

LIFE SATISFACTION OF OLDER CATHOLIC
SISTERS: A STUDY OF FOUR
COMMUNITIES

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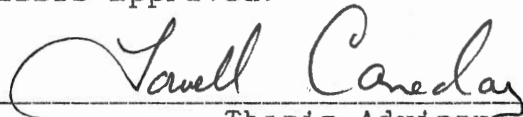
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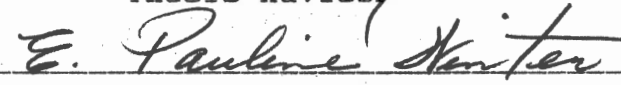
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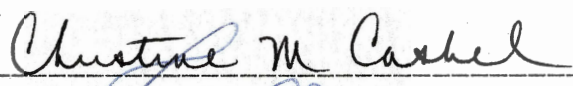
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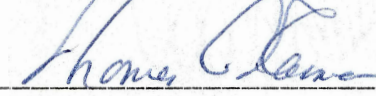
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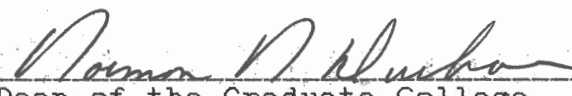


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aging of American society is axiomatic. One need only pick up a newspaper or magazine to read of the increasing percentage of older persons (60 years and older) in American society. Projections suggest that by the year 2030 the percentage of older persons in the United States will be approximately 25% of the entire population. The impact of the size of this large segment of society on their own adjustment to aging and retirement and to the greater society at large is worthy of closer examination. Unfortunately, the ability to study the future does not exist at present.

In an examination of society's acceptance of aging and the attitudes of various groups to that phenomenon, it was interesting to turn to the institution of the Church. In particular, it was worthwhile to examine the attitudes of those with religious vocations and their attitudes toward their own advancing years. It was expected that life satisfaction might be higher among older sisters, brothers, and priests than would be expected from the general population, because of their vows and commitments made when entering their vocations. Perhaps the retirement

satisfaction of the vowed religious, whose own demographics have already exceeded the most dire predictions for society at large, may give indication of paths to take that may enhance the later years of the aging American after the turn of the twenty-first century.

It has recently been brought to the attention of the church that vowed religious [one who dedicates his/her life, in its entirety (physically, emotionally, spiritually), to God and the service of mankind] of retirement age are suffering from financial deficits that are hampering the ability of respective congregations to adequately provide for their older members. While the financial aspect of the retirement of vowed religious is beyond the scope of the present study, the needs analysis research done to determine their resources, both available and required, has provided a wealth of information regarding the demographic profile of religious communities. It is not uncommon to find that fifty percent or more of the members of a given community are aged seventy or above.

Upon casual observation, one may readily determine that nuns indeed have a different lifestyle than females in general. Certain biological differences over time have been noted by earlier researchers, notably that the life expectancy of American nuns averages 3.5 years longer than other American females (Hickey and Kalish, 1969). Of greater interest are the attitudinal differences which are implied by the philosophy of life inherent in religious

vocation. Because a woman dedicates her life, in its entirety (physically, emotionally, spiritually), to God and the service of mankind, it would seem that aging and approaching death would be more acceptable to her as the advent of union with her Creator.

Literature regarding older sisters has been extremely limited and difficult to obtain. Of slightly greater frequency was research dealing with priests, and even more so, with Protestant clergy. While a large proportion of the information regarding priests was applicable in this study, the information gathered from studies of non-Catholic clergy was of limited value because of the possible influence of nuclear family roles (spousal and parental) obviously not extant in the group under study. Literature to be reviewed, thus, will address several topic areas with increasingly specific applicability to the present study. Literature considered will address the following issues:

- 1) Research dealing with life satisfaction studies,
- 2) Research regarding religious values and their impact on life satisfaction,
- 3) Research regarding women, and special concerns of older women,
- 4) Research regarding professed religious and priests,
- 5) Research dealing directly with retired Catholic sisters and their specific concerns.

Before addressing these issues in greater detail, however, it is useful to examine several theoretical approaches to understanding aging and the adjustment of individuals to aging and retirement. In addition, it is

important to examine broader social theories and theories of leisure behavior to understand more fully the complex issue under study here.

General Sociological Theory

When examining broader theoretical perspectives which attempt to examine social life in general, three general approaches become apparent: 1) functionalism; 2) conflict theory; and, 3) symbolic interactionism. Functionalism, as suggested by Durkheim, Comte, and others, views social life as an organic-type system, the parts of which work in a functional relationship to the whole. Conflict theory, as advanced by Marx, Coser, and others, looked at society in terms of its typical conflicts or competitions over scarce commodities--power, wealth, and so on. While both of these paradigms have merit, symbolic interaction is the most applicable to the premises of the current study.

As a major sociological theory, symbolic interactionism, as presented by Mead, Goffman, Blumer, and others, presents a fairly broad perspective. In general, it states that the focus of the study of human behavior must be on the interaction between persons and within the individual. It stresses the importance of meaning--of significant symbols, as discussed by Mead; of the situation, as presented by Thomas; of the self, as described by Cooley (Ritzer, 1983). In describing contemporary symbolic interactionism, Ritzer lists the following principles which are pertinent to the

present discussion:

In social interaction people learn the meanings and the symbols that allow them to exercise their distinctively human capacity for thought. Meanings and symbols allow people to carry on distinctively human action and interaction. People are able to modify or alter the meanings and symbols they use in action and interaction on the basis of their interpretation of the situation. People are able to make these modifications and alterations because, in part, of their ability to interact with themselves, which allows them to examine possible courses of action, assess their relative advantages and disadvantages, and then choose one. (Ritzer, 1983:306-7)

These notions closely parallel the concepts of Viktor Frankl (1946) as expressed in Man's Search for Meaning. Based on his professional background as a psychiatrist and his experiences in Nazi concentration camps during World War II, Frankl devised a new psychotherapeutic technique which he termed logotherapy. Contrary to previous therapeutic modalities, Frankl believed that man is motivated by his "will to meaning" rather than a "will to pleasure" (Freudian psychotherapy) or a "will to power" (Adlerian psychology) (Frankl, 1946:121). He further posited that this "meaning" can be discovered in three ways:

... (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering. (Frankl, 1946:133)

Later researchers have attempted to quantify and operationalize this will to meaning. Crumbaugh and Maholick defined it in this way:

...The ontological significance of life from the point of view of the experiencing individual. (1964:201)

It is thus interesting to refer to the methodological techniques of the symbolic interactionists and note the similarities. Herbert Blumer urged a very similar approach to the study of human behavior. Manford Kuhn (1964), while disagreeing with Blumer in some aspects of methodology, concurred with him on the "essential subject matter of symbolic interactionism--what goes on 'inside the heads' of humans" (Ritzer, 1983:319). Kuhn felt that a more empirical technique was needed than Blumer had suggested.

For instance, the answers of respondents to a series of questions should be the data for the symbolic interactionist to work with, not the 'unreliable' and 'unscientific' intuition of the sociologist. (Ritzer, 1983:320)

Comparing the theoretical premise of symbolic interaction and the work of Viktor Frankl, an essential similarity can be seen--that the meaning of the situation or experience is the critical issue of study.

Max Weber, a precursor to symbolic interaction, discussed in his works the concept verstehen. Literally translated from the German, it means "to understand". Hughes, writing much later, explained this approach to understanding social life:

In short, it was the effort to 'feel oneself into' a historical or social action by putting oneself in the place of the actor or actors. It was a method of psychological sympathy--the method that most sharply distinguished the 'inner' investigation of the human world from the merely external investigation of the world of nature. (Hughes, 1977:311)

This concept, as it has been applied by Weber and others writing since him, is a valuable method for understanding

the special needs of older adults with regard to their retirement activities and desires.

Along with this understanding of general sociological theory, there is also a need to understand the impact of the Protestant Work Ethic upon this generation of elderly, in particular.

The Work Ethic and Leisure

Max Weber, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, addressed the notion of the work ethic or the "Protestant Ethic" as it is frequently called. Dahl (1972) writing about work, described the work ethic this way:

Basically, however, the work ethic consists of two elements: The first is that a man's work, i.e. his job, his occupation, his craft, his profession or whatever he does that pays off in terms of money or its equivalent is the most important aspect of his life and takes precedence over all other aspects. The second is that each man will be rewarded for his work, but he must not seek to enjoy that reward until his work is finished. (Dahl, 1972:42)

Weber addressed, in blatant terms, the role of leisure according to the work ethic, which was prevalent at the time:

Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins. The span of human life is infinitely short and precious to make sure of one's own election (into the ranks of the saved). Loss of time through sociability, idle talk, luxury, even more sleep than is necessary for health...is worthy of absolute moral condemnation...Thus inactive contemplation is also valueless, or even directly reprehensible if it is at the expense of one's daily work. For it is less pleasing to God than the active performance of His will in a calling. (Weber, 1930:158)

This type of philosophy so thoroughly permeated the thought

of modern man that the generation of persons who grew up through the Great Depression found leisure pursuits antithetical to their way of life. Fontana wrote:

The work ethic has reduced leisure to that which we do while waiting to go back to work; we recuperate from a hard (but of course meaningful) day at the office or we relax to regenerate ourselves for tomorrow's workday. (Fontana, 1977:39)

Succeeding generations, with different life experiences, have failed to subscribe as fully to the work ethic. They have elevated leisure from a means to an end (recuperation for work) to an end in itself (as pleasure for its own sake). Fontana suggested:

This is where we are today, no longer forcefully driven by the work ethic, but not quite comfortable without it. (Fontana, 1977:55)

Ekerdt (1986) suggested that Americans have replaced the work ethic with a modern variation which he called the "busy ethic" which calls for the retired person to stay busy--that is, active and involved. Though leisure pursuits are now tolerated and, in fact, encouraged, it is important to "stay busy." He wrote:

The busy ethic serves several purposes: it legitimates the leisure of retirement, it defends retired people against judgments of obsolescence, it gives definition to retirement role, and it 'domesticates' retirement by adapting retired life to prevailing societal norms. (Ekerdt, 1986:240)

Still another broad area that needs to be examined is that of gerontological theory which seeks to explain aging and the adjustment or reaction of the individual to that aging process.

Social Theories of Aging

Each of the three sociological paradigms described above suggests a corresponding gerontological theory.

Functionalism has its gerontological counterpart in disengagement theory (Cumming and Henry, 1960). Although in disrepute in contemporary circles, it is interesting that the 1985 national meeting of the Gerontological Society of America program profiled a theme ("Markers of Aging") heavily laden with the physiological and sociological (functionalistic) roots of disengagement. Similarly, although not so obviously stated, exchange theory (Dowd, 1975), in gerontological literature, finds its archetype in older and newer conflict theory. For example, the advocacy movement stresses the inequity of the older population in their negotiating milieus, leaving them with humiliating "compliance" as the only alternative. Symbolic interactionism, of sociological theory, is complemented by the social breakdown syndrome and social reconstruction model of community psychiatry (Kuypers & Bengston, 1968).

Upon examination of the major theories of gerontology seeking to explain adjustment to aging, one finds two divergent, nearly polar, perspectives. Disengagement, as presented by Cumming and Henry (1960), suggests that successful adjustment to aging comes through the mutual withdrawal of the individual from society and society from the individual.

Havighurst (1963) and others posit, in activity theory, on the contrary, that good adjustment comes through continued participation--active participation--in middle-aged roles or by substituting other roles. The statement by Maddox (1963:203) concretely linked symbolic interaction and activity theory: "The social self emerges and is sustained in a most basic way through interaction with others." Other frequently mentioned theories (such as role theory, subculture theory, age stratification, reference group theory, and exchange theory) suggest still other "paths to successful aging".

Role theory (Burgess, 1960) was an early precursor of activity theory. Burgess discussed the concept of the "roleless role" of the elderly. Subculture theory (Rose, 1965) viewed the elderly as a separate subculture within society, similar to, for example, the adolescent subculture. Age stratification theory (Riley, et al, 1972) viewed each birth cohort as a subgroup of society with unique experiences and needs which would affect their adjustment to aging. Reference group theory (Romeis, et al, 1971) defined adjustment to aging in terms of groups, real or imaginary, past or present, with which the aging individual identified himself. Finally, exchange theory (Dowd, 1975) stressed the idea that each person seeks to maximize the benefits of interaction and minimize the costs (in prestige or self-esteem, for example).

