious: The Development of a New Instrument" which is a requirement for her doctoral degree. I have reviewed the two cover letters (superior's and participants'), the participants' rating form (which includes information regarding participant's consent) and feel comfortable in providing my support for this investigation.

---------- ----------

Signature Date

APPENDIX E: CONTENT ANALYSIS-COVER LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

Participants' Cover Letter

Dear Sisters,

My name is Sister Maria Clara Kreis and I am Sister of Divine Providence. Currently I am a doctoral student at Marquette University (Milwaukee, WI) in the department of Counseling and Educational Psychology. As a part of the doctoral degree requirement, I need to conduct a study and I have chosen to develop an instrument for the assessment of life satisfaction in apostolic women religious. As part of developing an instrument, I will need to consult with experts (women religious themselves) on the items that I will include in the instrument. I am looking for Sisters belonging to different age groups (age range between 19 and 83) who would volunteer their participation in this study. Therefore, I would like to conduct my research in particularly with 3 to 4 apostolic women religious congregations.

After having contacted the superior of your congregation, I have received her written approval to conduct my investigation with the Sisters of your congregation who are interested and willing to volunteer their participation. Please note that the approval of your superior for this study does not obligate your participation in this study. Further, your participation would be completely voluntary and confidential. The indirect benefits of this study for the participants are an increased understanding of the components that are important for the assessment of life satisfaction in women considering and/or committed to religious life.

In regard to keeping the confidentiality of each Sister who volunteers her participation, I would like to note that only I, the conductor of the study, will have access to the correspondence with the participating Sisters. The correspondence will be limited to receiving the signed consent form and the completed rating form (please see attachments). Any identifying information associated with a Sister will be removed immediately upon my receiving the signed consent form and the completed rating form. This procedure will ensure that neither the conductor of the study nor her advisor or assistant will be able to retrieve the identification of the Sister from the signed consent form and completed rating form. Please note since this study will be the first of three steps yet to be conducted for the dissertation study, a final summary of the dissertation results will be sent to the superiors of all participating congregations at the conclusion of this project for the distribution to the Sisters within these congregations.

It is hoped that all the above information afforded you with sufficient content and context about the purpose and procedures of this study so that you are able to provide your consent to this investigation if you are interested to volunteer your participation. Participants of this study are asked to **please send** the **signed consent form** and the **completed rating form** to me by e-mail or postal mail (address see below).

Expressing an initial interest and having received the study material does not obligate you to volunteer your participation. As the conductor of this study, I assume that Sisters who have not returned their **signed consent form** and **completed rating form** within the specified time period are unable to volunteer their participation. Please feel free to contact me or my advisor at any time if you have any questions about this study (see contact information at the end of this letter). I would like to thank you in advance for your attention and support given to this matter.

Sincerely,

Sister Maria Clara Kreis — November 11st, 2008

---------- ----------

Signature Date

Contact Information:

Doctoral Student

Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A.
Sisters of Divine Providence
9000 Babcock Blvd.
Allison Park, PA 15101

Phone: 414-232-1334
e-mail: maria.kreis@marquette.edu

Advisor

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140 Schroeder Complex
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881
Phone: 414-288-1430
e-mail: rebecca.bardwell@marquette.edu

APPENDIX F: CONTENT ANALYSIS-COVER LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS-EXPERTS

Participants' Cover Letter

Dear Sisters,

My name is Sister Maria Clara Kreis and I am Sister of Divine Providence. Currently I am a doctoral student at Marquette University (Milwaukee, WI) in the department of Counseling and Educational Psychology. As a part of the doctoral degree requirement, I need to conduct a study and I have chosen to develop an instrument for the assessment of life satisfaction in apostolic women religious. As part of developing an instrument, I will need to consult with experts (women religious themselves) on the items that I will include in the instrument. I am looking for Sisters belonging to different age groups (age range between 19 and 83) who would volunteer their participation in this study. The indirect benefits of this study for the participants are an increased understanding of the components that are important for the assessment of life satisfaction in women considering and/or committed to religious life.

Further, your participation would be completely voluntary and confidential. In regard to keeping the confidentiality of each Sister who volunteers her participation, I would like to note that only I, the conductor of the study, will have access to the correspondence with the participating Sisters. The correspondence will be limited to receiving the signed consent form and the completed rating form (please see attachments). Any identifying information associated with a Sister will be removed immediately upon my receiving the signed consent form and the completed rating form. This procedure will ensure that neither the conductor of the study nor her advisor or assistant will be able to retrieve the identification of the Sister from the signed consent form and completed rating form. Please note since this study will be the first of three steps yet to be conducted for the dissertation study, a final summary of the dissertation results will be sent to you at the conclusion of this project.

It is hoped that all the above information afforded you with sufficient content and context about the purpose and procedures of this study so that you are able to provide your consent to this investigation if you are interested to volunteer your participation. Participants of this study are asked to **please send** the **signed consent form** and the **completed rating form** to me by e-mail or postal mail (address see below).

Expressing an initial interest and having received the study material does not obligate you to volunteer your participation. As the conductor of this study, I assume that Sisters who have not returned their **signed consent form** and **completed rating form** within the specified time period are unable to volunteer their participation. Please feel free to contact me or my advisor at any time if you have any questions about this study

(see contact information at the end of this letter). I would like to thank you in advance for your attention and support given to this matter.

Sincerely,

Sister Maria Clara Kreis	November 11, 2008
---	---
Signature	Date

Contact Information:

Doctoral Student	Advisor
Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A. Sisters of Divine Providence 9000 Babcock Blvd. Allison Park, PA 15101 Phone: 414-232-1334 e-mail: maria.kreis@marquette.edu	Rebecca Bardwell, Ph.D. Counseling and Educational Psychology Marquette University 140 Schroeder Complex Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881 Phone: 414-288-1430 e-mail: rebecca.bardwell@marquette.edu

APPENDIX G: CONTENT ANALYSIS-CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
AGREEMENT OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
"Assessment of Life Satisfaction in Apostolic Women Religious: The Development of a New Instrument (Part 1-Content Analysis)."
Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A.
Counseling and Educational Psychology Department of Marquette University

You have been invited to participate in this research study. Before you agree to participate, it is important that you read and understand the following information. Participation is completely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

PURPOSE**:** The purpose of this research study is to determine the inclusion of items that are clear and relevant for the development of a life satisfaction instrument particularly designed for apostolic women religious. You will be one of approximately 20 participants in this research study.

