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Research paper

"She is a Spinster": a Descriptive Study on Perception Toward Single Women

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to explore perception toward single women, according to respondents from 4 different subject groups. Exploration on topic was intriguing to be further researched, considering that the percentage of single women had been increasing in numerous countries, but the discussion was lacking, especially in Indonesia. Respondents in this study were Indonesian single or married men and women aged 25-70 years. Respondents were gathered through purposive incidental sampling (N = 128) and consisted of 41 single women, 49 married women, 13 single men, and 25 married men. An open-ended questionnaires constructed by the first author was used as measurement tools. Respondents were tasked to mention perceived positive and negative impression toward single women. Data gathered underwent two analysis stages. The first part was a descriptive content analysis and the second stage was a descriptive statistical analysis comparing means from one-way ANOVA. Statistical analysis showed significant result (average $p < .05$) when comparing means of positive and negative perception based on demographic statistics. Results showed significant negative perception and strong labeling toward single women although there were also significant positive perceptions. Negative and positive perceptions of single women tend to be universal from several generations of adults.

Keywords: *Perception; Single Women; Content Analysis*

1. Introduction

As time changes, the choice of being a single woman developed into a lifestyle, not only in Western countries such as European and American countries, but also in Asian countries. The marriage avoidance in Asia was something new and was considered as a deviation from the norm. Three decades ago, only 2% of women were unmarried in most Asian countries. By now, the number of unmarried women in their 30s in Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong has been 20% or more. In Hong Kong, 27% women aged 30-34 years were unmarried whereas in Bangkok, Thailand, 20% among women aged 40-44 (1).

The number is quite high and for certain age categories in several countries, the percentage almost double from what it was back in 80s or 90s. In Thailand, the number of unmarried women entering the age of 40s increased from 7% in 1980 to 12% in 2000. Another study even showed that the proportion of unmarried women at the age of 45-49 years in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, jumped from 11% to 17% in just ten years. In Singapore and China, the percentage number of women aged 45-49 years who maintained to never getting married has increased from only 8% in 1990 to 13% by year 2000. The increase in number was also seen in Kuala Lumpur and Yangon's statistic (2).

The rising number of unmarried women in Asia follows the number of single-person household that has been seen in western countries such as England, Wales, Israel, United States of America and Denmark. One-third of the female population in England and Wales were single women. Statistic in USA & Denmark on 2016 showed that single women were almost 30% of the countries' total population (3).

In accordance with the census report in 1971 and 2000, the proportion of unmarried women aged 30-34 years in Indonesia increased from 2.2% to 6.9% in the past three decades, while the increase in men was from 6.1% to 11.8% (Jones, 2004 cited in (2). The proportion of unmarried adults in big cities like Jakarta, was higher. In 2000, 14.3% of women aged 30-34 years in Jakarta were never married, while in men it was 21.1% (Hull, 2002 cited in (2).

The following data was taken from Indonesia's National Statistic Bureau (2016) regarding progression percentage related to the number of single women based on age, from 2014 to 2015 in East Java, Indonesia, an area where most of single respondents lived. The first table shows that there was an increase in percentages of single women in 2015 compared to in 2014 with the percentages of 0.58 % of women aged 30-34 years, 0,8% of women aged 35-39 years and 0.29% of women aged 40-44 years old.

Table 1: Indonesia's National Statistic Bureau Data: Marriage Status on Single Women in East Java Based on Age Without Differentiation on Working Status

Age (in years)	Not Yet Married	
	Year 2014	Year 2015
30-34	3.08% 46,087	3.66% 55,082
35-39	1.79% 28,394	2.59% 39,653
40-44	1.49% 21,887	1.78% 26,940
45-49	1.69% 25,188	1.15% 16,828

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In general, people or families (especially those who has been married) perceived single life or people who never married as a social problem. They could not accept the idea that normal unmarried women could achieve happiness and be content with their life. Meanwhile, many women who chose not to get married thinks that being unmarried were not synonymous with unhappy or boring life, though they still have positive attitudes toward marriage. Some women showed that unmarried women could also live happily, especially when they could adapt to others' way of life, including families and friends, making it something pleasant not to get married (2). In fact, a longitudinal study by Richard Lucas and his colleagues (Lucas, 2005 as cited in (4) showed that the happiness level of people who stayed single were higher than divorced and widowed people.

(5) showed that most married people were generally perceived more positively than unmarried people. Married people tended to have more experience of taking care of children with their partner, developing characters of nurturance, tolerance, warmth, and responsibility. Unmarried people were seen as quieter, colder, and more uncaring than married people. However, several positive advantages were thought to originate from unmarried people as well. Also importantly were the characteristics of moderate perception of unmarried people. Therefore, despite the commonly less positive perception of single people, they were also judged by several groups as being more sophisticated and more affable than married ones.

Perception exploration toward single women was intriguing to be further researched, considering that the percentage of single women had been increasing in numerous countries, but the discussion of whether the negative and positive perception had experience change was lacking, especially in Indonesian adults. This study was based on the literature study by (6), which stated that there was a change in negative perception (stigma) on single women, (3-5, 7, 8) while also discussing the aspects of life of single women (2, 9-11).

