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### ***Future Mindedness pada Perempuan Dewasa Madya yang Melajang***

#### ***Future Mindedness in Single Middle Adult Women***

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#### **Abstrak**

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji perencanaan masa depan perempuan lajang dewasa madya. Kajian ini penting karena adanya kultur dominan dalam masyarakat Indonesia yang menggantungkan hari tua pada anak-anaknya. Perempuan yang tidak mempunyai anak karena tidak menikah menyebabkan mereka tidak bisa menggantungkan hidupnya di masa tua. Penelitian ini akan mengeksplorasi bagaimana para perempuan lajang dewasa madya merencanakan hari tua meskipun hidup tanpa keturunan dan pernikahan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif yakni studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara terstruktur dengan empat perempuan lajang berusia 42-55 tahun sebagai partisipan. Setelah ditriangulasikan, data ditafsirkan dengan analisis tematik. Penelitian ini membuahkan empat temuan. Pertama, partisipan merasa nyaman dengan status lajang mereka, tiga dari empat partisipan tidak berkeinginan menikah. Kedua, semua partisipan memandang usia lanjut secara positif. Mereka tidak mengkhawatirkan hari tua karena merasa ada kerabat yang kelak merawat mereka. Ketiga, keluarga keempat partisipan tidak mendorong perempuan dewasa madya untuk menikah. Keempat, kepribadian partisipan dan dukungan keluarga berperan kunci pada pilihan mereka untuk hidup melajang. Dengan demikian, perempuan dewasa madya yang melajang tergolong bahagia dengan statusnya dan mereka telah mempunyai perencanaan hari tua pada aspek domisili serta perawatan hari tua.

**Kata Kunci:** *Future Mindedness*; perempuan dewasa madya; melajang

#### **Abstract**

*This article examines future mindedness among single middle adult women. In line with the dominant culture, most parents in Indonesia rely on their children for support in old age. Some women, however, choose to remain single and childless. This article focuses its exploration on the ways in which these unmarried, childless women plan and prepare for their lives in old age. Using the case-study approach and employing, as its theoretical framework, Seginer's concept of future mindedness, we collected our data through semi-structured interviews with four women, aged 42 to 55, who served as research participants. After triangulating the data, we interpreted it using the thematic analysis method. Our study produced four findings. First, comfortable with being single, three of the four women had no desire to marry. Second, taking a positive view of old age, and knowing fully well that their kinfolk will take care of them in their advanced years, all the four participants do not worry about old age. Third, none of their relatives has put pressure on them to marry. Fourth, personality and family support appear to play a key role in these women's choice to live a life of celibacy. In sum, unmarried middle-aged women are happy with their status and have plans for life in old age, including where to live and how to get elderly care.*

**Keywords:** *Future Mindedness*; Middle Adult Woman; Single

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In Indonesia, the phenomenon of single life is increasing from year to year. The National Socioeconomic Survey (Susenas) in 2016 and 2020 showed that the number of single women rose by 8 percent. According to Susenas in 2016 there were 8.3 million adult women who were single. Then, in 2020, their number increased to 9.04 million. An increase of 0.38 percent was experienced by the middle adult group in the age range of 40-49 years, while an increase of 24.65 percent occurred in the middle adult group aged 50-59 years (Maharrani, 2021).

This increasing phenomenon of single living can be caused by the positive impact felt. According to Oktawirawan and Yudiarso (2020), single life makes you feel happy because you live in freedom. In addition, single middle adult women also enjoy their status more, they become productive individuals and feel good about themselves (Papalia et al., 2009). On the other hand, there are negative impacts caused by the phenomenon of singleness, including having minimal intimate relationships, worries about old age and feelings of loneliness (Nanik et al., 2018). The same thing is said by Lehmillier (2018) where single women tend not to feel the roles lived by married women. Those who are single are often attached to negative stereotypes by society.

The negative stereotype attached to single women is called singlism. Examples of singlism received by single women include "overdue", "spinster", "unsalable", "abnormal", "incompetent" and other negative mentions. This singlism makes single women an identical social category with negative attributes. (Himawan, K. K., Bambling, M., & Edirippulige, 2018). The impact felt by single women can affect their outlook on their future. A positive environment for single status can provide the support needed by single women, especially in the middle adult age range. In middle adulthood, single women will be oriented towards old age planning. Some of the images of old age can include elderly care, financial planning, housing, to the decision to be single until the end of life or the decision to marry.

