

What social lives do single people want? A person-centered approach to identifying profiles of social motives among singles.



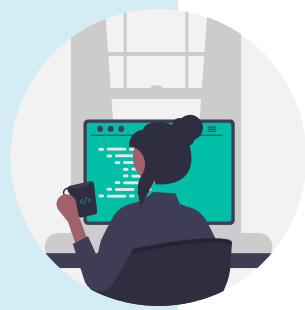
Across the samples, we identified 3 profiles of singles with distinct patterns of social motivations:

The Independent Profile

These singles were characterized by:

- Strong motivations for independence
- Little interest in mating or status (e.g., wishes for marriage and dating)
- Little interest in social affiliation (e.g., connections with family or friends)

Usually, singles who were older and/or had higher levels of attachment avoidance (i.e., discomfort with intimacy) were more likely to have this profile. These singles reported greatest satisfaction with being single.

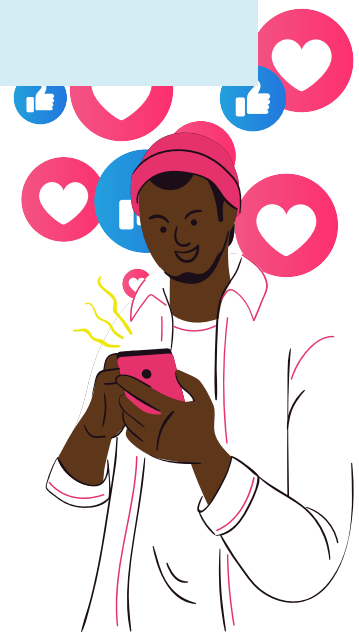


The Socially Focused Profile

These singles were characterized by:

- Concerns about being socially excluded
- A great interest in self-protection (e.g., staying safe from danger)
- A great interest in social connections (across the board) and status

Usually, singles who had higher levels of attachment anxiety (i.e., fear about abandonment) were more likely to have this profile. These singles tended to have greatest desire for dating, marrying, or having a child.

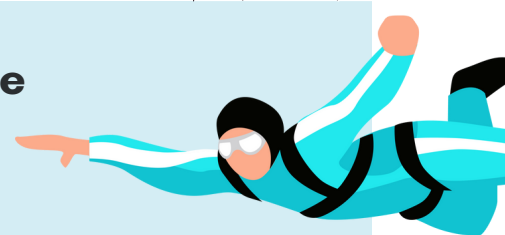


The Low Safety Focus Profile

These singles were characterized by:

- Little concern with exclusion
- Little interest in self-protection (e.g., staying safe from danger)
- Moderate interests in social affiliation (e.g., connections with family or friends)

Usually, men were more likely to have this profile compared to women. These singles were relatively satisfied with their lives overall, but tended to feel ambivalent about being single.



Caution on Generalizability

Each sample taken **during** the COVID-19 pandemic were almost equally divided among the three profiles, but a majority of the sample taken **before** the pandemic had an independent profile, and little had a low safety focus profile.

There were also differences in the motivational patterns in the Korean vs. American/European samples.

Concluding Remarks.

In short, there are different types of singles such that some primarily pursue independence, some anxiously seek connections, and others want group affiliation and partnering with little regard for their own safety. These different types of singles also feel differently about their life and the status of being single.

These findings advance the growing body of research on singlehood by offering new theoretical perspectives on different types of singles.