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## The Resilience of Mothers and Their Job Satisfaction: The Differentiating Role of Single Motherhood

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### Abstract

From the perspective of the social functioning of a family, single mothers are amongst the most vulnerable social groups in terms of interconnected economic, social and psychological burdens (Van Lancker, Ghysels, & Cantillon, 2015). Women in the situation of lone motherhood are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of meeting too many requirements and an excess of daily tasks. The aim of the study was to clarify whether resilience as an attribute and resilient coping can be a significant resource of their job satisfaction, taking into account the role of single motherhood as a difficult situation. The study involved 435 mothers, among whom 204 (47%) were in a formal or informal relationship, and 231 (53%) were lone mothers. For the measurement of resilient coping, the Brief Resilience Coping Scale – BRCS was used (Piórowska, Basińska, Piórowski, & Janicka, 2017), trait resilience was measured by the Resiliency Assessment Scale (SPP-25) (Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2008) and job satisfaction was rated by The Satisfaction with Job Scale (Zalewska, 2003b). The analysis showed no significant differences between mothers in terms of the level of job satisfaction, resilient coping and resilience as an attribute – with the exception of one dimension, openness to new experiences and sense of humour, which in the group of lone mothers scored significantly lower than in the group of mothers in relationships. The results also showed a significant differentiating role of marital status and resilient coping as well as trait resilience on job satisfaction.



## Keywords

resilience, resilient coping, job satisfaction, lone motherhood

From the perspective of the social functioning of a family, single mothers are among the most vulnerable social groups in terms of interconnected economic, social and psychological burdens that affect them every day. They often survive on the verge of economic poverty while bearing the burden of lone parenthood, which causes a high level of stress (Van Lancker et al., 2015). This might be partially alleviated by social benefits, as set out in social policy objectives, but will not be completely counteracted since incomes of single mothers remain significantly lower in comparison to couples raising children.

Undertaking family and work-related roles has become an important area of interest for researchers exploring this issue from the perspective of one's individual resources. These are seen as significant in explaining how these roles are performed, particularly in families of single mothers who experience family worries, work-related difficulties and economic burdens. The latter create subsequent hardships through a negative impact on family processes (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001; Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994). Difficult family life of a single mother and numerous additional responsibilities can lead to a decrease in satisfaction with life in general as well as to redundancy in fulfilment in her professional life (Argyle, 2004; Schultz & Schultz, 2012; Zalewska, 2003a).

Individual and environmental resources that increase one's resilience to stressful events may serve a protective function in their life (Carson, Butcher, & Mineka, 2003; Heszen, 2013; Hobfoll, 2006; Janicka, 2015). They include both behaviours and circumstances that reduce the likelihood of adverse consequences of stress. Protective factors include individual and family resources and skills that directly affect one's mental functioning by protecting against stressful factors. They can serve as mediators by changing, but not eliminating, relationships between risks and their consequences (Basińska, 2015; Białecka-Pikul, 2011; Grzankowska & Minda, 2015; Murry, Bynum, Brody, Willert, & Stephens, 2001). Personal resources are defined as anything (a matter, an energy, information) that can be used by an individual to meet their immediate needs or to achieve their long term goals (Hobfoll, 2006; Mudyń, 2003; Nadolska & Sęk, 2007; Ostaszewski, 2005).

Resilience as a theoretical construct was introduced to scientific research in the 1980s. Theoretical foundations for understanding resilience arose from longitudinal studies on personality traits in adolescents (Gąsior, Chodkiewicz, & Cechowski, 2016; Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2008). Resilience is defined in two respects: (1) as a personality attribute, a relatively stable disposition, which determines adaptability to changing life requirements (Block & Block, 1980; Grzankowska & Ślesińska-Sowińska, 2016; Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2010) and (2) as a process of adaptive capacity to overcome negative life events (Juczyński & Ogińska-Bulik, 2011; Piórowska et al., 2017). Resilience is relatively stable and evolves throughout one's life. It forms the grounds for coping with daily life and its challenges (Nadolska & Sęk, 2007). Resilience could be understood as a capacity to per-

