


# Sense of Community and Emotional Regulation: Interconnections Leading to Flourishing Among Single Catholics

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<p><b>Submitted:</b> 2024-09-09</p> <p><b>Published:</b> 2024-10-19</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Emotional Regulation, Flourishing, Sense Of Community, Single Individuals, Well-Being</p> <p><b>Copyright holder:</b> Author/s (2024)</p> <p><b>This article is under:</b></p>  <p><b>How to cite:</b> Tambun, I. N. K., Nanik, N., &amp; Sampe Tondok, M. (2024). Sense of Community and Emotional Regulation: Interconnections Leading to Flourishing Among Single Catholics. <i>Bulletin of Counseling and Psychotherapy</i>, 6(3). <a href="https://doi.org/10.51214/002024061096000">https://doi.org/10.51214/002024061096000</a></p> <p><b>Published by:</b> Kuras Institute</p> <p><b>E-ISSN:</b> 2656-1050</p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT:</b> Modernization and individualistic culture have shifted the values and expectations of the younger generation regarding marriage, leading to delays or decisions not to marry. However, in Indonesia, many single individuals still face social pressure due to societal stigma, as well as religious and cultural values. This pressure can negatively impact the well-being or flourishing of single individuals. This study aims to examine the relationship between sense of community and emotion regulation (cognitive and expressive suppressions) with flourishing among single individuals, using a correlational quantitative method with 105 respondents (<math>M_{age} = 34.90</math>; <math>SD = 5.84</math> years) from the Catholic Singles Community "J". A purposive sampling technique was employed to select the sample. The results of multiple correlation indicated that sense of community and emotion regulation together significantly positively correlate with flourishing (<math>R = 0.293</math>, <math>R^2 = 0.086</math>, <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>). Nevertheless, partial correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between the sense of community and flourishing (<math>p &lt; 0.05</math>), but a non-significant correlation between emotion regulation (both cognitive and expressive suppression) and flourishing (<math>p &gt; 0.05</math>). Although emotion regulation did not directly correlate with flourishing, emotion regulation (cognitive and expressive suppression) were significantly positively correlated with most aspects of sense of community. The implications of this research suggest that enhancing the sense of community plays a crucial role in achieving flourishing among members of a community. Sense of community can be further strengthened when supported by emotion regulation skills within the community context.</p>
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## INTRODUCTION

The increasing number of single individuals in Indonesia aligns with trends observed in Western countries and some Asian nations such as Japan and Singapore (Jones et al., 2012; Smock & Schwartz, 2020; Yoshida & Meagher, 2023). Over the past four decades, the number of unmarried individuals in Indonesia has steadily risen (Himawan, 2020). The Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS/Badan Pusat Statistik) reports a decline in marriage rates in Indonesia over the past five years. In 2023, the number of marriages was recorded at 1,577,255, representing a 7.5% decrease compared to 1,705,348 in 2022 (Central Statistics Agency, 2024). This phenomenon corresponds with findings from Himawan et al. (2019), which indicate that modernization has altered the values and expectations of younger generations regarding marriage, leading to delays or decisions not to marry.

Amid modernization and the rise of individualistic cultures, marital status still holds significant

meaning within the social structure of collectivist cultures such as Indonesia. The importance of marital status is viewed not only from an individual perspective but also as a positive contribution to the continuity and development of society at large. In this context, marriage is considered not just a personal choice but also a social responsibility that helps preserve traditional values and strengthen social networks within the community. This can create pressure on single individuals, especially those who find it challenging or delayed finding a partner compared to their peers, despite adhering to societal norms (Oktawirawan, 2020).

The National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN/Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional) recommends an ideal marriage age of at least 21 for women and 25 for men (BKKBN, 2019). According to Papalia et al. (2014), this recommended marriage age falls within the early adulthood range, which spans from 21 to 40 years. The developmental tasks for early adults focus on accepting social responsibilities and expectations, such as obtaining employment, marrying, raising children, managing a household, fulfilling civic duties, and joining social groups (Hurlock, 2009). Each early adult is responsible for accomplishing these developmental tasks in a timely manner. Success in meeting these tasks leads to happiness and prepares individuals for subsequent developmental stages, while failure can result in unhappiness and impaired future well-being (Putri, 2019). This is why there is a societal perception that singles who reach or exceed the ideal marriage age are seen as failing to fulfill developmental responsibilities, not meeting social expectations, and not achieving happiness or well-being in their lives.

According to the Indonesian Dictionary (2023), the term "single" refers to individuals who have never been married. Stein (1981) categorizes singles into four types: voluntary stable singles, voluntary temporary singles, involuntary stable singles, and involuntary temporary singles. Voluntary singles include those who choose to remain single (stable) and those who wish to marry but are not actively seeking a partner due to other life priorities such as education, career, and family (temporary). Involuntary singles are individuals who desire marriage and actively seek a partner but have not found one due to certain circumstances. Involuntary stable singles are those who hope to marry but have accepted the possibility of remaining single for life due to physical, psychological, or social reasons, such as physical disabilities or mental health issues. Involuntary temporary singles are those who are still actively seeking a partner with the hope of marrying.

