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LEVEL OF SELF-ESTEEM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO VOCATIONAL MATURITY AS EXPRESSED IN GOSPEL-SUMMARIES AMONG WOMEN RELIGIOUS OF TEMPORARY VOWS

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ABSTRACT

This research explored the relationship between level of self-esteem and vocational maturity as expressed in Gospel-summaries. 80 women religious of temporary vows from 11 congregations participated in the study, along with 80 laywomen who composed the comparison group. Two self-rating tests, Hudson's Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) and Pasao's Self-Concept Rating Scale (PASAO), measured the level of self-esteem; while Dolphin's quasi-projective Gospel-Summary determined the level of vocational maturity of the religious respondents. The *t*-test ($t = -1.958$ at $p = .052$ for the ISE, and $t = -3.329$ at $p = .001$ for the PASAO) revealed that the level of the self-esteem of the religious is lower than that of the lay respondents. This difference can be attributed to a higher incidence of unrealistic self-assessment among the lay respondents, as shown by their tendency to readily affirm positively-stated items and to give extreme answers. Both tests proved, however, that persons with High Self-Esteem, Middle Self-Esteem, and Low Self-Esteem can indeed be found in religious communities. Individual differences in vocational maturity exist likewise in the religious life; and as the Gospel-Summary results showed, it is the capacity to live out

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the more exigent or sacrificial aspects of the Gospel, the cost-of-discipleship variables (CV), that spells the difference between the mature and the immature. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the Gospel-Summary scores grouped according to level of self-esteem came up with different results despite the significantly high correlation between the ISE and the PASAO ($r = -.586$ at $p = .000$). The ANOVA yielded non-significant mean-differences for the ISE groupings; but surfaced a consistent trend. It revealed that the respondents in the Middle Self-Esteem category were the ones who scored the highest in vocational maturity. Results of the exploratory factor analysis conducted on the ISE pointed out that the ISE measures social self-esteem, and social and psychological adjustment. These findings then confirmed that while these aspects of self-esteem are important for developmental maturity, they are inadequate determinants of vocational maturity. The PASAO results confirmed that differences in level of self-esteem affect vocational maturity. Specifically, the result for CV ($F = 3.66$ at $p = .03$) showed that the individual's level of self-esteem affects her capacity to proclaim and live out the costs and the demands of the Gospel message. The PASAO also came up with the

surprise finding that it is the respondents in the Low Self-Esteem category who significantly scored the highest in the Gospel-Summary. Closer analysis pointed to the possibility of inflated self-views among the respondents in the High Self-Esteem category. This then indicated that it is not high self-esteem that is the crucial determinant of vocational maturity, but realistic self-esteem. To be more precise, it is the self-awareness and the capacity to honestly accept one's strengths and limitations that prove to be an important component of the authenticity that the Gospel demands. Better awareness of the self influences one's understanding of the Cross, and consequently, one's readiness to make the Cross a reality in one's life. It is indeed only with greater awareness and freedom that a person is able to live out the tension of renunciation that is an inherent aspect of the Christian life. All these findings, while to be regarded as suggestive rather than definitive, are useful in structuring future research on the area of self-esteem and vocational maturity. To come up with more conclusive results, it would be necessary to measure both conscious and unconscious self-esteem; to determine and validate the norms of the Gospel-Summary in consonance with the full battery of



instruments that are used for psychological assessment; and to employ a larger sample size. This study surfaced likewise the need to construct and validate both objective and projective instruments that would measure self-esteem within the Philippine context.

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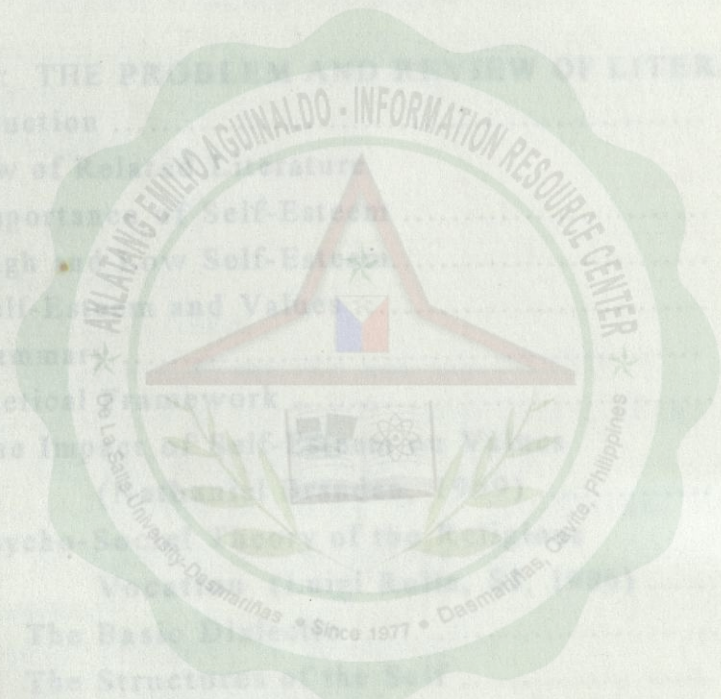


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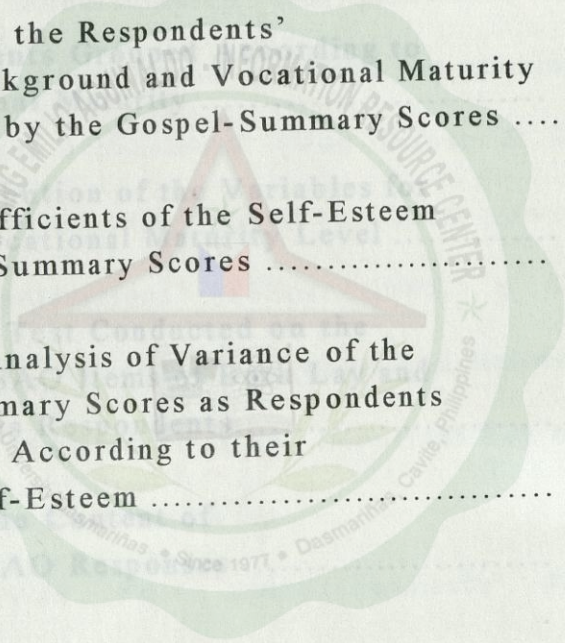
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