

Pre-Convening Survey of Researchers

Q1a: Common Challenges and Needs in our Research. Please list up to three challenges you confront in pursuing research on Catholic Sisters:

Summary:

- Among the challenges identified by researchers is the understanding and acceptance of social science research by Congregations and Sisters, at times there is a resistance to such research.
- Another challenge is the difficulty in obtaining contact information or basic demographic information of the Sisters and Congregation.
- Sisters and Congregational leaders are often constrained by time and ministry demands in being able to respond to survey and research requests.

Responses:

Research apathy

Sisters are unwilling to give information about themselves or their order

Upholding Ethical Conduct in International Research (IRB approval etc.)

obtaining contact information for Sisters

Convincing Superiors to come on board

Major superiors and sisters feeling they are bombarded with surveys from us.

Lack of resource materials on the subject

Time management

Sisters overburdened with responsibilities and work. therefore, not able to provide time for even filling a survey

Lack of a comprehensive, national database & not enough importance given to documentation within congregations

Limited knowledge of appropriate research approaches to adopt

We were carrying out qualitative research, and looking for sisters who were interested in and/or familiar with basic qualitative research methods and approaches who wanted to work with the project. We found that often sisters' assumptions about research are often based on positivist, quantitative methods, and therefore providing an introduction to/training in qualitative research is a challenge, but also an opportunity.

Difficulty in getting data and information from the target body/group

Resistance to social science on part of some sisters

Receptiveness of the Catholic Sisters to provide data to the lay

Constraints of time

Record keeping for sisters is not up to date

Being a Lay Person

explaining importance of research to obtain cooperation

Convincing Sisters to come on board

The erratic supply of electricity here

Difficult in collecting data from the sisters

Lack of trained Human Resources who can do research

Getting access to available congregational data

Inadequate information due to fear of being exposed

Where congregations have agreed to release a to work as part of a research team over a longer period, congregations' needs and indeed apostolates/ministries may still come first and can lead to sisters suddenly being pulled off the project, with no notice. Often the team is not told that a sister is not available until sometime afterwards certainly after the decision has been taken by the congregation/superior involved. On the other hand, those outside of religious life need to be aware that congregations have their own interior life, schedule, programs and we need to take these into consideration in planning.

Lack of understanding of the importance of research

Administrators overwhelmed so don't participate fully

Lack of research funding

Participants fatigue

Some sisters are technically challenged to fill surveys especially electronically

Self-Report Validity

technology challenges

Obtaining responses to questionnaires.

Finance

Challenge in data analysis

Lack of financial resources

Lack of resources (skilled personnel, finances)

People assume that the Catholics are rich and so expect to be paid for the data given

Communication within congregations' superiors are extremely busy and have to juggle many competing demands. Yet often they need to be the gatekeepers. Their lack of time can mean that they do not share the information about the project and how it will work with those who need it, and do not explain it, or take time to understand/engage themselves. Sometimes sisters take part out of obedience to their superior. This has made it very difficult for sisters to give truly informed consent.

Continuous calls and reminder

Lack of follow through on part of conferences and congregations to recommendations in research reports

Limited publication avenues or lack of knowledge of the same.

Q1b: Please list up to three needs you have in pursuing research on Catholic Sisters:

Summary:

- **There is a need for good data that is accessible to researchers.**
- **There is a need for collaboration and partnership with other researchers, research centers, Universities.**
- **Funding for research projects is needed.**
- **There is a need for greater publication of research findings to build a knowledge base.**

Responses:

Research funding

Technological needs

Funding

need for good data for cross-cultural comparisons

Funding

Although difficult to pull off, finding out why some Sisters leave religious life would be a very useful study.