form and manage everyday tasks in uncertain and often stressful circumstances (Juczyński & Ogińska-Bulik, 2011; Uchnast, 1997). It can exert motivation and strength to face and overcome obstacles by employing own resources (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Nadolska & Sęk, 2007; Piórowska et al., 2017). Luthar et al. (2000) consider resilience as a dynamic adaptation process that enables and facilitates adjustment and implementation of remedial strategies in the face of imminent adversity. Therefore, the process of resilient coping may arise only when an individual, firstly, is confronted with an adverse situation and, secondly, has a capacity to use resources that allow for its remedy (Luthar et al., 2000; Nadolska & Sęk, 2007).

Thus, resilience as an attribute and as a process should not be considered as synonymous phenomena. Their determinants, occurrence and function are significantly different (Nadolska & Sęk, 2007; Piórowska et al., 2017; Turkiewicz-Maligranda, 2014). Nevertheless, their common denominator is the perception of resilience as a capacity allowing individuals to perform at optimum levels of efficiency and to recover despite failures and encountered difficulties (Heszen, 2013).

An individual has a chance to overcome a stressful or extreme situation and to counteract its adverse effects when exerting resilience (Mudyń, 2003). Resilience as a resource can be defined as a set of skills leading to effective coping with traumatic situations as well as everyday obstacles. Predominantly, it is the ability to utilise one's own personal resources in a flexible and creative way as well as to withstand negative emotions (Sęk, 2008). In situations involving traumatic events, resilience exerts the will for life and exceptional resistance and guards against passiveness and abandonment (Bishop, 2000; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Juczyński & Ogińska-Bulik, 2011).

Resilience as an attribute is shaped by one's life context and can be considered as a trait that may improve and develop over time (Ostaszewski, 2005). Its level is varied and depends on age, gender, origin and life circumstances (Connor & Davidson, 2003). It is understood that resilient people show a higher level of social skills, demonstrated mainly in their communication skills, fulfilling relationships with others or empathy shaped predominantly in the family context (Compas et al., 2014). Positive effects of resilient coping are: high levels of internal tranquillity and optimism, greater curiosity for the world, increased life energy and openness to new experiences (Bishop, 2000; Fredrickson, 2001; Juczyński & Ogińska-Bulik, 2011).

Resilience, as an attribute and as a process, is employed by individuals in various life situations. Scientific research conducted on social workers confirms the validity of recognising resilience (as an attribute) as an important resource protecting them against burn-out. Resilience (as a process) influences one's perception of stress level and measures undertaken against it, including job demands and work-related stress (Kaczmarek & Aleszczyk, 2013; Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2011). Therefore, it can be expected that resilience as a disposition of personality as well as that exerted through the coping process would be significant to the functioning of mothers when fulfilling family and work roles, and may play an essential part influencing job satisfaction.

Professional work is an important element of the social functioning of adults. Job satisfaction is linked to professional activity (Zalewska, 2003a) and may enhance one's well-being and fulfilment. It may, however, be associated with a feeling of being overburdened caused by the demand to combine professional and family roles (Kurpiel & Wałęcka-Matyja, 2014). When evaluating job satisfaction, one needs to consider the conflicting aspects of work performance with other important functions, including family ones (Casey & Pitt-Catsouphes, 1994; Grandey, Cordeiro, & Crouter, 2005). This particularly concerns working mothers undertaking the so-called double function pattern and involves experiencing a conflict between professional and family roles, articulated to a greater extent by single working mothers than those living in conjugal families (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001). Reconciliation of parental and professional responsibilities, with no support from a partner, can be demanding and burdensome (McManus, Korabik, Rosin, & Kelloway, 2002; Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005).

