

Single Women's Happiness in Terms of Social Support and Religiosity

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| article information | Abstract |
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| Submitted: 2024-02-04 Revised: 2024-05-14 Published: 2024-06-30 | In Indonesia, single women still get a negative stigma. They are considered "incomplete" individuals because they haven't or don't want to get married. The society also sees the single women in concern even though they can also get happiness, with the social support and religiosity they have. This study aims to determine the relationship between social support and religiosity and happiness in single women. The participants of the study were 82 single women aged 26-45 who were unmarried. Data retrieval was carried out by distributing questionnaires using google form by online and the measurement using likert scale. This study uses a quantitative research method. The hypothesis test that was used in this research using SPSS program. The results showed that there was a relationship between social support and religiosity and happiness. The correlation results obtained of 0.650 showed a strong relationship with the direction of positive correlation, it means the higher the social support and religiosity of single women, the higher their happiness either. This study contributes to the understanding of how social support and religiosity influence happiness in single women. By confirming a strong positive correlation, it emphasizes the importance of emotional and spiritual resources in enhancing well-being, offering valuable insights for future psychological and social interventions targeting single adult populations. |
| Keywords: Social Support, Religiosity, Happiness, Singleness. | |

Introduction

The phenomenon of single women is still not widely exposed in Indonesia. BPS data in 2020 shows that out of 31.75 million people, there are 48.24% of adult women who are unmarried, this number increased from previous years (Azhima & Indrawati, 2020; Selan et al., 2020). Individuals have the assumption that marriage does not have to be done in a certain age range, this is shown by the number of young individuals who remain single and postpone marriage (Mullins, 2016; Lianda & Himawan, 2022; Maryanto et al., 2024). The phenomenon of single women is closely related to the interaction of social, cultural and religious values (Himawan, 2020a). Single women in Indonesia aged 30 years and above will face various pressures in their environment due to eastern cultures that consider adult women who live alone as "incomplete" individuals and must produce descendant and take care of children (Mulyani & Sari, 2024). Single women are stigmatized by society labeling them as "pasted", "past the times" and "unsold", and are considered to have the wrong personality in them (Gong et al., 2015; Budgeon, 2015). They also often receive negative labels as "weird," "cold," and "matrealistic" (Nanik et al, 2022). The stigma causes single women feeling afraid of their single status, thereby lowering the level of psychological well-being (Nanik et al., 2020). Erikson explained that in early adulthood, around the age of 26 to 39, having an intimate relationship is very important and when this is not done the individual will feel isolated which including melancholy and anxiety feelings (Ang et al, 2020).

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Literature studies show that single women can be grouped into three categories based on their experiences of singleness: those with positive, negative, and ambivalent experiences (Ang, et al., 2020). Women with positive experiences feel a sense of freedom and have more time for themselves (Ang, et al., 2020). In contrast, those with negative experiences feel the need for companionship and intimate relationships, often experiencing sadness from loneliness, self-doubt, isolation, and even depression (Anhar, 2021). The ambivalent group feels independent and enjoys time alone, but occasionally struggles with loneliness, emotional emptiness, and concern over others' judgments (Ariska, 2020). Most single women fall into this ambivalent category. Despite negative aspects, this group illustrates that single women can still find happiness in solitude. Happiness is defined as positive emotions and an individual's engagement in enjoyable activities (Pandelaere, 2016; Tu & Hsee, 2016), and is subjective—each person has a different understanding, meaning, and source of happiness (Veenhoven, 2012; Husna, 2016; Ng, 2022; Singh et al., 2023; Arini & Indriani, 2024).

Happiness can come vertically or horizontally. Vertical happiness is happiness that is closely related to religiosity. Religiosity is an important factor in a person's happiness. The research that was conducted by Pello and Soertjaningsih (2020) on 2 single adult women showed that the most powerful main factor when living single is religiosity (Mariam et al, 2023). Religiosity helps individuals interpret time in their lives positively, including the time of singleness (Himawan, 2020b). Research by Akhrani and Nuryanti of 135 disaster relief volunteers showed that the role of religiosity accounted for 19.6% in the happiness of disaster relief volunteers (Akhrani and Nuryanti, 2021). Religiosity has a role in increasing happiness. A close relationship with God and involvement in religious activities will help single women face their single status (Mullins, 2016; Lianda & Himawan, 2022; Maryanto et al., 2024).