Single individuals who have reached the marriageable age in Indonesia often experience social pressure related to societal stigma, as well as religious and cultural values. Some studies have concluded that family members and parents exert significant pressure to marry, with pressure from mothers being perceived as higher than from fathers. Additionally, respondents report experiencing pressure from themselves (Himawan, 2017; Primastiwi, 2020). This pressure can lead to anxiety and stress, negatively impacting psychological well-being, resulting in lower subjective well-being, threatening self-esteem and self-concept, and causing physical or psychological loneliness due to feelings of isolation from stigmatizing environments (Miranda & Amna, 2016; Santrock, 2019; Jati & Masykur, 2020; Nanik et al., 2022). Based on the above categories of singles, involuntary singles, especially involuntary temporary singles, tend to be less satisfied with their situation as they still desire marriage and have not accepted their single status. Consequently, they are more vulnerable to experiencing stress, frustration, and romantic loneliness compared to voluntary singles (Adamczyk, 2017; Shostak in Himawan et al., 2019).

In Finanti's (2013) study, early adult single women were found to experience a lack of positive emotional fulfillment due to insufficient support from their family environment. Schalkwyk and Wissing (2010) state that disrupted interpersonal relationships, lack of family support, conflicts, and negative relationships contribute to low well-being in individuals. Based on this research, both past and present emotional experiences can influence the well-being of single individuals.

In positive psychology, individual well-being is described by the term "flourishing." Seligman (2011) in his book *Flourish*, outlines five pillars of individual well-being in his theory: Positive Emotion,

Engagement, Relationships/Positive Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment/Achievement, abbreviated as PERMA. Flourishing represents the highest level of well-being based on both hedonic and eudaimonic philosophical traditions. Well-being is considered to reach its peak when individuals experience sustainability, as flourishing means perceiving that every life experience is valuable or meaningful. In this context, singles who are flourishing are those who are able to direct themselves towards life achievements, build positive relationships with others, and actively contribute to community activities as valuable members. Conversely, individuals in a low level of well-being or not flourishing are referred to as languishing (Hupper & So, 2009). The condition of languishing causes individuals, especially during the productive early adulthood phase, to be less able to fulfill their roles in family, society, and the nation, both through personal development and direct service to others.

Ryan and Deci (2017), in their Self-Determination Theory (SDT), assert that three basic psychological needs must be universally satisfied for individuals to experience well-being, sustainable personal development, and integrity. These fundamental needs remain relevant for understanding individual and societal flourishing within the dynamics of modern life, which is closely intertwined with the digitalization industry (Rigby, 2023). These three basic needs are: 1) Autonomy, 2) Competence, and 3) Relatedness.

The need for autonomy refers to the requirement for individuals to have control over their own experiences and behaviors. Ryan et al., as cited in Roth (2019), assert that emotion regulation is the central process supporting the psychological need for autonomy, enabling individuals to manage elements that originate from within themselves. According to Gross (2014), emotion regulation involves processes by which individuals shape their emotional experiences, determine when emotions are felt, and decide how these emotions are experienced or expressed. By developing appropriate emotion regulation strategies, individuals can enhance their well-being amidst the challenges of daily life (Balzarotti et al., 2016; Benita et al., 2020; Cheung et al., 2015). This skill is particularly beneficial for singles who often face various emotional triggers due to past or present adverse experiences. Gross and Jazaieri (2014) propose two emotion regulation strategies: cognitive reappraisal, an adaptive strategy that involves changing one's thinking patterns, and expressive suppression, a strategy that controls emotional responses by inhibiting the physical expression of emotions. The application of cognitive reappraisal can improve an individual's adaptability in facing challenges and changes in stressful environments, while expressive suppression can prevent the emergence of emotions that may negatively impact social relationships (Giyati & Wibhowo, 2023).

The natural human need to achieve well-being through relatedness—social connections and being part of a group—is also emphasized in self-determination theory. According to the individualization theory by Shim and Han, singles may be drawn to join communities that allow them to escape the pressure of collective cultural values, such as the expectation to marry (pull-factor) (Himawan & Surijah, 2022). Participation in a singles community enables members to engage in routine activities together, referred to as rituals. These rituals serve to address emotional needs, performance goal states, and social connection deficits experienced by singles. Research by Himawan et al. (2023) indicates that offline social support, or face-to-face social interactions, can reduce loneliness among single respondents. Moreover, religiosity is identified as a strong predictor of life satisfaction among single respondents, suggesting that religious institutions could initiate regular meetings for singles within the same faith community.

