

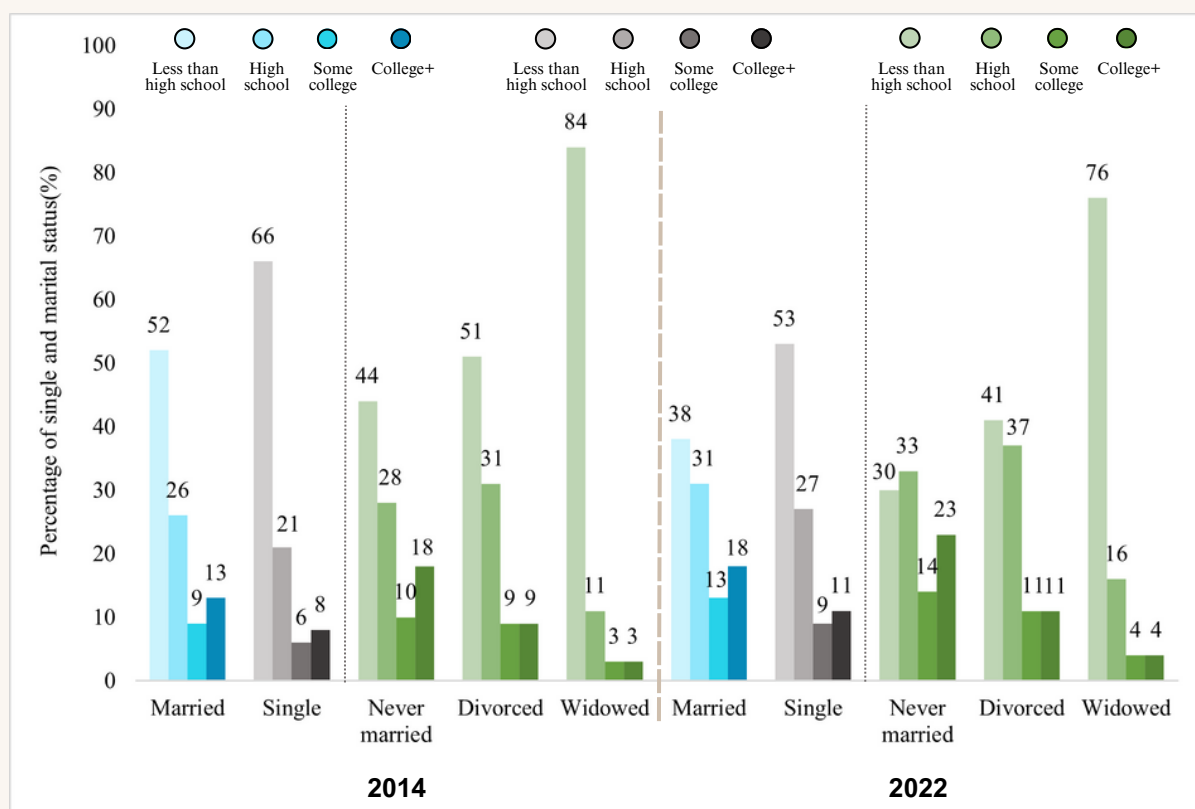
Singlehood during later life in Taiwan: The prevalence by gender and education between 2014 and 2022

Huijing Wu & Yushan Lin

Over the past decade, fertility and marriage rates have declined, leading to rapid shifts in the family structure in Taiwan. For example, there has been an increase in single-person households and the number of adults without children (Cheng, 2014; Wang & Yang, 2019). Previous studies in Taiwan have focused on examining family changes among younger single cohorts, such as marriage propensities by education (Cheng, 2014, 2016; Chiang, 2023). However, little is known about the characteristics of singlehood in the aging population and how it changes the population over time. Our prior report examined the prevalence of singlehood among adults aged 50 and older (Wu & Lin, 2023). This report examines how single adults aged 50 and older varied by gender and education between 2014 and 2022 using Taiwan census data (Taiwan Ministry of the Interior, 2022).

