

# Multicultural Awareness among the Consecrated Religious Women within Regina Caeli Parish Karen, Nairobi, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Consecrated religious women are missionaries by nature and are meant to live in communities made up of religious women from different nationalities, ethnicities and backgrounds. This living together as a family at times may be marked by challenges and difficulties caused by their cultural diversities. The main objective of this study is to assess multicultural awareness among the consecrated religious women. The study was guided by Social Integration Theory and Salad Bowl Theory. The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed methods research approach design. The target population was 86 participants that was sampled using census method. The study employed purposive sampling, to select 5 participants for qualitative data and 81 participants for quantitative data and only 71 questionnaires validly returned. The research instruments that were used were questionnaires given to 81 participants to collect quantitative data and 5 participants purposely chosen for interview to collect qualitative data. The study revealed that awareness of multiculturalism enabled many women religious to live harmoniously with each other from diverse cultures. The study established that religious women's exposure to diverse cultures has immensely impacted their lives mostly in a positive way. The study also revealed that most of the respondent feel obliged to respect other cultures while acknowledging the existence of many similarities between one's culture and other cultures. The study recommends that the General and Local superiors to consider organizing workshops and seminars to enlighten the consecrated religious women more about the challenges that arise as a result of multicultural differences.

**Keywords:** Multiculturalism, Multicultural Awareness, Consecrated Religious Women

## I. INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism is a phenomenon that exists in the society and enhances the society. According to Josefova (2014) shared space and culture in certain locations can be used to characterize a multicultural society. It has the potential to bring about a variety of benefits, but it can also bring about issues and hazards. When people live within the society they interact and relate with each other and these relations can be positive or negative and are experienced within the society and not in isolation.

Since by nature, consecrated religious women are entities with different people coming from different backgrounds and nationality, the element of multiculturalism

is inevitable. Multicultural awareness means being aware, ready to adopt, live, like, embrace and exist with people from various cultural backgrounds that are different from our own. Being conscious and mindful of each other's cultures enables people to co-exist and live together in great harmony and the opposite is also true. DeGeorge (2017) asserted that religious groups are shifting; younger members are coming from Africa and Asia and communities in Europe, America and Australia are diminishing. Similarly, Have and Gordijn (2013) added that the rise of multicultural societies and the globalization of the world have sparked a need for cultural awareness and respect for other customs. Countries that were formerly mostly homogeneous have seen an inflow of immigrants from Africa and Asia as a result of dramatically increasing immigration from developing to developed countries. As a result, urging tolerance for cultural diversity and pluralism in a globalized society is uncontroversial. Regard for persons, as a core ethical value, indicates that such respect involves acceptance of people's ideas and acts in accordance with their cultural affiliation.

Shah (2017) states that culture shapes our identities and actions, and cultural diversity allows us to accept and even integrate and assimilate with different cultures to some level and in today's world, cultural diversity has become extremely important. Our possibilities of engaging with people of various races, ethnic groups, and cultures are significantly larger now than they have ever been, whether we work, study, or even stay at home. The world today has become compact and people can travel, live and exist in diversity. Consecrated religious women are entities with different people coming from different backgrounds and nationality living together and sharing common life hence the element of multiculturalism is inevitable. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the assessment of multicultural experiences among the consecrated religious women within Regina Caeli Parish Karen, Nairobi, Kenya.

Multiculturalism exists in various dimensions depending on an individual's perspectives. Verkuyten (2007) holds that multiculturalism has numerous forms, but they all focus on differences and the benefits of diversity in some way. A multicultural society which consists of variety of people

existing in diversity benefits from each other's unique differences hence bringing about growth and development. Multiculturalism is a principle that promotes equality and respect for the diversity of cultures and group identities and also is promoted on the basis of favorable intergroup relations and productive variety, with the claim that it is a valuable national, organizational, or commercial asset.