Planning can be called future mindedness. According to Seginer (2009) future mindedness can be defined by the ability to describe the future. This picture is formed through a set of schematics from previous experiences. Next, the schematic will relate to the information available in the current environment. Then, the information will create expectations about the future, planning, and goals that can provide personal judgment on future events (Allen, 2019; Peterson et al., 2009). Future Mindedness consists of three aspects. According to Seginer (2009) these aspects consist of motivational, cognitive representation, and behavioral. The motivational aspect includes everything that drives individuals to plan. This first aspect also consists of three elements, including values, expetance, and control. Second, the cognitive aspect of representation which is something that individuals expect in the future. This aspect is formed from two things, namely content and valance. The third aspect, namely behavioral or behavioral, this aspect describes the form of effort made by individuals to achieve dreams in the future. Behavioural consists of two things, namely exploration and commitment.

Future Mindedness is influenced by two factors. First, internal factors in which an individual's cognitive development and self-concept play an important role in future mindedness. Second, contextual factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, peers, age, and patterns of interaction with parents (Seginer, 2009). In unmarried middle adult women, the picture of the future can be influenced by these internal and external factors. The phenomenon of singleness in middle adulthood, especially in women, has been reviewed by several previous studies. Aspects that have become the main highlights in previous studies include their psychological well-being during singleness (Selan et al., 2020), adjustment to conflict and stigma in society (Primanita & Lestari, 2018), and feelings of loneliness when single in middle adulthood (Wardani & Septiningsih, 2016). In addition to some of the studies above, there are other studies that review middle adult women from a positive side, the study has a focus on discussing the hopes and fears of single middle adult women (Nurhalimah, 2019).

Similar to Nurhalimah's (2019) research, this study reviews the positive aspects of single middle adult women, although this study has differences. First, the focus of this study does not only include hopes and fears but includes many things such as outlook and retirement planning, factors that support retirement planning, and planning strategies owned by middle adult women who are single. Meanwhile, Nurhalimah's research only focuses on aspects of hope and fear. Second, participants in this study involved various work backgrounds and Nurhalimah's research only involved participants with the same work background. Third, the method used in this research is a case study, while Nurhalimah uses phenomenological methods. Based on the presentation of the differences in research, it can be concluded that this study is interesting because the positive aspects of single middle adult women are rarely the main topic in research. In addition, this study is important mainly because of the dominant culture in Indonesian society that relies on old age to their children. Therefore, this study aims to describe how future mindedness in middle adult women who are single.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative approach. The method chosen is a case study. The participants of this study were middle adult women ranging in age from 40 to 60 years and single, namely individuals who had never been married, did not live with a partner, had hopes of marriage, but accepted the possibility of living alone. These participants (pseudonyms) include.

Table 1. Participant Details

Name	Age	Occupation
Nur	42	Traders
Kholifah	51	Shopkeeper
Lilik	55	Private Employees
Sakinem	53	Traders

This study used a data collection method, namely interviews. Researchers conducted semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions, but still guided by interview guidelines that had been compiled previously based on the theory of future mindedness. The rapport development process was carried out by researchers before conducting interviews. The interview process was carried out from August to December 2021. Researchers conducted interviews 2-3 times with a duration of 60 to 120. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis and the validity of the data was tested through member checking and triangulation of data sources. This process is carried out using significant others, namely family members of participants such as nieces and nephews and siblings. The selection of significant other is based on the level of closeness with participants where they live with nieces and nephews and biological family and are far from other families.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Interviews that have been conducted with four participants produced four key themes. These themes describe the main topic of the study, namely, the future thinking of single middle adult women.

Table 2. Research Theme Results

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub themes</b>
<b>Motivational</b>	Views on marriage
	Reasons for not being married
	Desire to marry
<b>Cognitive Representation</b>	Financial plan
	Domicile plan
	Old age care plan
<b>Behavioural</b>	Refusing arranged marriages
	Relationship with family
<b>Supporting Factors</b>	Family Support
	Self-concept

### **Motivational Themes**

Three of the four participants had a future orientation unrelated to marriage, all three participants were no longer motivated to marry. Lilik said the reason was voluntary choice. Kholifah and Sakinem wanted to be single because of the fear of separating from the family after marriage. Kholifah and Sakinem's decision was influenced by external factors such as the family environment. Loving families and providing social support to single middle adult women will discourage their motives for marriage (Allen, 2019).