PROCEDURES: I understand that my participation in the study will consist of completing this consent form and a rating form which I may return to the investigator via email or postal mail. If I return this consent form and the rating form via email, the principal investigator, Sister Maria Clara Kreis, will immediately delete any identifying information from the email. De-identified data from this study will be kept indefinitely.

DURATION: Your participation will involve the rating of an instrument which could take between 15 to 45 minutes.

RISKS: The risks associated with participation in this study do not exceed having a discussion with another Sister or friend.

BENEFITS: The benefits associated with participation in this study could help to clarify thoughts about components as related to life satisfaction that are important to religious life.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All information you reveal in this study will be kept confidential. Any identifying information will be removed immediately upon receiving the completed rating form. All your data will be assigned an arbitrary code number rather than using your name or other information that could identify you as an individual. When the results of the study are published, you will not be identified by name. The hard copies of the de-identified data (signed consent forms and completed rating forms) will be kept in the principal investigator's private residency (Sister M. Clara Kreis, 9000 Babcock Blvd., Allison Park, PA 15101) in a locked file drawer and destroyed by shredding paper documents 10 years after completing the dissertation requirements. However, I

understand that the de-identified electronic data will be kept indefinitely and might be used for further research and publication. In addition, your research records may be inspected by the Marquette University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and (as allowable by law) state and federal agencies.

Extra Costs to Participate: I understand that I can return the study materials to the principal investigator through the use of email. I also understand that if I would prefer to return the study materials by postal mail that I would be asked to provide the envelope and stamp myself.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participating in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. I understand that I am not obligated to respond to the study material that I have received through e-mail. I also understand that I can withdraw my participation at any time during the process of reading or completing my response to the study materials. However, I do understand that my data can not be removed anymore after is has been de-identified.

Contact Information: If you have any questions about this research project, you can contact Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A. at (414) 232-1334 and/or Professor Rebecca Bardwell, Ph.D. at (414) 288-1430. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS CONSENT FORM, ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND AM PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT. (**If** you will be **emailing** this consent form and your completed rating form, please **type your name and the date** below; *if* you will be sending this consent form and completed rating form via *postal mail,* please *print and sign* your name below and print the date.)

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Participant's Name

_____ _____

Researcher's Signature Date

APPENDIX H: QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGNED FOR THE FIELD-TESTING OF THE LSSAWR

Section I: **Demographic Information**

Responses in this section will be used for descriptive purposes only, and will be reported only at a group level. Demographic data are useful because they facilitate comparisons of the results when surveys are replicated with different groups of people. RESPONSES TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL **NOT** BE USED OR REPORTED **IN ANY WAY** THAT ALLOWS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF AN **INDIVIDUAL** OR A COMMUNITY. We encourage you to answer **all** the questions. Please mark all "Yes/No" questions with an "**X**".

Please be aware that only completed surveys that have a signed consent form attached to them can be included in the final analyses.

6. I have read and agree to the conditions of the Informed Consent Form.

   Yes _____
   No _____

7. Please provide the name of your congregation below:

   _____

   _____

8. Please indicate your current living arrangements by placing an "**X"** on the line preceding that item. Currently I live …

   ____ (a) alone.

   ____ (b) with one other Sister of my congregation.

   ____ (c) with four or less than four Sisters of my congregation.

   ____ (d) with eight or less than eight Sisters of my congregation.

____ (e) with twelve or less than twelve Sisters of my congregation.

____ (f) with more than twelve Sisters of my congregation.

____ (g) with Sister(s) of another congregation.

____ (h) other (Please describe below).

_____

_____

9. In what year were you born?

   19_____

10. Did you receive the sacraments of initiation (e.g., baptism, etc.) during your childhood and adolescence within the Roman Catholic Church?

    Yes _____
    No _____

11. If you answered "No" to Question No. 5, please indicate the length of time either a) between the year you received the last sacrament of initiation and the year you entered religious life or b) between the year you became a Roman Catholic and the year you entered religious life.

    _____ (number of years)

12. At about what age did you consider religious life for the first time?

    _____

13. In what year did you enter religious life?

    _____

14. If applicable, in what year did you celebrate your first temporary commitment (first profession) in your current congregation?

    _____

15. If applicable, in what year did you celebrate your final vows in your current congregation?

    _____

16. Have you ever been in a different religious congregation?

    Yes _____
    No _____

17. If you answered "Yes" to Question No. 11, please indicate the length of time (including the formation years) that you belonged to your former religious congregation.

    _____ (number of years)

18. Did you ever leave your current congregation for a period of time? (e.g., exclaustration, temporary leave of absence, sabbatical for vocation discernment, other)

    Yes _____
    No _____

19. If you answered "Yes" to Question No. 13, please indicate the length of time that you were absent from your congregation

    _____ (number of years)

20. Were you ever married or in a committed relationship?

    Yes _____
    No _____

21. If you answered "Yes" to Question No. 15, please indicate the length of time that you were married or in a committed relationship.

    _____ (number of years)

22. If you answered "Yes" to Question No. 15, please indicate the length of time either a) between the end of your married life and your entrance into religious life, or b) between the end of your committed relationship and your entrance into religious life.

_____ (number of years)

23. What is your racial/ ethnic background? (Please mark only one category)

1 ___ African American
2 ___ Asian American
3 ___ European American (e.g.: Irish, Italian, French, German, etc.)
4 ___ Native American (Indian, Eskimo, etc.)
5 ___ Hispanic American
6 ___ Other or no single category applies (Only for individuals who were **born in** the United States. Please explain below:)

_____

7 ___ Other or no single category applies (Only for individuals who were **not born** in the United States. Please indicate below: e.g.: *European from Poland* or *Asian from Korea)*

_____

24. What is the highest level of education that you have attained? (Please mark only one category)

1 ___ Some high school
2 ___ High school diploma
3 ___ Associate degree
4 ___ College degree
5 ___ Master's degree
6 ___ Post-masters education
7 ___ Doctoral degree
8 ___ Post-doctoral education

25. Please list chronologically all ministries (or if applicable employment history) in which you have been involved and indicate the approximate length of time you were involved in these ministries. (Please begin with your earliest ministry (or if applicable, employment) and end with your current or most recent one).