The literature study by (6) described the stigma of single women during the progression of ages (16th to 18th, 18th to 20th, and 20th to 21th century). Several terms were born during these ages, such as 'spinsters', 'old maids', and 'maiden aunts'. Even single women were viewed as lesbians because of their lack of partners, labeled as atypical on 1920. The stigma was reduced starting the 20th century and further comprehended on the 21th century as a life choice. However, the first choice was still considered to be marriage (6).

In Irish society, career single women were perceived as independent, selfish, fussy, too choosy, not wanting relationship, having no ties or responsibilities, wealthy and enjoying a great social life. Those who has an interest to build a heterosexual relationship often seen as man haters or man hunters, seductress and a threat to married women marital relationship (7).

Research on perception toward single women on the following years showed a swift change in the more positive direction such as immature, insecure, self-centered, unhappy, lonely and ugly. Also, there is positive perception as an appreciation toward single women which is independent (4).

Even at the current time of research, the status of single women was still an interesting discussion on various countries. New conceptions of single women on specific demographical areas, such as 'leftover women' in China, 'parasite women' in Japan, 'late singlehood' in Israel, 'singletons' in Australia, America, and England. More common perceptions were also existent, such as 'a lack/absence/deficient identity', 'lonely', 'desperate cat ladies' (3). Even so, single status was still often perceived as something unexpected and underappreciated, sometimes even obtaining negative judgments causing unmarried women's psychological well-being to be threatened in Indonesia. This study was a preliminary study of the author's dissertation on the psychological well-being of single women. Marital status was one of the factors affecting psychological well-being (12, 13).

The status of single women could be interpreted by single women themselves, in a process known as a reflected appraisal process. Single women conducted self-reflection by observing what others say about themselves. Furthermore, single women could interpret their bachelor status by social comparison which compared ability, attitudes, and beliefs or belief systems with others (14, 15).

The status of single women could also be interpreted by others (married women, single men and married men) with observation stages toward single women's actions (observation), stage of seeing behavioral causes (attribution), stage of merging information to obtain information accuracy (integration), and the stage of confirming whether the interpretation given to others were correct (confirmation). Confirmation stage was not compulsory, depending on the individual beliefs in ensuring accuracy in creating an impression about single women (14, 15).

This was in accordance with the real conditions experienced by several respondents, associated with negative perceptions (labeling).

The expression of Las, 68 years old, interview, May 2015 (16)

"From the age of 22 to 57, I worked in Surabaya. In Surabaya, I was often asked with questions like 'why don't you get married'. When I was back in Blora in 2005, there was rumor that said that I am 'hard to sell' in Surabaya which made me had to go back to Blora. It felt hurtful, but I could do nothing but try to understand that they did not know what the exact situation was."

The expression of Hw, 70 years old, interview, November 2016

"It was, indeed, so difficult... I was often asked by others why I didn't get married, living in the same city as the man who ever proposed me—who currently is married and happy—and it was considered strange to occupy a status as unmarried women back then in the 70-80s when I was 30 to 40 years old. In those days, the unmarried woman was called a spinster, choosy, cranky, snotty, grumpy and weird woman."

The aim of this research was to explore perception toward single women, according to respondents from 4 different groups, single and married women and men, with the age range of early, middle, and late adulthood. This research aimed to discover the change of negative perception from the older to younger generation and the development of positive perception from younger and older generation. Also whether the perceptions of single women resulted in judgments that still lead to negative things and there were still negative perceptions that lead to labeling. Furthermore, with the currently changing times, did the perception of single women produce positive perceptions as well? What self-perception in single women had in common with the perception of married women, single men and married men against single women.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Single and Singlism Definitions

Oxford dictionary's (2010) definition of single was "unmarried or not engaged in a permanent sexual relationship". Therefore, single populations included unmarried widows, divorced, separated, or never married (7, 11). Never-married singles were given an exclusive impression to portray people who had never married and were not involved in an intimate partnership, distinguishing them from the single population in general Lamanna & Riedman in (11).

(4) in (17) stated that singlism included prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination against single people. Singlism incorporated a set of beliefs rooted in the SNAF (Standard North American Family) ideologies, which included the idea that committed romantic couples were the culmination of maturity of adult development and also included the idea that singles could never be happy, fulfilled, important, or well-adapted like married people and people who bore children.

(4) in (17) proved that there was an unconscious belief that those who were bound in sexual relations led a more meaningful, more precious, and happier life than those who did not develop such relationships. They argued that this ideology was unquestioned, as it was assumed to be true and that those who veered away from it and did not fulfill the public marriage ambitions for the citizens of their city were negatively evaluated and even differentiated.

Most people were oriented in pairs. When people failed to meet others' expectations for pairing behavior, they were to be judged negatively and even alienated or differentiated. For example, many people thought that single people, especially the non-normative singles over 35, were 'childish', 'self-oriented', and 'emotionally' 'unstable'. People began to ask why someone wanted to be single and what was wrong with them. When Western societies disagreed or criticized other "isms" such as racism, sexism, and heterosexuals (racial, sexual, and heterosexual differences), singlism was accepted and was thought to be a form of legitimacy of judgment (4) in (17).