One less frequently cited theory upon which the present

study is based, the congruence theory (Seleen, 1981), suggests that neither disengagement nor activity theory in themselves can explain good adjustment but rather that the activity or disengagement needs to be "congruent" with the desired choices made by the individual. This is very similar to cognitive personality theory, as explained by Thomae. He stated:

Cognitive personality theory concentrates on how the individual perceives the world around him. As a theory of aging it involves the conceptualization of the aging personality in terms of an integrated system of processes rather than as a set of stable traits. (Thomae, 1971:64)

In an effort to synthesize the existing theories of social gerontology, Seleen (1981) integrated these diverse perspectives into a single workable theory, with particular application to life satisfaction. Seleen used an instrument she developed which asks for the actual number of hours the respondent spent on an activity, the desired number of hours the respondent would like to spend, and an explanation of the difference. Activities studied were: sleep (including naps), work for pay (full-time, part-time, and commuting time), volunteer work, personal care (hygiene and meals), family care (includes housework, shopping, and caring for others), organizations, media, social life, recreation, and other leisure. She found that as the discrepancy between desired and actual use of time decreases, life satisfaction scores increase, both with regard to each category of activity, as well as to the overall congruence score. She stated:

The degree of congruence between the actual and desired time spent in activity was significantly correlated with life satisfaction. Based on this finding it seems that it could be said that persons who are spending their time as they wished seemed to be more satisfied with life than those who wanted to make changes in their allocation of time, regardless of the direction of those shifts. (1981:99)

She suggested, for future study, the following:

In general, more studies of this type are important because they dispel the myths associated with old age, that is, that older Americans are disgruntled with their lives, in poor health, and spend their time only engaged in a few activities out of the mainstream of life. These data offer convincing evidence that the majority of these respondents are leading fulfilling and satisfied lives as functioning members of their communities. (1981:102)

Finally, to understand the importance of leisure to any part of the population, it is necessary to examine definitions of leisure and to understand the concepts upon which notions of leisure have been based.

Leisure Definitions and Trends

The final area of theory, which needs to be presented to understand the perspective of this research, is in the area of leisure. It is necessary to understand what is meant by the term, leisure, today. To fully understand leisure it is worthwhile to examine leisure and its meaning to the Greeks and Romans and other cultures since. The Greek word for leisure, schole, meant "serious activity without the pressure of necessity." From that Greek word for leisure derived the English word for school. Similarly the English word "leisure" seems to derive from the Latin word licere

which means "to be free." From the Latin roots came the French word loisir, meaning "to be permitted." From these classical roots comes the English word license.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle viewed leisure as "a state of being in which activity is performed for its own sake." (Bucher, 1972:245). Included in this notion of leisure were such activities as art, politics, philosophical dialogues, and learning. Work, to the Athenian Greeks, was boring. Kando wrote:

Greek civilization defined work as a function (namely the absence of leisure) whereas we do the exact opposite, defining leisure as non-work. (Kando, 1975:23)

Pieper (1952) compared this classical view to a later notion:

Among other things, it might be pointed out in reply that the Christian and Western conception of the contemplative life is closely linked to the Aristotelian notion of leisure. (Pieper, 1952:27)

Relating this classical view of leisure to modern times, Kraus suggested:

It is linked to the idea of an aristocratic class structure based on the availability of slave labor. In modern society, leisure cannot be a privilege reserved for the few. Instead, it is widely available to all. It must exist side by side with work that is respected in our society, and it should have a meaningful relationship to work. (Kraus, 1978:38).

In general, there are four ways to explain leisure: 1) as activity; 2) as free or discretionary time; 3) as a state of mind; or, 4) in a holistic manner. For the purpose of this study, this final view is the most cogent, that is leisure viewed from an approach which integrates activity,

attitude, and setting. Kaplan (1975:19) expressed it this way: "Leisure to the participant, like his religion and his love, is what he thinks it is." In a similar way, Dahl (1972) explained:

Leisure is rather that sense of freedom which is realized when a person experiences more fully both his uniqueness and worth as an individual and his acceptance and relationship as part of the world around him. A person finds leisure when he discovers who he is, what he can do with his life, and what an abundance of happy circumstances and relationships in which his life is cast. (Dahl, 1972:70)

With this understanding of leisure, then, it is possible to integrate the theoretical notions presented.

Symbolic interaction, as already discussed, states that the meaning of an act arises in and through the act. That is, it does not have predetermined meanings attached to it. Adding to this, the congruence theory of aging suggests that adjustment to aging is found in the ability to choose how to fill one's time. That is, adjustment is found in the ability to discover one's own meaning in an activity or lack of it. Finally, viewing leisure in terms of Kaplan's definition, in light of the broader theories of symbolic interaction and congruence, suggests that it is important to the satisfactory adjustment of aging individuals that they be able to choose their own use of time in terms of their own definition of leisure which has meaning for them regardless of its meaning to others who may observe or participate. Fontana summed this up in his study of leisure and aging:

...the meaning that leisure has to people shapes the way in which they grow old. The activity ethic has dominated the way in which most of the elders studied view old age. (Fontana, 1977:110)

It is with this theoretical orientation and this approach to understanding aging and the individual that this study has been undertaken.

As a part of requirements for a seminar in social gerontology in 1978, the Life Satisfaction Index-A (LSIA) (Neugarten, et al, 1961) was administered to older Catholic sisters in three congregations in Oklahoma and Kansas (n=82). These same congregations were again studied along members of a Texas congregation, providing the present sample (n=194).

Primary consideration will be given to the results of the current survey. However, comparison will be made to the 1978 data and to any studies in the literature of retired women to consider any trends that might exist. Research questions that will be examined include:

- 1) Do sisters have higher life satisfaction scores than other retired women in their age group?
- 2) As the length of time a sister belongs to the order increases, does her life satisfaction score also increase?
- 3) Do sisters with "late vocations" (who joined their order after age 35) have a higher life satisfaction score than sisters who joined at an earlier age with like terms of membership?
- 4) Are LSIA scores from 1991 proportionately higher than scores from 1978?

From these research questions the following hypotheses will be tested:

- 1) There is no difference in LSIA scores between sisters with late vocations (joined after age 35) and those who joined at an earlier age.
- 2) There is no difference in LSIA scores between the 1978 and 1991 samples.
- 3) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on reason for retirement.
- 4) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on comparable health.
- 5) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on retirement age.
- 6) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on education.
- 7) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on type of congregation.
- 8) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on self-perception of retirement status.

Certain limitations exist with the present study. These include problems with the survey instrument, notably question design and problems with the LSIA itself. Another limitation is that, for the most part, respondents were residents in retirement facilities.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature regarding older sisters has been extremely limited and difficult to obtain. Of slightly greater frequency is research dealing with priests, and even more so, with Protestant clergy. While a large proportion of the information regarding priests is applicable in this study, the information gathered from studies of non-Catholic clergy is of limited value because of the possible influence of nuclear family roles (spousal and parental) obviously not extant in the group under study. Literature to be reviewed, thus, will address several topic areas with increasingly specific applicability to the present study. Literature considered will address the following issues:

- 1) Research dealing with life satisfaction studies,
- 2) Research regarding religious values and their impact on life satisfaction,
- 3) Research regarding women, and special concerns of older women,
- 4) Research regarding professed religious and priests,
- 5) Research dealing directly with older Catholic sisters and their specific concerns.

Life Satisfaction Studies

In order to consider studies which address life

satisfaction, it is most efficient to divide them into two groups: those dealing with instrumentation and assessment and those seeking the critical variables or predictors of life satisfaction.

It is most appropriate to begin this examination of the literature with the initial article which first presented the Life Satisfaction Index-A (LSIA), which forms the foundation of the present study. Neugarten, et al (1961) stated:

There have been various attempts to define and to measure the psychological well-being of older people, usually with the goal of using such a measure as an operational definition of "successful" aging. (134)

Critical components of life satisfaction according to them included zest, resolution and fortitude, as well as the congruence between desired and achieved goals, positive self concept, and mood tone. Specifically they stated that positive psychological well-being is reflected by:

...the extent that he: A) takes pleasure from the round of activities that constitutes his everyday life; B) regards his life as meaningful and accepts resolutely that which life has been; C) feels he has succeeded in achieving his major goals; D) holds a positive image of self; and E) maintains happy and optimistic attitudes and mood. (1961:137)

The remainder of the article is devoted to the validation of the developed instruments which will be considered in the discussion of the methodology of this study.

Havighurst (1961) related measures of successful aging to the theoretical foundation, reiterating the development of the LSIA, to which he was a contributor. He suggested:

Life satisfaction will probably be associated with active involvement for some kinds of people and with disengagement for other kinds. (12)

Preston (1967) examined a self-report measure, other than the LSIA, and found no significant difference between the attitudes of retired and non-retired subjects (n=190, mean age=76.2).

Adams (1969) seems to be the earliest of the researchers to evaluate the life satisfaction measures. He analyzed the LSIA by means of factor analysis with a sample of respondents (n=1716) in Missouri. The analysis examined the reliability of the items, the number of "factors" measured, and the number of component parts of the scale. The LSIA was found to be an adequate measure of life satisfaction. Adams also found that a modified ten-item version of the LSIA was equally successful in assessing life satisfaction. Pierce and Clark (1973) studied elderly subjects (n=435) by asking forty-five questions. The responses were subjected to cluster analysis. Three clusters were related to morale: depression/satisfaction, equanimity, and will to live. Others were related to attitudes, physical health, and social accessibility. Klemmack, et al, (1974) evaluated three commonly used measures of adjustment to aging--the Life Satisfaction Index (Adams ten-item modification), the Social Isolation Index and the Willingness to Live Scale. They found:

Although the literature, particularly within the field of gerontology, suggested that life satisfaction, social isolation, and willingness to live are conceptually distinct subdimensions of

psychological well-being, an examination of the content of the items designed to measure each of these subdimensions suggests that at least the life satisfaction and social isolation scales overlap considerably. In fact, our data suggests that the concepts of isolation and satisfaction, at least as commonly measures, are not empirically distinct. (268-269)

In a brief editorial, Bloom (1975) suggested that most quality-of-life scales in use are questionable and rather advocates time series analysis using multiple interviews over time. Knapp (1975) employed the LSIA with a sample (n=51) in Southern England and found:

The encouraging results from this analysis suggest, therefore, that the multidimensional modelling of life satisfaction is both computationally feasible and theoretically profitable. (603)

Palmore and Kivett (1977) endeavored to examine life satisfaction in a longitudinal study looking for change over time. They found, with their sample (n=378) no significant change between any age or sex category. They reported:

This indicates that the overall picture seems to be one of basic stability in life satisfaction throughout this age range (46-70) for both sexes. (316)

Lohmann (1977) used correlation analysis to examine seven commonly used measures of morale, adjustment, and life satisfaction, including the LSIA in its original form, as well as the 1969 Adams modification. She found a high level of interrelationship between the studied measures. Larson (1978) examined thirty years of studies related to the well-being of older persons, as measured subjectively. He found that regardless of the instrument employed the findings have had comparable results. He summarized the

most recurrent significant variables in predicting this well-being.

Dobson, et al, (1979) compared measures of life satisfaction, anomie and self-esteem by means of factor analysis and suggested further refinement of the LSIA is warranted. A refinement of this measure, the LSI-Z developed by Wood, et al, (1969) seems to be more useful, according to their findings.

S. Cutler (1979) presented a commentary on the possibility of secondary data analysis and suggested the inclusion of the shorter scales of life satisfaction (Adams, 1969; Wood, et al, 1969) in major national surveys. Similarly, George (1979) reported on the sources for life satisfaction studies in terms of routine studies with national scope such as the National Opinion Resource Center studies and problems that exist with them.

Lohmann (1980) once again studied the seven commonly used measures of life satisfaction, morale, and adjustment, subjecting them to construct validation. She found none of the existing instruments adequately reflect the desired construct and suggested a new refined instrument, that might eliminate the seeming inconsistencies among studies in life satisfaction. Herzog and Rodgers (1981) looked at measures of satisfaction in two national sample surveys in 1971 and 1978, across age levels and found mixed results--some similarity and some dissimilarity across age levels. Stock and Okun (1982) examined several of the life satisfaction

measures, notably the LSI-Z (Wood, et al, 1969) using multivariate analysis and found that the measures demonstrate a high degree of validity. Hoyt and Creech (1983) studied the LSIA by means of factor analysis and found it to be insufficient to measure the concepts desired. However, they further reported:

Although, methodologically, both the three-factor, eight-item and the four-factor, 11-item configurations identified in this analysis provide a better fit to the data than previous conceptualizations, it is important to recognize that neither of those formulations is totally adequate. (115)

Baur and Okun (1983) examined life satisfaction stability over a three-year period by means of interview. They found that life satisfaction is stable over one's life and therefore later life satisfaction could be reasonably well predicted by earlier life satisfaction, allowing for environmental factors. Finally, Horley (1984) considered two problems of satisfaction measures--variation in usage and assessment at appropriate levels--and recommended solutions to these problems.

Studies which address predictors of life satisfaction are limited to those employing the LSIA or the two adaptations already discussed (Adams, 1969; Wood, et al, 1969). Tobin and Neugarten (1961) found a positive association between social interaction and life satisfaction. They stated:

It appears that, with advancing age, engagement, rather than disengagement, is more closely related to psychological well-being. (346)

Maddox and Eisdorfer (1962) looked at the relationship between age and activity and activity and morale. They found that the type of activity was as important as the quantity of activity. Maddox (1963), in a subsequent reported, again found that a positive relationship existed between morale and activity. He also found environment to be more important than social contacts. Kleemeier (1964) looked at the relationship between leisure and activity in retirement and suggested that the choice is not between activity and the lack of it but rather between levels and types of activity.