Brummett et al. (2011) opined that an individual who lives in a multicultural society has greater benefits when it comes to social relationships since he or she can relate, learn, exist and work with different people from different cultures who enables him or her to develop strategies of survival within the society. By the fact that consecrated religious women live together, they are exposed to multiple traditions. During religious formation years, time for a religious to be to get prepared to embrace and live as a religious, one is taught about multiculturalism in an effort to enable them to embrace each other and normalize diversity. Moreso, religious communities which are multicultural in nature are made up of both the young and old members who work, live and do things together which can be a challenge. According to DeGeorge (2017), religious groups are shifting; younger members are coming from Africa and Asia and communities in Europe, America and Australia are diminishing. Even congregations with members from the same country are often made up of distinct ethnic groups, and living together from one country can be more challenging than living together from many. Therefore, there is a great deal of suffering and unevangelical behavior among religious women.

As a result of the global challenge of acculturation and large-scale migration in recent years, which has raised the issue of coexistence of diverse cultures as well as the problem of racist reactions, religious groups fraternal life has been impacted. These difficulties have repercussions for multicultural and multi-racial religious communities, which are growing more common and hurting religious women's psychosocial well-being (DeGeorge, 2017). Religious communities experience variety of challenges with regard to their multicultural set up. In view of this, Cimperman and Schroeder (2021) argued that, challenges associated with the large majority of religious in the United States and in worldwide congregations in general are not the only issues that should demand the attention of individuals in positions of leadership in such societies and congregations. Indeed, their younger, more diverse members' abilities and insights should be viewed as chances for a more intensely lived Christian discipleship. The potential to improve how congregations practice their discipleship acculturation may determine the destiny of religious communities and the world as a whole. Initiating a dialogue between the charisma of the community as articulated by the founders and handed down by previous generations and the cultural values brought by younger members from a variety of ethnic backgrounds can produce something new, creative, and life-giving.

Personality is also shaped by one's culture. According to Putnam and Gartstein (2019), researchers have revealed how culture can change your personality. In 2005, psychologist Robert McCrae and his colleagues were able to show that people from different corners of the world have markedly diverse personalities. Adults from European cultures, for example, were more outgoing and receptive to new experiences than their Asian counterparts and within the European Union they found that people from Northern Europe were more conscientious than their peers in Southern Europe. This would also apply to religious women coming from different nationalities, cultures, races, that some would be more outgoing, others easy to adapt to new cultures and experiences than others hence impact on their psychosocial wellbeing.

Moreso, the coexistence of people from different cultures has unique implications to each individual. Chao et al. (2015) believed that as globalization brings people from many cultural backgrounds together and as some people expand their minds to embrace diversity others reject it. They further said that there are many consequences of multicultural exposure on individual psychology, as well as the implications for intercultural relations. For instance, multicultural experience provides people with a variety of perspectives, increases their creativity, and lessens their prejudices toward others while on the other hand it leads to a more rigid thinking style and increased intergroup prejudices which can as well be the experience of the consecrated religious communities who are also composed of members from different cultural backgrounds. Benet-Martine (2012) added that the study of multiculturalism has exciting and transformative implications for social and personality psychology, as the issue of how individuals develop a sense of national, cultural, ethnic, and racial group membership becomes particularly meaningful in situations of cultural clashing, mixing, and integration.

International Union of Superior Generals (2017) asserted that, while they appreciate diversity as a gift, the differences are also a source of difficulties, not only in multicultural world of today but also in religious communities and congregations as most of the congregations have members from different nationalities and cultures. They believe that religious communities experience both the richness and the challenges of intercultural community living, and that they become honest with themselves and own the lights and shadows of their intercultural living, allowing them to continue to evolve as they befriend difference. Congregation for Institute of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life no.4 (1994) further affirms that cultures, traditions and the mentality of a particular country all have an impact on the way fraternal life is lived in religious communities.