A community is defined as a social group consisting of individuals who shared common intentions, beliefs, resources, preferences, needs, risks, and other similar conditions (Tanoto, 2011). Through participation in a community, individuals can experience positive impacts and fulfill certain needs, leading them to perceive the community as meaningful. This feeling of belonging to a community is known as a sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). To build a strong and supportive community, it is important for members to actively participate, listen to one another, and collaborate in creating a positive and conducive environment for all.

Currently, many religious-based communities provide a platform for singles to meet and interact with the aim of finding a life partner. Among these is the Catholic Singles Community “J”, whose primary mission is to bring together Catholic singles for potential matchmaking (Katolikana, 2020). This community has established several regions in major cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, Bogor, Semarang (including Yogyakarta; Ungaran-Salatiga-Ambarawa, and Solo), Malang, Surabaya, and Denpasar. As of February 2024, the national membership of Community “J”, including its management, comprises approximately 800 individuals across various cities. To join this community, one must meet specific criteria: be baptized as a Catholic, never married, aged 23-50 years, and have their registration form verified by the community management. The community consistently organizes various programs each year, including national-scale events such as the 2-day 1-night National Gathering (GatNas) and the 3-day 2-night National Jambore (JamNas). What sets this religious singles community apart from non-religious singles communities is the inclusion of joint religious activities, such as worship or spiritual pilgrimages to specific sites.

### **Rational of Current Study**

There is a significant research gap concerning the role of singles communities in promoting well-being, particularly outside traditional residential or educational settings. While extensive research has consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between a sense of community and flourishing, most studies have focused on environments such as shared living spaces or adolescent education (Stewart & Townley, 2020; Shin et al., 2021). Likewise, research on the connection between emotion regulation and flourishing has largely centered on adolescent and early adult populations within academic institutions (Morrish et al., 2018). There is a notable lack of studies examining how these factors influence flourishing among single adults, particularly within faith-based singles communities. Specifically, research on early adult members of Catholic Singles Communities remains scarce. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how sense of community and emotion regulation relate to flourishing in this unique context, addressing the need for further understanding of these dynamics among single adults in religious settings.

### **Study Aim and Hypothesis**

Given the above, we are interested in investigating the relationship between sense of community and emotion regulation, both simultaneously and individually, in relation to the flourishing of early adult singles in the Catholic Singles Community “J”. Studying this relationship collectively can help identify whether there is an interaction or combined effect between sense of community and emotion regulation on flourishing.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Desain and Procedure**

The research data were collected by distributing an online survey via Google Forms to members of the Catholic Singles Community “J” through the community’s official social media group (WhatsApp group). Each participant received a link to an online form containing an Informed Consent page. On the following page, participants provided demographic information such as name (initials), gender, age, occupation, average monthly income, position within the community, community region, length of membership, motivation for joining, desire to marry, and current romantic relationship status. In the subsequent section, participants completed the PERMA-Profilier, Sense of Community Index-2 (SCI-2), and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ). Additionally, several open-ended questions were included in the survey. Three days after respondents completed the questionnaire, we sent an email summarizing the categorization of scores from the three measurement tools used for the variables, along with related suggestions. The psychology faculty’s ethics research committee of the University of Surabaya approved this research procedure.

### Participants

The sample for this study comprised 105 members of the Catholic Singles Community “J” in Indonesia ( $M_{age} = 34.90$ ;  $SD = 5.84$  years), recruited through purposive sampling. This sample includes members classified as involuntary singles (individuals who desire to marry), aged 25-45 years, who have been part of the community for at least 6 months, remain active in the official social media group (WhatsApp group), and are not currently in a romantic relationship. The sample was comprised primarily of women (66.7%). Participants in the 35-39 age group constituted the largest proportion of male respondents (12.38%), while those in the 30-34 age group dominated the female respondents (24.76%). The majority of participants had been members for over 5 years, with 22 individuals (20.95%), followed by those with more than 2 years of membership, totaling 20 individuals (19.05%). The income bracket of Rp. 2,500,000-4,000,000 accounted for the largest share, comprising 35.2% of the participants.

### Instrument

The PERMA-Profiler. This study utilized the PERMA-Profiler questionnaire (Butler & Kern, 2016), which was translated into Indonesian by Elfida et al. (2021). The questionnaire consists of a total of 23 items and covers five aspects of well-being according to Seligman’s book Flourish (2011): positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, along with additional aspects of loneliness and physical health, totaling 23 items. Each of the five PERMA elements comprises three favorable items, totaling 15 items. For example, an item assessing positive emotion is, "In general, how often do you feel satisfied with your life?" Additionally, there is one item measuring overall happiness and three items related to respondents' perceptions of their physical health. To avoid response bias, the PERMA-Profiler also includes three unfavorable items that measure negative affect and one item assessing loneliness. An example of an unfavorable item is, "In general, how often do you feel anxious?" The response options range from 0 to 10, on an 11-point scale.