Section II: Questions about Well-Being

Part A: Instructions:

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1 -7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

The 7-point scale is as follows:

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = slightly disagree
4 = neither agree nor disagree
5 = slightly agree
6 = agree
7 = strongly agree

_____ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

_____ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.

_____ 3. I am satisfied with my life.

_____ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

_____ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

The Satisfaction With Life Scale is in the public domain. Permission is not needed to use it. The official citation is a follows: Pavot, W., & Diener, E. (1993). Review of the Satisfaction With Life Scale. *Psychological Assessment, 5,* 164-172.

Part B: Instructions:

Please answer the following questions about yourself by indicating the extent of your agreement using the following scale:

[0] = strongly disagree

[1] = disagree

[2] = neutral

[3] = agree

[4] = strongly agree

Be as honest as you can throughout, and try not to let your responses to one question influence your response to other questions. There are no right or wrong answers

_____ 1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.
_____ 2. It's easy for me to relax.
_____ 3. If something can go wrong for me, it will.
_____ 4. I'm always optimistic about my future.
_____ 5. I enjoy my friends a lot.
_____ 6. It's important for me to keep busy.
_____ 7. I hardly ever expect things to go my way.
_____ 8. I don't get upset too easily.
_____ 9. I rarely count on good things happening to me.
_____ 10. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

Copyright © 1994 by the American Psychological Association. Reproduced [or Adapted] with permission. The official citation is a follows: Scheier, M. F., Carver, C. S., & Bridges, M. W. (1994). Distinguishing optimism from neuroticism (and trait anxiety, self mastery, and self-esteem): A reevaluation of the Life Orientation Test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67,* 1063-1078.

Section III: Questions about Religious Life

You are asked to rate your satisfaction on 50 items. Please be aware that in rating your level of satisfaction on each item you are indicating an overall rating. An overall rating will allow you to rate satisfaction of content that may have some levels to it. For example, you may tend to rate the safety of the car you are driving based on a variety of criteria. Thus, individually each criterion has a different importance to you when you determine the safety of this car but it is your overall assessment of this particular car that impacts your decision as to whether or not you consider this car as safe for you to continue driving it. As shown in the example below, please rate your level of satisfaction to each of the questions using the 1 to 5 scale provided.

(e.g., __5___ 1. How satisfied are you with the safety of the car you are driving?)

If you change your rating then please delete or cross out your first rating and write in the new rating.
(e.g., __X __4_ 1. How satisfied are you with the safety of the car you are driving?)

The 5-point scale is as follows:

1 = very dissatisfied
2 = dissatisfied
3 = neither dissatisfied or satisfied
4 = satisfied
5 = very satisfied

How satisfied are you with …

_____ 1. the direction of your congregation as you understand religious life today?

_____ 2. the way your congregation is living out its charism today?

_____ 3. your living out the mission of your congregation?

_____ 4. your congregation's efforts to respond to social justice issues?

The 5-point scale is as follows:

1 = very dissatisfied
2 = dissatisfied
3 = neither dissatisfied or satisfied
4 = satisfied
5 = very satisfied

How satisfied are you with …

_____ 5. your active contribution to the future planning of your congregation?

_____ 6. your congregation's planning efforts for ensuring future viability (members, ministry, finances)?

_____ 7. your congregation's ability to discuss issues of diversity (disability, ethnicity/race, sexual orientation) and the impact they have on your congregation?

_____ 8. your congregation's acceptance of diverse (see # 7) needs of individuals in your congregation?

_____ 9. your personal efforts to reach out to Sisters from diverse (see # 7) backgrounds?

_____ 10. the quality of your relationships with Sisters in general in your congregation?

_____ 11. the opportunities within your congregation to interact with others in your age group on a spiritual and social basis?

_____ 12. your relationships to the Sisters of your congregations that you consider close friends?

_____ 13. the level of encouragement in your congregation for maintaining relationships with close friends outside of your community?

_____ 14. the level of encouragement in your congregation for maintaining relationships with significant family members?

The 5-point scale is as follows:

1 = very dissatisfied
2 = dissatisfied
3 = neither dissatisfied or satisfied
4 = satisfied
5 = very satisfied

How satisfied are you with …

_____ 15. the level of encouragement in your congregation for maintaining professional relationships with co-workers/colleagues?

_____ 16. your congregation's inclusion of families, friends, co-workers, and others in religious, social and/or mission activities of the congregation?

_____ 17. the hierarchy of the Catholic Church (the pope, bishops, and clergy) regarding its influence on the mission of religious life?

_____ 18. your community's relationship to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church?

_____ 19. your involvement with the Catholic Church as a community of believers?

_____ 20. your current ministry?

_____ 21. your current local living situation?

_____ 22. how you are maintaining a healthy balance between your ministry obligations and your responsibilities pertaining to your community life?

_____ 23. your congregation's affirmation and support of your current ministry?

_____ 24. your congregation's development of new ministries in response to the needs of the times?

_____ 25. the governmental structure of your congregation?

_____ 26. the quality of relationships between Sisters in your congregation and your elected leaders?

The 5-point scale is as follows:

1 = very dissatisfied
2 = dissatisfied
3 = neither dissatisfied or satisfied
4 = satisfied
5 = very satisfied

How satisfied are you with …

_____ 27. the way your elected leaders carry out their responsibilities?

_____ 28. the quality of your relationship with your elected leaders?

_____ 29. the opportunities you have to exercise leadership (e.g., boards, committees) in your congregation?

_____ 30. your professional growth?

_____ 31. your personal growth (human development)?

_____ 32. your own religious/spiritual growth?

_____ 33. your personal relationship to God?

_____ 34. prayer and/or rituals in your congregation (e.g., at congregational assemblies)?

_____ 35. prayer and/or rituals in your local living situation?

_____ 36. your congregation's programs in spirituality or other forms of spiritual development?

_____ 37. opportunities your congregation offers for ongoing formation/ education?

_____ 38. conversations in your congregation that focus on new forms of

membership (e.g., temporary commitment)?