Therefore, religious women are repeatedly reminded that one of their current responsibilities is to spread the spirituality of communion, first in their own internal lives and then in the church community. Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (2002) also added that if

internal lives of the consecrated religious women do not reflect this communion, there is no way they can ignite a dialogue in charity, especially in places where today's world is torn apart by ethnic hatred or senseless violence. Furthermore, communal life, as a site of multicultural and intercultural encounter, becomes an evangelizing element for a culture shaped by tribalism, alienation, and violence, which is often shaped by blood or parental affiliations. African religious women become prophetic signals and tools of an integrated and free evangelization through intercultural communication and exchange. They establish an alternative culture with new perspectives on God, the world, reality, life, and the human being as a whole as a result of their Gospel experience. Their way of life and apostolate becomes a testament to a culture that has been transformed (Wirba, 2015).

In the same line, research carried out by Ngundo and Wiggins (2017) on African sisters, found that women religious living in communities demonstrate that individuals of many ethnic backgrounds, countries, colors, and races can live in peace together. They also asserted that cultural conflict is also experienced among members of different ethnic communities in Africa especially by African sisters who join international communities. Ngundo and Wiggins went further to say that African religious women are being called to play a critical role in the formation of a new African culture, one that does not require a return to traditional culture or its complete abandonment, but rather a critical reading and assessment of the past, an objective analysis of the present, and an optimistic projection into the future in light of the Gospel as the message of life. They are meant to be women who create a new Christian culture generated from interaction between their culture and the Gospel. Ezeani (2019) supported this study by adding that living interculturally opens up to others and makes mutually enriching and loving encounters possible and that when religious community fosters an authentic interculturality this positively affect their wellbeing.

Kyule (2008) also stated that multiculturalism is positive if it acknowledges cultural diversity where people have their own cultural beliefs and they happily coexist, but there is a common thread to hold society together. He believes that existence of cultures does not mean that such ethnic groups are entirely self-sufficient but that they share a common world view and the same language and that intercultural interaction are possible without tensions as African ethnic groups respects each other making cultural conflicts rare.

Study carried out by Soekarman and Bariyyah (2016) on student's multicultural awareness in Indonesia. This is the first study to use cluster random sampling to shape descriptive quantitative data. This study examines the gender, academic year, and ethnicity of 650 college students in East Java. The scale of multicultural awareness of college students was utilized as an instrument in this study. The data was analyzed in a normal statistic curve to answer the study question concerning the degree of multicultural awareness in college

students, determining the mean and computing percentages in each group. Apart from proving the research hypotheses, the t-test is utilized to determine the level of multicultural awareness based on academic year and gender. The findings indicated that there is a significant difference in the level of multicultural awareness based on gender and academic year. These findings could not be generalized because of the limited sample and ethnicity; it should need wider research so that can be generalized and recommended the efforts to development and improvement of multicultural awareness conditions for optimization the services. The conclusion was that the program of increasing multicultural awareness in the university needs to be done.

Another study by Ponterotto et al. (2011), on the relationship between multicultural personality dispositions and trait emotional intelligence in United States of America, using exploratory design, the study included 152 university students enrolled in a graduate school of education located in a large, culturally diverse north eastern U.S. city. The findings indicated that multicultural personality dispositions of Cultural Empathy and Social Initiative predicted variance in trait emotional intelligence above and beyond the variance accounted for by gender and potential socially desirable responding. The study found that components of the multicultural personality are relevant to the multi-dimensional construct of trait emotional intelligence. Ponterotto et al's study emphasized on multicultural personality dispositions in relation to multicultural dimensions among university students, while the current study however will look at the experiences of multiculturalism among consecrated women.

Aydin (2013) carried a study in Nigeria on educational reform; the case of multicultural education for peace, love and tolerance. The study comprised 22 adults, of which 9 were females and 13 males, aged 16 to 61 ( $M = 28.9$ ). To explore the lived experience of four selected groups of stakeholders, the study used qualitative inquiry, the researcher's observations, in-depth individual interviews, and focus groups administrators, teachers, students and parents. The findings indicated that the Gülenian style of education, as it is implemented in Nigeria, and according to the reflections of those participants involved with NTICs, exposes students to people from different parts of Nigeria, as well as people who often are from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. The organization of the school and the school activities allow students to experience those differences in a safe setting, resulting in their learning to appreciate one another. The above study used qualitative design while the current study used convergent mixed method design to fill in the gap.