Several of the more frequently used characteristics to describe the characteristics of married people were 'happy'; 'loving'; 'secure', 'stable'; 'kind', 'caring', 'giving'; 'faithful', 'loyal'; 'compromising'; 'reliable', 'careful'; 'dependent', and 'needy'. Furthermore, several of the more common characteristics used to describe the characteristics of single people were 'lonely'; 'shy'; 'unhappy'; 'insecure'; 'inflexible'; 'stubborn'; 'flirtatious';' looking for a partner';' independent'; 'affable', 'friendly', and 'fun' (4) in (17).

2.2. Types of Single and Single Cycle

Stein (in (18) classified the type of unmarried woman into four, namely:

2.2.1. 'Involuntary Temporary Singles'

Individuals who had never been married and were actively seeking for a partner, but had not found. This group also included those who were divorced or widowed and single parent, yet still wanted to remarry.

2.2.2. Voluntary Temporary Singles'

Individuals who never married and had the desire to marry, not actively looking for a partner, but prioritized other activities, such as education, career, politics, and self development. This group also included those who lived together but not yet married, but one day expected a marriage.

2.2.3. 'Involuntary Stable Single'

Individuals who never married and had hoped to marry, but accepted the possibility of living alone. This type consisted of individuals who had divorced and were old. They failed to find or get a partner for physical, psychological, and social reasons, such as mentally and physically disabled.

2.2.4. 'Voluntary Stable Singles'

Individuals who had never married, were divorced or widowed who decided not to marry again, and lived together with others but had no desire to marry. This group also included individuals who prioritized religion above marriage, like a priest or nun.

(19) in (20) revealed five models of the unmarried adult life cycle, including: 1) the not yet married, 2) the thirties, entering the "twilight zone" of singlehood (age thirty, entering the critical age of single life), 3) the midlife (age 40-50 years), 4) the later life (age 50 years until health declines), and the elderly (health decreasing until death).

2.3. Study Of Prior Research On Perceptions Of Single Women

A single woman in Indonesia was often perceived as a spinster who did not get a man for being unattractive, disabled or incompetent; a city single who did not want a man for being highly educated, ambitious, thinking and being an unmarried, active and career-oriented person(2).

In Malaysian society, single women were labeled as "*andartu*" or spinsters. The fact that they were old but still a virgin was often summoned with cynical words, such as "It's a pity, she has not had sex yet, and no one wants to be with her (9)."

Furthermore, spinsters (old girl/maiden) or old maids (girls/spinster/too careful woman), the stereotype or social stigma of single women in America, began to be abandoned. Anderson and Stewart (21) noted that the media portrayed single women in two sections as "pitiful leftovers of the marriage market, unhappy, desperate, or power-obsessed individuals bent only on greedily acquiring money and fame as rewards".

Inevitably, some of the above negative perceptions were mostly experienced by single women in different countries, but with the development of being a single as an option and lifestyle had brought a change to the assessment of single women. In a community that had a moderate view of single choice and lifestyle, single women still gained positive recognition as independent women, successful women by taking other avenues through career development and self-improvement, and were not married-oriented, as experienced in several respondents in the study of several studies (22).

3. Methodology

Research respondents were single and married men and women aged 25-70 years old who lived in several cities in Indonesia with high school as the minimum level of educational background. Respondents were obtained by the purposive incidental sampling technique (N = 128 people) and consisted of 41 single women never married, 49 married women, 13 single men never married and 25 married men.

Measurement was conducted using an open-ended questionnaire constructed by the first author. The questionnaire consist of identity and demographical data (sex, age, education level, occupation, religion, race), marital status identification (option for single men and women follows the classification from Stein, as stated above) and perception toward single women. Perception was divided as positive and negative perception. Single women respondents were asked to state as many positive and negative perceptions about themselves as a single woman from others as possible, with the minimum of 5 perceptions while for the other categories of respondents, they were asked to state as many positive and negative perceptions they have on single women as possible, with the minimum of 5 perceptions. The demographical questions were important for further analysis on positive and negative perceptions of single women.

Data analysis was conducted using quantitative descriptive content analysis, based on the results of the open-ended questionnaire regarding positive and negative perceptions on single women. Quantitative descriptive content analysis aimed to discover the characteristics of respondents' content and answers regarding perception on single women, and also to draw a conclusion or meaning from the characteristics of the answers (23). The conclusion or meaning from the answers was analyzed for difference based on the respondents demographical characteristics using descriptive statistics analysis.

Data processing underwent two analysis stages. The first stage was the analysis of descriptive content whom the authors scrutinized and made ranks based on the list of positive and negative responses given by those four groups of respondents. All answers regarding positive and negative perception with similar meaning were grouped, and the results were further categorized based on the content analysis.