We also added qualitative questions to clarify the aspect of relationships, asking respondents, "When answering the above questions, who are the people you consider having personal relationships with, who help, support, and care for you?" To further clarify the aspect of engagement, an additional question was included: "When answering the above questions, what activities do you mean that make you feel deeply involved, excited, and fully interested?"

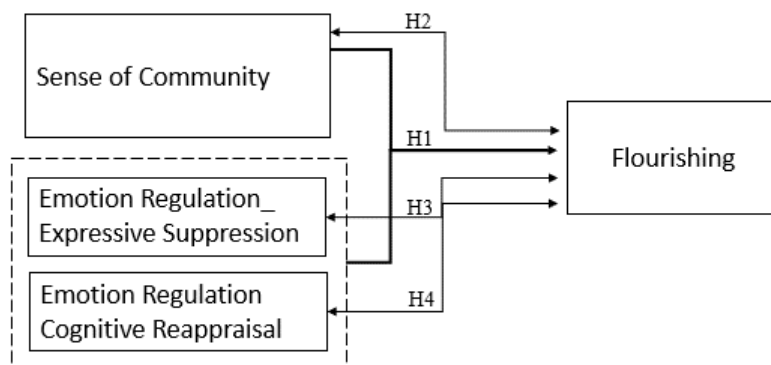


Figure 1. Research Hypothesis Scheme

The Sense of Community Index version two (SCI-2). The scale used in this study to gather data on the sense of community is the Sense of Community Index version two (SCI-2), based on the theory by McMillan and Chavis (2008). The SCI-2 assesses four aspects of sense of community: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. Each aspect

comprises 6 items, resulting in a total of 24 items. An example item is, "I and other community members share similar values or principles." The researcher included a note in the questionnaire instructions specifying that, in the sense of community scale section, the relationships being assessed should only refer to relationships with individuals known within the Catholic Singles Community "J".

The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ). The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) by Gross and John (2003), translated into Indonesian by Radde dan Saudi (2021), consists of 10 items. This tool measures two emotion regulation strategies. Cognitive reappraisal consists of 6 statements, while expressive suppression includes 4 statements. An example of a cognitive reappraisal item is, "When I want to feel more positive emotions, I change my way of thinking about the situation." An example of an expressive suppression item is, "I control my emotions by not expressing them."

### Data Analysis

Hypothesis testing was conducted using multiple correlation analysis to test the major hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>), which examines the simultaneous relationship between sense of community and the two emotion regulation strategies on flourishing. Correlation analysis also was performed to test the minor hypotheses (H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>, and H<sub>4</sub>), which assess the individual relationships between sense of community and each of the two emotion regulation strategies on flourishing. Additionally, correlation tests were conducted between the aspects of emotion regulation variables and sense of community with flourishing to identify which aspects are correlated with flourishing. Statistical data analysis was conducted using the International Business Machines (IBM) Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 26.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The classification of flourishing variables used in this study follows the guidelines recommended by the developers of the PERMA Profiler (Butler & Kern, 2016), which take into account the average overall well-being and negative emotion scores of each subject.

Table 1. The Flourishing Norms of The PERMA Profiler

Category	Overall Well-Being Mean Scores Intervals	Negative Emotions Mean Scores Intervals
Very High Functioning	≥9	0 – 1
High Functioning	8 – 8,9	1,1 – 3
Normal Functioning	6,5 – 7,9	3 – 5
Sub- Optimal Functioning	5 – 6,4	5,1 – 6,5
Languishing	<5	>6,5

Table 2. Distribution of Frequency Scores for the Flourishing Variable Measurement (PERMA- Profiler)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Functioning	7	6.67%
High Functioning	18	17.14%
Normal Functioning	36	34.29%
Sub- Optimal Functioning	36	34.29%
Languishing	8	7.62%
Total	105	100%

Based on the distribution of the flourishing variable norms from the measurement tool developers, the majority of research subjects are categorized as normal and suboptimal, with an equal number of 36 individuals (34.29%). A total of 18 research subjects, or 17.14%, are classified as

high functional, while the remainder are categorized as either very high functional (6.67%) or languishing (7.62%).

The classification of sense of community variable used in this study follows ideal norms. Subjects with a high sense of community score made up the largest portion of respondents, totaling 44 individuals (41.90%). Subjects with a moderate sense of community score were the next largest group, with 35 individuals (33.33%). It was also found that no subjects had a very low sense of community score (0%).