_____ 39. your personal efforts to provide a welcoming environment to women interested in religious life?

The 5-point scale is as follows:

1 = very dissatisfied
2 = dissatisfied
3 = neither dissatisfied or satisfied
4 = satisfied
5 = very satisfied

How satisfied are you with …

_____ 40. the opportunities your congregation offers you for participating in vocation ministry?

_____ 41. your congregation's recognition of the need to be actively involved with youth and young adults today?

_____ 42. your congregation's presence (visibility) among youth/young adults?

_____ 43. your congregation's initial formation process for women entering today?

_____ 44. the efforts that have been made by the congregation to involve the membership in initial formation of new members?

_____ 45. your congregation's efforts to provide a welcoming environment to new members that have joined your congregation?

_____ 46. your commitment to your religious vocation?

_____ 47. your opportunities to contribute your gifts and talents to the congregation?

_____ 48. your sense of belonging to the congregation?

_____ 49. the overall respect and validation you feel from your congregation?

_____ 50. Overall, how satisfied are you with your commitment to your congregation?

Apostolic Women's Religious Life Satisfaction Instrument 1 (12/08/08)

Section IV: Overall Satisfaction

1. Thinking about your life over the last year as a woman religious how satisfied are you on a scale from one to ten?

(e.g., _7_ indicates my level of satisfaction in regard to the safety of the car that I am driving).

(a) Please indicate your rating by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item.

Very unsatisfied Moderately satisfied Very satisfied
1----------5----------→ 10

_____ indicates my level of satisfaction with religious life in the past year.

Please elaborate on your rating with a brief answer to both of these questions:

A. What factors currently influence your satisfaction in your congregation today?"

B. What factors currently influence your lack of satisfaction in your congregation today?"

Section V: Open-ended Questions

1. Please state the main reasons that motivated you to enter religious life.

2. Please state the main reasons that motivate you to remain in religious life.

3. Please state the main reasons that make it sometimes difficult for you to live a vowed life.

4. Taking a look at the current state of religious life, please complete at least one of the following statements.

a) I believe that religious life <u>will</u> have a future because.....

b) I believe that religious life <u>will not</u> have a future because.....

5. Please state briefly how you envision religious life should be, in order to ensure its viability in the future.

Section VI: Participants' Comments

Please use as much space as needed to make any comments about this survey.

Section VII: Returning your Survey

Thank you for completing the survey. Please send your completed survey either by e-mail or postal mail.

Sister Maria Clara Kreis

Maria.kreis@marquette.edu

Or to the attention of:

Sister Maria Clara Kreis
Sisters of Divine Providence
9000 Babcock Blvd.
Allison Park, PA 15101

As already mentioned, your **signed consent form** and **completed questionnaire** will be kept confidential and stored separately and securely. If you do not wish to send your **signed consent form** (type your name if returned via e-mail) and **completed questionnaire** by e-mail then it would be appreciated if you could please send it by postal mail. MOST IMPORTANT, **please return the completed study materials to me AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** Finally, the **deadline** for returning your response is **February 28, 2009. THANK YOU** for your participation and generous support.

APPENDIX I: APA'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE SWLS'S PUBLIC DOMAIN STATUS

From: Baker, Barbara <BBaker@apa.org>
Subject: RE: Permissions for instruments
To: "Clara Kreis" < clarakreis@yahoo.com >
Date: Thursday, October 9, 2008, 11:17 AM

Dear Sister Clara,

Good news! We have received approval to grant you permission to use the requested test LOT-R) in your dissertation research. Attached is APA's formal permission agreement; please sign and return to the APA Permissions Office.

Re: the "Satisfaction with Life Scale" (SWLS): As you already know, this scale is in the public domain. No permission is required to reproduce it; you need only cite the source.

Re: the "Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale" (KMMS): As you are also aware, APA does not own the copyright to this scale, as it appeared in a non-APA-copyrighted journal (Journal of Marriage and the Family).

Thanks for your patience throughout this process, and good luck with your research.

Best regards,

Barbara

Barbara Baker

APA Permissions Office

750 First Street, NE, Washington , DC 20002-4242

Fax: 202.336.5633, Phone: 202.336.5632

Part-time hours: 7:30-12:30, Eastern Time

APPENDIX J: APA PERMISSION FORM FOR THE USE OF THE LOT-R

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

INVOICE NO. **N/A**
Federal Tax I.D. 53-0205890
Date: October 9, 2008
Revised January 8, 2009

IF THE TERMS STATED BELOW ARE ACCEPTABLE, PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN ONE COPY TO APA. RETAIN ONE COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS. PLEASE NOTE THAT PERMISSION IS NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APA RECEIVES THE COUNTERSIGNED FORM AND ANY APPLICABLE FEES.

Sister Maria Clara Kreis
Permissions Office
9000 Babcock Blvd.
Street, NE
Allison Park, PA 15101
DC 20002-4242

about/copyright.html

apa.org

5633

APA

750 First

Washington,

www.apa.org/

permissions@

202-336-5650
Fax: 202-336-

IN MAKING PAYMENT REFER TO THE ABOVE INVOICE NUMBER

Request is for the following APA-copyrighted material: Table 6, page 1073, from JOURNAL OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, 1994, *67*, 1063-1078

For the following use: **Email distribution** (by Sister Maria Clara Kreis's Superior) to various Superiors of religious congregations of Roman Catholic women, for Doctoral Dissertation research (data collection) purposes. Participants at these houses will then be able to return the completed questionnaire to Sister Maria Clara Kreis via email or via postal mail

File: Kreis, Sister Maria Clara (author)

Permission is granted for the nonexclusive use of APA-copyrighted material specified on the attached request contingent upon fulfillment of the conditions indicated below:

1. The fee is waived.
2. The reproduced material must include the following notice: Copyright © 1994 by the American Psychological Association. Reproduced [or Adapted] with permission. The official citation that should be used in referencing this material is [list the original APA bibliographic citation].