Beyond a close relationship with God, humans are social beings so they need social support from their environment. Single women need social support to avoid feelings of loneliness and self-isolating behavior (Rahmani et al., 2016; Shahrak, 2021). The support provided can be emotional, such as attention, affection, and informational empathy, instrumental, such as goods or objects, and feedback assessments of behaviors performed (Amna and Anastasya, 2023). In the previous study, two research participants who are single women aged 50 and 52 felt that it was okay to be single because of the support from their siblings (Hidayati, 2020). Research by Natasha and Desiningrum on three participants who were single women aged 40, 47, and 55 years showed that social support made them calm, cared for, loved, and confident (Natasha and Desiningrum, 2020; Attia et al., 2022). Another study conducted in New Zealand showed that single adults have lower levels of psychological well-being compared to adults in couples due to the lack of social support, discrimination, and negative treatment experienced due to single status (Oh et al., 2021; Girme et al, 2022; Cantarella et al., 2023). This shows that social support, and especially long-term support from the family, is an important factor in composing happiness (Nasution and Fauziah, 2020).

This study is based on social phenomena indicating that social support and religiosity play significant roles in shaping happiness, particularly among single adult women. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is that there is a positive relationship between social support and religiosity with the level of happiness in single adult women. This research is expected to provide empirical contributions to the development of psychological studies, especially in the field of singleness and happiness.

Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey research type to study populations both on a large and small scale. The researcher used a non-probability sample because it did not know how large the number of groups or population of samples used in this study was. The criteria

for selecting participants are 1). Women aged 26-45 years, 2). Not dating, and 3). Unmarried. Data retrieval was carried out by distributing questionnaires using google form by online and the measurment using likert scale with five categories, “always”, “often”, “sometimes”, “rarely”, and “never”. The hypotesis test that was used in this research using SPSS program.

The independent variables of this study were social support and religiosity. King defined social support as feedback from a person that indicates that the individual is loved, valued, respected, engaged, and cared in his or her environment. Meanwhile, Ancok explained religiosity as an individual perspective and a level of commitment to religion (Brailovskaia et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2019; Sungadi, 2020). The dependent variable of this study is happiness. Seligman defined happiness as the positive emotions that a person feels as well as the overall involvement of the individual in something he or she likes.

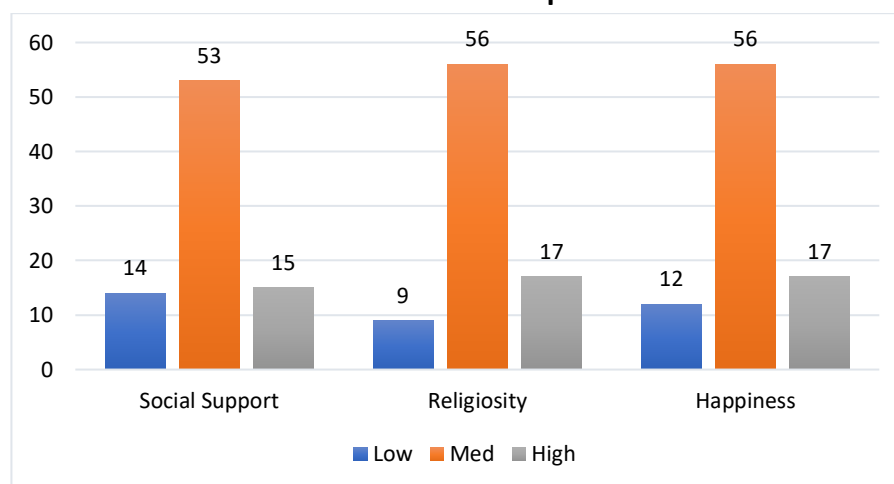
This study used The Medical Outcomes Study–Social Support Survey (MOS-SSS) thar compiled by Sherbourne and Stewart to measure social support with a reliability coefficient of r of 0.97. Centrality of the Religious Scale compiled by Huber and Huber is a scale that used to measure religiosity in general, consisting of 15 core questions and 5 multiple-choice questions. The reliability coefficient r on the religiosity scale is 0.84 The researcher used only 15 core questions. The Happiness Scale used by the researcher is the Indonesian Indigenous Peoples Scale which was compiled and developed in 2010 by Anggoro and Widiharso (Augustiya et al, 2020). This scale measures the level of happiness felt by individuals shown by 4 aspects, namely family ties, personal achievements or achievements, social relationships, and spiritual needs. The reliability coefficient r of this scale is 0.90. The three scales show a strong level of reliability so the authors choose to use them.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis of Social Support, Religiosity, and Happiness Levels Among Single Adult Women