Table 3. Distribution of Frequency Scores for the Sense of Community Variable Measurement (SCI-2)

Category	Ideal Norms Score Intervals	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	≥ 57.6	20	19,05%
High	43.2 – 57.6	44	41,90%
Average	28.8 – 43.2	35	33,33%
Low	14.4 – 28.8	6	5,71%
Very Low	< 14.4	0	0%
Total		105	100%

The classification of emotional regulation variable used in this study follows ideal norms. Subjects with very high scores in the emotion regulation strategy of expressive suppression were the majority, totaling 88 individuals (83.81%), while the cognitive reappraisal strategy was dominated by those in the high category, with 49 individuals (46.67%).

Table 4. Distribution of Frequency Scores for the Emotion Regulation Variable Measurement (ERQ)

Category	Ideal Norm Score Intervals of ESS	Ideal Norm Score Interval of CAS	Frequency and Percentage of ESS	Frequency and Percentage of CAS
Very High	≥ 20	≥ 30	88 (83,81%)	37 (35,24%)
High	16 - 19	24 - 29	13 (12,38%)	49 (46,67%)
High	12 - 15	18 - 23	4 (3,81%)	14 (13,33%)
Average	8 - 11	12 - 17	-	2 (1,90%)
Low	< 8	< 12	-	3 (2,86%)
Very Low				
Low				
Total			105 (100%)	105 (100%)

Note. ESS = Expressive Suppression Strategy; CAS = Cognitive Appraisal Strategy

The relationship between sense of community and emotion regulation on flourishing is illustrated through multiple correlation analysis in Table 5. The multiple correlation coefficient (*R*) between sense of community, two emotion regulation strategies and flourishing is 0.293. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.086$ ) indicates that sense of community and emotion regulation account for 8.6% of the variance in flourishing, with the remaining 91.4% influenced by other factors. The *F*-value is 3.150, with a significance of 0.028 ( $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting a positive relationship between flourishing and both sense of community and emotion regulation. Therefore, hypothesis  $H_1$  is accepted.

The correlation between sense of community and flourishing was significant (Tabel 6), with a *p*-value of 0.012 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a positive relationship. In contrast, the correlations between the two emotion regulation strategies and flourishing were not significant, with *p*-values of 0.126 ( $p > 0.05$ ) for expressive suppression and 0.180 ( $p > 0.05$ ) for cognitive reappraisal. Therefore, sense of

community is positively related to flourishing, while the emotion regulation strategies of suppressive expression and cognitive reappraisal do not significantly relate to flourishing. Consequently, hypothesis H<sub>2</sub> is accepted, whereas hypotheses H<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>4</sub> are rejected.

Table 5. Results of Major Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) Testing with Multiple Correlation Analysis

Variabels	R	R Square	F	Sig.
Sense of Community, Emotion Regulation (2 strategies), and Flourishing	0,293	0,086	3,150	0,028

Table 6. Results of Minor Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) Testing (H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>, and H<sub>4</sub>)

Variabels	Sig.	Note
Sense of Community – Flourishing (H <sub>2</sub> )	0,012	Significant
Emotion Regulation Suppressive Expression – Flourishing (H <sub>3</sub> )	0,126	Not significant
Emotion Regulation Cognitive Reappraisal – Flourishing (H <sub>4</sub> )	0,180	Not significant

A correlation test was conducted to examine the relationships between the aspects of emotion regulation and sense of community with flourishing, to identify which aspects are correlated with flourishing. Based on Table 7, it can be concluded that only two aspects of sense of community have a significant positive correlation with flourishing: the aspect of integration and fulfillment of needs (0.269,  $p < 0.01$ ) and the aspect of shared emotional connection (0.271,  $p < 0.01$ ). The aspect of expressive suppression in emotion regulation is significantly positively correlated with all aspects of sense of community. The strongest correlations, in order, are with shared emotional connection (0.300,  $p < 0.01$ ); integration and fulfillment of needs (0.282,  $p < 0.01$ ); influence (0.266,  $p < 0.01$ ); and membership (0.208,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 7. Results of Correlation Test Between Aspects of the Variable

Variabels/Aspects	FL	RE <sub>1</sub>	RE <sub>2</sub>	SOC <sub>1</sub>	SOC <sub>2</sub>	SOC <sub>3</sub>	SOC <sub>4</sub>
FL	1						
RE <sub>1</sub>	-0,026	1					
RE <sub>2</sub>	0,132	0,451**	1				
SOC <sub>1</sub>	0,269**	0,282**	0,231*	1			
SOC <sub>2</sub>	0,137	0,208*	0,108	0,729**	1		
SOC <sub>3</sub>	0,166	0,266**	0,195*	0,724**	0,652**	1	
SOC <sub>4</sub>	0,271**	0,300**	0,319*	0,753**	0,631**	0,740**	1