Existing research reveals that women satisfied with their job are more likely to cope with setbacks by seeking help, and that work is of greater subjective importance to them (Napora, Andruszkiewicz, & Basińska, 2018). Furthermore, previous research indicates a connection between job satisfaction and other factors influencing their functioning in the family (Mróz & Kaleta, 2015). Family support as well as length, type and model of marital relationship are the most vital factors (Basińska, 2013; Lachowska, 2008). This particularly relates to single mothers as they account for the overwhelming majority of single-parent families: in western societies, single motherhood occurs nearly 10 times more often than single fatherhood (Napora, Kozerska, & Schneider, 2014). In addition, the permanent absence of one parent causes the other to undertake all responsibilities and to reconcile them with a high level of professional duties. That is often a subject of informal social judgement, where societal expectations of working professional women somewhat demand greater career advancements and equally intensive, hands-on parenthood (Matysiak-Błaszczuk & Włodarczyk, 2004; Treas, van der Lippe, & Tai, 2011).

Studies on single mothers and those in conjugal families highlight childcare as the key stress factor at home, articulated especially by single mothers on low incomes (Stavrova & Fetchenhauer, 2015). Research also reveals that single mothers spend an equal amount of time with their families as married ones, yet do not experience increased exhaustion (Duxbury et al., 1994; Duxbury & Higgins, 2001). Studies on single and cohabiting mothers reveal that, regardless of family structure, both groups of women function similarly at work. However, single mothers were more likely to express symptoms of depression, reduced satisfaction with life and lower self-esteem in comparison to married mothers (Cairney, Boyle, Offord, & Racine, 2003; Lansford, Ceballo, Abbey, & Stewart, 2001). They were also less likely to seek help when addressing work-related stress (Napora et al., 2018).

Relationships with other family members as well as having children can undoubtedly be a significant source of empowerment for mothers when fulfilling their professional

roles. Thus, worth analysing are personality traits allowing for accomplishment of work roles, including resilience as an attribute and resilient coping with adversities. There are limited notations on single mothers' ability to cope at work despite adverse home situation (Brody & Flor, 1997; Murry & Brody, 1999; Murry et al., 2001; Stavrova & Fetchenhauer, 2015) in comparison to numerous attempts to analyse the negative effects of single motherhood (Greenfield & Marks, 2006; Jeżewska, 2001).

The aim of this study was to explore whether resilience as an attribute and resilient coping available to mothers are significant to their job satisfaction, when taking into account implications of single motherhood and its adverse impact. The following hypotheses were tested for the purpose of this study:

H1: Single and cohabiting mothers differ significantly in terms of their job satisfaction, ability to cope with adversities and intensity of resilience as an attribute.

H2: Resilience significantly differentiates between both studied groups in terms of job satisfaction and these dissimilarities in single mothers differ from mothers in relationships.

## Method

### Participants

435 mothers participated in the study, including 204 (47%) that were in conventional ( $n = 179$ ) or informal relationships ( $n = 25$ ), and 231 (53%) that were single mothers (unmarried ( $n = 63$ ), widows ( $n = 22$ ), divorced ( $n = 112$ ), or separated ( $n = 34$ )). The average age of respondents was 36.14 years ( $SD_{age} = 7.58$ ;  $Min_{age} = 20$ ,  $Max_{age} = 57$ ); groups of single mothers and those in relationship was similar in terms of age ( $t(434) = -.47$ ,  $p = .63$ ) and number of children (single mothers:  $M_{children} = 1.61$ ;  $SD_{children} = 0.81$ , mothers living in relationships:  $M_{children} = 0.70$ ). The largest number of children in the family was five, although one child per family was the most common. Regardless of their life situation, all mothers spent a comparable amount of time with their children during the day (single mothers:  $M_{hours} = 6.38$ ;  $SD_{hours} = 4.76$ , mothers in relationships:  $M_{hours} = 6.13$ ;  $SD_{hours} = 5.51$ ).