Single Adults Aged 50+ by Education, 2014-2022

Figure 1. Percentage of Single Adults Aged 50+ by Education in Taiwan, 2014-2022

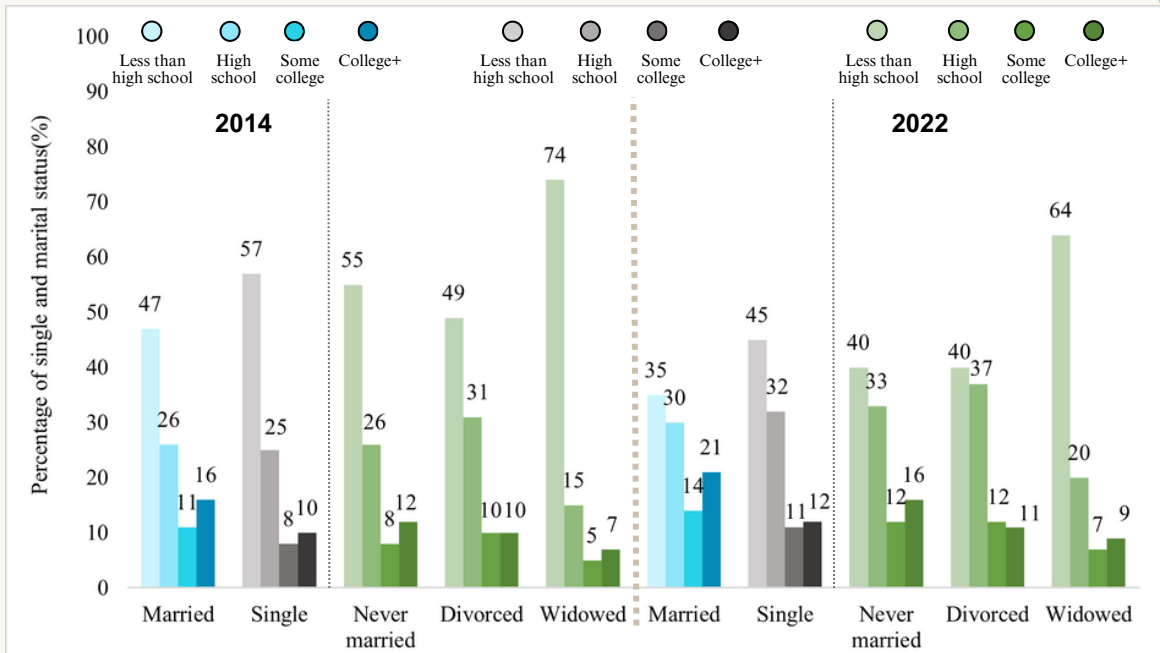


Note: 1. Married adults are considered the reference group. 2. The education percentages add up to 100. 3. Singles include adults who were never married, divorced, or widowed.

- Most single adults aged 50+ had less than a high school degree, but the percentage declined from 66% in 2014 to 53% in 2022. Those with high school degrees, some college, and college and higher degrees have increased recently.
- Adults who never married were more likely to have higher levels of education in 2022 than in 2014, especially for those with high school degrees (increased to 33%) and college and above degrees (increased to 23%).
- Among divorced adults, the percentage with a higher educational attainment has increased, while the percentage with less than a high school degree has decreased by roughly 10% since 2014.
- Among widowed adults, levels of educational attainment were similar between 2014 and 2022, although the percentage with less than a high school degree decreased slightly.