3. You must obtain the author's (or, in the case of multiple authorship, one author's) permission. APA's permission is subject to the condition that the author of the cited material does not object to your usage.

4. **APA permission is granted with the understanding that there will be a maximum of 5,000 participants.**

NOTE: Permission was originally granted for a maximum of 500 participants. However, in order to allow for non-respondents and/or incomplete responses, as well as "dropouts" from the study, APA hereby extends permission to include a possible maximum of 5,000 participants.

This agreement constitutes permission to reproduce only for the purposes specified on the attached request and does not apply to subsequent uses. Permission applies solely to publication and distribution in the English language throughout the world, unless otherwise stated. No changes, additions, or deletions to the material other than any authorized in this correspondence shall be made without prior written consent by APA.

This permission does not include permission to use any copyrighted matter obtained by APA or the author(s) from other sources that may be incorporated in the material. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain permission from such other sources.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED TO BY: **PERMISSION GRANTED ON ABOVE TERMS:**

Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A. Barbara Baker

Applicant for the American Psychological Association

January 8, 2009 October 9, 2008

Revised January 8, 2009

Date Date

_____ I wish to cancel my request for permission at this time.

APPENDIX K: AUTHOR'S PERMISSION EMAIL FOR THE USE OF THE LOT-R

Permission to use LOT-R

Monday, June 2, 2008 12:39 PM

From:

"ginger placone" <gingerp@andrew.cmu.edu>

View contact details

To:

"Clara Kreis" <clarakreis@yahoo.com>

Hello Sister Kreis,

I received your voicemail message upon returning from lunch--your email saves my returning the call! Below is the permission letter for LOT-R as well as a copy of the scale.

Should you require further info, please contact me.

Cordially,

Ginger Placone

Department of Psychology

Carnegie Mellon University

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213-3890

Phone: (412) 268-3791

FAX: (412) 268-7810

Internet: scheier@cmu.edu

June 2, 2008

Sister Clara Kreis

Counseling Psychology Department

Marquette University

Milwaukee, WI.

c/o email: clarakreis@yahoo.com

Dear Sister Kreis,

My permission to use the Life Orientation Test--Revised (LOT-R) for research purposes is hereby granted. You should also know that the copyright for the revised scale is officially held by the American Psychological Association, which publishes the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, the journal in which the revised scale originally appeared. You might want to obtain permission from the publisher as well.

If you publish any research using the revised scale, I'd eventually like to receive a copy of the published work for my files. Thanks in advance for this courtesy.

Good luck with your project.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Scheier, Ph.D.

Professor and Head, Department of Psychology

Co-Director, Pittsburgh Mind-Body Center

(Dedicated to the Scientific Study of Mind-Body Interactions in Health)

Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R)

Instructions:

Please answer the following questions about yourself by indicating the extent of your agreement using the following scale:

[0] = strongly disagree

[1] = disagree

[2] = neutral

[3] = agree

[4] = strongly agree

Be as honest as you can throughout, and try not to let your responses to one question influence

your response to other questions. There are no right or wrong answers

_____ 1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.

_____ 2. It's easy for me to relax.

_____ 3. If something can go wrong for me, it will.

_____ 4. I'm always optimistic about my future.

_____ 5. I enjoy my friends a lot.

_____ 6. It's important for me to keep busy.

_____ 7. I hardly ever expect things to go my way.

_____ 8. I don't get upset too easily.

_____ 9. I rarely count on good things happening to me.

_____ 10. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

Scoring:

1. Reverse code items 3, 7, and 9 prior to scoring (0=4) (1=3) (2=2) (3=1) (4=0).

2. Sum items 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, and 10 to obtain an overall score.

Note: Items 2, 5, 6, and 8 are filler items only. They are not scored as part of the revised scale. The revised scale was constructed in order to eliminate two items from the original scale, which dealt more with coping style than with positive expectations for future outcomes. The correlation between the revised scale and the original scale is .95.

Reference:

Scheier, M.F., Carver C.S., and Bridges, M.W. (1994). Distinguishing optimism from neuroticism (and trait anxiety, self-mastery, and self-esteem): A re-evaluation of the Life Orientation Test. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67, 1063-1078.

APPENDIX L: FIELD TESTING OF LSSAWR- COVER LETTER FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

Cover Letter for the Leadership of Women's Religious Congregations

Dear Sister,

My name is Sister Maria Clara Kreis, a Sister of Divine Providence, and currently a doctoral student in Counseling and Educational Psychology at Marquette University (Milwaukee, WI). Three professors from Marquette University, Dr. Rebecca Bardwell (chair of my dissertation), Dr. Robert Fox, and Dr. Kathleen Cepelka, as well as Sister Janet Mock, the Director of the Jubilee Institute at Washington Theological Union; Washington, DC, have agreed to serve on my dissertation committee.

The topic of my dissertation is the development of a life satisfaction instrument specifically designed for apostolic women religious. Please note that the term 'apostolic women religious', for the purposes of this research, includes all religious who minister in an apostolate (e.g. teaching, pastoral work) regardless of their designation as apostolic religious, evangelical (e.g. Franciscans) or monastic (e.g. Benedictines).

The outcome of my work will concentrate on evaluating the instrument. It will not discuss any degrees of satisfaction about religious life. This can only be obtained once the validity and reliability of an instrument is shown which, hopefully, will be the result at the end of my doctoral work. The methodology includes statistical analyses of all the items in the instrument along with open-ended questions to assess motivational factors and satisfaction factors among different generations of women religious. Assessing for these motivational factors and satisfaction factors assists in evaluating the content of the items of the current version of the instrument. In summary, the objective of this study is to test whether the current version of this instrument is able to assess the satisfaction with religious life among different cohorts of apostolic women religious.

To ensure the greatest diversity of participants, I am asking the Congregations who belong to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) for their participation and support of my study. My target audience is apostolic women religious (including women in initial formation), who were born between 1925 and 1989. With this letter I am asking for your permission to conduct this study with the Sisters in your congregation who were born between 1925 and 1989. In order to conduct this research, I would need your written permission as well as your assistance in distributing my study materials to the Sisters in your congregation who would be willing to participate.