These findings are in line with (Nsereka, 2019) that there are numerous advantages to being multicultural, and many countries aspire to be as diverse as Nigeria since people in a multi-ethnic society, for example, can learn about diverse cultures and learn other people's languages, arts, traditions, and behavioral tendencies. The findings of the research by

Aydin reveals important information about numerous advantages of being multicultural however the focus of the current study is on the experiences of multiculturalism among the consecrated religious women.

More so, in a study carried out by Kuppens et al. (2018), on the teachers' views on Multicultural Education in Kenya, the study used a large-scale survey among 925 secondary school teachers in Nairobi, complemented by 68 in-depth follow-up interviews and the empirical analysis based on Banks' 1993 analytical framework of five dimensions of multicultural education. The findings showed that while Kenyan teachers respect multicultural education and employ multicultural teaching practices to a lower level, the data suggested that maintaining unity is more important to Kenyan teachers than acknowledging and appreciating variety at school. It is therefore important that teachers become more aware of and through teaching seminars or workshops, help to find a better balance between unity and diversity in multicultural Kenya. The reviewed literatures examine multiculturalism among students, teachers, administrators and adults among others, however there is a gap in literature because the present study will focus on multiculturalism among consecrated religious women which is different from the reviewed literatures.

Furthermore, it seems consecrated religious women receive intensive formation during their training period which emphasizes on living together in communion despite of their unique cultures, ethnic groups or from different countries. Yet this at times does not seem to work well when it comes to living together as a family of God. Most of the consecrated religious women communities in Regina Caeli have members from different nationalities, ethnic groups and cultures hence they may be experiencing tensions and conflicts as they coexist with their diverse cultures. The researcher is therefore interested to find out if this diversity of culture brings about these tensions and conflicts among the consecrated religious women in Regina Caeli Parish.

This study was guided by two theories; the theory of social integration by Emile Durkheim (1892) and salad bowl theory by Horace Kallen (1908). Émile Durkheim is the founder of social integration theory developed in 1892. For him, a collective consciousness, or a shared method of thinking and behaving in the world, is made up of people's traditions, beliefs, and values and that individuals are bound together by collective consciousness, which leads to social integration. Durkheim was particularly interested in the intimate bonds that exist between families and small communities, groups of individuals who share a shared faith and may eat, work, and spend leisure time together. Social integration theory therefore reflects the existence of social cohesion, a solid institutional framework, and an acceptance culture as societies promote social integration through inclusive policies that reduce conflicts (Cruz-Saco, 2008). Therefore, this theory is applicable to this study because according to Durkheim, people's norms, beliefs, and values

make up a collective consciousness, or a shared way of understanding and behaving in the world. Religious communities are like small societies, in which people freely accepts to live together, have some shared system of meaning, language, culture, which binds them together and create social integration within their communities. This on the other hand strengthens the social integration making consecrated religious women feel more connected to their communities

Salad bowl theory was founded by Horace Kallen in 1908 who advocated for cultural pluralism, in which different groups could retain cultural heritage and respect the ties and commitments of others. The Salad Bowl is a heterogeneous mixture which promote diversity, as it allows one to recognize the individual identities that contribute to the whole culture and also it is more inclusive (Amoskala, 2020). According to Flowiz (2012), the concept of salad bowl emphasizes that each culture retains its unique characteristics and by allowing multiple cultures, the salad bowl model can assist establish a cohesive country, which should be the goal of all society. Salad Bowl prohibits the mixing of cultures into a single uniform mixture, much as salad elements keep their original flavors and as a result, cultural integration is unlikely because every culture exists, whether or not it is part of the mainstream.

The salad bowl theory is relevant to this study because, it describes a heterogeneous society in which people coexist but retain at least some of the unique characteristics of their traditional culture. Consecrated religious community is comprised of various types of salad ingredients put together but each of the ingredients has its own unique nature, likewise multiculturalism brings people of different cultures together. Like a salad's ingredients, different cultures are brought together, but rather than combining into a single homogeneous culture, retain their own distinct flavors. This theory affirms that, despite the fact that people come together from unique background and share life in common, they do not have to give up on their cultural heritage in order to be considered members of the dominant society. Therefore, consecrated religious women come together and share life in common and they do not have to give up on their unique cultures in order to be considered members of their community and still can be one family.