Lowenthal and Haven (1968) looked at interaction and intimacy as predictors of adjustment and found:

...the maintenance of a stable intimate relationship is more closely associated with good mental health and high morale than is high social interaction or role status, or stability in interaction and role.
(29)

Havens (1968) examined the continuity and discontinuity of activity patterns following relocation and found low levels of adjustment related to discontinued activities and high levels of adjustment in those who continued activities. Similarly, Bultena (1969), studying retired men in Wisconsin, found the highest morale among those subjects who did not experience major life changes after retirement.

Bortner and Hultsch (1970) examined 27 variables which might affect life satisfaction and found the most significant to be: success in goals, opportunity, self-presence, troubles and obstacles, and self-respect.

Interestingly, they found other variables generally thought to be significant predictors (age, sex, marital status, education and efficacy) to be of little statistical consequence.

Schooler (1969) considered the disengagement theory in terms of environmental characteristics as an explanation of morale. Tallmer and Kutner (1970) also examined the relationship between disengagement and morale and found morale was not related to marital status, sex, health status, income, cause of unemployment, or engagement. A later study by Schooler (1970) again looked at environmental effects on morale and found:

That is, social relations (social participation, social integration, or whatever) is not as central to maintaining morale as the hypothesis suggests. At the same time, environmental factors take on more significance. (196)

Goldman (1971) examined loss of choice as a definition of social aging. Pollman (1971) found high life satisfaction among early retirees from skilled jobs. He suggested that this high morale would continue during retirement. Bultena and Oyler (1971) examined the relationship between disengagement and morale as related to health. They reported:

On the contrary, assessment by disengaged individuals of their present status as vis-a-vis earlier life patterns is apt to make all the more poignant a realization of the loss which likely have accompanied the onset of old age, and thereby increase their sense of deprivation and despair. (148)

Smith and Lipman (1972) examined three

variables--constraint, length of time in the housing project, and interaction--as predictors of life satisfaction and found constraint to be significant and interaction with peers by those who felt constrained to also be important. Sherman (1972) looked at satisfaction with retirement housing and found satisfaction to be highest when needs are met.

Palmore and Luikart (1972), studying health and social factors related to life satisfaction, found self-reported health to be of importance and, similarly to Bortner and Hultsch (1970), found that age, sex, numbers of social contacts, marital status, intelligence and career anchorage to be of little or no significance. Alston and Dudley (1973), in a national survey, by contrast found age to be important to life satisfaction, mitigated by the effects of income and occupational status.

Moriwaki (1973) extended the Lowenthal and Haven (1968) study by examining the number of significant others to psychological well-being. Also considered was the rate of self-disclosure. She suggested:

The major contribution of this study is the importance of social supports for the elderly's well-being. These data supplement the findings of Lowenthal and Haven by extending their concept of the presence of a confidant to the number of significant others to whom the aging individual can confide. (231)

Edwards and Klemmack (1973) compared twenty-two variables to life satisfaction seeking to find the most significant predictors of it. Socioeconomic status,

non-familial participation, and health status appeared to be the most significant. Martin (1973) considered life satisfaction in a retirement community and found age, education, previous retirement status, familism, and family interaction to not be significant to life satisfaction.

Nystrom (1974) examined the activity patterns, leisure "notions," leisure uses and meanings of leisure among sixty-five elderly residents of a low-income housing project. Types of activities and reasons for participation were studied. Spreitzer and Snyder (1974) endeavored to repeat the findings of earlier studies seeking to determine the critical predictors of life satisfaction as measured by personal interview techniques. The most significant variables found by this study were self-assessed health and financial satisfaction. Monk and Cryns (1974) considered predictors of voluntaristic intent with certain demographic variables and found age, education, belief in one's capacity to serve others, and scope of social interests to be among those significant variable.

Fillenbaum and Maddox (1974) studied reasons why male faculty members might work after retirement. They found: "... that nearly all healthy, retired male faculty work for pay at some time after retiring." (423) Graney (1975) reported on a four-year longitudinal study of happiness and social participation among women and found substantial positive relationship to exist. Elder (1975) presented an overview of theoretical understandings of age

differentiation over the course of life and reviews studies of social change in the patterns of life of both individuals and cohorts.

Conner and Powers (1975) examined the effects of community structure, age-graded interaction, and total interaction upon life satisfaction and found age-graded (with those of the same generation as the respondent) interaction to be most important. Cutler (1976) considered membership in various types of voluntary associations as predictors of life satisfaction and found only membership in church-affiliated groups to be a significant, though weak, indicator.

Medley (1976) studied financial situation, health satisfaction, satisfaction with the standard of living, satisfaction with family life and life satisfaction. He found satisfaction with family life to be the most important contributor to life satisfaction. Clemente and Sauer (1976) looked at race, age, socioeconomic status, perceived health and social participation and their effect on life satisfaction and found race and quality of perceived health most important.

Types of leisure participation and the resulting effects on life satisfaction were discussed by Peppers (1976) who found significant correlations between leisure and life satisfaction. Murphy (1977) described the traditional patterns of leisure and work lifestyles and suggested that a different approach might be needed in the future which

integrates work, education, and leisure throughout the life cycle. Tinsley, et al (1977) looked at the relationship of need satisfaction to five leisure activities: watching television, attending cultural events, reading, bicycling, and socializing. Needs most often satisfied by these activities were: sex, catharsis, independence, understanding, getting along with others, and affiliation.

Mulac (1977) suggested planning for retirement by beginning earlier leisure activities which can be continued throughout life. Toseland and Sykes (1977) found life satisfaction best predicted by activity level, financial status, and health status. George and Maddox (1977) considered the relationship between retirement and adjustment and found that marital status and socioeconomic status are most important in understanding adaptation to retirement. Toseland and Rasch (1978) have studied the most important factors in community satisfaction and found that perceived safety, the individual dwelling, and satisfaction with recreational and health facilities to be more important than demographic variables such as age, income, sex, or marital status.

Larson (1978) examined thirty years of studies related to the well-being of older persons, as measured subjectively. He found that regardless of the instrument employed the findings have had comparable results. He summarized the most recurrent significant variables in predicting this well-being, notably health, socioeconomic

factors, interaction, and to a lesser extent, marital status and living situations. Not found to be consistently significant were age, sex, race and employment.

Wood and Robertson (1978) discussed the importance of friendship and kinship interaction on morale. Friends were found to be more important than grandchildren in this study. Kimmel, et al, (1978) found that health status and preretirement notions about retirement were more important to satisfaction than whether retirement was voluntary or involuntary. Bell (1978) examined life satisfaction following retirement in terms of three theoretical perspectives. His findings did not support the theories. Toseland and Rasch (1979) found that the most important predictors of life satisfaction were family life satisfaction, personal health satisfaction and satisfaction with dwelling.

Palmore (1979) sought to discover the predictors of successful aging and found that activity was as good a predictor as physical functioning and happiness. Cox and Bhak (1979) again replicated the Lowenthal and Haven (1968) study and added the dimension of reference groups to the previous notion of the Moriwaki (1973) study stressing significant others as important to retirement adjustment. Ray (1979) studied respondents in Maryland (n=124) and found that activity was important to life satisfaction. He stated:

Leisure services should recognize its role as facilitator and advocate for maintaining quality

leisure experiences which allow for social interaction and activities which are congruent with the needs and desires of older clients. (118)

N. Cutler (1979) believed that life satisfaction is a multidimensional construct and that these dimensions vary across age groups. Beard and Ragheb (1980) developed a measure of leisure satisfaction which assesses this variable. Nehrke, et al, (1980) studied life satisfaction, locus of control and self concept and found significant age differences in life satisfaction and self-concept in an institutionalized sample (n=99). Walsh and Kiracofe (1980) were concerned with choices of significant others in retirement home residents (n=59). They concluded that changes away from family members to significantly effect life satisfaction scores, in a positive manner. Spreitzer, et al, (1980) analyzed the impact of health and income on life satisfaction in three national surveys. They found income to be more important before age sixty-five and health to be more important after age sixty-five.

Kleiber and Thompson (1980) explored, in depth, in their philosophical article, some of the myths of aging, citing the pluses and minuses associated with each one, as they relate to leisure behavior. They stated:

But the emphasis on activity for activity's sake, irrespective of the personal significance of the activity, probably contributes little to individual well-being. (10)

Guinn (1980) found, in a study of leisure satisfaction and its effect on life satisfaction, that satisfaction with leisure did, in fact, enhance life satisfaction. Medley

(1980), studying life satisfaction across four life stages, found life satisfaction scores to be fairly constant across all stages for women with changes noted for men. Family life and standard of living were significant predictors of life satisfaction for both sexes.

Fawcett, et al, (1980) examined the relationship between locus of control and life satisfaction. Life satisfaction was associated with belief in personal influence and negatively related to perceived institutional constraints in a sample of institutionalized women (n=56). Seleen (1981) found, as reported in depth in the introduction to this study, that as the discrepancy between desired and actual use of time decreases, life satisfaction scores increase. Fly, et al, (1981) focused on the relationship between leisure activity and adjustment to retirement. Indices of life satisfaction and alienation were employed. Respondents with more leisure activity showed higher life satisfaction and lower alienation.

Elwell and Maltbie-Crannell (1981) discovered that role loss has both an indirect and a direct effect on coping resources and life satisfaction for both men and women. Walker, et al, (1981) compared retirement style with health, income, occupation and preretirement feelings about retirement. They found:

However, the individual's style of retirement is related to the level of satisfaction with retirement. In turn, retirement style is related to other important variables such as health, income and level of education. (278)

Goudy and Goudeau (1981) considered social ties and life satisfaction and found that friendship ties are better predictors of life satisfaction than family ties. Similarly, Glenn and McLanahan (1981) found little relationship between later stages of parenthood and psychological well-being. Seleen (1982) found that satisfaction with time use is a contributor to life satisfaction. Ragheb and Griffith (1982) used the Leisure Satisfaction Scale (LSS) developed by Beard and Ragheb (1980) in conjunction with the LSIA in studying a sample of older adults. Their study examined subjects in Florida (n=565) who were fifty-five and above. They concluded:

...this finding shows that gaining a sense of accomplishment from engaging in leisure activities, gaining self-confidence, utilizing one's skills and abilities, and doing interesting activity (psychological component) are important to one's life satisfaction. (304)

Lee and Ellithorpe (1982) studied the exchange between generations and the subjective well-being of the elderly and found, as had earlier studies, that interaction with kin has no significant effect on morale. Kozma and Stones (1983), in a study of subjects in Newfoundland, found the main predictors of happiness to be housing satisfaction, health, activities, and changes in life events for institutionalized individuals and for rural individuals, marital status and health were predictors. Zeigler and Reid (1983) described the correlates of life satisfaction and desired control in a sample of elderly residents of an apartment complex (n=79). Activity level and psychomotor speed were considered.

Hooker and Ventis (1984) conducted a study relating retirement satisfaction, strength of the work ethic, and daily activities. They stated:

The results show some support for the hypothesis that work-related values, in conjunction with activities, influence life satisfaction in retirement.

Mobily, et al, (1984) analyzed the relationship between leisure participation and other factors and found age and self-reported health to be the most important factors studied. Ward (1985) examined informal support networks and their relationship to well-being and found the results to be inconclusive. Tinsley, et al, (1985) classified leisure activities in terms of the benefits psychologically to older persons and presented the resulting schema as a means of preliminary classification of leisure activities.

Interestingly, leisure pursuits requiring strenuous physical activity were absent from the sample. Romsa, et al, (1985) endeavored to address life satisfaction of retirees from the viewpoint of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs and built a recreational model using it to explain life satisfaction in terms of need satisfaction. The work of Sneegas (1985, 1986) examined the relationship of perceived social competence, leisure participation, leisure satisfaction, and life satisfaction in middle-aged and older adults. She concluded:

Leisure service professionals should be at least sensitive to the social demands of various activities, cognizant of the social abilities of participants, and skilled in facilitating

reinforcing social environments and interaction for positive leisure engagements. (256)

Among the most recent studies, D'Amato (1987), using secondary data from a national study, looked at life satisfaction with special emphasis on race. She found income, health, marriage, social contacts, family support, and contact with the labor force as significant in assessing levels of life satisfaction. Russell (1987) considered the importance of recreation participation and recreation satisfaction and found that satisfaction with activities, rather than simply frequency of participation, correlated positively with life satisfaction. Feinson (1987) studied gender differences in mental health and aging and found no conclusive evidence. Steinkamp and Kelly (1987) considered social integration and leisure activity in relationship to life satisfaction and found that leisure activity contributed significantly to life satisfaction.

With this understanding of the more general aspects of life satisfaction, studies which more directly pertain to the present research will be considered.