This study aims to provide an overview of the level of social support, religiosity, and happiness in single adult women. Based on data obtained from 82 participants, it was found that most respondents were in the moderate category for the three variables. This shows that the majority of single women in this study have sufficient levels of social support, religiosity, and happiness, although not classified as high. These findings provide an important basis for understanding how single women live their lives emotionally and spiritually, and the extent to which external and internal factors contribute to their happiness.

Chart 1. The Participants



According to Chart 1 (N=82), 17.1% (14 participants) were categorized as low in social support, 11% (9 participants) in religiosity, and 14.6% (12 participants) in happiness. A larger group, 64.6% (53 participants), fell into the moderate category for social support, 68.3% (56 participants) for religiosity, and happiness. Finally, 18.3% (15 participants) were classified as high in social support, 20.7% (17 participants) in religiosity, and 17.1% (14 participants) in happiness. Overall, the majority of participants, 64.6% in social support, 68.3% in religiosity, and happiness, fall into the moderate category. This highlights that most individuals exhibit a moderate level of these factors, suggesting a more balanced distribution across the variables.

The participants who were 26 years old were 65.8% or 54 people, 27 years old were 32.9% or 27 people, 28 and 29 years old were 3.65% or 3 people, 30 years old were 4.87% or 4 people, and participants who were 31, 32, 33, and 40 were 1.21% or 1 person each category. Amount 86.5% or 71 people came from Java and the remaining are 23.5% or 11 people came from outside Java. The last education of the participants was dominated by 80.48% or 66 people are bachelor degree, 7.31% or 6 people are magister degree, 1.21% or 1 person is associate degree, and 9.75% or 8 people are senior high school.

Before conducting a multiple correlation analysis test to see if there is a strong relationship between variable x and variable y, an assumption test is carried out by conducting a normality test and a linearity test.

| Table 1. Normality Test | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov | |
| | Sig. |
| Social Support | 0,200* |
| Religiosity | 0,200* |
| Happiness | 0,200* |

Table 1 reveals that the significance value for the scales of social support, religiosity, and happiness is 0.200. This suggests that the data follows a normal distribution, as the p-value is greater than 0.05. This normality in the data distribution indicates that the values for these variables are evenly spread out, making them suitable for further statistical analysis. The result reinforces the reliability of the dataset, confirming that the assumptions for conducting parametric tests have been met, allowing for more accurate and meaningful conclusions to be drawn.

| Table 2. Linearity Test | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Variable | Linearity |
| Social Support and Happiness | 0,000 |
| Religiosity and Happiness | 0,000 |

Based on the data presented in Table 2, the significance values for the relationship between social support and happiness, as well as religiosity and happiness, were found to be 0.000. This indicates a linear relationship, as the p-value is less than 0.05. The findings confirm that both social support and religiosity play a crucial role in enhancing happiness among single women. This linear relationship suggests that as social support and religiosity increase, so does the level of happiness. The results highlight the importance of these factors in fostering well-being, emphasizing the positive impact of external support systems and internal spiritual beliefs on the psychological well-being of single women. This reinforces the idea that social support and religiosity are essential elements for improving happiness and should be considered in interventions aimed at boosting the well-being of single individuals.

The findings of this study reveal the distribution of participants across various categories of social support, religiosity, and happiness. The majority of participants were in the moderate category for all three variables, suggesting that most single women in this sample experienced a

balanced level of social support, religiosity, and happiness. This aligns with previous research indicating that a moderate level of these factors contributes to an optimal well-being state (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Carvallo & Gabriel, 2006; Barnes et al., 2010). While low levels of these variables may contribute to negative outcomes such as loneliness or dissatisfaction, high levels may lead to unrealistic expectations or social dependency, thus a moderate level is often ideal for maintaining psychological health (Diener, 2000).