### Procedure

There was a deliberate selection of mothers based on two criteria: (1) remaining in a relationship or single motherhood as well as (2) bearing at least one child under the age of 18. The study was carried out using the snowball sampling method amongst women living in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian, Masovian, Warmian-Masurian, Pomeranian, Silesian and Łódź Voivodeships between March and September 2016. Participants received a set of questionnaires with the relevant instructions. The research was conducted anonymously, individually and without time limitation, in accordance with the ethical standards of scientific research.

## Measures<sup>1</sup>

Coping resilience in adverse situations was measured by *the Brief Resilient Coping Scale* (Piórowska et al., 2017) created by V. G. Sinclair and K. A. Wallston (2004) and used to measure resilience as a process in adults. *The Resilience Assessment Scale* (SPP-25) by Ogińska-Bulik and Juczyński (2008) was used to measure resilience as an attribute. The satisfaction level was assessed using *the Satisfaction with Job Scale* (Zalewska, 2003b). A questionnaire form of own design was used to describe the studied group in terms of demographic characteristics and contained some questions regarding length of service and financial situation.

## Results

### Differences and Similarities Between Studied Mothers

In most studied domains, the single and cohabitant mothers proved to be similar. A significant difference was noted only on one dimension of resilience – openness to new experiences and sense of humour (2nd dimension of resilience as an attribute). The mothers in relationships were more open to new experiences and had a greater sense of humour in comparison to the single mothers ( $z = -2.55, p = .01$ ).

### Resilience as an Attribute and Job Satisfaction

The relation between resiliency as an attribute and job satisfaction was statistically significant in both groups ( $r = .44; p = .001$  among the single mothers, and  $r = .29; p = .001$  in the group of mothers in relationships). A tendency emerged suggesting that this relation was stronger in the group of single mothers ( $z = 1.85, p = .06$ ).

Three groups of women were identified based on intensity of resilience as an attribute: (1) mothers with low resilience (1–4 sten;  $n = 128$ ; 30%), (2) mothers with moderate resilience (5–6 sten;  $n = 158$ ; 36%) and (3) mothers with high resilience (7–10 sten;  $n = 148$ ; 31%). Civil status alone (single mothers versus those in a relationship) was not linked to job satisfaction. A main effect of resiliency as an attribute was found ( $F(2, 427) = 26.91, p < .001; \eta^2 = .112$ ). Moreover, the interaction effect between marital status and resilience as an attribute proved to be statistically significant ( $F(2, 427) = 3.06, p = .048$ ) with only a small effect size ( $\eta^2 = .01$ ) (see Figure 1). This model explained 12% of variance of job satisfaction (corrected  $R^2 = .12$ ).

We performed Bonferroni post-hoc analyses to explore differences between groups included in the study. It revealed that single mothers with high resiliency declared the highest job satisfaction ( $M = 25.14$ ). Job satisfaction of this group was significantly differ-

<sup>1</sup> Detailed description of psychometric characteristics of applied variable measurement tools is given in Appendix 1.

