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STRESS AND COPING AMONG THE SOCIALLY-INVOLVED  
RELIGIOUS OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY OF  
THE ASSUMPTION

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A Thesis

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by

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## ABSTRACT

This study attempted to find out the sources and level of stress and personality traits among the socially-involved religious of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary of the Assumption in Davao, Philippines.

Furthermore, the study identified the coping mechanisms utilized by the Sisters in dealing with stressful life situations. It also measured the effectiveness of coping strategies employed by the Sisters when confronted with stressful events.

Thus, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the sources and level of stress of the Sisters?
2. What are their personality traits, as measured by the Comrey Personality Scale?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the over-all, by area and by item level of stress of the Sisters and the following personality traits?



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|----------------------|------------------------|
| a. Trust             | e. Emotional stability |
| b. Orderliness       | f. Extraversion        |
| c. Social Conformity | g. Masculinity         |
| d. Activity          | h. Empathy             |

4. What coping strategies do the Sisters used and how effective do they perceive them to be?

The researcher employed the descriptive research method to identify the sources and levels of stress among the Sisters and to determine the relationship between stress level and personality traits. It also described the coping mechanisms that the Sisters used as they experienced stress in life and determined how effective these coping strategies were.

The subjects of the study were twenty-nine out of fifty sisters of the Daughters of Mary of the Assumption in the Philippines from the novices to the perpetually professed Sisters.

Research instruments employed were: (1) Questionnaire on sources and level of stress constructed by the researcher herself to measure the level of stress of the Sisters, (2) Comrey Personality



Scale (CPS) to measure the personality traits of the Sisters, (3) Survey Questionnaire (SQ) constructed by the researcher to get the Sisters' background and (4) Questionnaire on coping mechanisms ((CM) constructed by the researcher to identify coping mechanisms used and their effectiveness.

Frequency, percentages, mean weights, standard deviations and ranking were used to analyze and interpret the data on sources and the level of stress, coping mechanisms, personality ratings and effectiveness of coping.

The Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was computed to determine whether there was a significant correlation between the over-all, by area and by level of stress of the Sisters and their personality traits.

This study yielded the following findings:

1. The Sisters experienced high level of stress in the area of community support and structures, especially the following:
  - a. Superiors making major decisions without consulting the members of the community.



b. Conflict within the Congregation arising from varied interpretation and implementation of the mission trust.

c. Misunderstanding arising from misinterpretation of authority.

2. The Sisters' Personality ratings on the Comrey's Personality Scale ranged from high average ( $\bar{X} = 66.1$ ) to very high ( $\bar{X} = 76.31$ ) where empathy got the highest mean score of 76.31 followed by trust ( $\bar{X} = 76.1$ ).

3. A significant relationship between stress level and personality traits were obtained at .05 significant level except for trust.

4. The coping mechanisms most used by the Sisters are: Ventilating feelings and allowing enough time for oneself, which were also most effective that the Sisters identified.

On the basis of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. In general, the Sisters have low level of stress.



2. They tend however, to be affected in their work by the conflict they experience in the congregation due to the misinterpretation and implementation of the mission thrust.

3. Stress is a function of personality traits, except for trust. The stronger and more dominant the personality traits of the Sisters as measured by the Comrey Personality Scale are, the lower the stress of the Sisters.

On the basis of the findings and conclusions, it was recommended that:

1. A clarification of the understanding of the exercise of religious authority and practice of obedience be made in the context of religious life according to post Vatican II.
2. Training on management and techniques for handling conflicts be given for all the Sisters especially for Superiors so that this will be integrated with the values of religious life and commitment to service.



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3. Reassessment of the implementation of the mission thrust be made in and with the collaboration of all the Sisters.
4. Career counseling be provided for the Sisters to facilitate the assignment to the ministry. Continuing education be made available relating to Sisters' apostolate and religious life to clarify goals and priorities to consider coping strategies and to develop new skills.
5. Further study be made on stress and coping to have a better understanding of it, especially for priests and sisters who are actively involved in work for justice.