Regarding demographic factors, most participants were aged 26-27, which is consistent with the typical age range of single women navigating adulthood and seeking stability in social relationships. Research by Slatcher & Selcuk (2017) supports that individuals in this age range often experience fluctuating levels of social support and religiosity, as they navigate complex life stages involving career, relationships, and personal growth. Moreover, the high representation from Java (86.5%) may reflect cultural differences in societal expectations of singlehood, where social support systems may be more robust, contributing to higher levels of happiness among these participants (Anjara et al., 2021; Putra et al., 2024).

Educational attainment also plays a crucial role in shaping social support and religiosity. The majority of participants held a bachelor's degree, which aligns with findings by Lammers et al. (2011), who suggested that higher education is positively correlated with better access to social support networks and a greater understanding of religious and spiritual practices. This is particularly relevant for single women, as higher education often provides individuals with better career opportunities, financial stability, and access to social networks that foster a sense of belonging and happiness. Additionally, the presence of individuals with higher education levels suggests that these women may possess greater resilience against societal pressures and stigmas related to their single status.

Finally, the theory of social exchange can be applied to understand the relationship between social support and happiness in this study (Homans, 1958; Cook et al., 2013; Cropanzano et al., 2017). According to this theory, individuals assess the rewards and costs in their relationships. The positive correlation between social support and happiness suggests that single women who perceive more support from their social networks experience greater happiness. Similarly, religiosity offers a spiritual dimension to the support system, where belief systems provide meaning and comfort, reducing stress related to societal judgment about their single status. This dual support—both social and spiritual—appears to buffer the challenges associated with singleness, thereby enhancing overall well-being and life satisfaction.

This analysis provides valuable insights into the factors influencing happiness among single women, highlighting the significance of both external (social support) and internal (religiosity) resources in enhancing well-being. The findings emphasize that external social connections and personal spiritual beliefs both contribute to greater happiness. Future studies could examine how these factors interact in various cultural settings and explore the long-term impacts of different levels of support on psychological resilience and overall life satisfaction. Additionally, research could investigate the role of other potential variables, such as personal values or social stigma, in shaping the happiness of single women. Understanding these dynamics can help create more comprehensive strategies to improve well-being for single individuals, particularly in societies where singlehood is often stigmatized.

Social Support and Religiosity on Happiness in Single Women

Relationship between social support, religiosity, and happiness. Findings indicate that both social support and religiosity are positively associated with happiness in single adult women. Although the relationship between social support and religiosity appears weaker, each factor independently contributes to participants' overall well-being. These results highlight the important

role that interpersonal relationships and personal beliefs can play in fostering happiness in the context of singlehood.

Table 3. Correlation Test

| | Social Support | Religiosity | Happiness |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| Social Support | 1 | 0,152 | 0,374* |
| | | 0,35 | 0,001 |
| Religiosity | 0,152 | 1 | 0,582** |
| | 0,174 | | 0,000 |
| Happiness | 0,374** | 0,582** | 1 |
| | 0,001 | 0,000 | |

** .Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

According to the results from Table 3, the correlation test revealed a statistically significant relationship between social support and happiness, with a correlation value of 0.374 ($p = 0.001$). This indicates a low positive correlation between the two variables. Additionally, the relationship between religiosity and happiness showed a stronger statistically significant correlation of 0.582 ($p = 0.000$), reflecting a moderate positive association. These findings indicate that both social support and religiosity are positively correlated with happiness in single women. Specifically, as social support increases, so does happiness, and similarly, higher levels of religiosity are associated with greater happiness. These results suggest that both external support from others and personal spiritual beliefs play an important role in enhancing the well-being of single women.

Positive social support in the form of healthy relationships can provide single women with a sense of being appreciated, accepted, and emotionally secure (Amna, 2023). These supportive interactions contribute to an increased sense of happiness. Beyond emotional benefits, social support also has a positive impact on physical well-being and helps to reduce stress levels (Moningka, 2022). This finding aligns with studies conducted by Girme et al. (2022) in New Zealand and Canada, which revealed that single individuals tend to report lower psychological well-being compared to those who are in relationships. This disparity is often due to the higher level of social stigma and negative treatment that single adults receive compared to their married counterparts (Oh et al., 2021; Cantarella et al., 2023). The lack of external support and societal acceptance may affect the emotional and psychological stability of single individuals, emphasizing the importance of social support in maintaining their overall well-being.