Religion and Life Satisfaction

Numerous studies have considered religion and life satisfaction. The earliest of those to be considered, by Fichter (1952), examined the religious practices of Catholics (n=8363) and found three types of religious observance. It is interesting to note that the oldest age group (60 and over) were less devout by the measures

employed than were those who were ten to nineteen years of age. Gray (1956) looked at several variables related to religious practice and their relationship to adjustment in old age and found that the church does, in fact, contribute to adjustment. Scudder (1958) edited a collection of articles which related organized religion and the older person, which were actually presentations at a conference on that topic. Glock (1962), studying religious commitment, examined several dimensions of religiosity and suggested that an adequate explanation of the relationship between religion and the individual is yet to be found.

In another book, Gray and Moberg (1962) discussed the role of the church and the older person and particularly discussed the impact of religiosity on adjustment in the later years. They stated:

Church activities and the religious experience tend to satisfy such basic social and psychological needs of members as the need to belong, to be valued, and to be understood. (92)

Further, and especially applicable to this study, they added:

The older Christian who lives in intimate fellowship with his Lord is never laid on the shelf. As long as he retains consciousness in this life and is not in such extreme suffering that all thoughts except those of his pain are squeezed from his mind, he can be active in the service of God, the church and his fellowmen through his prayers on their behalf. (139)

Moberg (1965a) explored various facets of the integration of older members in church congregations. He makes recommendations for the inclusion of such members by

congregations. Moberg (1965b), employing Glock's dimensions of religiosity, found that while religious works and practices might decrease with advancing age, religious beliefs seem to intensify. Moberg and Taves (1965) discovered that church members have higher adjustment scores than non-members. They stated:

The hypothesis that church participation is related to good adjustment in old age is overwhelmingly supported by the evidence presented in this study.
(124)

Bahr (1970) found that substantial disaffiliation with religion occurs during adult life. He suggested studies which examine developmental changes separately from societal influences. Wingrove and Alston (1971) examined aging and church attendance and found attendance trends most related to changes in the social environment. Heenan (1972) presented a comprehensive bibliography of studies of religion and aging to that time and four major areas of research: church participation, religion and personal adjustment, the meaning of religion to the aged, and religion and death. Most of the studies, he found, were conducted by gerontologists. Hammond (1972) discussed ministry and the aging. O'Connell (1975) examined the dimensions of religiosity among Catholics. One of his findings suggested that dimensions of religiosity might differ between denominations.

Blazer and Palmore (1976) found, in a longitudinal study, that religious attitudes remained stable despite a decrease in religious activities. Further, they found

significant correlations between religion and happiness, feelings of usefulness, and adjustment. Mindel and Vaughan (1978) used a multidimensional approach to religiosity and found that while formal activity declined, significant relationships with religious organizations were maintained. They concluded:

This study suggests that religion is still a salient factor in their lives as they understand it despite their lack of participation in its formally organized forms.

Hadaway (1978) examined four measures of religiosity and four measures of life satisfaction and found that religion might serve as a resource for old age rather than as a compensation. Hadaway and Roof (1978) studied religious commitment and the quality of life. They found:

Religious meaning and religious belonging both influence quality of life in essentially the same way, although it would appear that meaning is the more distinctively religious resource. (306)

Guy (1982) was concerned with religious affiliation and life satisfaction. She reported:

Our data indicate that physical limitation is the intervening variable that significantly alters the relation between aging and church attendance. Consequently, if individuals (physically limited and unable to attend church) could maintain contact with the church through church newsletters, telephone calls, personal, or ministerial visits, life would be more satisfying than if church contact were completely severed. (231)

Tellis-Nayak (1982) considered religion and meaning and found it was best explained existentially among the rural elderly in the studied community. Markides (1983) studied church attendance, self-rated religiosity, and private

prayer in a longitudinal study of older Anglos and Mexican-Americans. He found, over time (four years), that self-rated religiosity increased and that private prayer and church attendance remained stable.

St. George and McNamara (1984), studying religion, race and psychological well-being, reported:

The overall bland relationship between quality-of-life, religiosity measures, and sense of well-being for the population at large is at least partially related, we believe, to the way religiosity is operationally defined. (361)

Heflebower, et al, (1984) considered religious orientation, self-concept and purpose-in-life in three-generation families. They called for more sophisticated measures of religiosity, among their findings. Ainlay and Smith (1984), seeking to eliminate problems in earlier studies of religion and aging, found that dimensions of religious involvement became more distinct with age. Hunsberger (1985) was concerned with age, religion, life satisfaction, and perceived sources of religiousness. Highly religious persons reported an increase in religiosity over their lives. Further, mothers were reported to be the strongest influence in religious development.

Witter, et al, (1985) found that religion was significantly related to subjective well-being in an adult sample. Petersen and Roy (1985) attempted to understand the relationship between religion and psychological well-being. They found a relationship between religious salience and meaning and purpose. Becker (1986), in a book directed

toward ministry with older persons, suggested:

I am convinced that the providence of God is one of the most vital faith perspectives for older people and that a key pastoral task is the careful development of trust in God's providential care.
(101)

Levin and Markides (1986) were concerned with religious attendance and subjective health. They stated:

Especially among older women, where the correlation of subjective health with religious attendance is initially significant because both variables are associated with physical capacity, religious attendance may be more an indicator of physical capacity or functional health than of religious commitment. (36-37)

Markides, et al, (1987), in an eight-year longitudinal study of religion, aging, and life satisfaction, found that:

Taking all of the findings into consideration, there is little evidence that older people turn to religion as they age and approach death. The data showed that indicators of religiosity remained fairly stable over time, with the possible exception of religious attendance, which declined slightly among the very old. (664)

Johnson and Mullins (1989) found that greater participation in religious activities was related to less loneliness. They stressed the importance of the social dimension of religious participation. Ellison, et al, (1989) found that both devotional and participatory aspects of religiosity have a small but positive relationship with life satisfaction.

With these understandings in mind, studies which focus on women will be considered.

Women and Aging

Several studies have examined the special needs of older women. Those studies are presented here.

Cottrell (1942), in a presentation to the American Sociological Society, suggested that an individual's adjustment is related to age and sex roles. Atchley (1969) compared those who respond and refuse in interview research. Factors leading to refusal to participate included physical situation, health and income, interests, and personality needs. Booth (1972) found that while males might have more friends than females, females had affectively richer bonds

. Pihlblad and Adams (1972) concentrated their study on widows and life satisfaction. They stated:

While there are undoubtedly other intervening variables in these relationships, it appears that satisfaction among the small town elderly is most affected by participation in formal organizations, second by friend associations, and least by family contacts. (330)

Query and Steines (1974) were concerned with disillusionment with American values as aging takes place. They found that religious optimism decreases but that a work-activity orientation does not. As reported earlier, Graney (1975) reported on a four-year longitudinal study of happiness and social participation among women and found a substantial positive relationship to exist. Jaslow (1976) considered employment, retirement and morale among women. In his study of women over age sixty-five (n=2398), he found that employed women had the highest morale, those who were

retired were next, and the lowest morale was found in those women who had never worked.

Atchley (1976) studied women and their work orientation and found that the only related variable was the kind of job that she had held prior to retirement. Powers and Bultena (1976) examined sex differences and intimate friendships in a sample (n=234) seventy years of age and older. As suggested earlier, men's contacts were more numerous; women's contacts were more intimate. Fox (1977) discussed the effects of retirement and former work life on adaptation to old age. She reported:

Results of analysis show that women who have worked much of their lives have no fewer social resources and in fact, appear to be more socially involved than lifelong housewives. Compared to women still in the labor force, retirees have a lower perceived level of social contact, but are more involved in informal interaction with friends and neighbors.
(202)

Lewis (1978) found changes in women's role participation over time and suggested considerations for the future. Sales (1978) related the adult development of women to role choice. Sontag (1979) discussed the double standard of aging reflecting the additional problems of older women. Uhlenberg (1979) suggested that older women in the future will be healthy, educated, non-poor and native-born who are not employed and not living with a spouse. He outlines possible constructive roles which should be considered for the group of able elderly women. Keith (1979) looked at life changes and perceptions of life and death. She stated:

Even after experiencing decremental change, women's

perceptions of life and death, for example, were inclined to be more positive than those of men. (877)

Levy (1980) considered the adjustment of the older women as related to chronic ill health and attitudes toward retirement. She found:

On the other, she seems to have the capacity that is not shared by male, to transcend her biology and adjust to life's transitional demands despite ill health. Her needs, therefore, are radically distinct from the aging male's. (109)

Prentis (1980) examined a relatively unstudied area, women's perception of retirement (n=1235). He found that women have been relatively unprepared for retirement and suggested areas of research that might assist practitioners. Longino and Lipman (1982) were concerned with support systems of women in retirement communities. They found that while married women received more support than formerly married or never married women, it was from their offspring rather than their spouse, in terms of emotional support.

Liang (1982) considered sex differences in life satisfaction. No systematic difference between the sexes was found. Traupman, et al, (1982) related intimacy in older women's lives to life satisfaction. They found sexually intimate relationships to be extremely important to life satisfaction and moderately important to physical health. Tate (1982) studied life satisfaction and death anxiety and found an inverse relationship. She reported:

In general, the findings of the present study strengthen the proposition that both life satisfaction and death anxiety are a function of

past and present life experiences and conditions. (304)

Riddick and Daniel (1984) examined leisure activities as well as other factors as contributors to life satisfaction in older women. They found life satisfaction to be directly and positively affected by (in declining order) leisure roles, income, health problems, and employment background. George, et al (1984) were concerned with sex differences in the antecedents and consequences of retirement. Variables which predict retirement for men are found not to apply to women.

Roberto and Scott (1984) were interested in the friendship patterns of older women. They reported:

Results from this study suggest that older women, and widowed older women in particular, are making use of the natural support systems around them. ... In partial support of equity theory, the older women who were over benefited had lower mean morale scores when compared to those equitably benefited women, but the overbenefiters also had lower morale scores than the underbenefited women. (9)

Haug, et al (1985) compiled a book on the physical and mental health of older women. Presented in this work are the following findings. In considering institutionalization of women, Kahana and Kahana (1985) reported:

The impact of institutional living on older women represents an important but thus far largely neglected concern for social gerontologists. (219)

Riley (1985) suggested that both men and women cherish their independence, maintain high levels of energy and productivity and function effectively in their own households. Somers (1985) presented social trends affecting

older women. She stated:

Nevertheless, the increase in the number and proportion of older women in the total population and their relatively disadvantaged position with respect to many key indicators-- health, jobs, income, formal education, family supports-- suggests at least a temporary lowering of overall standards for the nation as a whole, particularly with respect to physical and material goods and values. (23)

Keith (1985), in a particularly interesting study, examined work, retirement, and well-being among unmarried men and women (n=1398). She suggested that formerly married women are most in need of attention from practitioners who plan preretirement programs. Adams (1985) studied emotional closeness and physical distance between friends. She found positive relationships between emotional closeness and physical distance, duration and emotional closeness and frequency of interaction and proximity. Gigy (1985) has studied attitudes toward retirement of preretired and retired women. She stated:

The findings reported here suggest the conclusion that retirement status has little or no direct impact on the psychological functioning and general attitudes of women in this study. (42)

Goldberg, et al, (1986) presented an exploratory study of the social supports of spouseless, childless older women. They suggested the following:

A longitudinal study of spouseless, childless elderly women would help answer some important questions raised by this exploratory study. (110)

Engle and Graney (1986) were concerned with the self-reported and functional health of older women. Their analysis supported earlier studies demonstrating a

relationship between self-reported health and functional health. Szinovacz (1987) investigated retirement timing and retirement satisfaction. Results of her study were consistent with earlier studies supporting the idea that a negative relationship existed between non-voluntary retirement and retirement satisfaction. Rodeheaver (1987) suggested that social policies and programs designed to serve the older population are premised on the needs of males and have overlooked the fact that females are the largest proportion of the older population. He concluded his article with the following:

Invisible in culture and in law, older women have increased in number but their numbers have not informed social policy. (745)

Lohr, et al, (1988) related coping responses to physical health problems to the life satisfaction of older women.

They found:

Overall, the results of this study emphasize that the relationship of physical health status and life satisfaction is more complex than most previous research has considered, that coping responses play important and specific roles in this process, and that the process differs from women with varying amounts of physical conditions. (P59)

Bearon (1989) conducted interviews with middle-aged women (n=30) and older women (n=30) and reported:

While global scores represent the end stage of a cognitive process of reconciling what is and what could be, an examination of qualitative responses (even in a cross-sectional study) gives insight into relativistic thinking and the dynamic elements of accomodation in later life. (778)

In the most recent study found, Erdner and Guy (1990) studied career identification and women's attitudes toward

retirement. They found that women with stronger work identities experienced less satisfaction with retirement.

