

THESIS

Title: MOTIVATIONAL DIMENSIONS IN ENTERING
RELIGIOUS VOCATION

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Rationale/Background:

The priest and religious are ordinary men and women. Many problems of entering and leaving vocations arise precisely because they are human. Why a man or a woman would want to enter religious life is the major interest of this study.

Problem:

The study is concerned with the problems:

1. What are the prominent or the fundamental motivations of the candidates entering religious life?
2. Is there a clear motivational pattern in the candidates?

To discover what the conscious motivations of the candidates are, an instrument was derived using “the three formulation technique”, that is, every item has three formulations: the expression of the motivation, the extent of its realization, and the probability of further realizing one’s motivation in religious life in comparison with the life of the laity.

The items in the questionnaire form the motivational dimensions of the candidates. There have been derived from the selected theoretical framework of the study: Nuttin’s relational theory of needs and Atkinson’s theory of achievement motivation.

This constructed instrument was administered to a group of 300 Filipino male and female candidates. The male candidates (150) were composed of seminarians in their 1st year of theology, novices and seminarians in their third and fourth year philosophy and the female candidates (150) were novices and postulants of different congregations.

Statistical Treatment:

The medians and the standard deviation and the mean of the medians were calculated for each of the three formulations: motivation, realization and perception of the candidates.

Findings:

The main findings of the research are:

1. The primary motivation of the male candidates is promoted by the ministerial functions of the priesthood. (Need for altruistic social contact). It is directed towards humanitarian ministerial functions in the field of social welfare and social reform. For the female candidates it is their need for psycho-social contact on the existential level. They want to find their identity as religious by listening to the call of their environment.

2. There are two main motivational patterns found in the candidates: the specific motivational pattern and the general motivational pattern. The specific motivation is characterized by their desire to acquire or achieve their unrealized motivations in religious life. In the specific motivational pattern, the strongest motivation for male and female candidates is the achievement motivations. The second motivational pattern is the general motivational pattern marked by a strong desire to further their present realizations in religious life. Most of the responses analyzed in this study belong to the general motivational pattern.

It is also interesting to note that the strongest motivational dimension for male and female candidates is on the existential level. (Need for psycho-social contact on the existential level.)

Conclusions:

All the findings confirm the hypothesis of the study: That is, the primary conscious motivation of the candidates to enter religious life is to satisfy their desire for self-realization patterned after their idealized notion of religious life. The findings also suggest the fact that the candidates want to enter religious life to satisfy not only their need for self-realization but also their need for self-transcendence. The overall results show that the candidates have a complexity of motivations, a mixture of spiritual and non-spiritual elements.

Recommendations:

The results and the implications of the research can lead to further studies. The three formulation technique developed in this instrument can be extended to studies on social attitudes, study attitudes, and values in life. This technique has proved to be a reliable

and valid method of assessing attitudes, beliefs and values. Another similar study can be undertaken on religious from the perspective of the laity.

The present study is important because in developing the questionnaire the content validity of the instrument is realized. It derives its motivational dimensions from the scientific theories of Nuttin and Atkinson and accommodates items to the interest of the target population. This instrument could be further developed for diagnosis purposes concerning the motivation of the candidates. It could be done by exploring the construct validity of the instrument by employing the statistical technique of factor analysis and development of scales with item analysis. Still further, this instrument can be developed into an instrument of predictive validity where the future behavior of the candidates may be inferred in certain situations. Through such further developments of the study, it is hoped that a greater knowledge on motivation will emerge and consequently lead to a better application in screening candidates to religious life.