For your own review, I have attached the cover letter, written consent form, and questionnaires that your Sisters would receive if they volunteer to participate. What would be asked of Sisters who participate in this study is described in the cover letter given to them. Sisters who volunteer to participate would need to sign the consent form, complete the questionnaire and send both back to me by either e-mail or regular mail. Following the distribution of the study materials, I will be in touch with you to ask you twice for your assistance in forwarding a reminder e-mail to all the Sisters who initially

received an invitation to participate. Approximately 500 completed responses will be included in the final interpretation and analyses.

In regard to maintaining the confidentiality of each Sister who participates only I, the conductor of the study, will have access to the correspondence with the Sisters who send their completed materials by e-mail or postal mail. Any identifying information associated with a Sister will be removed immediately upon receiving the completed questionnaire. This procedure will ensure that neither the conductor of the study nor her advisor or assistant will be able to identify the Sister from the completed questionnaire. A summary of the results will be sent to you for distribution to the Sisters of your congregation after the completion of the study (defense of the dissertation).

Please feel free to contact me or my advisor at any time if you have any questions about this study (see contact information at the end of this letter). If you approve of this study within your congregation, please sign the "Leadership Agreement Form" and return it to me by postal mail. Lastly, I would like to express in advance my gratitude for your willingness to support this endeavor. It is my hope that the results of this study will contribute to the future of religious life in very positive ways.

Sincerely,

Sister Maria Clara Kreis January 29, 2009

Contact Information:

Doctoral Student

Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A.
Sisters of Divine Providence
9000 Babcock Blvd.
Allison Park
PA, 15101
Phone: 414-232-1334
e-mail: maria.kreis@marquette.edu

Advisor

Rebecca Bardwell, Ph.D.
Counseling and Educational Psychology
Marquette University
140 Schroeder Complex
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881
Phone: 414-288-1430
e-mail: rebecca.bardwell@marquette.edu

(Please note the Leadership Agreement Form below)

APPENDIX M: FIELD TESTING OF LSSAWR - AGREEMENT FORM FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

Leadership Agreement Form

I_____
(Name)

_____
(Title and congregation; e.g.: Provincial of the Sisters of ….)

offer my assistance to Sister Maria Clara Kreis so that she can conduct her research with the Sisters of our congregation. I understand that this study "Assessment of Life Satisfaction in Apostolic Women Religious: The Development of a New Instrument" is a part of the requirements for her doctoral degree. I have reviewed the two cover letters (for leadership and participant), the participants' consent form as well as the participants' questionnaire and feel comfortable in providing my support for this research.

I understand that once I have made the study materials available to all the Sisters that meet the study criteria, I will no longer be in contact with these Sisters. The individual Sister who volunteers her participation will be communicating directly to Sister Clara either by e-mail or postal mail to ensure the confidentiality of the study. My only other involvement with this study will be limited to forwarding twice a reminder e-mail from Sister Clara regarding this study to all the Sisters who initially received an invitation to participate following the distribution of the study material.

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Signature Date

APPENDIX N: FIELD TESTING OF LSSAWR- COVER LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

Participants' Cover Letter

Dear Sister,

My name is Sister Maria Clara Kreis and I am a Sister of Divine Providence. Currently I am a doctoral student at Marquette University (Milwaukee, WI) in the department of Counseling and Educational Psychology. For my dissertation, I have chosen to develop a life satisfaction instrument specifically designed for apostolic women religious. Please note that the term 'apostolic women religious', for the purposes of this research, includes all religious who minister in an apostolate (e.g. teaching, pastoral work) regardless of their designation as apostolic religious, evangelical (e.g. Franciscans) or monastic (e.g. Benedictines).

The outcome of my work will concentrate on evaluating the instrument. It will not discuss any degrees of satisfaction about religious life. This can only be obtained once the validity and reliability of an instrument is shown which, hopefully, will be the result at the end of my doctoral work. The methodology includes statistical analyses of all the items in the instrument along with open-ended questions to assess motivational factors and satisfaction factors among different generations of women religious. Assessing for these motivational factors and satisfaction factors assists in evaluating the content of the items of the current version of the instrument. In summary, the objective of this study is to test whether the current version of this instrument is able to assess the satisfaction with religious life among different cohorts of apostolic women religious.

To ensure the greatest diversity of participants, I am asking the Congregations who belong to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) for their participation and support of my study. My target audience is apostolic women religious (including women in initial formation), who were born between 1925 and 1989.

In order to get in contact with apostolic women religious who would be interested in participating in my research, I have contacted the leadership of your congregation, and have received authorization to contact the Sisters in your congregation to see who is interested and willing to volunteer their participation. Please note that the support of your leadership of this study does not obligate your participation in this study. Furthermore, your participation would be completely voluntary and confidential. For risk and benefits of a Sister's participation in this study please see the attached consent form. The indirect benefits of this study for the participants are the development of a life satisfaction instrument specifically designed for apostolic women religious. Once this instrument is established it could be used to assess the life satisfaction levels across generations of apostolic women religious.

With regard to maintaining the confidentiality of each Sister who volunteers her participation, please note that only I, the conductor of the study, will have access to the correspondence from the participating Sisters. The correspondence includes the return of the signed consent form and the completed questionnaire (please see attachments). Any

identifying information associated with a Sister will be removed from the completed questionnaire as soon as it is received. This procedure will ensure that neither the conductor of the study nor her advisor or assistant will be able to retrieve the identification of the Sister from the completed questionnaire. Upon the completion of this study (defense of the dissertation), a summary of the results will be sent to the leadership of your congregation who will forward it to your congregation.

It is hoped that the above information helps you to understand the content and context about the purpose and procedures of this study. If you interested in volunteering to participate, **please sign** the consent form, **complete** the questionnaire, and **send both** to me by e-mail or regular mail (address below). Please note that there is a deadline for returning your response (**02 / 28 / 09)**. Your participation is voluntary; there is no obligation to participate.

I will be sending two brief reminders to your leadership. Your leadership will then forward these reminders to all Sisters who received the initial invitation. However, expressing an initial interest and having received the study material does not obligate you to volunteer your participation. Please feel free to contact me or my advisor at any time if you have any questions about this study (see contact information at the end of this letter). I would like to thank you in advance for your attention and support of this study. It is my hope that the results of this study can contribute to the future of religious life.