The next step was to use ANOVA's comparison means one-way as the descriptive statistical analysis technique. The process consisted of: (1) scoring every answers with similar meaning in categories; (2) conducting a calculation in totaling the scores of each respondents; (3) categorizing the total scores from the total mean calculation, and (4) conducting a difference comparison of total mean based on age, sex, education level, religion, culture background, marital status, and single type.

4. Results and Findings

4.1. Demographic data

The following table is a description of demographic data of 128 respondents which includes: age, education level, employment status, cultural and religious background:

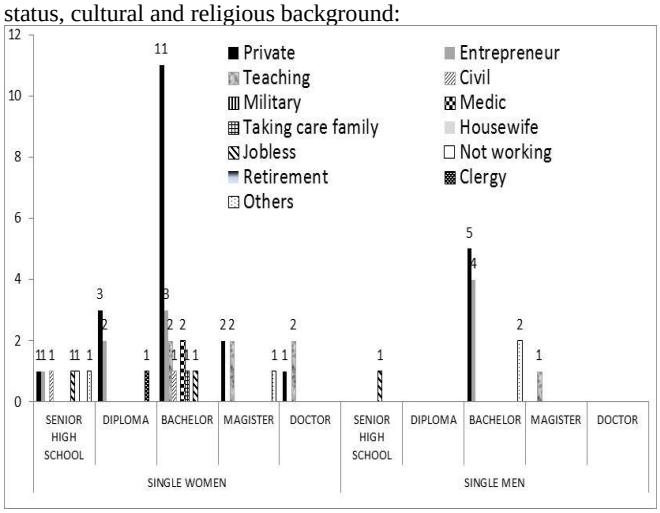


Fig. 1: Frequency of Job and Educational Background of Single Respondents

This is the demographic graph related to job and educational background of single respondents. The most jobs that our single respondents held were in the private sector and most education level that our single respondents had was bachelor.

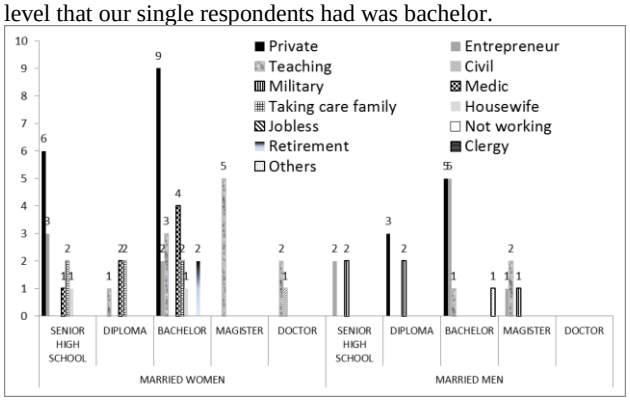


Fig. 2: Frequency of Job and Educational Background of Married Respondents

This is the demographic graph related to job and educational background of married respondents. The most jobs that our married respondents held were in the private sector and most education level that our married respondents had was bachelor.

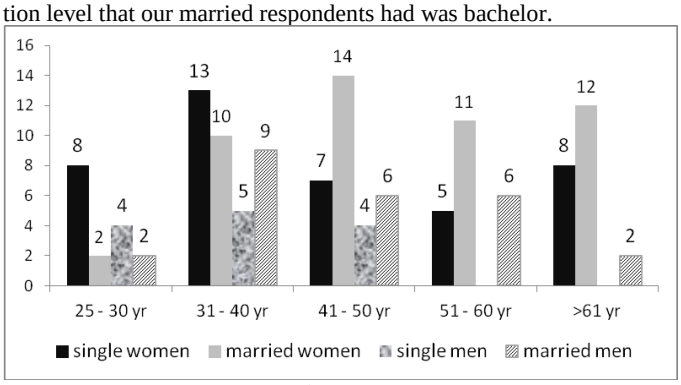


Fig. 3: Frequency of Age and Marital Status

This is the demographic graph related to age and marital status in four different groups. More single women were still single at age 31- 40 years.

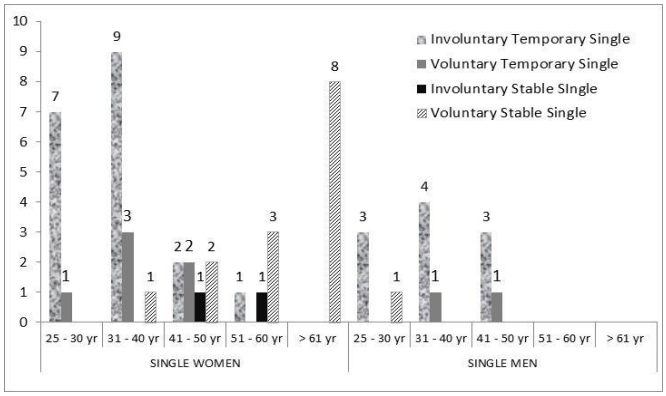


Fig. 4: Frequency of Single Type based on Age

This is the demographic graph related to single types based on age. Starting at 40 years old, we can see that voluntary stable single type existed till later life.