Unlike the three participants above, Nur has the desire to get married. Nur's motivation to get married comes from her desire to improve her social status where married women will be considered nobler women than single women who are attached to negative stigma. According to Himawan (2020), marriage in Indonesia is considered an individual "social achievement", so most Indonesians yearn for marriage, and of course this desire is also influenced by the pressure of conservative cultural values. Nur's motivation to immediately get married is because of Nur's belief that marriage is a religious recommendation if it meets the physical, mental, and material requirements. In

addition, the difference in Nur's age with the other three participants also affected Nur's desire to marry. Nur's age, which has just passed early adulthood and entered middle adulthood, makes her inseparable from the task of early adult development. In contrast to the other three participants who had entered the final stage of middle adulthood.

The motivational aspect in future mindedness consists of three elements. First, value can be defined by an individual's understanding in describing a detailed sequence of relevance and importance of goals in the future (Seginer, 2009). All participants in the study had the same understanding of marriage. Where they agreed that the ideal marriage was carried out at the age of 25 years for women and 30 years for men. According to Santrock (2012) this age is classified as an early adult age category, where the developmental task carried out is to explore careers and establish relationships with the opposite sex. Participants in the study had passed the age of early adulthood so that the developmental tasks that should have been performed could not be fulfilled and were replaced by intermediate adult development tasks. Unlike the three participants who have entered middle adulthood, Nur, who has just turned 42 years old and is counted as just entering middle adulthood, still has the desire to fulfill her initial adult development task, namely marriage.

Second, expetance is a feeling of optimism about the realization of future planning. Nur said that she is optimistic that she can get married because she is currently in a romantic relationship and plans to end her singleness soon. For Lilik, Sakinem, and Kholifah said that they have no worries about old age, this is because they have a positive community environment and the support of family members. From all participants it can be said that they are positive about the future. Third, there is an aspect of control which is an individual's belief to control themselves to realize dreams in the future. To achieve her dream, Nur said that she continues to approach each other's families. Then for Lilik, Sakinem, and Kholifah confessed that they continued to connect both with the neighborhood and family members. With full power to control themselves, it will make it easier for participants to realize the planned future picture (Seginer, 2009).

### **Cognitive Representation Theme**

Future mindedness is useful as a basis for determining an individual's future. This determination lies in the aspect of cognitive representation, where there are two elements underlying this aspect, namely first, content that covers various sides to build life. The content in this study is described by old-age planning consisting of domicile, finance, and old-age care. Second, valance means personal opinions regarding individual hopes and fears, as well as ways of avoiding unwanted events in the future. Valance in this study was shown through various kinds of feelings of participants when single in middle adulthood. The four participants claimed to have made their retirement plans, both in terms of finances, old age care, and residence domicile. Three out of four participants wanted to live with their nieces and nephews when they were old. However, Nur, who still has the desire to get married, hopes to live with her new family,

but does not rule out the possibility that she will live with her siblings if the marriage plan cannot be realized.

Financial plan all participants agreed to continue working even though they had entered old age. According to Nanik and Hendriani (2016) this desire is caused by increasing age the increasingly changing cognitive, economic, physical, and functional levels in individual lives. Thus, the need for economic stability is one of the problems that must be faced by single middle adult women who have never married and have no children. All four participants had expectations of being able to work if it was possible by their conditions and abilities. The ideal condition that usually occurs is that single middle adult women have prepared life support and savings to enter old age. However, the conditions found in the three participants showed that they did not have savings for old age, except for Lilik who had an old age allowance from his company. Three participants who did not have financial preparation in old age due to lack of financial income so they could not set aside income for old age care funds.

Living single until old age is one of the choices of individual life. One of the things that must be planned is old-age care. The three participants, Lilik, Sakinem, and Kholifah, explained that they relied their old age on their nephews. They want to be cared for and live with their nieces and nephews because they feel comfortable. According to Nanik et al. (2018) this feeling of comfort is caused by acceptance and positive attitudes in family members towards middle adult women who are single. Single life is also inseparable from some negative feelings. One of them is loneliness. One way to overcome this is to build close relationships with family members. Support and attention provided by family members can help participants overcome loneliness. All four participants admitted that they never felt lonely. This is because they are surrounded by relatives who love them. In addition to family, the cause of middle adult women not experiencing loneliness is a feeling of habituation to experiencing loneliness without a partner (Winterstein, T. B. & Rimon, 2014).

All four participants said they felt happy and comfortable about their single status. Three of the four participants, namely Kholifah, Lilik, and Sakinem said that being single could have a positive impact in the form of freedom and avoiding the burden of household chores while Nur also felt happy about her single status but felt anxiety because she wanted to get married soon. This reinforced the reasons for the three participants to maintain the desire not to marry except Nur. By maintaining their single status, all three participants also agreed that they had more opportunities for personal development and increased personal freedom.