Therefore, social integration theory was useful in this study because it makes people feel more connected to their community, reduce conflicts and promotes better mental health. The salad bowl was also useful to this study as it assimilates into the new world culture and retains the uniqueness of each culture which is the aim of consecrated religious women. Both theories complement each other in the sense that integration theory enhances mental health while salad theory promotes unity in diversity hence both are necessary for consecrated women religious to help reduce conflicts

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the convergent parallel mixed method design which comprised of the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Creswell (2014), describes convergent parallel mixed method design as method that a researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data, analyzes them separately, and then compares the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other.

This approach assumes that both qualitative and quantitative data provide different types of information often detailed views of participants qualitatively and scores on instruments quantitatively and together they yield results that should be the same. The target population for this study comprised of 17 congregations of consecrated religious women with 203 members. Five congregations were selected giving a total 86 participants. Census method was used in which 5 local superiors were purposively selected for qualitative study and 81 participants for quantitative study. The researcher opted for census method since the sample target population was manageable to interview. The tools the researcher used in this study for the collection of data was interview guide and a questionnaire.

## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1.1 The Demographic Information of Respondents for Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The study sought the demographic information of the respondents in terms of age group, Congregation, profession status, period in religious life and educational status. Other information sought included type of apostolate and the current position of the respondents.

Table 3.1 Age group of the Respondents

Statement	Quantitative (Sisters)		Qualitative (Superiors)		
Age Group	f	%	Age Group	f	%
20-30 Years	18	25.4			
31-40 Years	22	31.0	31-40 Years	1	25
41-50 Years	27	38.0	41-50 Years	2	50
51-60 Years	3	4.2	51 and above	1	25
61 Years and above	1	1.4			
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>

The study shows that the respondents who participated in answering questionnaires were drawn from various age groups ranging from the young to the elderly ones. Those, in the middle age surpassed any other age group. However, most of them were old enough to understand the concept of multiculturalism since they have lived in and with various cultures and have got more experiences in life. The researcher intended to have the view of the better experienced group by age. The findings also show that most of the local

superiors who participated in the interviews were aged 41 years and above (75%) which implies that they had adequate experience on multiculturalism to provide the information being sought by this study. At this age it is assumed that these local superiors have had an opportunity and experience life with different religious sisters in different communities and this has enhanced their awareness on multiculturalism.

### 3.1.2 Religious Status

The study sought to establish the religious status of the respondents. The results of these analyses are presented in Figure 3.2

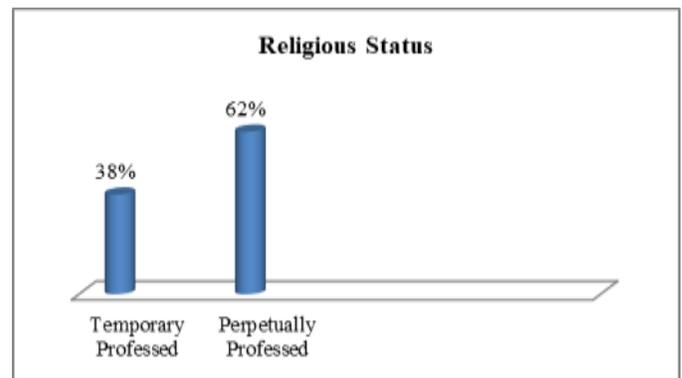


Figure 3.2: Religious Status

These findings revealed that majority of the respondents 44 (62. %) were perpetually professed. This implies that perpetual profession comes with experiences of different communities, people from different backgrounds and even nationalities. Furthermore, perpetual professed members are assumed to have lived in their congregations for a longer period of time and have got a better understanding of multiculturalism and its concepts. This helped the researcher to draw from different experiences of multiculturalism.