Religiosity plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's sense of direction and life purpose (Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006; Akhrani & Nuryanti, 2021; Petrovic et al., 2024). It is rooted in faith and expressed through religious practices that offer strength and emotional stability during challenging periods (Pello & Soetjningsih, 2020). For single women, religiosity provides a meaningful framework to understand and accept their life status (Adamczyk et al., 2024). Research findings suggest that religiosity serves as an effective coping mechanism in navigating the challenges of being single (Granqvist & Hagekull, 2000; Abo-Zena, 2024). When a woman has a strong belief in divine guidance and perceives her circumstances through a spiritual lens, it becomes easier for her to embrace her singleness with peace and happiness. This inner strength allows her to maintain psychological well-being despite societal pressure or stigma often attached to being single.

These results are in line with the research of Khuzaimah, et al on the elderly at the Binjai Medan nursing home which shows that there is a relationship between social support and happiness (Julianto et al., 2020; Khuzaimah et al, 2021). Social support is one of the important predictors of happiness which includes the amount and quality of support is given. For the elderly, social support is obtained from friends and caregivers in orphanages, which reduces the dependence and problems of the elderly with their families (Luchesi et al., 2018; Mahmoodi et al., 2022). Reducing conflict and a feeling of more independence increases happiness for elderly.

Another study by Akhrani and Nuryanti on 135 disaster relief volunteers, there was a significant relationship between religiosity and happiness which contributed as much as 19.6% (Akhrani and Nuryanti, 2021). Activities carried out by volunteers are activities to help disaster victims which are not easy to do and can cause stress, but the helping activities that carried out are a symbol of gratitude to God and an indicator of a person's religiosity, when volunteers help, satisfaction will appear as a symbol of happy feelings (Ruiter & De Graaf, 2006; Petrovic et al., 2024).

The Contribution of Social Support and Religiosity in Determining the Happiness of Single Women

This study examines the contributions of social support and religiosity in determining happiness among single women. Using multiple correlation analysis, the results indicate that both social support and religiosity collectively influence happiness, with a significant proportion of the variance explained by these two factors. The findings suggest that while social support and religiosity each play a role in enhancing well-being, other variables also contribute to the overall happiness of single women. This research highlights the importance of both social and spiritual factors in fostering a positive life experience in singleness.

Table 4. Multiple Correlation Test

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of The Estimate |
|-------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 0,650 ^a | 0,422 | 0,408 | 11,403 |

a. Predictors: (Constans), Religiosity (X2), Social Support (X1)

b. Dependent Variable: Happiness (Y)

Based on the results of the multiple correlation test, the analysis revealed a correlation value (R) of 0.650 with a determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.422. This indicates that social support and religiosity collectively contribute 42.2% to the variance in happiness, while the remaining percentage is influenced by other factors. The findings highlight that both social support and religiosity are positively related to happiness. Social support plays a crucial role in enhancing psychological well-being. When single women experience sufficient emotional and social support, it fosters a sense of well-being that contributes to greater happiness (Rani, 2016; Ramadhani et al., 2023; Yuliani et al., 2023; Riski & Ticoalu, 2024). Conversely, a lack of social support can negatively affect their psychological state, potentially leading to emotional distress and reduced happiness. Therefore, social connections and support systems are essential components in promoting the well-being and life satisfaction of single women.

Social support from friends, best friends, and family will overcome the loneliness that single women often feel (Rahmani et al., 2016; Shahrak, 2021). Single women are not by choice, they are more at risk of feeling lonely because they tend to feel limited in their activities when they are single and because they do not have interaction with the opposite sex (Mund et al., 2020; Umberson et al., 2022). They also feel inferior because of the stigma around them due to their single status. This will put them in the wrong position, feeling lonely but having trouble getting along with the people around them. On the other hand, single women of their own choice have lower stress levels compared to singles without their choice (Granqvist & Hagekull, 2000; Abo-Zena, 2024), making it easier for single women to socialize and maintain their psychological well-being. This is in line with Chapman and Guven's research (Himawan, 2020b) which in their research, the level of happiness is not determined by marriage. Single women can also create their happiness even if they are not or will not get married (Nisa et al., 2021; Indrianie & Dwijayanthi, 2024).