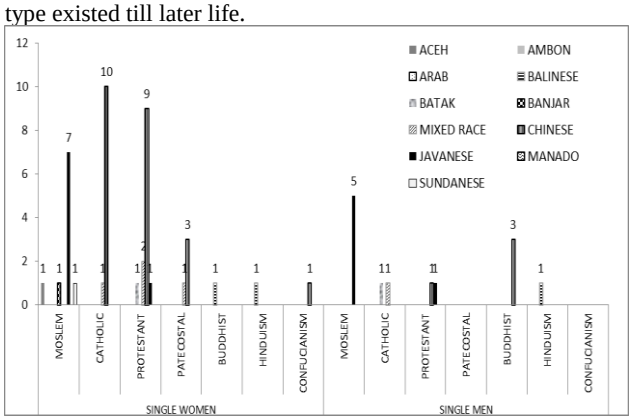


Fig. 5: Culture Background and Religion in Single Participants

This is the demographic graph related to cultural background and religion in single respondents. The highest cultural backgrounds in our respondents were Chinese and Javanese. The highest religions that our respondents had were Moslem, Protestant, and Catholic.

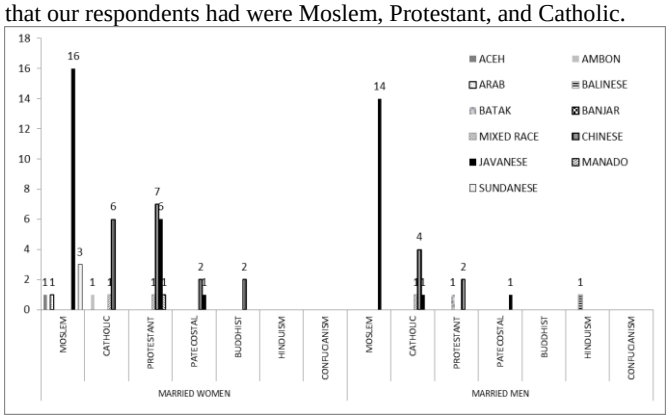


Fig. 6: Culture Background and Religion in Married Participants

This is the demographic graph related to cultural background and religion in married respondents. The highest cultural backgrounds in our respondents were Chinese and Javanese. The highest religion that our respondents had were Moslem, Protestant, and Catholic.

4.2. Negative and Positive Perceptions Data Category

The total of respondents was 128 people, however, only 95 people gave answers toward the negative perceptions of single women, and 97 people gave answers toward the positive perceptions of single women. Respondents who did not answer were not included in the data processing of negative and positive perceptions.

4.2.1. Negative Perception Category

Table 2: Frequency of Negative Perception based on Marital Status

Category	Single Women	Married Women	Single Men	Married Men
Strong Labeling	14	17	6	10
Selfish	7	19	3	10
Hard To Get Along	7	10	2	3
Choosy	12	13	2	5
Emotional	13	12	1	6
Lonely	8	4	2	
Arrogant	5	3	2	2
Physical Limitation	5	3	1	1
Childish	6	1	2	2
Living in Non Normative Way	2	2	2	1
Isn't Ready To Have Responsibility Of Having Own Family	5	3	3	3
Inability To Control Finance	1	5	3	2
Unconfident	3	4		1
Worry	5			
Feeling Insecure	5			1
Less Affection	2		1	
Passive	4	3		1
To Be Pitied	1	1		

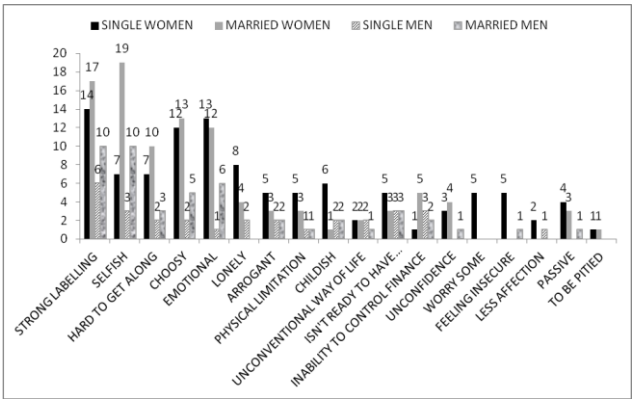


Fig. 7: Frequency of Negative Perception based on Marital Status

This is the graph of negative perception based on group of marital status. The highest negative perceptions among 4 different groups were strong labeling, selfish, hard to get along, choosy, emotional, and lonely.

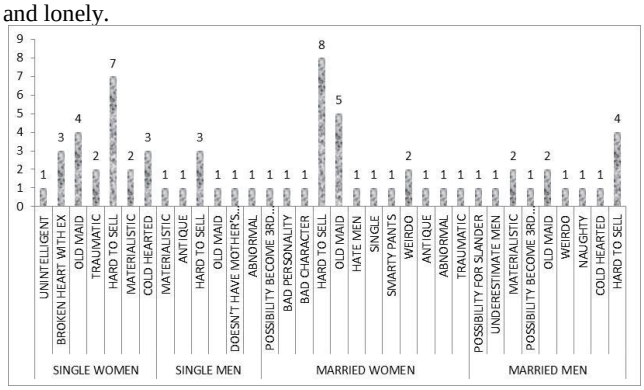


Fig. 8: Strong Labelling to Single Women (All Marital Status)

This is the graph of strong labeling given by all marital status to single women. The highest were hard to sell and old maid.