Aging and Religious Vocations

Studies which address religious vocations and aging are much more limited. Lepkowski (1956) is concerned with attitudes and adjustments of institutionalized and non-institutionalized elderly Catholics. He found no statistically significant differences between the two groups. Bootz, et al, (1970) primarily concerned with male members of religious orders, discussed retirement and pretirement preparation. They presented several cogent points:

The individual who was dedicated to God was supposed to remain "in the saddle" as long as possible, working until physically incapacitated--perhaps beyond the time when he would be of much benefit to others. (98)

Further, they suggested:

Until recently few if any religious orders had any detailed, organized retirement plan or policy for the retirement of religious....Today, as the life expectancy increases and major superiors are engulfed in many other serious financial and personnel problems, it seems imperative that a retirement policy and program be established for the benefit of the individual person in religious life who is aging. (101)

Of significance given the preceding studies related to income and life satisfaction, they continued:

There are many advantages which religious have over a layman in retirement. Religious do not have to worry about financial matters relating to retirement; nor do they have to show concern over providing adequately for a spouse. (102)

Ashley (1972) discussed the problems of retirement in a religious community. He described later life as a period of vigil and stated:

All of us, young and old, must have some vigil in our life, some time of reflection, purification, integration. It should begin early, so that old age will only be its culmination and intensification. It is not something separated from active life but is rather a harvest time in which the fruit of experience is reaped, assimilated, and made part of our total personality. (330)

In a special section of the Gerontologist, entitled "Catholic Religious Orders and the Aging Process" (1972), several significant notions were presented. Hunter (1972) was concerned with leadership training for preretirement programs. He suggested:

Therefore, religious communities in the United States are encouraged to promote the development of at least four regional retirement training centers of their own. (19)

MacGuigan (1972) wrote of the aging priest:

My feeling is that there should be more emphasis on retirement to rather than on retirement from, since a priest never retires from his priesthood or from his basic commitment. (20)

Herold (1973) presented useful descriptions of retirement and its meaning for older religious. She stated:

Retirement for a religious means the gradual or sudden transition from one's usual work in the apostolate to another means of self-giving. (1)

Of interest and, perhaps, particular value to the present study was her description of retirement for a vowed religious:

For a religious, retirement may include the following altered means of "giving self";

1. A shortened day in their accustomed activity.
2. Participation in less physically intense work, but work which enhances and supplements the fruitfulness of those members still in full activity.
3. Utilization of predeveloped talents and skills.
4. The rendering of mundane but loving services to their fellow-religious.
5. A sincere manifestation of interest in others, deriving a vicarious enjoyment in their personal activities and accomplishments.
6. Praying for others, listening, encouraging and counseling them in their problems.
7. Generously sharing the wisdom of life's experiences.
8. A joyful offering of the immeasurable gifts of silent prayer, pain, suffering, dependence, inactivity and loneliness. (2)

Ward (1979) discussed the never-married in later life.

His findings of lower well-being in this group were inconclusive and may be related to age-related changes or to less societal support of single living among older cohorts. Kaiser, et al, (1982) considered the retirement of diocesan priests. They found that the length of time in the priesthood was positively related to retirement satisfaction.

Older Sisters

The final area of literature to be explored is that which deals specifically with sisters and particularly, older sisters.

Gambari (1964), writing on the formation process of sisters, presented several concepts important to understanding the subjects of this study. He stated:

Religious formation is, as it were, the bringing to

birth of a new personality which was conceived in baptism and now must be shaped and fashioned to respond to the particular mode of the Christian vocation to which religious are destined. (19)

Further, he added:

The vocation itself is a gift from God but requires human collaboration on the part of the candidate, the Church as a whole and the particular Institute. (21)

Heenan (1968) presented several interesting concerns about aging and religious life. He indicated:

The societal demographic trend also seems to have been duplicated in religious communities. Vocations are down (somewhat like a decrease in birth rate), attrition continues, but not in the upper age groups, and increased medical benefits permit the individual religious to live longer (a decrease in death rate). (1123)

Contrasting the conditions of elderly religious to the older population in general, he found:

Most older people in the United States reside in a family context, either their own or that of an offspring. In contrast, very few (2% to 5%) are institutionalized to the same extent as the elderly religious. (1123)

Hickey and Kalish (1969) reported on the "new old nuns." In reflecting the sisters' attitude toward retirements, they reported:

The prevailing attitude of all age groups still supports the traditional belief that retirement should take place only when the sister is no longer capable of productive work. (172)

They further added:

The general reaction is not based upon rejection of the concept of retirement, but upon the assumption that it is both wasteful and contrary to the spirit of the rules for a healthy sister, regardless of age, to have leisure time for activities that have no bearing upon the productivity and the financial welfare of her religious community. (172)

A further concept they presented, with regard to retirement residence, indicated further reluctance toward retirement:

...a substantial majority of sisters hold very strong negative feelings about their own eventual retirement to the Motherhouse. The two major reasons for these feelings seem to be the isolation of the Motherhouse and the recognition that it is the last home prior to death. (174)

Rys (1970) was concerned with leisure, relaxation and recreation in religious life. She presented an interesting view of leisure which was directly applicable to the retirement or leisure years:

Throughout this paper thus far, it has been stated that leisure is a spiritual attitude, that leisure is of a higher sphere than activity, that leisure is justified by divine worship, and that prayer is necessary to maintain a proper balance between work and leisure. (38)

Hickey (1970) presented, again, several interesting ideas about aging sisters. First, with regard to health issues, he stated:

What does my "statistical ball" say about the Catholic sister and the aging process? First of all the physical factors: you live longer than the average American woman; you die of different diseases; climb too many stairs; do not visit your physician often enough; and--in general--do not take sufficient preventive care of yourselves. (107)

A further interesting comment revealed:

A recent survey showed that only 10% of American women are participating in the labor force after age 65, while the nuns have over 93% of their members still active. (108)

In the special section of the Gerontologist, reported above, two further articles related specifically to sisters. Guinan (1972) related the aging of religious to

the larger society and suggested:

If religious orders can find ways to solve the problems inherent in the retirement syndrome, then they can help their neighbors in the secular city find remedies for one of the great personal and social problems of our time. (21)

Hickey (1972), once again presented several concerns regarding sisters and retirement. In particular, he stated:

My data support this, showing that for most sisters there is an apprehensive period late in life when they attempt to work harder and avoid showing any outward signs of physical illness or fatigue, lest retirement be required. (16)

McIsaac (1973) considered the spirituality of the older sister. She indicated:

At the heart of the spirituality of the well-adjusted older sisters is their recognition that they serve most effectively by being faith-persons. (297)

Beha (1974) discussed the leisure available to be contemplative, an aspect of religious life presented earlier by others. Melamed, et al, (1974) studied women religious in 1969 and in 1972 with regard to sixteen personality factors. They found an increase in self-awareness, self-sufficiency and inner resourcefulness.

Pellicane (1975) presented concern for the increasing median age of congregations. She related:

But the calendar does not stop, and we are getting older, and the disciplining of wrinkles notwithstanding, the yearly statistics of our Congregations will not let us forget, the median age gets higher and higher and no one comes to rescue us. (91)

Melamed, et al, (1975), reporting further results from their three-year studies of sisters, indicated that they appear

more innerdirected, more self-actualizing, more spontaneous and have a higher self-regard. Bernstein (1976) wrote in an attempt to explain the mystery of religious life to those outside of it. She remarked:

To an outsider, the process of going into a convent looks remarkably like being admitted to prison: the taking of a person's clothes, the removal of all personal items, the life in common, the assuming of a new identity-- for the prisoner, a number; for the nun, the title, "Sister." (76)

Of limited value to this study was the book by Campbell-Jones (1978) which described religious life in England. Caliguiri (1979) discussed aging and the spiritual life. He concluded:

The best and really the only preparation we can make to assure such an awareness of our spiritual life and such a vital spirituality in the transitional years of old age is to strive to be aware of, fully present to and comfortable with how God's Spirit is at work in our lives now. (46)

FitzPatrick (1980) presented a contemporary understanding of vowed life. Brennan and Brewi (1981) discussed transitions at mid-life as sisters might experience them. Kolmer (1984) compiled a survey of literature discussing religious women in the United States from 1950 to 1983. Neal (1984) discussed religious women in transition from the sixties to the eighties. Her longitudinal study was useful because of the statistical analysis she presented. For example, she reported:

Our data tell us that where 17% were over sixty-five in 1966, today 38% are. (19)

And of concern to congregations as a whole, and their administrators in particular, she stated:

This means that in the immediate future, more of sisters' incomes have to be allocated to providing for their aging population. (45)

The most useful works discovered were those by Magee. In completion of the requirements for a doctorate in social work, Magee (1984b) studied the life satisfaction of retired sisters in two congregations on Long Island. The findings of his research and his cooperation have been invaluable in planning the present study. Magee (1984a), in another article, suggested a model for the assessment of life satisfaction by the religious congregation. He stated:

The findings of my doctoral research with a random sample of one hundred fifty women religious who were retired from their full-time ministry revealed that the conditions that contribute to the life satisfaction of older adults in general contribute, as well, to the quality of life of older women religious. (923)

In a later publication, Magee (1987) discussed strategies for assisting older sisters in their adjustment to retirement. He stated the role of the social work practitioner in these strategies:

Consultation with religious congregations concerning gerontological issues is, indeed, an appropriate and valuable area of social work practice. Not only can the consultant address seminal issues affecting older persons and be instrumental in inaugurating structural changes that enhance the life satisfaction of older women religious, but the communal life styles characteristic of these congregations can also be a rich source of insight concerning the adaptation of these structural changes in secular institutions of communal living for older adults. (191)

Smiley (1988) reflected on women religious and aging. She discussed the value of the current cohort of older nuns as role models for later cohorts as they age. A final

article by Magee (1989) discussed the value of life review to the vowed life.

The preceding review of the literature has attempted to address the cogent issues in considering the life satisfaction of older Catholic sisters. What has surfaced is the need for further study in this area of gerontology.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As a part of the requirements for a seminar in social gerontology in 1978, the Life Satisfaction Index A (LSIA) (Neugarten, etal, 1968) along with demographic questions (see Appendix A). was administered to older Catholic sisters in three congregations in Oklahoma and Kansas. Because of their religious vocation, it was thought that their scores on this instrument would be higher than for their agemates in the secular world. Preliminary examination indicated that this was in fact true. Surveys were mailed to each retirement facility and returned in like manner. These questionnaires remain on file and were considered during this study.

With the above-mentioned increased attention to the retirement of religious, it is important to re-examine this group. It is also worthwhile to compare the more recent with the earlier findings to determine if any trends might be present to assist in retirement planning for this group.

Congregations studied in 1978 were located in Oklahoma and Kansas, yielding a total sample of eighty-two respondents. These same congregations were again studied along with members of a Texas congregation, yielding

approximately two hundred respondents in the second sample.

Research Questions

Primary consideration was given to the results of the current survey. However, comparison was made to the 1978 data and to any studies in the literature of retired women to consider any trends that might exist. Research questions that were examined include:

1) Do sisters have higher life satisfaction scores than other retired women in their age group?

2) As the length of time a sister belongs to the order increases, does her life satisfaction score also increase?

3) Do sisters with "late vocations" (who joined their order after age 35) have a higher life satisfaction score than sisters who joined at an earlier age with like terms of membership?

4) Are LSIA scores from 1991 proportionately higher than scores from 1978?

Hypotheses

From these research questions the following hypotheses were derived and tested:

- 1) There is no difference in LSIA scores between sisters with late vocations (joined after age 35) and those who joined at an earlier age.
- 2) There is no difference in LSIA scores between the 1978 and 1991 samples.
- 3) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on reason for retirement.
- 4) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on comparable health.

- 5) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on retirement age.
- 6) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on education.
- 7) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on type of congregation.
- 8) There is no difference in LSIA scores based on self-perception of retirement status.

From the present study, findings might be used to augment the retirement satisfaction of older Catholic sisters. Additionally, as suggested earlier, findings of this study might indicate possible courses of action for older Americans in the next century when the proportionate size of this segment of society has significantly increased.

Design of Questionnaires

A short questionnaire, along with a cover letter explaining the study, was mailed to the superior of each congregation (see appendix C) to determine the demographic profile of each group and to obtain the appropriate contact person for later use. Questions asked included the type of congregation, apostolic or monastic; whether the congregation participated in the Tri-Conference Retirement Project and demographic results from that needs analysis; the contact person in each retirement facility and the approximate number of sisters in the facility.

Questionnaires for the individual respondents again consisted of the LSIA and demographic questions (see Appendix B). Demographic information collected consisted of: age, primary occupation, years in religious life,

retirement status, retirement age, perceived health. perceived health comparable to peers, felt age, reason for retirement, and education. Additionally, self-rated use of time was asked but was not considered during this study.

Use of the Life Satisfaction Index-A (LSIA) was deemed appropriate as a measure of life satisfaction or morale. First, it was used in the earlier 1978 study with which comparisons were to be made. Second, it is commonly used and comparable results are available for other groups. Third, it has been evaluated for reliability and validity for use with older samples. (Mangen and Peterson, 1982:220-222) As designed by Neugarten, et al, (1961), it is scored by comparison to expected responses, with a "correct" response receiving one point and an "incorrect" or unsure response receiving no points, yielding a range of scores from zero to twenty. As defined in Acuff's (1967) work, life satisfaction is divided into high (16-20), mid (13-15), and low (0-12).