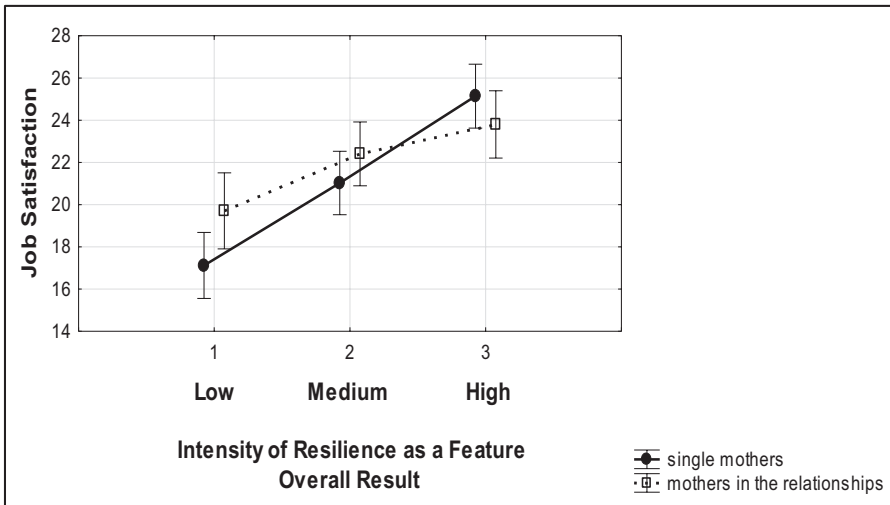


Figure 1. Marital status and the resilience as a feature versus the single mothers job satisfaction ( $n = 204$ ) and the mothers remaining in a relationship job satisfaction ( $n = 231$ ).

ent from the results of the rest of the single mothers and those with low resiliency and currently in relationships. Mothers with high resiliency and in relationships were also characterised by one of the highest levels of job satisfaction ( $M = 23.80$ ), and this result was significantly different from job satisfaction of mothers with low resiliency in both groups ( $M = 17.16$  and  $M = 19.71$  for single mothers and mothers in a relationship regardless of their marital status, respectively).

### Resilient Coping with Difficult Situations and Job Satisfaction

The link between resiliently coping with stress and job satisfaction was statistically significant in both groups of mothers ( $r = .419$ ;  $p = .001$  and  $r = .207$ ;  $p = .003$  for single mothers and mothers in relationships, respectively). This relation was stronger in the group of single mothers ( $z = 1.85$ ,  $p = .01$ ). Thereafter, participants were divided into groups according to the intensity of their resilient coping based on the mean results and standard deviation ( $M \pm 1/2 SD$ )<sup>2</sup>. This led to identifying the following: (1) first group, with a lower resilient coping ( $n = 99$ , 23%); (2) second group, with a moderate resilient coping ( $n = 184$ , 42%) and (3) third group, with a higher resilient coping ( $n = 151$ , 35%).

Both main effects of marital status (single and cohabiting mothers) and resilience as a remedy process were significant ( $F(2, 202) = 3.96$ ,  $p = .047$ ;  $\eta^2 = .01$ ; and  $F(2, 229) = 15.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\eta^2 = .02$ , respectively). The marital status  $\times$  resilient coping interaction was significant as well ( $F(2, 427) = 4.67$ ,  $p = .01$ ), although the effect size was low ( $\eta^2 = .02$ ). This

<sup>2</sup> For *The Resilience Assessment Scale* (SPP-25) by Ogińska-Bulik and Juczyński (2008) no criteria for assessing low and high resilience have been defined; therefore statistical criterion was used.

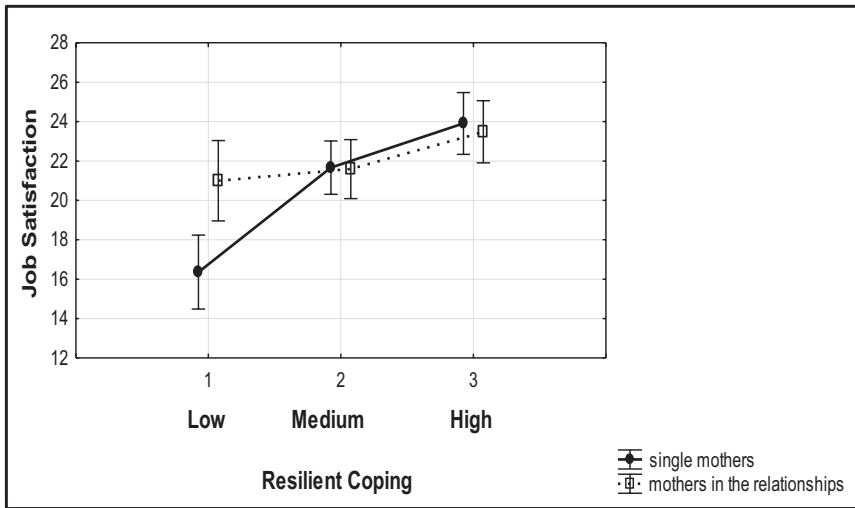


Figure 2. Marital status and resilient coping versus single mothers' job satisfaction ( $n = 204$ ) and mothers in a relationship job satisfaction ( $n = 231$ ).

