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Investigating the Relationship between singlehood and life satisfaction

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Abstract

In various societies, being unmarried often leads to stigma and discrimination, which can have profound effects on the psychological well-being and self-esteem of individuals. This study examines the relationship between being single and overall life satisfaction, with a particular focus on the impact of personal attitudes toward one's single status.

Recent findings suggest that singlehood does not inherently correlate with lower life satisfaction; instead, the perception and internalization of being single play a critical role in determining an individual's happiness. The primary objective of this research is to investigate how various attitudes toward singlehood influence the life satisfaction of unmarried individuals, highlighting the potential for positive attitudes to mitigate the adverse effects of societal biases.

To conduct this investigation, a comprehensive cross-sectional study was performed, utilizing a sample of 457 unmarried men and women. Participants completed standardized assessments, such as the Attitude Towards Singlehood Scale (ATSS) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). In addition, demographic variables, including age, gender, and educational background, were collected to account for potential confounding factors.

The statistical analyses revealed a significant and positive relationship between individuals who hold favorable views of singlehood and their reported levels of life satisfaction. Specifically, those who view their single life as rewarding and fulfilling consistently express higher satisfaction with their overall life circumstances.

In summary, the study underscores the necessity of fostering inclusive societal narratives regarding singlehood. By promoting positive attitudes and challenging negative stereotypes, we can create a supportive environment where unmarried individuals feel appreciated and fulfilled. The findings carry significant implications for policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals aiming to improve the overall well-being of diverse groups within society. By understanding the role of attitude in life satisfaction, stakeholders can implement strategies that empower unmarried individuals, enhancing their self-image and quality of life.

Keywords: Singlehood, Life Satisfaction, Attitude

Introduction

In modern society, staying single is increasingly common, especially among younger people. This shift raises important questions about how singlehood affects happiness. Historically, marriage was a significant milestone influencing social status and personal fulfillment. However, as more individuals embrace being single, it is crucial to examine its effects on emotional health.

In Pakistani society, cultural pressure surrounding marriage often leads to negative perceptions of unmarried women, particularly as they age. This bias views them as incomplete, adversely affecting their social standing and choices. Women who prioritize education or careers over marriage frequently face stigma, which can result in isolation and limit opportunities (Zulqarnain et al., 2022).

Stereotypes suggest that single women are unhappy and unattractive, while single men are seen as immature and irresponsible (Ward, 2020; Mrozowicz-Wrońska et al., 2023). This stigma can negatively impact self-esteem (Girme et al., 2023).

Mortelmans et al (2023) define being single as living alone without a partner, a lifestyle that comes with unique challenges. Single individuals, especially women, often confront societal stigma that can diminish life satisfaction (Zulqarnain et al., 2022).

Recent years have seen a growing acceptance of singlehood, reflecting societal changes that prioritize personal fulfillment and independence. As such, being single is increasingly

recognized as a legitimate and empowering choice, reflecting a deeper understanding of fulfillment beyond traditional relationship norms (Bühler & Nikitin, 2020).

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant positive relationship between singlehood and satisfaction with life among unmarried individuals.

Materials and Methods

Data were collected in person and online from 457 individuals using a purposive sampling technique. The study utilized self-report measures, including the Attitude Towards Singlehood Scale (Tan et al., 2021) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). This study uses a quantitative approach and a cross-sectional design. It includes both physical and online surveys, which use a self-report questionnaire. The research aims to clarify the relationship between attitudes towards singlehood and life satisfaction, hypothesizing that positive attitudes towards singlehood correlate with higher life satisfaction.

Sample

A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed to collect data from 457 unmarried participants. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling from various cities in Pakistan.

Instruments

Attitude towards singlehood scale:

The Attitude towards Singlehood Scale (ATSS) was developed by Tan et al (20021). It consists of 9 items, a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) with Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$. Measures an individual's opinions about being single.

Scale: **Satisfaction with life SWL:**

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWL) was developed by Diener et al (1985) , assesses individuals' global satisfaction with life using five statements, a 7-point scale to indicate how closely it reflects their standards of life satisfaction, reliability coefficient of 0.82.

Procedure:

This study received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Wah. We distributed questionnaires in person and online after providing essential information. Participants gave informed consent and were encouraged to answer thoroughly without time constraints. We reviewed the questionnaires for any missing data, and data analysis was performed using SPSS.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between singlehood and satisfaction with life. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated, and normality was assessed through skewness and kurtosis. Correlation analyses clarified the associations among the variables. The findings reveal that individuals with a positive view of being single report higher life satisfaction.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha and Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables (N=457)

Variable	*K*	*α*	*M*	*SD*	*Range*		*Skewness*	*Kurtosis*
					Actual	*Potential*		
ATS	9	.88	38.63	14.05	9-63	9-63	-.05	-.89
SWL	5	.79	22.51	6.96	5-35	5-35	-.29	-.55

Note: ATS = Singlehood, SWL = Satisfaction with life

Table 2 presents the scales' reliability (α: .79 and .88), average scores, and confirms normal distribution based on skewness and kurtosis.

Table 2: Pearson Product Correlation Coefficients (N=457)

	Scales	1	2
1	ATS	-	.20**
2	SWL		-

Note: ATS = Singlehood, SWL = Satisfaction with life

Correlation analyses revealed significant relationships between singlehood and life satisfaction. A positive attitude towards singlehood correlated with higher life satisfaction ($r = .20$, $p < .01$), indicating a significant positive association between singlehood and life satisfaction.

Single individuals can experience high levels of satisfaction, especially when they have a positive outlook on their singlehood or engage in fulfilling social networks. The hypothesis proposed that there is a positive relationship between attitudes towards singlehood and life satisfaction among unmarried individuals. The findings, as shown in Table 2, supported this hypothesis and align with previous research indicating that single individuals often enjoy a remarkable sense of control over their lives, which enhances their mental health and overall happiness (Oh et al., 2022).

The freedom to make choices without having to consider a partner's preferences empowers individuals to fully pursue their passions and interests. They actively invest their time and energy into building strong friendships and participating in community involvement, which fosters a strong sense of belonging and emotional support. These meaningful relationships enable individuals to face life's challenges with resilience (Doherty & Feeney, 2004).

A recent study reveals that many people find genuine satisfaction and happiness in being single, challenging the belief that romantic relationships are essential for a fulfilling life. These findings emphasize the importance of personal choice and demonstrate that there are various paths to achieving happiness and self-fulfillment beyond traditional relationships (DePaulo, 2014).

Many single individuals are truly content with their relationship status, and this contentment plays a significant role in their overall happiness. When people embrace being single rather than viewing it as a temporary or negative situation, they often report high levels of life satisfaction (Kislev, 2021).

Conclusion

This research indicates a strong link between attitudes toward singlehood and life satisfaction. A positive view of being single enhances happiness and significantly boosts overall satisfaction. Promoting acceptance of diverse life choices and reducing the stigma around singlehood can effectively improve psychological well-being.

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