

The Gendered Singlehood Perception Scale (GSPS)

[BACKGROUND]

The GSPS is a new¹, balanced Likert scale designed to measure gendered attitudes about single adults. The scale captures the extent to which respondents endorse deficit-based perceptions of singlehood (e.g. “incomplete”, “missing something”) versus egalitarian views that single life can be equally fulfilling as partnered life. This will allow us to quantitatively capture how perceptions of singlehood differ according to broader cultural and normative contexts.

The GSPS is a seven-point Likert scale with the following response options:

1 = completely disagree; 2 = mostly disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = mostly agree, and 7 = completely agree.

The GSPS is a split-ballot Likert scale with two parallel versions: one about single women and one about single men, both measuring the same latent concept. Respondents will be randomly assigned so that the sample consists of 25% men and 25% women receiving the male version, and 25% men and 25% women receiving the female version, ensuring that both scale variants are completed by equal proportions of male and female respondents. This design allows us to assess whether gendered wording or framing of the items systematically affects response distributions, while each respondent only answers one version of the scale to prevent overburdening the respondent.

[CITATION REQUIREMENT]

The Gendered Singlehood Perception Scale is freely available for research and educational purposes. If you use the scale in your research, please cite it as follows:

Robberecht, L., Mortelmans, D., & Thielemans, G. (2026). *The Gendered Singlehood Perception Scale* [Research instrument]. University of Antwerp.

¹ Based on Pignotti, M., & Abell, N. (2009). The Negative Stereotyping of Single Persons Scale. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 19(5), 639-652. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731508329402>

[FEMALE VARIANT]²

Please indicate the extent to which you (dis)agree with the following statements about single women (i.e., women not in a romantic relationship):

1. A woman is meant to be in a committed romantic relationship. (R)
2. A single woman can be as socially fulfilled as a woman in a committed romantic relationship.
3. A single woman who says she is satisfied with her life is actually content and thriving.
4. If I had a daughter who grew up and chose to remain single, I would ask myself if she is happy. (R)
5. A single woman can experience more emotional closeness in a friendship than in a committed romantic relationship.
6. A woman who remains single is incomplete. (R)
7. A single woman is missing something in her life. (R)
8. A single woman can be socially fulfilled in her life.
9. When a single woman says she is satisfied with her life, it is doubtful that she actually feels that way. (R)
10. There is nothing wrong with a woman who wants to stay single.

[MALE VARIANT]

Please indicate the extent to which you (dis)agree with the following statements about single men (i.e., men not in a romantic relationship):

1. A man is meant to be in a committed romantic relationship. (R)
2. A single man can be as socially fulfilled as a man in a committed romantic relationship.
3. A single man who says he is satisfied with his life is actually content and thriving.
4. If I had a son who grew up and chose to remain single, I would ask myself if he is happy. (R)
5. A single man can experience more emotional closeness in a friendship than in a committed romantic relationship.
6. A man who remains single is incomplete. (R)
7. A single man is missing something in his life. (R)
8. A single man can be socially fulfilled in his life.
9. When a single man says he is satisfied with his life, it is doubtful that he actually feels that way. (R)
10. There is nothing wrong with a man who wants to stay single.

² (R) indicates items that are reverse-coded, meaning they are phrased from a relationship-oriented perspective. The full scale is a balanced mix of positively and negatively framed items.