Note. FL= Flourishing, RE<sub>1</sub>=Suppressive Expression, RE<sub>2</sub>=Cognitive Appraisal, SOC<sub>1</sub>=Integration and fulfillment of needs, SOC<sub>2</sub>=Membership, SOC<sub>3</sub>=Influence, SOC<sub>4</sub>=Shared Emotional Connection

\*\*= significant at level .01

\* = significant at level .05

## Discussion

The results of the major hypothesis test (H<sub>1</sub>) presented in Table 5 indicate that sense of community and emotion regulation together have a significant positive relationship with flourishing among members of the Catholic Singles Community "J" ( $R = 0.293$ ,  $F = 3.150$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the study's major hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) is accepted, confirming the relationship between sense of community and emotion regulation with flourishing among members of the Catholic J singles community. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was found to be 8.6%, meaning that 91.4% of the variance in flourishing is influenced by other variables not included in this study. To explore further, the researcher analyzed demographic variables, such as gender, age, income, personality, and



membership duration in the Catholic Singles Community “J.” Only gender significantly influenced flourishing, with men ( $M = 7.76$ ) scoring higher than women ( $M = 7.30$ ). This difference was statistically significant ( $t = 0.029, p < 0.05$ ), although both scores still fall within the normal flourishing range. According to Seligman (2002), factors that can affect an individual's flourishing include personality, age, gender, religiosity, and social life. The gender-based differences in flourishing found in this study align with Seligman's (2002) views in Authentic Happiness. He suggests that women experience both positive and negative emotions more intensely than men. This heightened emotional sensitivity allows women to feel happiness and joy more profoundly, but also makes them more susceptible to negative emotions like sadness and anger. Consequently, women may have a broader and more acute emotional spectrum than men, influencing their overall flourishing.

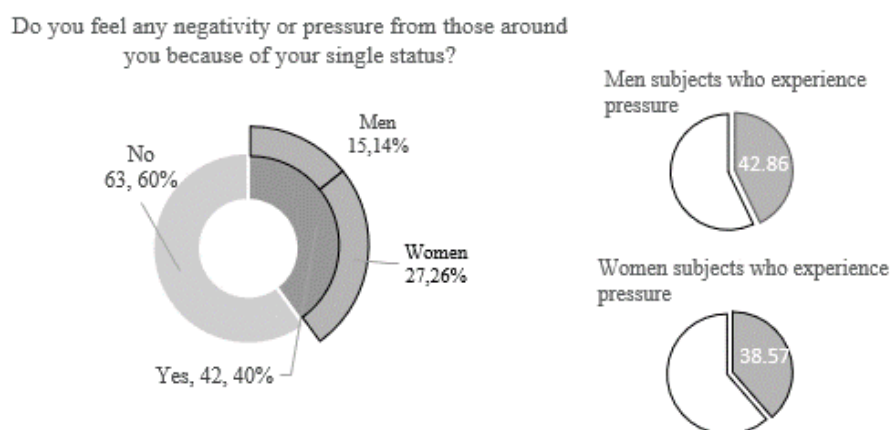


Figure 2. Data on Marriage Pressure by Gender

Himawan (2022) in his study identifies two strategies for single individuals to mitigate the negative impact of their status: individualization and rituals. The first strategy, drawing on Shim and Han's work, includes push factors that help individuals detach from societal pressures and pull factors that encourage them to join non-stigmatizing institutions. The second strategy, based on Hobson et al., focuses on rituals that help manage deficits in emotional, performance goal states, and social connection.

The Catholic singles community "J" integrates both strategies. Its mission to unite singles seeking faith-based partners aligns with the internal push factors of those wanting to alleviate societal pressure. The community itself serves as a pull factor, offering a collective space where the burden of being single is shared. The local and national activities within the Catholic singles community "J" can be seen as meaningful, repetitive behaviors or rituals for the members. These activities include casual weekend gatherings, entertainment events, sports, and religious activities such as celebrating the Eucharist and participating in recreational pilgrimages called “ziarek”. Through these community rituals, single individuals are encouraged to address their emotional, goal achievement, and social connection deficits experienced as singles.

Furthermore, the results of the minor hypothesis tests ( $H_2, H_3, H_4$ ) in Table 5 reveal that sense of community has a significant positive relationship with flourishing ( $H_2: p < 0.05$ ), whereas emotion regulation does not have a significant relationship with flourishing ( $H_3$  and  $H_4: p > 0.05$ ). This suggests that the significant positive relationship found in the major hypothesis test ( $H_1$ ) is attributed solely to sense of community's influence on flourishing. In other words, the flourishing condition of the members of the Catholic Singles Community “J” is more closely related to external factors, such as the sense of togetherness within the community, than to internal factors, like the ability to use emotion regulation strategies.