4.2.2. Positive Perception Category

Table 3: Frequency of Positive Perception based on Marital Status

Category	Single Women	Married Women	Single Men	Married Men
Independent	23	23	6	7
Freedom	9	15	6	6
Success	7	10		4
Hardworking	7	6		4
Tough	5	7		5
Focus on career	7	1	5	4
Affable	1	8	1	3
Enjoy life	7			
Charming	4		3	1
Focused on education	1	2	3	3
Focused on family	3	4		3
Helpful	4		1	2
Modern	3	2		2
Grooming		2		1
Strong will		4		
Religious Orientation	2			
Life choice	1			
Happy				1

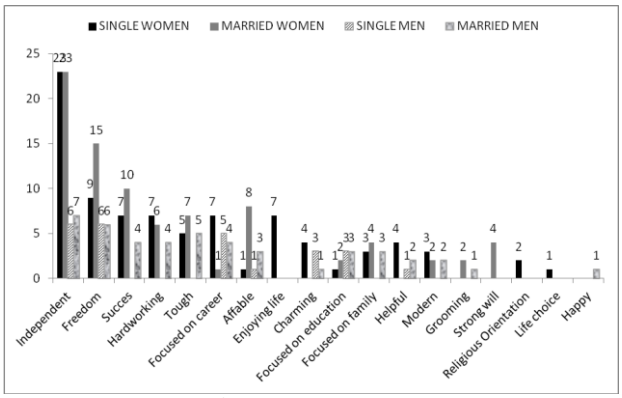


Fig. 9: Frequency of Positive Perception based on Marital Status

This is the graph of positive perception based on group of marital status. The highest positive perceptions among 4 different groups were independent, freedom, success, hard working, tough, and focus on career.

4.3. Data Comparisons of the Mean of Negative Perception Category and Positive Perception Category

Table 4: Mean Comparison on Negative Perception Category

Category	*Age*	*Education Level*	*Religion*	*Culture background*	*Marital Status*	*Single Type*
Selfish	*0.001*				*0.042*	*0.036*
Feeling Insecure			*0.038*		*0.026*	*0.005*
Worrysome	*0.024*		*0.024*			
Strong Labeling	*0.027*			*0.021*		
Passive		*0.042*		*0.033*		
Emotional		*0.004*				
Childish			*0.005*			
Physical Limitation						*0.009*
Arrogant				*0.015*		
Lonely					*0.035*	
Hard to get along				*0.036*		

There were several significant mean differences between negative perception categories of single women in terms of age, education level, religion, cultural background, marital status group, and single type. There were significant negative perception categories including 'selfish', 'feeling insecure', 'worrysome', 'strong labeling', 'passive',' emotional', 'childish', 'physical limitation', 'arrogant', 'lonely' and 'hard to get a long',. The following are the explanation of the mean differences:

(1) Mean of negative perception and age category, namely: 'selfish' (p = 0.001, $p < 0.05$, highest mean at the age of 51-60 years), 'worrysome' (p = 0.024, $p < 0.05$, highest mean at the age of 25-

30 years) and 'strong labeling' ($p = 0.027$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean at the age of 31-40 years);
(2) Mean of negative perception and level of education category, namely: 'emotional' ($p = 0.004$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean was on doctoral degree), and 'passive' ($p = 0.042$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean was on diploma and doctoral degree);
(3) Mean of negative perception and religious category, namely: 'childish' ($p = 0.005$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean in Protestant), 'worrysome'($p = 0.024$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean in Moslem); and 'insecure' ($p = 0.038$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean in Patecostal);
(4) Mean of negative perceptions and cultural backgrounds category, namely: 'strong labeling' ($p = 0.021$, $p < 0.05$, highest means were in Banjar and Ambon tribes), 'arrogant' ($p = 0.015$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in the Banjar tribe), 'hard to get along' ($p = 0.036$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in the Banjar tribe), and 'passive' ($p = 0.033$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in the Chinese tribe);
(5) Mean of negative perception and marital status category, namely: 'selfish'($p = 0.042$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean in married men), 'lonely' ($p = 0.035$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean in single women), and 'insecure' ($p = 0.026$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean in single women);
(6) Mean of negative perception and single type category, namely: 'selfish' ($p = 0.036$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean in married group), 'physical limitation' ($p = 0.009$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean is 'voluntary stable single type'), and 'feeling insecure' ($p = 0.005$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean is in 'involuntary stable single type').
It was understandable why the highest mean of 'strong labeling 'category was at the age of 31-40 years, because that period of age was considered as the critical period of the thirties, entering the "twilight zone" of singlehood (thirty years old, entering the critical age of single life). Similarly, the highest mean on 'worrysome' category was at the age of 25-30 years old, considering that at that age period, it was proper to fulfill the developmental task to find the life partner (10, 19, 24).
The highest mean of 'selfish' was in the group of married men. This suggested that married men perceived more strongly that the life of single women was a 'selfish' life compared to groups of married women and groups of single men and women. Furthermore, the highest mean of 'lonely' and 'insecure' were both owned by a group of single women. These two highest means indicated that single women perceived stronger that the life they had as a life with 'loneliness' and 'insecure' feelings in accordance with the consequences of their single status.
The highest mean of the 'physical limitation was owned by 'voluntary stable single' and the highest mean of the insecure was occupied by 'involuntary stable single'. The two highest means of both single types corresponded to the characteristics of the single type conditions, which were single individuals who had never been married and or did not have the desire to marry which were the characteristics of 'voluntary stable single' type. Furthermore, single individuals who had never been married, but still hoped to marry, though being ready to accept the possibility of living alone was categorized in 'involuntary stable single' characteristic (18).