Books written on catholic sisters

To inform action

Trained Human Resources

Opportunity to convince sisters on the importance of documentation, research, analysis for planning & future sustainability

Funding

Congregations who are prepared and able to make sisters available and make a commitment to that

Cost in terms of data usage for communication

Grant money

Partnership - collaborative ventures between the Catholic Sisters and the laity

Ongoing collaboration in research with experts

some sisters are in very remote areas so reaching them is a challenge

Research Ethics Guide when Participants are Catholic Sisters

need for comparable data across countries and time periods

Articles published on Catholic sisters

To prove a theory and contribute to developing knowledge

Financial Resources

Tie up with credible organizations to convince congregations to share available data

minimal knowledge of appropriate research methods to adopt

Sisters with an interest in and appreciation of qualitative research

Mobility to reach many as possible

Research support

Recognition of Catholic Sisters research agenda by Higher Education Institutions

More exposure through diverse groups of researchers

Academic need some sisters may not understand fully what they are supposed to do due to their level of education

Central Database

need for basic country-specific information on organizational structures and institutional support of Catholic Sisters

Finance

To build knowledge, facilitate learning and document data

Resources (skilled researchers, finances)

Analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data

Commonly agreed theme/topics for research and a process for identifying agreed themes/topics for research

Sensitization and enlightenment of sisters

Dissemination support

Q2: Partnership and Collaboration in our Research. Please list up to three successful partnerships and collaborations you have had in your research on Catholic Sisters:

Summary:

- **Collaboration of CARA and ASEC**
- **Collaboration with ASEC**
- **Collaboration with the Hilton Foundation and USC**
- **Local and national collaborations.**

Responses:

CARA/ASEC Visiting scholars' program

Collaboration with DePaul University

CARA & ASEC

CARA/ASEC collaboration for support and mentoring of Sisters' research in Africa

Work with ASEC

Workshop in Ghana in 2015

The University of Zambia

We have not done any serious Research on sisters so far

Catholic Health Association of India (ongoing)

"Partnership with the Catholic Sisters Initiative at the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation"

Collaboration with clusters Religious institutes in Nigeria

CARA

African Sisters Education Collaborative - Outcome was a publication - Voices of Courage (2015)

Major Superiors partnerships

Collaboration with ASEC

ASEC & Marywood University

CARA/Australia collaboration on survey of religious superiors in Australia

Work with CARA

Giving orientation to ASEC sisters at Veritas University

Hut to Hut Zambia Limited

A research team from University of Southern California (USC) has approached us to do a research on sisters

Hilton Foundation (ongoing)

"Partnerships between the research teams and AOSK, ZAS, AWRIM, TCAS and ARU in relation to practical issues of making payments to sisters, helping with arrangements for meetings, dissemination of reports"

Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) Nigeria Alumnae group

GHR Foundation

Training HESA students on conduct of research

Alumni Collaboration

Collaboration with Hilton Foundation

Johnson, Wittberg, Gautier, Do collaboration on 2 books: New Generations of Catholic Sisters and Migration for Mission

Teaching ASEC students as Veritas University

Zambia Association of Sisterhoods (ZAS)

We came in touch with USC through Hilton foundation

"The partnership between the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology and the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham"

Partnership with Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) and African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC)

Individual scholars

Q3: Dissemination of our Research. Please list up to three ways you have used to disseminate your research on Catholic Sisters:

Summary:

- Through publication of research findings in books and articles
- By electronic means of websites, blogs, Instagram, email
- Through the Global Sisters Report
- Through presentations at conferences and offering workshops.

Responses:

Doctoral Dissertation

Writing a book chapter

Book Publication

Four workshops at colleges sponsored by women religious

Sharing results with Sisters I know.

CARA's blog

Book chapter published

Social networking websites

Not applicable for us

Website (www.evocation.org)

Having the research publicized/covered in Global Sisters Report both while underway and sharing the findings

Print

GHR Foundation

Publications - book chapter

Publications in Journals

Contributing in GSR (global sisters report)

Journals

Books and journal articles

Sr. Bibiana printing up reports.

General discussion in a wider audience on catholic sisters

Mass emails

Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/evocation_org/)

Writing articles on the research while it is underway before finishing so that people are aware of it and writing journal articles on the findings

Electronically

SSSR

Sharing in meetings and workshops

Conferences Presentations

Coming up with a program that addresses the sisters' needs.

Conference Presentations

Presentations at professional conferences and other invited presentations

At Education summit.

Meetings

Sharing the research and findings at meetings and conferences especially meetings with sisters through ACWECA, and the leadership conferences of individual countries

Social Media - WhatsApp

UISG