These findings align with the research by Shin et al. (2021), which demonstrated that sense of

community has a direct and significant impact on flourishing. Individuals who feel connected to their community experience higher well-being across the PERMA aspects (Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment). Seligman (2002), the originator of the PERMA theory of well-being, also suggests that engaging in community life helps individuals develop virtues and strengths that enhance their positive relationships with others, thereby facilitating the achievement of flourishing.

The Catholic Singles Community “J” has cultivated a strong sense of value and community image, as clearly articulated in its vision and mission. All annual work programs are designed to realize the missions, which were formulated by the founders and are maintained by the community leaders. Strategic steps are implemented to guide the community, build identity, unify members spread across various cities, and foster commitment to the community. The results of these work programs are reflected in the research data. A significant portion of the participants reported a high sense of community (41.90%), followed by moderate (33.33%) and very high (19.05%) levels. The analysis indicates that a higher sense of community is significantly associated with improved flourishing among members of the Catholic Singles Community “J”.

The significant relationship between the sense of community and flourishing was further examined through correlation analysis between the aspects of the sense of community variable and flourishing. The results in Table 6 reveal that two of the four aspects of the sense of community - namely, shared emotional connection and integration and fulfillment of needs show a significant positive correlation with flourishing. According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), shared emotional connection refers to the emotional bond within a community, which are strengthened through the quantity and quality of positive interactions among members, involvement in shared experiences, and spiritual bonds.

The manifestation of the sense of community in the Catholic Singles Community “J” through the aspect of shared emotional connection is supported by open questionnaire data on positive experiences reported by members. The three most positively impactful interactions include getting to know fellow single believers (96.19%), engaging in recreational activities, gatherings, and sharing stories (76.19%), and participating in religious activities such as praying, singing, and spiritual pilgrimages together (64.76%). The most successful activity in attracting both new and long-standing members to participate in the community is the “ziarek,” which combines prayer activities at a spiritual site (pilgrimage) with visits to other tourist sites (recreation) in a single day.

The aspect of integration and fulfillment of needs reflects the belief that members' needs will be met through the resources they gain by being part of the community. The contribution of this aspect to achieving a high sense of community in Community “J” is supported by data on the frequency of members' motivations for joining the Catholic Singles Community “J”. The most common motivation or driving factor for members seeking to fulfill their needs within the community was to find a like-minded life partner (85.7%), followed by expanding friendships with fellow single believers (52.4%), and participating in pilgrimage-recreation activities (22.9%). Community leaders continuously facilitate the fulfillment of these needs through active support for romantic relationships among members, including publicizing all member marriages on social media. Additionally, efforts include local (regional) and national-scale activities designed to expand the social network of single Catholics from various regions. These programs foster the belief that members' needs will be met through collective efforts within the community, contributing to the high sense of community found among Community “J” members in the study data.

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The subsequent hypothesis tests ( $H_3$  and  $H_4$ ) explored the relationship between two aspects of emotion regulation and flourishing. The results of the correlation tests revealed that neither aspect of emotion regulation, expressive suppression nor cognitive reappraisal, had a significant relationship with flourishing ( $p > 0.05$ ). This finding contrasts with the results of a meta-analysis by Morrish et al. (2018), which concluded that emotion regulation can enhance an individual's flourishing condition. The discrepancy in findings may be due to differences in the social context of the study respondents. Previous studies in Morrish et al. (2018) were conducted on respondents in educational institutions, whereas this research was conducted within a religiously affiliated social community of singles (non-educational). In educational settings, flourishing is more likely to correlate with emotion regulation due to the structured, high-intensity routine activities that support emotional skill development. In contrast, within the Catholic Singles Community “J”, joint activities among members are less intense and distant from everyday life, more flexible in following collective holidays or members' leisure time, which may reduce the effectiveness of emotion regulation in directly contributing to flourishing.

The studies in Morrish et al. (2018) all involved respondents from countries with individualistic cultures. Ford and Mauss (in Klein et al., 2024) assert that an individual's cultural orientation—whether collectivist or individualist—can influence how emotion regulation is practiced. Individuals with a high collectivist orientation are more likely to adjust their emotional expressions (expressive suppression strategy) to maintain social harmony, while those with an individualist orientation are more likely to express their emotions directly or openly. This is consistent with the data from this study conducted among members of Community “J” in a country characterized by collectivist culture. It was found that members with a Very High score in the expressive suppression emotion regulation strategy overwhelmingly dominated the respondents, with 88 participants (83.81%).

Gross and John (2003) found cognitive reappraisal to be positively linked to well-being, while expressive suppression, which inhibits emotional expression without reducing negative emotions, has a negative impact. In individualistic cultures, emotion regulation strategies align with personal goals and happiness, whereas collectivist cultures prioritize group harmony. Thus, expressive suppression may hinder flourishing in collectivist societies, as well-being there is more dependent on social relationships. This may explain the absence of a significant relationship between expressive suppression and flourishing in the study's single respondents.