Choice of Sample

This system of inquiry yielded the following sample frame from which participants in the study might be obtained, as indicated by the congregational survey.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE FRAME

	Congregation			
	A	B	C	D
Sisters in Congregation	45	269	333	432
Sisters aged 70 or older	19	118	197	209
Percentage aged 70 or older	42.2	44.9	59.2	48.4
Sisters in retirement facility	45	109	60	120

Questionnaires were then mailed to the facility contact persons for distribution to individual participants and collected and returned by mail for analysis. Data remain in the hands of the researcher from both time frames. In communicating the results to the cooperating congregations, the only identification made was of their own results and no mention was made of the identity of the other three groups.

From this mailing the following sample was achieved (n=194).

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

	Total	Congregation			
		A	B	C	D
Surveys mailed	364	45	109	60	150
Surveys returned	211	21	66	22	102
Surveys usable	194	20	57	20	97

Description of Sample

Respondents were all sisters aged sixty or older who completed the survey. The usual retirement age for sisters is age seventy. This fact probably accounted for the small percentage of sisters under that age in the sample. Age sixty was used in this study, however, to allow comparison with the 1978 study.

Examination of the sample in its entirety (n=194) provided the following descriptive information. Of the responding sisters, 14.7% were sixty to sixty-nine years of age, 39.2% were between seventy and seventy-nine, 41.7% were between eighty and eighty-nine, and 4.4% were ninety or older. The mean age of the total sample was 77.72 years. Occupationally, 13.7% regarded themselves primarily as

administrators, 63.2% were teachers, 8.8% were nurses, and 14.2% indicated other occupations. Years in religious life as reported by the sisters ranged from thirty-seven years to eighty-eight years, with a mean of 59.09 years.

Regarding retirement status, 28.1% reported that they were retired, 42.4% were semi-retired, and 29.6% reported that they were still employed. Retirement ages ranged from forty-one to ninety-one with the mean retirement age being 73.06 years.

Questions regarding health showed the sisters to be in good health generally. Of those responding, 46.6% rated their health "good," 44.6% rated their health as "fair," and 8.8% rated their health as poor. In comparison to the health of others their age, 53% rated their health as "better" than others, 3.5% as "worse," and 43.5% as "about the same." A third question regarding physical well-being asked if they felt younger or older than their years or about the same age. Over sixty percent (60.9%) responded "younger", 4.5% responded "older," and 34.7% reported feeling "about the same."

Feelings about their retirement are reflected in Table 3. It is interesting to note that the percentage for those who reported that they were not yet retired in this question (34.1%) exceeds the number who reported that they were still employed in an earlier question (29.6%). Visual examination of the data shows that several of the sisters who reported being semi-retired in the first question reported being not

yet retired in the later question (n=10).

TABLE 3
FEELINGS ABOUT RETIREMENT

	n	Percentage
Would have preferred to continue full time	38	18.5%
Ready to retire due to:		
Age	23	11.2
Health	48	23.4
Other reasons	26	12.7
Not yet retired	70	34.1

Also of interest is the educational level of the sisters (See Table 4.). It is worth noting that over half of the sisters hold at least one advanced degree (masters or doctorate) (50.9%). Visual examination of the surveys revealed that several sisters held multiple masters degrees or had neared completion of the doctorate but had not finished it.

TABLE 4
EDUCATION OF SISTERS

	n	Percentage
High School Diploma	6	2.9%
Baccalaureate Degree (BA,BS)	60	29.4
Masters Degree	97	47.5
Doctorate	7	3.4
Nursing Certification or Associate Degree	12	5.9
Other	22	10.8

Statistical Analysis

Statistics employed in this investigation were frequency distributions, means, and correlations. Justification for limiting the statistical analyses to these simpler processes can be found in the desire to share the results of the research with the cooperating congregations, for their possible use. Computer analysis was employed to enhance accuracy.

Frequency distributions are used to summarize data in a form which can be quickly understood and interpreted by the reader and by the researcher. The mean, a measure of central tendency, is "defined as the sum of the scores

divided by the total number of cases involved." (Blalock, 1979:56) Means are used to indicate the "typical" response. They are particularly useful in comparing widely varying responses as they indicate the central tendency of the data; that is, the tendency of the data to cluster or group around a particular number.

The final statistical procedure employed in this research was Pearson's correlation coefficient (denoted by "r") in the tables. The values of "r" range from -1.0 to +1.0 depending on the direction of the relationship. As "r" increases from 0.0 to +1.0 the relationship between the variables under study increases or becomes stronger. Similarly, as the value of "r" goes from 0.0 to -1.0, it implies or indicates that the relationship between the two variables becomes stronger, but that as one variable increases, the other variable decreases. Another concept that is necessary to understand in order to interpret the correlation coefficients is the idea of statistical significance. Statistical significance considers the likelihood that the findings of the data analysis might have occurred by chance. Thus if the correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.001 level, the probability of that correlation occurring by chance would be found in less than one out of one thousand tries (1/1000), and so on. Variables that were considered for correlation with life satisfaction scores include: length of time in congregation, comparable health, reasons for retirement, age

at retirement, retirement status, self-reported health, and education.

With this understanding of the statistical concepts employed, it is now possible to consider the research questions and hypotheses presented in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of the present study has been to examine the life satisfaction of a specific segment of the older population, older Catholic sisters, notably in four congregations in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas, and to draw conclusions based upon that research. Primary consideration is given to the results of the current survey (n=194). However, comparison is made to the 1978 data (n=82) and to any studies in the literature of groups of retired women to consider any trends that might exist.

This chapter presents the statistical consideration of the research questions and hypotheses under study, with data gathered from the four religious communities described in Chapter 3. For analysis and hypothesis testing, a 0.05 level of significance was used to consider the propositions under study.

Consideration of the Research Questions

Research Question One

Do sisters have higher life satisfaction scores than other retired women in their age group?

To answer this question, two studies of retired women

reviewed in Chapter 2 were re-examined, which were the only ones that employed the same measure of life satisfaction, the Life Satisfaction Index-A (LSIA) (Neugarten, et al:1961). Tate (1982) studied life satisfaction and death anxiety and found an inverse relationship. In her study of sixty women, thirty white and thirty black, over the age of sixty-five, she found a mean life satisfaction score of 12.88 for the combined group.

Bearon (1989), in a more recent study, also examined a group of sixty women, thirty middle-aged (aged 40-50) women and thirty older women (aged 65-75). The mean life satisfaction score for both groups was 14.5 out of a possible 20 points. The mean score for the present study was 14.52, again from a possible twenty points. While the sisters had a noticeably higher score than the women in the 1982 study, they achieved virtually identical scores to the later 1989 study. No conclusions can be drawn from this comparison.

Research Question Two

As the length of time a sister belongs to the order increases, does her life satisfaction score also increase?

An examination of the correlation between years in religious life and the total life satisfaction scores of the sisters showed that this was in fact not a viable predictor of life satisfaction ($r=-.1217$, $p=0.0989$), at the prescribed level of significance.

Research Question Three

Do sisters with "late vocations" (who joined their order after age 35) have a higher life satisfaction score than sisters who joined at an earlier age with like terms of membership?

In the studied sample, only one sister reported having joined at an age over thirty-five. Her score for the LSIA was a "10." No conclusion can be made from this finding, however, based on age at entry. A second sister in the study near the age denoting the age for late vocation was thirty-four at entry and scored a "19" on the life satisfaction instrument. Further study is required to consider this question.

Research Question Four

Are LSIA scores from 1991 proportionately higher than scores from 1978?

The mean life satisfaction score for the sisters who participated in the 1978 study was 15.03, based on a possible twenty points. The mean score for the sisters in the present study was 14.52, on the same scale. However, a fourth congregation was included in the present study which did not participate earlier. Again, no conclusions can be drawn from the collected data. (For a more in depth discussion of this question, see Hypothesis two.)

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no difference in LSIA scores between sisters with late vocations (joined after age 35) and those who joined at an earlier age.

As discussed above (research question three), only one or two sisters of the sample qualified in this category of late vocations (entering after age 35). No conclusions may be drawn, then, regarding this hypothesis. It is worth noting that the notion of late vocations is somewhat recent, and, perhaps, sisters who entered later have not yet reached the age of the sampled sisters or have reached the age of sixty but are not yet in retirement centers within their respective congregations.

Hypothesis Two

There is no difference in LSIA scores between the 1978 and 1991 samples.

Again, as stated above (research question four), there appears to be no difference in the LSIA scores over time. Thus, to answer this question better, the congregations should be considered individually (See Table 5). Both Congregations A and C showed a slight decrease in mean LSIA scores while remaining fairly constant in number of respondents. Congregation B showed a small increase in mean LSIA scores with a dramatic increase in number of respondents. A t-test was employed, which tests the

difference between means drawn from two samples, using only Congregation A. This choice was made because 1) the sample size was reasonably constant for the two samples, and 2) because the means showed the most divergence. No statistically significant difference was found. Because of this finding, Hypothesis two cannot be rejected.

TABLE 5
COMPARISON OF MEAN LIFE SATISFACTION SCORES
1978 AND 1991

Congregation	1978		1991	
	Score	n	Score	n
A	15.47	19	15.00	20
B	15.17	35	15.25	57
C	14.48	25	14.25	20
D	----	--	14.04	97
Total	15.03	79	14.52	194

Hypothesis Three

There is no difference in LSIA scores based on reason for retirement.

When the correlation coefficients of reason for

retirement and LSIA scores are considered, there appears to be a very weak but significant relationship between these two variables, ($r=.1806$, $p=0.011$). Hypothesis three is rejected, because there is a difference in LSIA scores based on reason for retirement.

Hypothesis Four

There is no difference in LSIA scores based on comparable health.

Once again, there appears to be a weak relationship between comparable health (health compared to peers) and LSIA scores ($r=-0.3708$, $p=0.0001$). The negative aspect of the correlation reflects the design of the question (worse health having a higher response number). It is interesting to examine this variable in terms of the individual congregations, as well. (See Table 6.) Note that for Congregation A the relationship between comparable health and LSIA increased to a fairly strong relationship. Also note that for Congregation C, no significant relationship existed. For the purpose of hypothesis testing, only total sample scores were considered. Thus, Hypothesis four is rejected, because there is a difference in LSIA scores based on comparable health.

TABLE 6
RELATIONSHIP OF COMPARABLE HEALTH TO LSIA SCORES

	r	p
Total Sample	-0.3708	0.0001
Congregation		
A	-0.5735	0.0082
B	-0.3127	0.0189
C	0.1127	0.6460 *
D	-0.3328	0.0009

*not significant ($p > 0.05$)

Hypothesis Five

There is no difference in LSIA scores based on retirement age.

In consideration of the data, there appears to be no significant correlation between LSIA scores and retirement age. ($r = -0.0843$, $p = 0.3236$). Thus, Hypothesis five cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis Six

There is no difference in LSIA scores based on education.

As with retirement age, education does not appear to be a realistic predictor of LSIA scores ($r = -0.0565$, $p = 0.4336$).

Thus, Hypothesis six cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis Seven

There is no difference in LSIA scores based on type of congregation.

This hypothesis sought to discover if either the monastic or apostolic lifestyle were a better predictor of life satisfaction. A monastic lifestyle, simply described, involves living in community as a whole group for the entirety of one's religious vocation. An apostolic lifestyle, on the other hand, involves both large group community life, in the early and later years of religious life, and small group or solitary living during the majority of one's vocation. Only Congregation A, in the studied sample, reflected a monastic lifestyle, as indicated on the Congregational questionnaire (see appendix C). A comparison of these lifestyles is reflected in Table 7.

TABLE 7
COMPARISON OF LIFESTYLES

	n	Mean LSIA Score
Monastic (Congregation A)	20	15.00
Apostolic (Congregations B, C, & D)	174	14.46

Because of the small number of sisters who represented the monastic lifestyle in comparison to the large number of sisters who represented the apostolic lifestyle, no conclusions can be drawn from the existing data.

Hypothesis Eight

There is no difference in LSIA scores based on self-perception of retirement status.

When self-designated retirement status was compared to LSIA scores, a weak relationship emerged ($r=0.1991$, $p=0.0055$) which suggests that those who regard themselves as more involved with employment have higher LSIA scores. Thus, because there is a difference in LSIA scores based on self-perception of retirement status, hypothesis eight is rejected.

Other Findings

In an attempt to make some sense of the data generated by this investigation, in the face of the analysis of the research questions and hypotheses presented above, all variables generated by the questionnaires, not already considered, were compared to LSIA scores. This analysis of all statistically significant variables is presented in Table 8, with variables listed in order of strength of relationship.

No strong ($r>0.50$) predictors of life satisfaction emerged from this present study, with the variables

considered and the group taken as a whole.

TABLE 8
 VARIABLES AFFECTING LIFE SATISFACTION
 TOTAL SAMPLE
 (n=194)

Variable	r	p
Health	-0.3708	0.0001
Felt Age	-0.2743	0.0001
Age	-0.1884	0.0087
Reason for Retirement	0.1806	0.0118

It is interesting to look at the individual congregations and consider these same possible predictors of life satisfaction for each one (See Tables 9 through 12).

