



Looking for Love? Single Young Adults' Interest in Participation in Romantic Activities



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Background

Because romantic involvement is a salient developmental task during young adulthood, it is commonly assumed that single young adults are actively exploring their options for romantic partnering. Yet, not all single young adults are interested in romantic relationships. In the present study we explored which romantic activities single young adults are engaging in. We also tested if interest and/or engagement in romantic activities were associated with romantic relationship interest and/or how they felt about being single.

Methods

We used data from the single participants (N = 140) from the Relationship Histories Survey, a sample of 18 to 35-year-olds recruited via Qualtrics Panel Services. We provided participants with a list of 13 romantic activities and asked participants if they engaged in the activity since they have been single (see figure below). We also asked participants how true it was that they found being single empowering or disappointing. Finally, we asked participants who much they wanted to be in a romantic relationship.

Key Takeaways

Singles have little desire to have family or friends set up dates.

Relationship interest may motivate young adults to engage in more romantic activities.

How young adults feel about being single is not related to participation in romantic activities.

Table 1. Sample Demographics (N = 140).

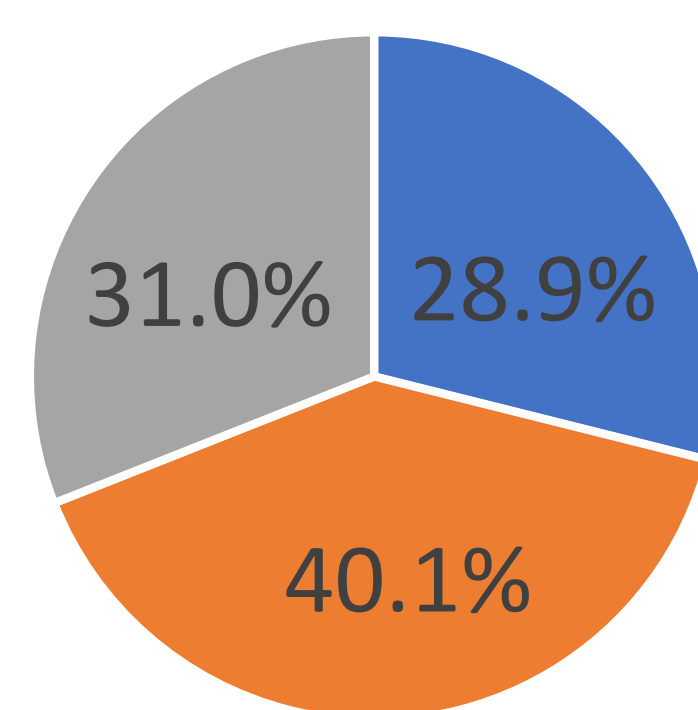
	n(%) or M(SD)
Age	25.26 (5.43)
Gender	
Female	63 (44.4%)
Male	77 (54.2%)
Transgender	2 (1.4%)
Race/ethnicity	
Black or African American	26 (18.3%)
Hispanic	18 (12.7%)
White non-Hispanic	76 (53.5%)
Multiracial	9 (6.3%)
Another race/ethnicity	13 (9.2%)
Heterosexual	118 (83.1%)
Length of singlehood	
Never had a relationship	49 (34.5%)
6-months or less	22 (15.5%)
7- to 12-months	12 (8.5%)
1-year or more	59 (41.5%)

Table 2. Regression Models (N = 142).

	Romantic activities interested in	Romantic activities in the last month	Romantic activities more than a month ago
	β	β	β
Disappointed to be single	.08	.15	.07
Empowered by being single	-.16	.09	.08
Relationship interest			
Moderate interest	.21*	-.14	.28**
High interest	.08	.22*	-.21*
Model F(13, 128)	2.32**	4.65***	2.01*
Model R ²	.19	.32	.17

Notes. Models control for age, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, if they live in a rural community, and length of singlehood. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Romantic Relationship Interest



Feelings about Being Single

