

[SINGLE MOTHERS AND LIFE SATISFACTION]

Summary of Results

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This study is part of a five year research program that examines which factor, or combination of factors, of resilience, social support, and self-esteem predict life satisfaction. This stage examined single mothers in Australia. Data was collected in 2011.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were recruited via online forums (such as singlemum.com.au and bubhub.com.au), social media (Twitter and Facebook), personal contacts, and snowballing. They were drawn from all states and territories Australia wide. A total of 156 participants began the survey. Eleven responses were excluded, as those surveys were incomplete, leaving 145 responses in this data set.

THE SURVEY

Participants were asked to complete an online survey consisting of: Resilience Scale for Adults; Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support; Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; and, Satisfaction With Life Scale. Resilience items were scored 1 to 7, with higher scores denoting greater resilience. The scale is semantic style, with items 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 27, 28, and 33 reverse scored; and range of total score equals 1 to 7. Social Support items were scored 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating greater support. There are no reverse scored items, and the range of total scores equals 12 to 84. Self-esteem items were scored 0 to 3, with Strongly Agree presented on the left end of the Likert scale. Higher scores indicate greater self-esteem. Items 3, 5, 8, and 9 were reverse scored; and the range of total score equals 0 to 30. Life Satisfaction items were scored 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating greater life satisfaction and no items were reverse scored. The range of total scores equals 5 to 35.

RESULTS

The means and standard deviations for resilience ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.17$, range 1 to 7), social support ($M = 54.34$, $SD = 17.09$, range 12 to 84), self esteem ($M = 18.15$, $SD = 6.46$, range 0 to 30) and life satisfaction ($M = 19.14$, $SD = 7.77$, range 5 to 45) were calculated. Analysis of the data was by standard multiple regression, and all variables were entered simultaneously. In combination, the three factors assessed in this study predicted a significant and large (50%) amount of variation in life satisfaction, $F(3, 144) = 46.14$, $p < .001$. Self esteem, social support and resilience made a significant and relatively equal contribution to the prediction of life satisfaction for the single mothers who participated in this study.

DISCUSSION

Overall, single mothers with higher self esteem, greater social support, and higher personal resilience were more likely to report greater life satisfaction. So, single mothers who have a higher level of self esteem, greater support by friends and family, and feel more resilient generally also experience greater life satisfaction. Organisations intending to provide support for single mothers should consider providing services that enhance social support as well as providing single mothers with the skills to tap into social support provided by friends, family, and community organisations. They should also consider services, such as workshops, to increase self esteem in single mothers.

QUERIES

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