Self-Adjustment Of Middle-Aged Nuns Experiencing Job Transfer

Ruminta Simamora
Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas Medan

Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The vocation of becoming a nun signifies a Christian commitment to devote oneself entirely to God's mission and service to humanity. This life choice involves embracing vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, which significantly shape the responsibilities and dynamics of living in a religious community. One aspect of this life is experiencing job transfers (mutations), which are often mandated to meet the congregation's needs. While these transfers aim to enhance service efficiency, they also pose psychological and practical challenges for the individuals involved. This qualitative study explores the self-adjustment processes of five middle-aged nuns (aged 30–50 years) who have undergone at least one transfer within the same congregation. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations, focusing on their initial reactions, adaptation strategies, supporting factors, and challenges faced during these transitions. Results indicate that initial reactions to transfers typically involve fear, uncertainty, and hesitation, particularly when the assignments deviate from personal expertise or familiarity. However, successful adaptation was linked to factors such as strong spiritual motivation, community support, and leveraging prior experiences.Challenges encountered included the difficulty of leaving comfort zones, managing interpersonal dynamics in new communities, and psychological unpreparedness. Despite these obstacles, the nuns demonstrated resilience by engaging in active and passive adjustment strategies, such as seeking guidance, prayer, and gradual immersion into new roles. This study underscores the importance of structured preparation, effective communication from superiors, and psychological support to ensure smooth transitions. Additionally, fostering a supportive and cohesive community environment significantly contributes to their ability to adapt effectively and fulfill their responsibilities.
	Corresponding Author: Ruminta Simamora Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas Medan sruminta@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The vocation of life as a nun is a form of Christian life choice that aims to find the meaning of life through devotion to God and service to others. Convent life involves religious vows such as chastity, poverty, and obedience, which demand loyalty and readiness to accept all the consequences and challenges that arise (KHK, 574). These vows become the foundation for the implementation of nuns' services, both in the fields of education, health, and other social services. This life choice not only involves spiritual aspects, but also exposes nuns to the reality of changes in duties, responsibilities, and workplaces through job transfers.

Job transfer is an unavoidable necessity in the life of a nun. It aims to improve the efficiency of ministry and support individual development within the religious community.

However, transfers often present major challenges as they involve changes in environment, roles and social interactions. These new situations can be positive, such as opening up opportunities for self-development, but they can also lead to conflict, stress, and even resistance to change. Factors such as individual readiness, effective communication from the congregation leader, and spiritual and community support greatly influence the success of the adjustment process.

Self-adjustment is an individual's ability to respond to change in a healthy and constructive way. Haber and Runyon (1984) mentioned that healthy self-adjustment is characterized by a realistic perception of reality, the ability to manage stress, a positive attitude towards oneself, appropriate expression of emotions, and good interpersonal relationships. In the context of religious life, this ability is very important, because nuns are not only faced with changes in duties, but also have to maintain their vocation spirit in various conditions that are not ideal.

Some cases show that mutations can be a source of conflict among nuns. For example, nuns who feel comfortable in their previous place or feel unsuitable for the new assignment tend to have difficulty in accepting the transfer. This difficulty is also often influenced by health factors, lack of psychological preparation, or lack of clear communication from the leadership of the congregation. This kind of conflict is not only detrimental to the individual, but also impacts the effectiveness of the congregation's ministry as a whole.

This study aims to understand how middle-aged nuns adjust to the changes that occur due to job transfer. The focus is on identifying factors that influence the adjustment process, both from the internal aspects of the individual and external support. The results of this study are expected to provide new insights for the congregation in managing mutations more effectively and supporting the development of adaptability for nuns.

METHOD

Research Subjects
This study involved five middle-aged nuns aged 30-50 years who had experienced job transfer at least once. All subjects live in the same community in Bekasi and come from the same congregation to avoid the bias of differences in spirituality. Subject selection was done by considering permission from the community leader and individual subject consent.

Type of Research
This research uses a qualitative approach with an in-depth interview method. Observation was also conducted during the interview process to support data processing. This approach allows researchers to explore the experiences and perceptions of subjects in depth.

Research Setting and Equipment
The research was conducted in the community where the subject lived. The tools used included a recording device, interview guidelines, informed consent, anecdotal notes, and a laptop. The recording device was used to document the interview, while anecdotal notes recorded observations related to the subject's behavior and environmental conditions.