Sincerely,

Sister Maria Clara Kreis January 20, 2009

Contact Information:

Doctoral Student	Advisor
Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A.	Rebecca Bardwell, Ph.D.
Sisters of Divine Providence	Counseling and Educational Psychology
9000 Babcock Blvd.	Marquette University
Allison Park	140 Schroeder Complex
PA, 15101	Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881
Phone: 414-232-1334	Phone: 414-288-1430
e-mail: maria.kreis@marquette.edu	e-mail: rebecca.bardwell@marquette.edu

APPENDIX O: FIELD TESTING OF LSSAWR- CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
AGREEMENT OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
"Assessment of Life Satisfaction in Apostolic Women Religious: The Development of a New Instrument."
Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A.
Counseling and Educational Psychology Department of Marquette University

You have been invited to participate in this research study. Before you agree to participate, it is important that you read and understand the following information. Participation is completely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research study is to develop a life satisfaction instrument particularly designed for apostolic women religious. You will be one of approximately 500 participants in this research study.

PROCEDURES: I understand that my participation in the study will consist of completing this consent form and a questionnaire which I may return to the investigator via email or postal mail. If I return this signed consent form and completed questionnaire via email, the principal investigator, Sister Maria Clara Kreis, will immediately delete any identifying information from the email. De-identified data from this study will be kept indefinitely.

DURATION: Your participation will involve the completion of a questionnaire that could take between 45 to 90 minutes.

RISKS: The risks associated with participation in this study do not exceed having a discussion with another Sister or friend.

BENEFITS: The benefits associated with participation in this study could help to clarify thoughts about components related to life satisfaction that are important to religious life.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All information you reveal in this study will be kept confidential. Any identifying information will be removed immediately upon receiving the completed questionnaire. All your data will be assigned an arbitrary code number rather than using your name or other information that could identify you as an individual. When the results of the study are published, you will not be identified by name. The electronic and hard copies of the de-identified data (signed consent forms and completed questionnaires) will be kept in the principal investigator's private residence (Sister M. Clara Kreis, 9000 Babcock Blvd., Allison Park, PA 15101) in a locked file drawer and destroyed by deleting electronic copies from a flash drive or shredding paper documents 10 years after

completing the dissertation requirements. However, I understand that the compiled data will be kept indefinitely and might be used for further research and publication. In addition, your research records may be inspected by the Marquette University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and (as allowable by law) state and federal agencies.

Extra Costs to Participate: I understand that I can return the study materials to the principal investigator through the use of email. I also understand that if I would prefer to return the study materials by postal mail that I would be asked to provide the envelope and stamp myself.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participating in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. I understand that I am not obligated to respond to the study material that I have received through e-mail. I also understand that I can withdraw my participation at any time during the process of reading or completing my response to the study materials. However, I do understand that my data cannot be removed anymore after it has been de-identified.

Contact Information: If you have any questions about this research project, you can contact Sister Maria Clara Kreis, M.A. at (414) 232-1334 and/or Professor Rebecca Bardwell, Ph.D. at (414) 288-1430. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THIS CONSENT FORM, ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND AM PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT. (**If** you will be **emailing** this consent form and your completed questionnaire, please **type your name and the date** below; *if* you will be sending this consent form and completed questionnaire via *postal mail*, please *print and sign* your name below and print the date.)

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Participant's Name

_____ _____

Researcher's Signature Date

APPENDIX P: CODING SCHEME FOR THE QUALITATIVE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY

Established Common Themes (based on IRP June, 2008)

A. Ministry

1. Social/Facilitation/Services/Mental Health (or Social, Medical/Mental Health Services)

   e.g. Medical Social Worker, Nurse, Psychologist, Health Coordinator, Facilitation, Parish Social Ministry, Peace Work, Public Relations/Writer/ Communications/Consultant, Graphic Designer, Activity Director, Child Care.

   (code = q20socmh)

2. Education

   e.g. taught in Elementary School, High School, College; Campus Ministry in College, taught Art, Dance, etc., Librarian, Research, work with International Students.

   (code = q20educa)

3. Religious Formation and Retreat/Spirituality Ministry

   e.g. Vocation or Formation Ministry, Retreat Director, Spiritual Director, Pilgrimage Leader, Retreat/Spirituality Ministries.

   (code = q20fresp)

4. Leadership/Administration & Business/Finances

   e.g. Any body in decision making positions such as Administration within a Parish, Congregational (leadership team or house director), or Educational Setting, etc. positions as Principal/Dean/President/Director/ Coordinator (e.g., Director of Achieves or Coordinator of Retirement or Volunteer Coordinator); Development Office, Grant Writer, Treasurer or Finances, Director Pastoral Care, Personnel Director, DRE, Activities Director, Administrative Assistant, Consultant (Business/Finances)

   (code = q20ladbf)

5. Diocese/Parish & Pastoral Work

   e.g. Hospital or Prison Chaplain or Hospice Ministry, CCD Teacher, Liturgist, Parish Adult/Faith Formation/Youth/Pastoral Ministry, Pastoral

Associate or Care, Mission Integration

(code = q20dippw)

6. Other Category

   e.g. Internal ministry (car driver, house cleaning jobs, gardening, cooking, etc.), Receptionist or Switchboard Operator, Volunteer, Student, Translator, History Writer/General Writer, Editor, Free-Lance-Artist, Artist, Sabbatical, Novice, Clerical/Office work (e.g., Bookkeeper, Technical Support, Secretary, Accounting, Finance Dep. Assistance) Archives, CPE-Education , Staff, Institutional NGO rep at the U. N., Accountant, Self-Imprisoned (SOA), Parent Care, currently Unemployed, Retired (only if mentioned).

   (code = q20othco)

* Using the established themes from the IRP conducted in completed in June of 2008, the "leadership" theme was changed from the third theme into the fourth theme category because some Sisters used the two separate categories "leadership" and "administration" interchangeable for their services in congregational leadership position.