### 3.1.3 Period Spent in Religious Life

The study sought to establish the period spent in the religious life of the respondents. The results of these analyses are presented in Figure 3.3

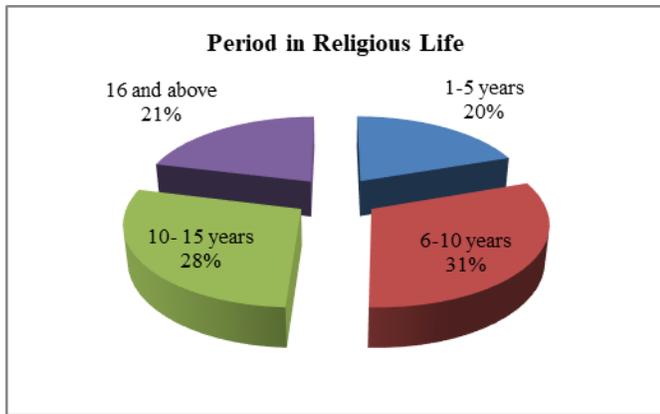


Figure 3.3: Period Spent in Religious Life

The findings revealed that most of the respondents 42(59.0%) had been in religious life for a period between of 6-15 years. This implies that members falling in this period have had an opportunity to live in various communities with different individuals and have learned various aspects streaming from multiculturalism. Furthermore, these members are engaged in various apostolates in which they mingle and relate with diversity of people who might have impacted on their understanding of multiculturalism.

### 3.1.4 Type of Apostolates

The study sought to establish the type of apostolates of the respondents. The results of these analyses are presented in table 3.4

Type of Apostolate	Frequency	Percentage
Education	22	31.0
Social Work	11	15.5
Health	10	14.1
Formation	6	8.5
Hospitality	10	14.1
Any other	12	16.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 3.4: Types of Apostolates

This study revealed that majority of the religious sisters were involved in education as their main apostolate. This means that majority of the Congregations have got education as their ministry hence many sisters are trained as teachers where they meet students, teachers, parents and guardians from different cultures and orientations.

## IV. MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS AMONG THE CONSECRATED RELIGIOUS WOMEN

The study adopted a four- point Likert scale to measure the levels of multicultural awareness among the consecrated religious women. The Likert scale was weighted as strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D) as presented in the Table 4.1

Table 4.1: Multicultural Awareness among the consecrated religious women

Statement	SA	A	SD	D
My exposure to many cultures has influenced me.	39(54.9%)	28(39.4%)	2(2.8%)	2(2.8%)
I often feel at home when I mingle with people of different cultural background	29(40.8%)	39(54.9%)	1(1.4%)	2(2.8%)
I don't feel inferior when I mingle with other sisters from other cultures	35(49.3%)	3(4.2.3%)	4(5.6%)	2(2.8%)
I feel offended when people speak their mother tongue	10(14.1%)	19(26.8%)	13(18.3%)	29(40.8%)
I feel that my culture is the best in the world	7(9.9%)	10(14.1%)	30(42.3%)	24(33.8%)
I feel obliged to respect other cultures/ cultural institutions	37(52.1%)	27(38.0%)	4(5.6%)	3(4.2%)
I find many similarities between my culture and other culture	25(35.2%)	40(56.3%)	1(1.4%)	5(7.0%)
I see other culture as the same as mine in terms of cultural taboos and values	13(18.3%)	28(39.4%)	8(11.3%)	22(31.0%)
I like most parts of my personality	41(57.7%)	26(36.6%)	2(2.8%)	2(2.8%)
I am pleased with how things turned out so far with my multicultural exposure	23(32.4%)	41(57.7%)	1(1.4%)	6(8.5%)

It is evident from the information in this table that majority of the respondents 39(54.9%) strongly agreed that their exposure to many cultures had influenced them, 39 (54.9%) agreed that they often felt at home when they mingled with people from different cultural backgrounds, 35(49.3%) strongly agreed that they do not feel inferior when mingling with other sisters from other cultures. In addition, majority of the respondents 29(40.8%) disagreed that they feel offended when people speak their mother tongue. Pertaining to whether their culture is the best in the world, majority of the respondents 30(42.3%) strongly disagreed, 37(52.1%) strongly agreed that they feel obliged to respect other cultures/ cultural institutions while in response to whether there existed many similarities between one's culture and other cultures, 40(56.3%) agreed to the fact there were many similarities.