Research Procedure

The research procedure was conducted through several stages, including preparation, conducting interviews, and data processing. The interview was conducted with one subject, Sister E, for 75 minutes.

Data Processing and Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews were transcribed in verbatim form, then analyzed using relevant theories.

RESULTS AND DISCCUSION

Result

This study explores the adjustment experiences of five middle-aged nuns who have experienced job transfer within the congregation. The following are the main findings:

Tabel 1. Data Collection Process

No	Subject	Mutation Experience	Initial Reaction	Supporting Factors	Challenges
1	Sister M	Experienced four mutations, feeling anxious and fearful at the initial mutation.	Fear and hesitation in the face of change, especially in the first mutation.	Spiritual motivation, community support, previous experience.	Fear of moving out of comfort zone, difficulty in household duties.
2	Sister K	Experienced nine transfers, anxious about tasks that were not in line with expertise.	Anxious about tasks in the children's world, but receptive to learning efforts.	Interpersonal relationships, experience in educational tasks.	Lack of confidence in new tasks, relatively long adaptation time.
3	Sister F	Experienced six mutations, has good adaptability.	Calmly and seriously tackle a new task, using previous experience.	Previous work experience, community support, high motivation.	Barriers in getting to know the new environment, but adapts quickly.
4	Sister O	Experienced five transfers, focusing on similar tasks to ease adaptation.	Enthusiastic, but sometimes doubtful of own abilities.	Community support, ability to learn from new experiences.	Indecisiveness on new tasks, difficulty dealing with work pressure.
5	Sister E	Experienced six mutations, once refused a mutation because he felt unprepared.	Fear of new tasks and acceptance from the new environment.	Personal readiness, good communication with leaders.	Fear of failure, having turned down a transfer due to lack of preparation.

Discussion

The mutation experiences of the five subjects showed a variety of psychological responses based on the number of mutations and the type of tasks assigned. Sister M, who experienced four transfers, faced a major challenge in the first one as she had to move out of

her comfort zone during the formation period. The fear that emerged was more related to the change in environment than to the type of task. In contrast, Sister K, who had experienced nine transfers, showed anxiety especially when given tasks that were not in line with her expertise, such as teaching children. Sister F and Sister O, with more mutation experience focused on similar tasks, were able to adapt faster. Their previous experience was the main provision for them in carrying out their new duties. However, Sister E faced a big challenge when the transfer was done quickly without preparation, so much so that on one occasion she refused the transfer.

Initial reactions to mutation generally involve anxiety and fear, caused by being unprepared for change. Sister M and Sister K showed fear and lack of confidence towards the new task. However, both tried to overcome these feelings with resignation and prayer. Sister F showed a calmer and more serious response to the mutation, thanks to her previous experience. Meanwhile, Sister O and Sister E had doubts about their own abilities and the acceptance of the new community, highlighting the importance of psychological preparation before the transfer.

Successful adaptation to mutation is supported by spiritual motivation, community support, and previous experience. All subjects stated that religious vows became a strong foundation in accepting mutations, especially the vow of obedience which reminded them of their commitment to carry out leadership orders. Support from the community also played a significant role, especially in creating self-confidence. Good interpersonal relationships allowed subjects to feel accepted in the new environment. Subjects like Sister F and Sister O utilized their previous transfer experiences to learn and develop themselves in the new place, making it a major supporting factor in their adaptation.

The main challenges the subjects faced were fear and lack of confidence, especially when facing new tasks that were not within their expertise. Sister M and Sister K faced difficulties getting out of their comfort zones and doubted their abilities. Lack of communication from the leadership regarding the reason for the transfer was also an obstacle, as experienced by Sister E, who felt that preparation for the transfer was often inadequate. Barriers in establishing social relationships with the new community were also a significant challenge, especially for subjects with slower social adaptation.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the experience of transfer can be a significant psychological challenge, but with the support of the community, spiritual motivation, and previous experience, subjects were able to adapt well. Subjects with more mutation experience, such as Sister F and Sister O, showed faster adaptation. This suggests the need for training or mentoring before the transfer to improve psychological readiness. In addition, good interpersonal relationships in the monastic community and the observance of religious vows are the keys to success in accepting and carrying out new tasks.

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