

Oh, to Be Young and (Not) in Love: A Latent Profile Analysis of Single Young Adults

Lisa C. Walsh, Calen Horton, Reed Kaufman, Anthony Rodriguez, and Victor A. Kaufman

Abstract

Whether attending college, entering the workforce, or finding a romantic partner, single young adults live through a momentous period of life. The present study sought to examine the happiness of single young adults ($N=1,073$). Using five predictors of life satisfaction (friendship satisfaction, family satisfaction, self-esteem, neuroticism, and extraversion) as indicators in latent profile analysis, we identified five distinct profiles (or groups) of young singles. Profile 1 with the most favorable indicator patterns (e.g., high friendship satisfaction, low neuroticism) were the happiest, while those in Profile 5 with the least favorable indicator patterns (e.g., low friendship satisfaction, high neuroticism) were the unhappiest. The middle profiles (2-4) had varying shape differences, often showing that disadvantages in one indicator (e.g., high neuroticism) could be offset with advantages in others (e.g., high friendship satisfaction). Among the profiles, friendship satisfaction was a particularly distinguishing variable, often indicating which singles were happy or not.

Keywords: singles, well-being, happiness, life satisfaction, relationships, self-esteem, personality