Furthermore, when asked whether they saw other cultures as the same as theirs in terms of cultural taboos and values, majority of the respondents 28(39.4%) agreed that there existed many similarities in their own cultures and other people's cultures. In addition, the respondents like most parts of their personality, majority of the respondents 41(57.7%) strongly agreed. Finally, in response to whether they are pleased with how things turned out so far with their multicultural exposure, an overwhelming majority of

41(57.7%) agreed that they were pleased with how things turned out so far.

The finding of this study therefore shows that multicultural awareness among the consecrated religious women in Regina Caeli Parish in Karen is very high as 94.3% agreed that their exposure to many cultures have influenced them and 95.7% felt at home when they mingle with sisters from other cultures, meaning there is multicultural awareness among consecrated religious women in Karen.

Similarly, the interview revealed that there was evidence of multicultural awareness and noted how it was impacting on the psychosocial wellbeing among the consecrated religious women. These findings are in agreement with those of Have and Gordijn (2013) who observed that the rise of multicultural societies and the globalization of the world has sparked a need for cultural awareness and respect for other customs.

According to respondent Local Superior 1 from the face-to-face interview;

Cultures are a gift and there is the aspect of diversity of cultures in each and every community. For example, in our community here we come from different ethnical communities, different backgrounds. Mostly we used to be Kenyans but now of late we have Tanzanians; we have Ugandans so it has added to the aspect of multiculturalism. I have seen there is a lot of good things from these other cultures if you look at them in a positive way. They bring a lot of goodness, whereby I will be able to recognize that it not only my culture but there also other good elements from other cultures which if they can be tapped, they enhance the community especially the community living (14<sup>th</sup> March 2022).

Also, respondent local superior 4 from face-to-face interview added;

Since I joined religious life, this is where I can say I have lived with different people, from different cultures and from different nationalities. But I can just say that it is an opportunity for me where I have interacted with these different cultures of people, where I have shared their different experiences. We share how they live, how they behave even meals. It has helped us to integrate, to understand each other and to appreciate and also to share life together and continue serving the Lord (20<sup>th</sup> March 2022).

Local superior respondent 2 from face-to-face interview also added that;

For me I count myself rich, because they have many, many goods [things] in their culture that we Italians don't have. We are another culture. For instance, they are more patient, tolerant with different people, they are able to teach us without making us feel belittled ... let us say especially the language ....they are never offended or

making you feel that you are wrong. They are very respectful, very patient....what I love more is to have that patient even sharing, we Italian if it is something to be done we don't need a meeting, for them they see in terms of everybody to say something to join together to a conclusion....for us we are quick. But this is something that I learn living together with them. Even telling somebody do this, or can you bring this....we are quick ....sometimes not because we are not polite but our language is quick and even talking loudly but for them our people are calm and not shouting to one another. For us Italian can shout to you and you think she is angry and that she doesn't like you.... there is nothing like that.... after a moment she can talk to you freely but for them shouting in not there (12<sup>th</sup> March 2022).

These findings are also supported by that of Ponterotto et al (2011) who indicated that cultural awareness in terms of multicultural personality dispositions of cultural empathy and social initiative predicted one's wellbeing. From the above findings, illustrates that, living together with individuals from different cultures and nationalities offered sisters a rich experience that had enabled them to learn how their colleagues from other communities and nationalities live, talk, behave and eat. This has resulted to the integration, understanding of each other and appreciation of other cultures which are important attributes when sharing life together and when serving God.

#### 4.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that awareness of multiculturalism enabled many consecrated women religious to live harmoniously with their fellow community members from diverse cultures leading to by instilling values such as appreciation of other cultures, learning new ideas and new ways of doing things. The study recommends that the General and Local superiors to consider organizing workshops and seminars to enlighten the consecrated religious women more about the challenges that arise as a result of multicultural differences.

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