Table 5: Mean Comparison on Positive Perception

Category	*Age*	*Gender*	*Job*	*Religion*	*Culture background*	*Marital Status*	*Single Type*
Enjoying life			*0.001*		*0.000*	*0.005*	*0.003*
Charming	*0.027*			*0.008*		*0.035*	*0.039*
Independent	*0.022*		*0.022*				0.09
Focused on career		*0.026*				*0.011*	*0.031*
Focused on education		*0.007*				*0.047*	
Focused on family			*11*				
Helpful	*0.017*				*0.013*		
Affable		*0.011*				*0.009*	
Successful			*0.002*				
Life choice					*0.000*		
Freedom					*0.020*		

There were several significant mean differences between the categories of positive perceptions of single women in terms of age, education level, religion, cultural background, marital status group, and single type. There were several significant positive perceptions of single women on some demographic characteristics, including: 'enjoying life', 'charming', 'independent', 'focused on career', 'focused on education', 'focused on family', 'helpful', 'affable', 'successful', 'life choice', and 'freedom'.The following are explanations of the mean differences:
(1) Mean of positive perception and age category: 'independent '($p = 0.022$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was shown at the age ≥ 61 years), 'charming' ($p = 0.027$, $p < 0.05$, highest mean was at age 25-30 years) and 'helpful' ($p = 0.017$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was at the age of 31-40 years);
(2) Mean of positive perception and gender category: 'focused on career' ($p = 0.026$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in men), 'affable' ($p = 0.011$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in men), and 'focused on education' ($p = 0.007$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in men);
(3) Mean of positive perception and job types category:' independent' ($p = 0.022$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in private), 'successful' ($p = 0.002$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in family care), 'enjoying life' ($p = 0.001$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in unemployed), and 'focused on family' ($p = 0.011$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in not yet occupied);
(4) Mean of positive perception and religion category: 'charming' ($p = 0.008$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in Hinduism);
(5) Mean of positive perception and cultural backgrounds category: 'freedom' ($p = 0.020$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in Sundanese), 'enjoying life' ($p = 0{,}000$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in Banjar), 'helpful' ($p = 0.013$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in Banjar), 'focused on family' ($p = 0.004$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in Arab and Manado) and 'life choice', the highest mean was in Batak ($p = 0{,}000$, $p < 0.05$);
(6) Mean of positive perception and marital status groups category: 'focused on career' ($p = 0.011$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in married women), 'affable' ($p = 0.009$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in single man), 'enjoying life' ($p = 0.005$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in single women), 'charming' ($p = 0.035$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in single man), and 'focused on education' ($p = 0.047$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in single men);
(7) Mean of positive perception and single type category: 'independent' ($p = 0.009$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in 'voluntary stable single'), 'focused on career' ($p = 0.031$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in 'involuntary temporary single'), and 'enjoying life' ($p = 0.003$, $p < 0.05$, the highest mean was in 'voluntary temporary single').
The stated positive perceptions were in accordance with the conditions of today's single women, particularly 'independent',' focused on education', 'focused on career', 'successful perceptions', because women were encouraged and had more opportunity to develop themselves, to be highly educated, and to successfully pursue careers with good salary so that they could support their 'independent life' as well as living a lifestyle as a 'modern woman'. Life as a single woman without being burdened with the responsibilities of married life, allowed single women to enjoy life better and more freely because they could have more personal time, freedom to do their interest and to manage their financial for personal benefit (1).
The highest mean of 'independent' was owned by 'voluntary stable single', the highest mean of 'focus on career' was owned by 'involuntary temporary single', and the highest mean of 'enjoying life' was in 'voluntary temporary single'. All of the highest means

of three kinds of single types corresponded to the characteristics of the single type conditions. The 'voluntary stable single' was single individual who had never been married and or did not have the desire to marry again. The single women with this type usually tended to make themselves to be 'independent'. The 'involuntary temporary single' was a single individual who was never been married and was actively seeking for a partner, but had not found one. This type usually came from the single women who were 'focused on education and career' early and they were at least aware and proactive in finding their partner. The 'voluntary temporary single' was a single individual who never married and had the desire to marry, but did not actively looking for a partner, but prioritized other activities, such as education, career, and politics. This condition of this type tended to make the single women 'enjoy their life' (10, 18).