In addition to social support, religiosity also plays a significant role in fostering happiness. Research by Akhrani and Nuryanti (2021) found that volunteers helping disaster victims

experience happiness because acts of assistance align with religious teachings. Similarly, single women who have a high level of religiosity tend to experience improved psychological well-being (Mullins, 2016; Lianda & Himawan, 2022; Maryanto et al., 2024). When religiosity is high, their actions and thoughts are guided not by human judgment but by divine principles. As a result, societal stigma about their single status has a minimal negative impact on their psychological well-being. This suggests that strong religious beliefs can buffer the emotional effects of social judgments and help individuals maintain a sense of peace and contentment, even when facing external challenges (Bennett, 2015; Sallam et al., 2018).

A study by Himawan (2020b) involving 635 male and female participants aged 26-50 years demonstrates that religiosity contributes to the well-being of single men and women in Indonesia. Himawan (2020a) also conducted interviews with several participants who viewed their single status as a period of self-reflection, personal growth, and spiritual development. This mindset fosters greater religiosity, allowing single women—especially those who are single not by choice—to alleviate concerns about their unmarried status. By focusing on spiritual growth, these women are able to maintain their happiness, despite societal pressures or personal challenges related to being single. This perspective suggests that religiosity can serve as a source of strength and contentment for individuals navigating the emotional complexities of singleness, helping them to maintain a sense of well-being and purpose.

Social support and religiosity that correlate with happiness in single women suggest that a balance of vertical relationships with God Almighty, and horizontal relationships with fellow human beings is necessary. Social support will help in social relationships and religiosity will help strengthen the relationship with God. Both are complementary parts so that the psychological well-being of single women is maintained. The stigma given to single women is not a natural thing to do. The sentences and views expressed can put pressure and burden on single women. This can be a reference in the future to be educated about how life is experienced and felt by single women. Some of the limitations of the research conducted include a limited number of subjects, uneven domicile of subjects which are mostly dominated by the island of Java, and research subjects that focus on women.

Conclusion

The conclusion obtained from the results of this study is that there is a relationship between social support and religiosity and happiness in single women. The correlation obtained was 0.650, indicating that there was a strong relationship with the direction of positive correlation. This is interpreted as the higher the social support and religiosity of single women, the higher their happiness, and vice versa. Social support is an important factor for single women to overcome their status as single, especially because of the stigma and discrimination that they often get. When social support becomes support from the outside, religiosity becomes spirituality support for single women. The more single women believe that being single is not a punishment from God, and that solitude has a positive meaning in religion, the lower the stress level that single women have so that they will be easier to feel happy.

Theoretically, this study highlights the importance of social support and religiosity as key factors influencing happiness in single women, emphasizing the need for further exploration of how external support and spiritual beliefs interact to improve psychological well-being. It suggests that both social and religious dimensions play a significant role in mitigating the negative effects of singleness, contributing to a deeper understanding of the factors that shape happiness in this demographic. Practically, the findings imply that strengthening social support systems and fostering religiosity can be effective interventions for improving the mental well-being of single women, especially those who experience societal stigma. Policies and programs that promote

community support, along with spiritual growth initiatives, could be valuable in helping single women navigate their status, reduce stress, and increase happiness. This approach offers both social and spiritual solutions to enhance well-being in singlehood.

Future research could explore the specific types of social support—such as emotional, informational, or instrumental—that most effectively contribute to the happiness of single women, particularly in different cultural or social contexts. Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine how the relationship between social support, religiosity, and happiness evolves over time, especially in response to life events such as changing relationship status or aging. It would also be valuable to investigate the role of other variables, such as personality traits or coping mechanisms, in mediating this relationship. Lastly, comparative studies between single women and those in relationships could offer deeper insights into the unique factors influencing happiness in singlehood, potentially leading to more tailored interventions for improving well-being among single women in diverse settings.

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