model allowed 8% of variance of job satisfaction to be explained (corrected  $R^2 = .08$ ). Performed Bonferroni post-hoc analyses revealed that the highest job satisfaction ( $M = 23.85$ ) was found in single women with high resiliency and they were significantly different solely from the single mothers with lower resilient coping. The mothers with the highest resiliency in relationships were also characterised by one of the highest levels of job satisfaction ( $M = 23.59$ ). The lowest level of job satisfaction was noticeable among the single mothers with the lowest resiliency ( $M = 16.36$ ) who were significantly different from the rest of women regardless of their marital status.

## Discussion

The aim of this research was to clarify whether resilience as an attribute and resiliently coping with difficult situations in mothers are significant resources for their job satisfaction, considering single motherhood as a difficult situation. The outcomes of our research enabled us to respond to the formulated research hypotheses.

The first hypothesis stating a significant difference in job satisfaction, resiliently coping with difficult situations and resilience as an attribute between single mothers and mothers living in relationships, was partially confirmed. The research outcomes indicated that study participants were relatively similar in terms of these attributes, regardless of their marital status. The only significant difference was noted in relation to one dimension of resilience as an attribute, i.e., openness to new experiences and sense of humour. Considerably lower scores were obtained by single mothers in comparison to cohabiting ones.



Basińska (2014) emphasizes the influence of factors such as situational context and current negative experiences on responders' participation and answers. Consequently, negative life events that had occurred prior to the study may have caused changes in observed openness to new experiences. Considering resilience as the ability to recover from adverse experiences and circumstances (Ogińska-Bulik, 2014), this result implies the significant burden of daily challenges on single mothers and its negative impact on their experiences. Previous research has revealed a strong link between life events and depression among single mothers in comparison to married ones (Cairney et al., 2003). Therefore, lower openness to new experiences of single mothers might be construed as their attempt to reduce hardships and withstand risks of new challenges and changes. Moreover, it may express a self-regulatory tendency of single mothers, who are already required to meet immense expectations. This explanation is consistent with understanding resilience as a manifestation of personality regulatory processes (Uchnast, 1997). The need for stability or predictability appears evident in the group of mothers who juggle the demands of maternity and career without help from a supportive partner. Thus, their withstanding approach may be understood as an attempt to find work-life balance through reducing challenges and taking control of their lives (Oleś & Drat-Ruszczak, 2008). It is difficult to clearly determine whether reduced openness is a manifestation of their flexibility in finding effective remedies in a difficult situation (Cheng, 2001; Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2008) or an attempt to avoid emotions and uncertainties resulting from negative evaluation of life experiences (McCrae & Costa, 2005).

However, a parallel difficulty to distance themselves from reality using humour might suggest a post traumatic response (Connor, 2006). The overall level of resilience of single mothers and their ability to cope with life events proves to be similar to mothers in relationships with regards to both resilient coping and resilience as an attribute. Their job satisfaction is also comparable to that of cohabiting mothers. Thus, it can be concluded that, regardless of life circumstances, women hold a similar level of personal resources, which points to their external nature. The influences on resources associated with resilience and job satisfaction are likely to be multifactorial, and include experiences from earlier in life, for example, childhood (Compas et al., 2014; Heszen & Sęk, 2007; Ostaszewski, 2005). Therefore, an assumption that single motherhood is an important factor in explaining differences in resilience and job satisfaction among women proved to be only partially supported.