TABLE 9
 VARIABLES AFFECTING LIFE SATISFACTION
 CONGREGATION A
 (n=20)

Variable	r	p
Health	-0.5094	0.0218
Felt Age	-0.5611	0.0101
Age	-0.0995	0.6763 *
Reason for Retirement	0.2126	0.3683 *

* Not significant ($p > 0.05$)

In looking only at Congregation A, whether sisters feel their age becomes a strong predictor of life satisfaction, which is more important than health. Age and reason for retirement lose their significance for this group of sisters. In considering Congregation B, again, health becomes a strong predictor of life satisfaction for this group of sisters, with felt age still significant. As with Congregation A, age and reason for retirement lose significance.

TABLE 10
 VARIABLES AFFECTING LIFE SATISFACTION
 CONGREGATION B
 (n=57)

Variable	r	P
Health	-0.5009	0.0001
Felt Age	-0.3205	0.0151
Age	-0.1518	0.2598 *
Reason for Retirement	0.1251	0.3537 *

* Not significant ($p > 0.05$)

TABLE 11
 VARIABLES AFFECTING LIFE SATISFACTION
 CONGREGATION C
 (n=20)

Variable	r	P
Health	-0.2039	0.3885 *
Felt Age	-0.1817	0.4566 *
Age	-0.1966	0.4060 *
Reason for Retirement	0.2285	0.3326 *

* Not significant ($p > 0.05$)

It is particularly interesting to notice that for Congregation C, no significant predictors of life satisfaction were uncovered by the present study. While this might be attributed to the small size of this subsample (n=20), note that the size of the Congregation A subsample is the same and significant variables did emerge with that group. It will be suggested later (Chapter 5) that a better explanation than sample size exists for these findings. As with the first two congregations considered, health and felt age remain predictors of life satisfaction for Congregation D, but in this case, only weakly. As with all other congregations, age and reason for retirement lost significance.

TABLE 12
 VARIABLES AFFECTING LIFE SATISFACTION
 CONGREGATION D
 (n=97)

Variable	r	p
Health	-0.3068	0.0024
Felt Age	-0.2439	0.0166
Age	-0.1953	0.0565 *
Reason for Retirement	0.1697	0.0966 *

* Not significant ($p > 0.05$)

No strong relationships existed between any of the variables considered and life satisfaction, when the sample was considered as a whole. Even though the sisters appear to have a higher life satisfaction than other women their age, the usual predictors of life satisfaction do not appear to be operating. From this perusal of the findings, then, and within the limitations of this study, it is not possible to determine just what variables seem to predict or affect life satisfaction for the older Catholic sisters under study. Problems with the present study, speculations regarding the results, and suggestions of other possible explanations for high life satisfaction are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present study has been to examine the life satisfaction of a specific segment of the older population, older Catholic sisters, notably in four congregations in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas, and to draw conclusions based upon that study. Primary consideration was given to the results of the current survey. Further, comparison was made to the 1978 data and to any studies in the literature of retired women to consider any trends that might exist.

Summary of Research

As a part of the requirements for a seminar in social gerontology in 1978, the Life Satisfaction Index A (LSIA) (Neugarten, et al, 1961) along with demographic questions (see Appendix A), was administered to older Catholic sisters in three congregations in Oklahoma and Kansas. Because of their religious vocation, it was thought that their scores on this instrument would be higher than for their agemates in the secular world. Preliminary examination indicated that this was in fact true. Surveys were mailed to each retirement facility and returned in like manner. These

questionnaires remain on file and were considered during this study.

With the above-mentioned increased attention to the retirement of religious, it is important to re-examine this group. It is also worthwhile to compare the more recent with the earlier findings to determine if any trends might be present to assist in retirement planning for this group.

Congregations studied in 1978 were located in Oklahoma and Kansas, yielding a total sample of eighty-two respondents. These same congregations were again studied along with members of a Texas congregation, yielding approximately two hundred respondents in the second sample.

Summary of Findings

Research question one examined whether sisters have higher life satisfaction scores than other retired women in their age group. To answer this question, two studies of retired women reviewed in Chapter 2 were re-examined, which were the only ones that employed the same measure of life satisfaction, the Life Satisfaction Index-A (LSIA) (Neugarten, et al:1961). While the sisters had a noticeably higher score than the women in the 1982 study, they achieved virtually identical scores to the later 1989 study. No conclusions can be drawn then from this comparison.

Research question two asked whether life satisfaction scores increase as the length of time a sister belongs to the order increases. An examination of the correlation

between years in religious life and the total life satisfaction scores of the sisters showed that this was in fact not a viable predictor of life satisfaction, ($r=-.1217$, $p=0.0989$) at the prescribed level of significance.

Research question three asked if sisters with "late vocations" (who joined their order after age 35) have a higher life satisfaction score than sisters who joined at an earlier age with like terms of membership. In the studied sample, only one sister reported having joined at an age over thirty-five. Her score for the LSIA was a "10." No conclusion can be made from this finding, however, based solely on age at entry. A second sister in the study near the age denoting the age for late vocation was thirty-four at entry and scored a "19" on the life satisfaction instrument. Further study is required to consider this question.

Research question four examined whether LSIA scores from 1991 were proportionately higher than scores from 1978. The mean life satisfaction score for the sisters who participated in the 1978 study was 15.03, based on a possible twenty points. The mean score for the sisters in the present study was 14.52, on the same scale. However, a fourth congregation was included in the present study which did not participate earlier. Again, no conclusions can be drawn from the collected data.

Hypothesis one viewed the difference in LSIA scores between sisters with late vocations (joined after age 35)

and those who joined at an earlier age. As discussed above (research question three), only one or two sisters of the sample qualified in this category of late vocations (entering after age 35). No conclusions may be drawn, then, regarding this hypothesis. It is worth noting that the notion of late vocations is somewhat recent and perhaps sisters who have entered later have not yet reached the age of the sampled sisters or have reached the age of sixty but are not yet in retirement centers within their respective congregations.

Hypothesis two examined the difference in LSIA scores between the 1978 and 1991 samples. Again, as stated above (research question four), there appears to be no difference in the LSIA scores over time. Thus, to answer better this question, the congregations should be considered individually. Both Congregations A and C showed a slight decrease in mean LSIA scores while remaining fairly constant in number of respondents. Congregation B showed a small increase in mean LSIA scores with a dramatic increase in number of respondents. Hypothesis two cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis three questioned the difference in LSIA scores based on reason for retirement. When the correlation coefficients of reason for retirement and LSIA scores are considered, there appears to be a very weak but significant relationship between these two variables, ($r=.1806$, $p=0.011$). Thus, Hypothesis three is rejected.

Hypothesis four examined the difference in LSIA scores

based on comparable health. Once again, there appears to be a weak relationship between comparable health (health compared to peers) and LSIA scores ($r=-0.3708$, $p=0.0001$). The negative aspect of the correlation reflects the design of the question (worse health having a higher response number). It is interesting to examine this variable in terms of the individual congregations, as well. For Congregation A the relationship between comparable health and LSIA increased to a fairly strong relationship. Also for Congregation C, no relationship existed. For the purpose of hypothesis testing, only total sample scores were considered. Thus, Hypothesis four is rejected.

Hypothesis five viewed the difference in LSIA scores based on retirement age. In consideration of the data, there appears to be no significant correlation between LSIA scores and retirement age. ($r=-0.0843$, $p=0.3236$). Thus, Hypothesis five cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis six examined the difference in LSIA scores based on education. As with retirement age, education does not appear to be a realistic predictor of LSIA scores ($r=-0.0565$, $p=0.4336$). Thus, Hypothesis six cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis seven questioned the difference in LSIA scores based on type of congregation. This hypothesis sought to discover if either the monastic or apostolic lifestyle were a better predictor of life satisfaction. A monastic lifestyle, simply described, involves living in

community as a whole group for the entirety of one's religious vocation. An apostolic lifestyle, on the other hand, involves both large group community life, in the early and later years of religious life, and small group or solitary living during the majority of one's vocation. Only Congregation A, in the studied sample, reflected a monastic lifestyle, as indicated on the Congregational questionnaire (see appendix C). Because of the small number of sisters who represented the monastic lifestyle in comparison to the large number of sisters who represented the apostolic lifestyle, no conclusions can be drawn from the existing data.

Hypothesis eight viewed the difference in LSIA scores based on self-perception of retirement status. When self-designated retirement status was compared to LSIA scores, a weak relationship emerged ($r=0.1991$, $p=0.0055$) which suggests that those who regard themselves as more involved with employment have higher LSIA scores. Thus, Hypothesis eight is rejected.

Limitations of the Study

Before making conclusions about the findings of this study and the implications it makes for future research or policy, it is important to consider the limitations of this study.

First, because of the desirability of comparing the results of the present study with the earlier study

conducted in 1978, limitations were placed upon the present study. Wording of questions which might have been improved in the present study were kept reasonably the same as the earlier questions. This is particularly true of questions which sought information expressed in number of years--age, years in religious life, and retirement age. More accurate information would likely have been collected if date of birth, date of entry into religious life, and date of retirement had been asked. Another limitation was the breadth of variables asked. In keeping with the earlier study, no new variables were considered. The design for the earlier questionnaire was based on an instrument used with retired Protestant clergy. This was, perhaps, inappropriate but the inexperience of the researcher at the time of the earlier research was also a factor.

A second area of problems or limitations with the study exist with the Life Satisfaction Index-A (LSIA) itself. First, Mangen and Peterson (1982) reported, in a description of the instrument, that problems exist with items eleven and fourteen. This is, in part, supported by the present research. When correlations are considered between individual items and the total LSIA score, all have modest correlations ranging from $r=0.3017$ to $r=0.5346$, all with $p=0.0001$. Item 11, however, does not seem to fit the instrument since no significant relationship between the item and the total scale existed ($r=0.1400$, $p=0.0515$).

Of further interest is an examination of the sisters'

response to individual items. As used, the LSIA has "right" answers for which the respondent receives one point. It is most interesting to consider those items which a majority of the sisters did not answer correctly. Those questions with the percentage of sisters answering right or wrong appear in Table 13.

TABLE 13
PERCENTAGE OF INCORRECT RESPONSE TO SELECTED ITEMS

	% Right	% Wrong
Item 6	47.0 %	53.0 %
Item 20	47.7	52.3

These items are: "These are the best years of my life." (#6) and "In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better." (#20). Interestingly, when the 1978 data were considered, thirty-seven percent of the sisters answered question twenty incorrectly. Reasons why this might have taken place, in both studies, will be considered later.

Several other questions, though answered correctly by a

majority of the respondents, were incorrectly answered by more than forty percent of the sisters. These questions are considered in Table 14.

TABLE 14
PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT RESPONSE TO SELECTED ITEMS

	% Right	% Wrong
Item 2	57.0 %	43.0 %
Item 8	53.8	46.2
Item 10	52.5	47.5
Item 16	55.1	44.9

These items are: "I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most people I know." (#2); "I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future." (#8); "I feel old and somewhat tired." (#10); and "I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now." (#16) Further discussion of these items will appear later.

A third limitation is that these scores reflect only those sisters who are in a retirement facility, with the exception of Congregation A. There may be many more sisters

over the age of sixty in each of the other three congregations who could not be contacted through this study.

Conclusions

This study has shown that the sisters who participated in this study do in fact demonstrate fairly high life satisfaction with 43.3% of sisters having an LSIA score of sixteen or higher. Another 32.5% reflect mid-range scores (13 to 15). Thus, 75.8% seem to be fairly happy in their later years. This compares favorably with the 1978 study in which 78% reflected this level of life satisfaction.

As stated earlier, further discussion is required on the items which were "incorrectly" answered by a majority of the sisters. These items are: "These are the best years of my life." (#6) and "In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better." (#20).

Some of the sisters when responding to question six wrote in comments such as "I don't know yet." The item is intended to reflect mood tone, as designated by the original researchers, but in the case of the sisters, this does not seem to be the case.

Similarly, item twenty is intended to reflect mood tone. With such a large number of sisters "incorrectly" responding to this item, one assumes a gloomy opinion of life in general, as the question implies. In the case of the sisters, one might suggest a different provocation for

this response. It would seem that the sisters fear that the lot of the "average man" is getting worse. It is speculated that the sisters do not include themselves in this category but rather are regarding those people whom they see in the secular world and to whom they have ministered throughout most of their lives. Further questioning on this point would prove of interest.

Perhaps the most poignant expression of the life satisfaction of this special group of women comes from some of the sisters themselves. Several chose to write notes upon the instrument which bear sharing here. One sister, aged eighty-four, related:

On Fridays, two lay ladies and myself [sic] deliver 150 loaves of bread, pastries, etc., to the slums where the people are poor and welfare people. The four big grocery stores here donate all these goodies. [city] has a very generous heart, when it comes to helping the poor and children.