This study analyzed the correlations between emotion regulation aspects and sense of community (Table 7). Expressive suppression was significantly correlated with all sense of community aspects ( $r = 0.208-0.300$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Cognitive appraisal showed significant correlations with three out of four sense of community aspects—integration and fulfillment of needs, influence, and shared emotional connection ( $r = 0.195-0.319$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )—but not with the membership aspect.

The findings can be attributed to the predominantly Javanese (79.05%) background of the Catholic Singles Community “J,” known for its collectivist culture. In such societies, individuals prioritize group harmony, often suppressing personal opinions to avoid conflict (Zakiya & Hariyadi, 2022). This aligns with the expressive suppression emotion regulation strategy (Gross, 2014), which helps maintain harmonious relationships. In collectivist communities, expressive suppression is particularly effective in fostering a strong sense of community.

The significant correlation between cognitive appraisal and three sense of community aspects

aligns with Yunanto's (2023) findings on cognitive change in Javanese culture. Rooted in the concepts of “*rila and narima ing pandum*”, Javanese individuals adjust their mindset to maintain happiness, believing that life is predetermined by God (Ruswahyuningsih & Afiatin, 2015; Pradanta et al., 2015). This spiritual outlook significantly influences cognitive appraisal. The strongest correlation was with shared emotional connection ( $r = 0.319, p < 0.05$ ), emphasizing the role of shared spirituality in fostering community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

The membership aspect was the only sense of community aspect not significantly correlated with cognitive appraisal. This may be due to the structure of the Catholic Singles Community “J,” which spans multiple regions in Indonesia. With national events involving 200-300 participants and varying levels of local interaction, many members may not have frequent or direct contact. As a result, trust and recognition—key components of the membership aspect—might not develop fully, explaining the lack of a significant correlation.

The relationship between gender and flourishing is supported by data from an open-ended questionnaire on social pressure to marry. Among respondents, 42.86% of men and 38.57% of women reported experiencing such pressure. Despite this, single men reported higher flourishing levels than single women. This finding aligns with Kaparang and Himawan (2021), who noted that single men in Indonesia may enhance life satisfaction through the quality of friendships, which tends to remain stable with age, unlike for single women, whose friendship quality often declines. Data from this study supports these findings, showing that members of Community “J” value their social connections more than familial ones, with 71.4% of respondents choosing social networks outside the community as their primary support, followed by 58.1% who rely on connections within the community. Notably, more men than women engage in networks outside the community, providing men with more opportunities to form supportive friendships, which may explain their higher flourishing levels. Interestingly, the study found that 63.60% of respondents did not feel pressured to marry, challenging the common perception that such pressure significantly affects the well-being of single individuals. The age distribution shows that men aged 35-39 years and women aged 30-34 years dominate the community, reflecting a societal shift in marriage age to above 30, influenced by modernization. This trend suggests that early-career adults are prioritizing education, career, and financial stability over marriage, reducing perceived pressure. In Community “J”, marriage pressure varies by age and gender. Men aged 35-39 years feel more pressure, while for women, pressure peaks at 30-34 years and decreases thereafter. This decrease may be due to societal perceptions that men have more freedom to delay marriage, while women face earlier pressure due to expectations of starting families. Additionally, reduced pressure on women after 35 may be linked to health concerns, as fertility decreases and risks associated with childbirth increase with age. This study highlights the complex interplay between gender, social networks, and societal expectations in shaping the flourishing of single individuals in a collectivist culture.

### Limitations and Further Research Direction

This study had an uneven distribution of respondents across the various regions within Community “J,” with some regions represented by very small percentages. Consequently, generalizations from this study should be made cautiously. To improve future research, quantitative researchers in Community “J” should establish more intensive connections with members in each region before data collection to ensure a more representative sample for analyzing the impact of membership areas.

### CONCLUSION

Enhancing the sense of community plays a crucial role in achieving flourishing among involuntary single members of Community “J”. The sense of community among these members can be optimally improved when supported by strong emotional regulation skills by everyone within the

community. The level of flourishing in Community “J” is also influenced by the members' gender. Involuntary single men tend to have higher flourishing levels compared to women, partly due to their broader social involvement. To address this disparity, the leadership of Community “J” ought to develop specific activities to enhance the flourishing condition of female members.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mary Elisabeth and Karel Himawan offered valuable input throughout this research, particularly during the proposal and results seminar. Ayuni helped and critical revisions. Mega Ruhapy and the members of Single Catholic Community “J” supported the data collection.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Conceptualization: INKT and N; methodology, INKT and N; formal analysis, INKT and MST; data curation, INKT; writing—original draft preparation, INKT; writing-review and editing, MST; supervision, N and MST. All authors have read and agreed to the final version of the article.

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