The second hypothesis presuming intensity of resilience as a factor significantly differentiating job satisfaction of women with regards to their marital status was confirmed. Although the interactions between marital status and women's resilient coping with difficulties and resilience as an attribute was statistically significant, the effect sizes were rather low. The research outcomes encouraged us to conclude that both resilient coping and resilience as an attribute were more important to job satisfaction for single mothers than for those in relationships. Thus, it could be assumed that these resources are broadly employed by single mothers in the work context. What is more, it could be hypothesised that resil-

iently coping with difficulties plays a greater role in gaining job satisfaction than resilience as a feature. It may be consequential to the expectation of being independent when dealing with problems and exerting self-efficacy as less support is available to them (in comparison to mothers in relationships) (Cairney et al., 2003).

It is worth noting that hardiness is understood as a personality basis for resilience, that is, the ability to focus on fulfilling tasks and not on the self-construct (Russel & Karol, 1994). Therefore, it is likely that greater job satisfaction of single mothers requires employing a broader social perspective. For example, help received from a supportive partner allows women to self-care. This may explain why resilience of cohabiting mothers is not as strongly related to their job satisfaction as that of single mothers. The social situation of surveyed women is a factor that could play an important role in explaining the relationship between resilience and job satisfaction. Therefore, resilience as a resource should be considered an important factor from the perspective of social psychology. Resilience takes part in the adaptation of individuals to social requirements, and is an especially vital part of coping for people from the most vulnerable social groups. Also, it is known that high resilience as a personal resource could increase mothers' job satisfaction and permits greater work retention (Ciabattari, 2005).

Nadolska and Sęk (2007) highlight that resilience emerges as a result of difficult experiences or threats, which explains its high level among single mothers. Thus, the level of resilience in lone mothers may possibly be explained by individual differences, rather than the situation itself. Nevertheless, lower resilience and resilient coping together with hardships of single motherhood correlate with a greater difficulty in achieving job satisfaction by women. This is consistent with previous analyses that underline some challenges in mobilising one's own coping potential and undertaking actions. These challenges are especially present among people with a low resilience (Iskra & Klinkosz, 2013). It is difficult to gain a sense of achievement without engaging in activities directed to fulfil one's goals. This may also apply to job satisfaction. Less resilient individuals might be inclined to utilise non-adaptive coping strategies, which would lead them to feel overburdened and reduce their job satisfaction (Chojnacka-Szawłowska, 2009; Górska, 2004). Lower resilience is also negatively associated with social competences (Compas et al., 2014), and consequently with poorer working relationships, including a higher chance of conflicts or difficulties in cooperation. Finally, it is linked to lower overall resistance to social stressors in the workplace (Białas & Litwin, 2013; Borowska-Pietrzak, 2014; Łaguna, 2012; Lipińska-Grobelyń & Głowacka, 2009; Wołowska, 2013). Each of these factors could contribute to a decrease in job satisfaction. Lower job satisfaction among women burdened by an immense workload and family duties might engage in a vicious circle, which can turn into a spiral of loss. This could consequently be linked to increased discomfort in many areas of life (Carson et al., 2003; Ogińska-Bulik, 2001). Being able to rely on resources other than personal ones is an important safeguarding factor. Therefore, it might be concluded that relationship status brings about psychological consequences that may be perceived as a source of important resources for a working mother.

## Conclusions

Both resilient coping and resilience as an attribute are more strongly related to job satisfaction among single mothers than among cohabiting ones. It is likely that when coping with life challenges, single mothers rely on their personal resources to a greater extent in comparison to mothers in relationships who can receive support from a partner<sup>3</sup>. Lower job satisfaction was observed in a group of single mothers with a low level of resilience. Thus, weak personal coping resources among people from disadvantaged social groups could be related to lower quality of life.

## Authors' Contribution

Izabela Grzankowska – research conducting, preparing the part of theoretical basis of the work, analysing the results in the light of a theory and current researches, preparing the work for printing (35%).

Elżbieta Napora – the concept author; research conducting, preparing the part of theoretical basis of the work (35%).

Małgorzata A. Basińska – the concept author; the research model construction, statistical data analysis (30%).

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## Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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<sup>3</sup> Limitations and suggestions for further research are presented in Appendix 3.