5 Conclusion

Negative and positive perceptions of single women tended to be universal from several generations with young adult age range, midlife adulthood, and later life in adulthood, both in single women and men as well as married women and men in Indonesia.

Negative perceptions of single women still persisted among the respondents living in the urban cities in Indonesia, in a generation with an early adult age range, and in people experiencing a more modern life than the generations with midlife and later life age ranges.

There were several negative perceptions of single women which needed to be reviewed in its role in influencing psychological well-being of single women, including: 'lonely', 'insecure', 'strong labeling' (especially in 31-40 years), and 'worry some' (especially in 25-30 years) in Indonesia.

There are some positive perceptions of single women which need to be concerned in influencing psychological well-being of single women, include: 'enjoying life', 'independent', and 'focused on career' in Indonesia.

There were several negative and positive perceptions of single women universally in Western and Eastern countries. Particularly, prominent similarities to the negative perception of strong labeling which were: 'old hag', 'hard to sell', 'lonely', and 'insecure'. In addition, other prominent similarities in positive perceptions included 'independent', 'successful', 'focused on career', and 'enjoying life' (happy).

Positive perceptions of single women indicated that the appreciation of single women already existed and could be considered as one way to anticipate the impact of negative perception on the psychological well-being of single women. This condition needed to be studied in further research.

Limitations of the initial survey of the study were: 1) the number of respondents from four groups of women and single men, married women and men, was disproportionate; 2) the cultural background and the city of residence of respondents, the religion, the education level and the occupation varied greatly with unrepresentative number of respondents; 3) the arrangement of categorization (axial coding) was less involving some singlism experts as the raters; 4) the approach of the descriptive content analysis method could be developed into explanative and predictive content analysis.

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Appendix

Open-ended questionnaire

Warm greetings.

I am Nanik, a student of the doctoral program of Universitas Airlangga's Faculty of Psychology. I am currently conducting a preliminary research regarding the opinion/perception/appraisal on single women (nevermarried). I hereby ask for your assistance by filling in this questionnaire as per your real condition. Your answers and identity will be confidential.

Please read the questions and statements carefully and answer all of them. There is no correct or wrong answer. I thank you for your willingness and cooperation and I apologize for any mistakes.

Regards,

Researcher

Nanik, S.Psi., M.Si., Psikolog

Please answer all of the questions as per your real condition. All answers and identity will be confidential.

Name (Initial) :
Sex : a. Male b. Female
Age : Years Old

21-25	c. 31-35	e. 41-45	g. 51-55	i. 61-65
26-30	d. 36-40	f. 46-50	h. 55-60	j. >65

Current level of education :

Elementary	c. Senior High	e. Diploma 1	g. Diploma 3	i. Magister	b.
b. Junior High	d. Specialized Senior High	f. Diploma 2	h. Bachelor	j. Doctor	

Job:

Military	d. Entrepreneur	f. Medic	i. Consultant	l. Taking care of family	a. b. c.
Civil Private	e. Teaching (Teacher/Lecturer)	g. Lawyer h. Accountant	j. Clergy k. Nurse	m. Others	d. e. f. g.

Marriage status: (*pick one) [for single respondents]
a. Not yet married
b. Cohabiting with opposite-sex partner outside of marriage
c. Cohabiting with same-sex partner outside of marriage

Marriage status: (*pick one) [for married respondents]
a. Married
b. Co-habiting with partner outside of marriage
c. Woman: 1) widow 2) divorced
d. Man: 1) widower 2) divorced

Religion : (*pick one)
a. Islam
b. Catholic
c. Christian Protestant
d. Christian Pantecost
e. Buddhist
f. Hindu
g. Khong Hu Tju
h. Others...

Culture background

Aceh	d. Batak	g. Chinese	j. Madura	m. Sundanese
Ambon	e. Banjar	h. Dayak	k. Makasar	n. Mixed race
Arab	f. Balinese	i. Javanese	l. Menado	o. Others

City of residence and hometown:

1. What is your reason for being single at the moment? [for single respondents]
a. life choice
b. have not found the right partner
c. aiming to have an intimate homosexual relationship
d. others

2. Do you still have the desire to be married? [for single respondents]
Yes
No
Not sure

3. If you answered Yes/Not Sure on question number 2, please answer question number 3 [for single respondents]
Of all these activities, which ones have you participated in? (allowed to choose more than one)
a. joining a religious activity or organization to have a better social relationship with different-sex individuals
b. asking friends to be introduced to different-sex individuals
c. asking friends or relatives for partners
d. following a social-networking for partnering
e. putting up an advertisement on social-networking platforms
f. starting a conversation with encountered different-sex individuals
g. others

4. State the positive opinion/perception/appraisal of single/unmarried women (minimum of 5) that you know or experienced

Positive opinion/perception/appraisal of single women (unmarried)
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Etc.

5. State the negative opinion/perception/appraisal of single/unmarried women (minimum of 5) that you know or experienced.

Negative opinion/perception/appraisal of single women (unmarried)
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Etc.