### **Behavior Theme**

Behavior in future mindedness is defined by efforts to realize goals in the future. Behavior consists of two elements, namely exploration and commitment. Exploration is the activity of searching for information, asking other individuals for advice, and identifying the compatibility of choices with future goals. Then, commitment is an individual's decision-making process that relates to future goals (Seginer, 2009). In

middle adult women who are single, exploration can be interpreted by the emergence of efforts to find the opposite sex who have the potential to become a soulmate, the support of family and friends to find a mate can also be categorized in the exploration phase to prepare for the future. In addition, exploration also appeared when the four participants continued to build a harmonious relationship with the family, this is because the family is the old age dependency for middle adult women who are single.

Based on the confessions of the three participants, namely Lilik, Sakinem, and Kholifah, they no longer explore life companions. The three participants refused to be helped to find a life partner by their family members, they chose to maintain their single status because of their values. Family members who help this exploration phase certainly do not have the autonomy to force arranged marriages, single women have their own autonomy and the value that marriage is not conventional, but lies in the side of individual freedom (Himawan, 2020).

This determination to maintain single status shows the commitment that three out of four participants have for their old age. Rather than committing to marriage, these three participants preferred to strengthen relationships with family. Lilik and Nur expressed their form of business to establish a harmonious relationship with the family, namely by taking care of the children of nieces and nephews and gathering every holiday. They also often spend time together doing activities such as cooking and eating with family. For Nur and Sakinem also do the same thing, namely vacationing with family and taking care of their niece's child. The parenting carried out by these four participants can meet the needs of adult development, namely building a family (Santrock, 2012). According to Ericson, the crucial stages of adult development are intimacy and generativity. Intimacy refers to having a special relationship with the opposite sex or a like-minded individual, the goal of which is to gain a positive value in the form of love. Meanwhile, generativity refers to contributing oneself to caring for others, as well as making positive impacts for future generations. Generativity is demonstrated through strengthening relationships with family and raising children.

Winterstein, T. B. and Rimon (2014) add that this intimacy and generativity can be fulfilled through non-sexual relationships. Unmarried participants in middle adulthood can meet intimacy needs by establishing supportive social relationships through positive activities. According to the results of interviews with the three participants, namely Kholifah, Nur, and Lilik, they are individuals who actively participate in recitation associations in their environment. However, Sakinem admitted that he did not like to blend in with society. So even though three participants can be said to have fulfilled intimacy needs, Sakinem has intimacy needs that have not been fully met. As for the needs of generativity, all participants have taken the right step, namely becoming foster parents of their nieces and nephews.

### **Supporting Factors Theme**

Based on the results of the interview, the factors that influence future mindedness in unmarried middle adult women in terms of contextual are socioeconomic

and when viewed internally are individual personalities. Through contextual factors, individuals who have a high socioeconomic status will tend to think ahead. While individuals who have low socioeconomic status do not seem to think about more mature future planning, this is because these individuals only focus on the present life (Seginer, 2009).

Participants in this study belonged to the middle to lower socioeconomic category. The absence of savings due to economic limitations makes them more focused on efforts to meet their daily needs so that there is no time and financial empowerment to plan for old age. From an internal point of view, there are personality factors that play a role in determining the future planning of middle adult women who have never been married, this factor is self-concept. Individuals who have a positive and ideal self-concept will make it easier for individuals to make retirement planning (Seginer, 2009). The results of interviews with participants showed that all participants had a positive self-concept so that they had an optimistic attitude towards old age. All participants also admitted that they did not have old age worries such as loneliness. All four participants were optimistic that they would not feel lonely or worry about planning for old age.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the conclusion that can be drawn is that three out of four participants do not have the desire to marry, while one other participant still has the hope of getting married but does not rule out the possibility of choosing to be single. Participants who did not want to marry admitted that they had no demands from family, were closed to relationships with the opposite sex, and were more comfortable when living single. All participants had plans for retirement, especially in terms of retirement care and residence. From the financial aspect, the four participants had no intention to prepare retirement savings. In terms of residence and old-age care, they plan to lean on next of kin such as nieces and nephews and siblings. All participants had a positive outlook on old age despite not being married. This is supported by the fulfillment of the needs of intimacy and generativity through social relations of residence, work, and family. Although socioeconomic factors make them unable to prepare financially for old age, they remain optimistic and focus more on what is happening in the present.

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