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## Appendix 1

### The Psychometric Characteristics of the Measurement Tools

*The Brief Resilient Coping Scale* (Piórowska et al., 2017) is comprised of 4 statements, to which a respondent replies using a five-point scale. The results range between 4 and 20 points. The scale is a reliable and accurate method; the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .73 in the studied group. The intensity of resilient coping corresponded with higher points on the scale.

*The Resilience Assessment Scale* (SPP-25) by N. Ogińska-Bulik and Z. Juczyński (2008) finds the participant's degree of agreement with a set of 25 statements using a Likert-type five-point scale (from 0 – *definitely not* to 4 – *definitely yes*). The scale measures the intensity of resilience and its five factors: perseverance and determination in action; openness to new experiences and sense of humour; personal competences to cope with adverse situations and a resistance to negative feelings; resistance to failures and perception of life as a challenge as well as optimistic outlook on life and encouragement to confront difficult situations. The results are calculated for the total value of resilience and for its individual dimensions. The intensity of resilience and its components increases with the amount of points scored on the test. The Cronbach's coefficient  $\alpha$  was .89 for the entire scale (Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2008).

*The Satisfaction with Job Scale* (Zalewska, 2003b) is a tool composed of five items and measures general, subjective job satisfaction in its cognitive aspect. The participants respond to the statements on a seven-point scale (where 1 means *I totally disagree*, and 7 – *I*

*totally agree*). The results range between 5 and 35 points. The psychometric value of the scale in the studied group was high, Chronbach's  $\alpha = .88$ .

Demographic characteristics of the studied group contained data on age, education, residence, number of children, marital status and nature of the relationship with a partner (single mothers: *unmarried, divorced, widowed*, mothers in relationships: *married, in informal relationship*).

## Appendix 2 Differences Between Mothers in Terms of the Analysed Variables

Table A1

*The Significance of Differences Between Single Mothers and Mothers Remaining in a Relationship (df = 433).*

Analysed variables	Single mothers (n = 231)		Mothers remaining in a relationship (n = 204)		t/z	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Job satisfaction	21.18	07.61	22.16	06.80	-1.40 <sup>t</sup>	.16
Resilient coping	14.23	02.94	14.44	02.64	-0.78 <sup>t</sup>	.43
General resiliency	70.24	16.00	72.50	12.79	-1.30 <sup>z</sup>	.19
I perseverance and determination in activity	14.83	03.64	15.40	03.03	-1.69 <sup>z</sup>	.09
II openness to new experiences and a sense of humour	14.63	03.53	15.50	02.68	-2.55 <sup>z</sup>	.01
III personal competences to cope and negative emotions tolerance	13.74	03.53	13.99	02.98	-0.43 <sup>z</sup>	.67
IV failure tolerance and treating life as a challenge	14.08	03.51	14.53	02.89	-0.71 <sup>z</sup>	.47
V optimistic attitude towards life and an ability to mobilize itself	13.03	03.79	13.29	03.22	-0.19 <sup>z</sup>	.85

<sup>t</sup>t-value; <sup>z</sup>z-value.

## Appendix 3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Due to the relatively small scope and imbalance in numbers of participants in a given group, an analysis of differences between both groups was not performed. It is worth adding this analysis in further investigations as well as examining the role of the quality of prior relationships.

To answer the question of how to counteract the over-use of resources and reduce burdens arising from single motherhood among working women, we need further research. A broader study that would include people from mothers' social network (such as parents, friends and other relatives) might indicate the importance of presence of and support from other people (Reivich & Shatte, 2003). The area of personal resources, which are strengthened through a supportive relationship with a partner, seems to also be an important factor to analyse. As single mothers lack the opportunity to seek support from a partner, they could be considered a particularly vulnerable group. This is especially the case with regards to self-esteem, which is seen as a predictor of seeking social support in difficult situations (Eris & Ikiz, 2013; Ogińska-Bulik, 2001).