Another member of the same congregation, aged seventy-nine, when asked about use of time, stated:

Completing files, scrapbooks, cleaning out non-essential items, materials, etc., which accumulated or were sent from various areas of ... campus; helping the new art instructors during this transition period as a consultant; ... advising the last senior art students, etc. ... Stole time to complete typing the genealogy section of the ... family history as information was received. Met with lace-making friends each week on Tuesdays, 9-11.

Still another sister, aged eighty-nine wrote:

I pray, read and walk with Sister who is totally blind. I write letters for sisters who are unable to write anymore.

If one were to describe the typical older sister in this

study, she would be a woman in her early seventies, probably still active and in good health. She would have a strong sense of who she is and what her purpose for being means. She is a woman accepted by others and accepting of others, both her sisters in the congregation and those around her in the secular world. She is well-educated and has worked for about fifty years, probably as a teacher. She has a strong confidence in God and in the loving support of her community. Certainly the sisters, regardless of age, demonstrate some special quality, at least to this researcher.

Early in this study it was suggested that, perhaps, the older sisters might be able to instruct, through this research, the general aging public about later life morale. It is this strong sense of a caring, genuine community which is possibly the most important element in their adjustment to their later years. To feel a sense of oneness with one's fellows and environment may be the crucial element of adjustment to aging.

Another consideration in the findings of this research is the publicity connected with the Tri-Conference Retirement Project which has focused on the financial distress being experienced by many religious communities, both men and women. Further, at least one of the congregations make collegial decisions with each of the sisters being kept informed of the financial status of the congregation. This may, in part, account for the slight

decrease in LSIA scores between the 1978 and 1991 studies.

Suggestions for Future Study

From the findings presented here further studies are indicated. Further studies into the reasons of higher life satisfaction, by means of interview, would be of interest and serve to further validate the presented findings. Parallel studies of aging priests and religious brothers would be of similar interest to see if this finding continues over to male vocations. As suggested above, other variables also need to be considered. Perhaps the inclusion of other established scales, such as the Death Anxiety Scale or the Religious Motivation Scales (Mangen and Peterson, 1982), would provide some explanation of the high life satisfaction found. Certain studies of longevity might yield further variables which might be considered.

Likewise, it would seem worthwhile to question groups of older women in Catholic parishes in each of the communities were the sisters were questioned or in parishes in general. It would be of great interest to address whether it was the religious vocation or actually the doctrines of Catholicism that produced the acceptance of aging and approaching death. Greeley (1990) has indicated that this is, in fact, a likely possibility. He suggested:

The Catholic tends to see society as a "sacrament of God", a set of ordered relationships, governed by both justice and love, that reveal, however imperfectly, the presence of God. Society is "natural" and "good," therefore, for humans and their "natural" response to God is social. The

Protestant, on the other hand, tends to see human society as "God-forsaken" and therefore unnatural and oppressive. The individual stands over against society and not integrated into it. The human becomes fully human only when he is able to break away from social oppression and related to the absent God as a completely free individual. (45)

He further stated, from his research:

The difference in religious behavior that exists between Catholics and Protestants can be accounted for by their different images of God, who is perceived as distant (father, judge, king, master) in the Protestant imagination and present in the Catholic imagination (mother, lover, friend, and spouse). (55)

He concluded this section of his discussion this way:

It is the poetry of Catholicism, then, that is the secret of its continuing appeal to American Catholics, an appeal so attractive and so deep that it has hardly been touched by the turbulence of the last quarter century. (64)

A further seemingly necessary study would seem to be the use of the Life Satisfaction Index-A (LSIA) (Neugarten, et al, 1961) as a measure of adjustment to aging. Problems with the instrument have been discovered in this research which reinforce earlier findings (Adams, 1969; Dobson, et al, 1979; Lohmann, 1980; Hoyt and Creech, 1983) and their concern for the widespread use of the LSIA. Factor analysis of the instrument with the current sample is certainly warranted. Perhaps there are other scales already existing, such as the Purpose-in-Life Scale (Crumbaugh and Maholick, 1964), that would be more useful with this population. It may also be that it is necessary to develop a new measure of adjustment that addresses the concerns of a new generation of aging individuals.

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APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY--1978

1. Age to the nearest birthday. _____
2. Indicate your one major area of activity during most of your professional life.
 - _____ Administration
 - _____ Teacher
 - _____ Nursing
 - _____ Other _____
3. How many years since you entered religious life? _____
4. Are you still active, semi-retired, or retired?
 - _____ Active
 - _____ Semi-retired
 - _____ Retired
5. At what age did you retire from full-time employment?

6. In general, would you say your health is good, fair, or poor?
 - _____ Good
 - _____ fair
 - _____ poor
7. Would you say that your health is better or worse than the health of other people your age?
 - _____ better
 - _____ about the same
 - _____ worse
8. Do you feel younger or older than your years?
 - _____ younger
 - _____ older
 - _____ same
9. At the time you retired from full-time professional activity, which of the following best represented your feeling?
 - _____ I would have preferred to (and I felt I was in every way able to) continue full time
 - _____ I was ready to retire because of age
 - _____ I was ready to retire because of health
 - _____ I was ready to retire because of other reasons.
10. Do you still attend daily Mass?
 - _____ Yes
 - _____ No

11. What is the highest level of education you attained?

- _____ baccalaureate degree (BA,BS)
- _____ masters degree
- _____ doctorate
- _____ nursing certification (RN)
- _____ other (explain _____)

Here are some statements about life in general that people feel differently about. Would you read each statement on the list, and if you agree with it, put a check mark in the space under "AGREE". If you do not agree with a statement put a check mark in the space under "DISAGREE." If you are not sure one way or the other, put a check mark in the space under "?" PLEASE BE SURE TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION ON THE LIST.

	AGREE	DISAGREE	?
1. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.	_____	_____	_____
2. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most people I know.	_____	_____	_____
3. This is the dreariest time of my life.	_____	_____	_____
4. I am just as happy as when I was younger.	_____	_____	_____
5. My life could be happier than it is now.	_____	_____	_____
6. These are the best years of my life.	_____	_____	_____
7. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.	_____	_____	_____
8. I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future.	_____	_____	_____
9. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.	_____	_____	_____
10. I feel old and somewhat tired.	_____	_____	_____

11. I feel my age, but it does not bother me. _____
12. As I look back on my life I am fairly well satisfied. _____
13. I would not change my past life even if I could. _____
14. Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life. _____
15. Compared to other people my age, I make a good appearance. _____
16. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now. _____
17. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted. _____
18. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often. _____
19. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life. _____
20. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better. _____

APPENDIX B

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY--1991

1. What is your age (to the nearest birthday). _____
2. Indicate your one major area of activity during most of your professional life.
 - 1 Administration
 - 2 Teacher
 - 3 Nursing
 - 4 Other (please explain _____)
3. How many years since you entered religious life? _____
4. Are you retired, semi-retired, or still employed?
 - 1 Retired
 - 2 Semi-retired
 - 3 Still employed
5. At what age did you retire from full-time employment?

6. In general, would you say your health is good, fair, or poor?
 - 1 Good
 - 2 fair
 - 3 poor
7. Would you say that your health is better or worse than the health of other people your age?
 - 1 better
 - 2 worse
 - 3 about the same.
8. Do you feel younger or older than your years?
 - 1 younger
 - 2 older
 - 3 same
9. At the time you retired from full-time employment, which of the following best represented your feelings?
 - 1 I would have preferred to (and I felt I was in every way able to) continue full time
 - 2 I was ready to retire because of age
 - 3 I was ready to retire because of health
 - 4 I was ready to retire because of other reasons.
 - 5 I am not yet retired.
10. What is the highest level of education you attained?
 - 1 high school diploma
 - 2 baccalaureate degree (BA,BS)
 - 3 masters degree
 - 4 doctorate
 - 5 nursing certification, associate degree
 - 6 other (please specify _____)

11. During your usual day, please indicate about how many hours or parts of hours you participate in each of the following activities.

_____ paid or full-time employment
 _____ arts and crafts
 _____ volunteer work
 _____ reading (non-religious)
 _____ walking
 _____ meditation
 _____ religious reading
 _____ television/radio
 _____ visiting with friends within my residence
 _____ visiting with friends or relatives living elsewhere
 _____ other (please explain _____)

Here are some statements about life in general that people feel differently about. Would you read each statement on the list, and if you agree with it, put a circle around the "A" under "AGREE". If you do not agree with a statement put a circle around the "D" under "DISAGREE." If you are not sure one way or the other, put a circle around the "?" under "???" PLEASE BE SURE TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION ON THE LIST.

	AGREE	DISAGREE	???
1. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.	A	D	?
2. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most people I know.	A	D	?
3. This is the dreariest time of my life.	A	D	?
4. I am just as happy as when I was younger.	A	D	?
5. My life could be happier than it is now.	A	D	?
6. These are the best years of my life.	A	D	?
7. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.	A	D	?

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| 8. | I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future. | A | D | ? |
| 9. | The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were. | A | D | ? |
| 10. | I feel old and somewhat tired. | A | D | ? |
| 11. | I feel my age, but it does not bother me. | A | D | ? |
| 12. | As I look back on my life I am fairly well satisfied. | A | D | ? |
| 13. | I would not change my past life even if I could. | A | D | ? |
| 14. | Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life. | A | D | ? |
| 15. | Compared to other people my age, I make a good appearance. | A | D | ? |
| 16. | I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now. | A | D | ? |
| 17. | When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted. | A | D | ? |
| 18. | Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often. | A | D | ? |
| 19. | I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life. | A | D | ? |
| 20. | In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better. | A | D | ? |

APPENDIX C

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY



Oklahoma State University

SCHOOL OF HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION
AND LEISURE

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078-0616
COLVIN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CENTER
(405) 744-5493
FAX: (405) 744-6507

February 1, 1991

Dear Sister:

As a major part of my doctoral studies at Oklahoma State University I am studying the life satisfaction of older Catholic sisters. I have data from several congregations from 1978 which I will compare with the data I wish to collect this spring. The data will enable me to better understand this phenomenon.

I am asking your cooperation on two tasks. First, I have enclosed a questionnaire which seeks demographic information about your congregation. You will notice, if you have participated in the Tri-Conference Retirement Fund for Religious Needs Analysis, that the form parallels that report form. Feel free to photocopy that form if more convenient for you. If you did not participate, please share the demographic breakdown from your records, if possible, giving the appropriate date in question 5.

Secondly, I have also enclosed a sample of the survey instrument which I would like to distribute by mail in the near future to your older sisters. Could you please advise me of the name and address of the appropriate person to whom I might send these surveys for distribution and collection? If there is more than one facility for older sisters, please add others on the reverse of the form.

Please be assured that the sisters' individual responses are voluntary and will remain anonymous. Congregational information will remain confidential. Identity of specific congregations will be used only in analysis of data and not in the reporting of such information.

I will be happy to share with you the results of my research when it is completed.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Curtis

Linda Curtis
Principal Investigator

Lowell Caneday

Lowell Caneday, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Faculty Advisor

enc. Congregational Survey
Sample Survey Form
Return, stamped envelope

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

1. Name of Congregation _____
2. Title of Person Completing this Survey _____
3. Type of Congregation
 - 1 apostolic
 - 2 monastic
 - 3 other (please explain _____)
4. Did your congregation participate in Retirement Fund for Religious retirement needs analysis project?
 - 1 Yes
 - 2 No
5. Date of needs analysis _____
6. Please share the demographic information as reported by the needs analysis. (Feel free to attach Photocopy of analysis report of this information, if more convenient)

Age in Base Year	Number of Members
<30	_____
30-34	_____
35-39	_____
40-44	_____
45-49	_____
50-54	_____
55-59	_____
60-64	_____
65-69	_____
70-74	_____
75-79	_____
80-84	_____
85-89	_____
>89	_____
TOTAL CENSUS	_____
Total less than 70	_____
Total 70 or greater	_____

7. Please give the name and address of the contact person who could distribute the surveys to your retired sisters.

8. Approximate number of sisters in this facility _____

VITA

Linda L. Curtis

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: LIFE SATISFACTION OF OLDER CATHOLIC SISTERS:
A STUDY OF FOUR COMMUNITIES

Major Field: Higher Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Lakewood, New Jersey, October 11, 1946, the daughter of Vernon W. and Dorothy W. Kroamer.

Education: Graduated from C.E. Donart High School, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in May, 1964; received Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology from Oklahoma State University in May, 1969; received Master of Science in Health, Physical Education and Leisure Science from Oklahoma State University in December, 1983; received Master of Science Degree in Sociology from Oklahoma State University in May, 1989, completed requirements for Doctor of Education in July, 1991.

Professional Experience: Teaching Associate, Department of Sociology, Oklahoma State University, August, 1985, to May, 1987; Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, McMurry College, Abilene, TX, August, 1987 to August, 1990; Assistant Campus Coordinator, Oklahoma State University, November, 1985 to January, 1987; Campus Coordinator, Oklahoma State University Elderhostel, January, 1987 to June, 1987; Campus Coordinator, McMurry College Elderhostel, November, 1987 to August, 1990.