B. Summary of Common Themes included in the Apostolic Women's Religious Life Satisfaction Instrument was based on:

- the responses (see below) to the IRP's Six Open-ended Questions (answers overlapped among the six open-ended -- including 6 a & b-- questions)
- review of research in regard to the declining membership in religious life and in the Roman Catholic Church (the necessity to be visible and to reach out to today's youth and young adult catholic)
- feedback from dissertation committee (items # 47 and # 48 --belonging and acceptance of personal contributions to congregation)
- content analysis (conducted in November of 2008)

Common Themes of the Apostolic Women's Religious Life Satisfaction Instrument (for Dissertation Defense called Life Satisfaction Scale for Apostolic Women Religious; LSSAWR)

1. **Sisters' Example** (Witness)
2. **Sister's Positive Qualities** (Characteristics)
3. **God Centered Family & Neighborhood** (Parish)
4. **Inner Call** (Vocational Discernment)
5. **Intellectual, Psychological & Spiritual Growth and Practices** (Ongoing Formation)

6. **Simple/Prayerful/Spiritual/Balanced/Fulfilling Life**
7. **Viability** (countercultural)**, Witness, Ministry and Evangelization to Church and World**
8. **Commitment to God & Community** (spiritual focus and practices and community relations and interaction)
9. **Charism and Mission** (Inspirational Qualities of Congregation)
10. **Signs of the Time** (Contemporary Characteristics/Responses)
    e.g.: concern about declining membership (more work but aging and few or no new members), desire for and delight in new membership, new members are of diverse multicultural background, increase in vocation in other parts of the world, response to emerging global & local social justice issues (immigration, ecology, etc.), continued response to those in need (poor, voiceless, etc.), alternative membership, foresight on retirement needs (decline in health), better understanding of financial, mission, and direction of the congregation, women's issues, cosmology (Story of the Universe).
11. **Relationship to Church** (experiences and attitudes toward the broader Church and the institutional Church hierarchy)
12. **Democratic Governance** (democratic, collegial, and visionary congregational leadership)
13. **Training New** (younger) **Members** (suggestions for changes)

Above Themes were integrated into the Development of the LSSAWR

The 50 items of the LSSAWR:

1. Direction of Congregation
2. Charism of Congregation
3. Mission of Congregation
4. Response to Social Justice Issues
5. Personal contribution to future planning of congregation
6. Congregation's planning efforts in regard to future viability
7. Congregation's ability to discuss diversity issues
8. Congregation's acceptance of diversity issues
9. Personal outreach to Srs. from diverse background
10. Quality of relationship to Srs. in general
11. Opportunities to interact with peers
12. Relationships to Srs. that one considers close friends
13. Relationships outside of community
14. Relationships with family members
15. Maintaining professional relationships
16. Inclusion of "outside people into congregation's religious, social/and or mission activities
17. Hierarchy's (Catholic Church) influence on mission of religious life
18. Congregation's relationship to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church
19. Personal involvement with the community of believers (Cath. Church).

20. Current ministry
21. Local living
22. Balance between ministry and community life
23. Congregation's affirmation and support of current ministry
24. New ministries as a congregational response to needs of the times
25. Governmental structures of congregation
26. Relationship between Srs. and the leadership
27. Leadership's ability to carry our their responsibility
28. Personal relationship to leadership
29. Personal opportunities to exercise leadership
30. Professional growth
31. Personal growth (human development)
32. Religious/Spiritual growth
33. Relationship to God
34. Quality of prayer/rituals on congregational level
35. Quality of prayer/rituals on a local level
36. Congregational programs in spirituality/spiritual development
37. Congregational opportunities for ongoing formation/education
38. Conversations about new forms of membership
39. Personal effort to provide welcoming environment to women interested in rel. life
40. Opportunities to participate in vocation ministry
41. Congregation's awareness to be involved w/ youth/young adults
42. Congregation's presence (visibility) among youth/young adults
43. Congregation's initial formation process
44. Involvement of membership in initial formation of members
45. Congregation's efforts to provide welcoming environment to new members
46. Commitment to religious vocation
47. Opportunities to contribute gifts and talents
48. Sense of Belonging
49. Overall respect and validation from congregation
50. Overall satisfaction with personal commitment to the congregation

The Twelve Domains of the LSSAWR:

Direction of Congregation:
Item 1 (Direction)
Item 2 (Charism)
Item 3 (Mission)
Item 4 (Social Justice)
Item 5 (Future Planning)
Item 6 (Future Viability)
Item 16 (Inclusion of "Others")
Item 24 (New Ministries)

Diversity:
Item 7 (Discuss Diversity)

Item 8 (Acceptance of Diversity)
Item 9 (Reach Out)

Community Relations:
Item 10 (Quality of Relationship)
Item 11 (Interact with Peers)
Item 12 (Close Friendship)
Item 21 (Local Living)

Social Relations:
Item 13 (External Friendship)
Item 14 (Family Relationships)
Item 15 (Professional Relationships)

Church Relations:
Item 17 (Influence on Mission)
Item 18 (Relation to Hierarchy)
Item 19 (Relation to Believers)

Ministry:
Item 20 (Current Ministry)
Item 22 (Balance)
Item 23 (Support)
Item 30 (Professional Growth)

Leadership:
Item 25 (Governmental Structure)
Item 26 (Sisters/Leadership)
Item 27 (Administrative Skills)
Item 28 (Personal/Leadership)
Item 29 (Exercise Leadership)

God:
Item 31 (Personal Growth)
Item 32 (Spiritual Growth)
Item 33 (Relation to God)

Ongoing Formation:
Item 34 (Congregational Prayers)
Item 35 (Local Prayers)
Item 36 (Spiritual Programs)
Item 37 (Ongoing Formation)

New Membership:
Item 38 (New Forms)
Item 39 (Personal Efforts)

Item 40 (Opportunities/Vocation)
Item 41 (Recognition)
Item 42 (Visibility)
Item 43 (Initial Formation)
Item 44 (Involvement/Formation)
Item 45 (Welcoming Environment)

Institutional Validation:
Item 47 (Gifts/Talents)
Item 48 (Belonging)
Item 49 (Respect/Validation)

Overall Commitment:
Item 46 (Vocation)
Item 50 (Congregation)