Single Men Aged 50+ by Education, 2014-2022

Figure 2. Percentage of Single Men Aged 50+ by Education, Taiwan, 2014-2022

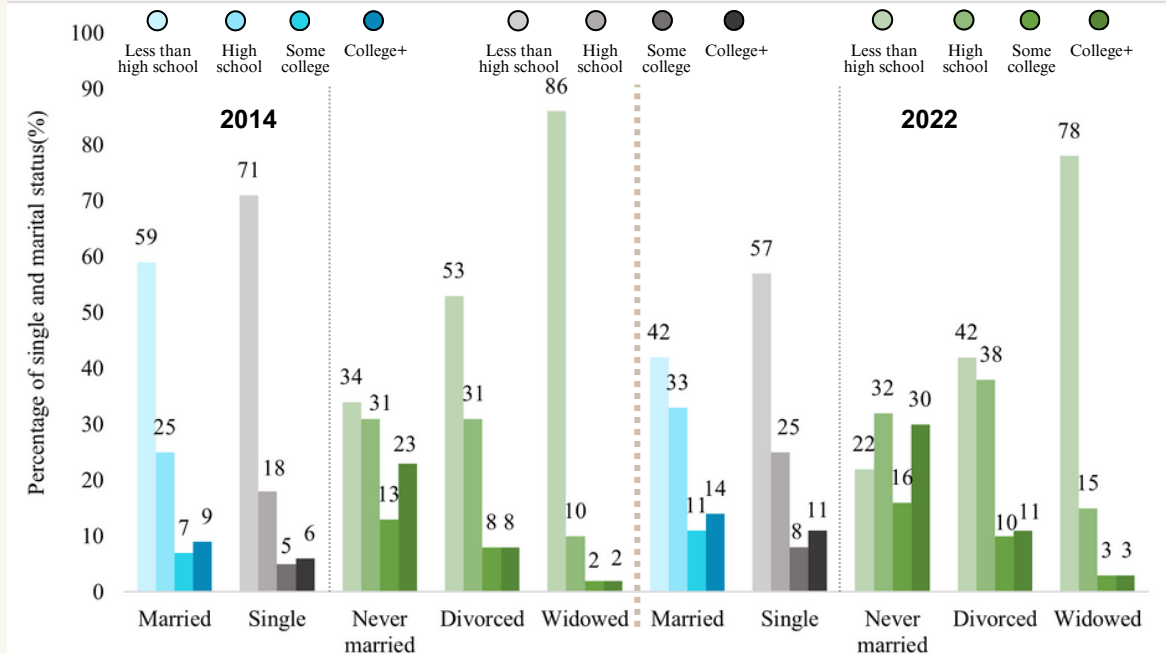


Note: 1. Married adults are considered the reference group. 2. The education percentages add up to 100. 3. Singles include adults who were never married, divorced, or widowed.

- Most single men aged 50+ had less than a high school degree. However, the percentage with high school, some college, and college+ degrees became more common in 2022 than in 2014.
- Although most never-married men had less than a high school degree, the percentage declined by nearly 15% between 2014 and 2022.
- In 2014, most divorced men had less than a high school degree (49%). However, the trend indicates that divorced men have higher levels of educational attainment in 2022.
- Widowed men had similar levels of educational attainment between 2014 and 2022.

Single Women Aged 50+ by Education, 2014-2022

Figure 3. Percentages of Single Women Aged 50+ by Education, Taiwan, 2014-2022



Note: 1. Married adults are considered the reference group. 2. The education percentages add up to 100. 3. Singles include adults who were never married, divorced, or widowed.

- Compared to men, the number of single women with less than a high school degree has declined since 2014, although the percentages remain higher than those for men. Single women were more likely to have higher levels of educational attainment in 2022 than in 2014.
- The percentage of never-married women with high school degrees (32%) and college degrees and above (30%), increased in 2022.
- If never-married men are likely to have high school or less than high school degrees in 2022, never-married women are likely to have some college or college and above degrees.
- Divorced women were more likely to have less than high school or high school degrees in 2014 and 2022, presenting a trend similar to divorced men.
- Widowed women were significantly more likely to have less than a high school degree in the last few years.

Reference

- Cheng, Y. H. A. (2014). Changing partner choice and marriage propensities by education in post-industrial Taiwan, 2000–2010. *Demographic Research*, 31, 1007-1042.
- Cheng, Y. H. A. (2016). More education, fewer divorcees? Shifting education differentials of divorce in Taiwan from 1975 to 2010. *Demographic Research*, 34, 927-942.
- Chiang, Y. L., & Park, H. (2023). Three decades of gender and education differentials in attitudes toward divorce in Taiwan, 1985–2015. *Asian Population Studies*, 19(1), 22-39.
- Taiwan Ministry of the Interior. (2014). Number of people aged 15 and above by age, education level and marital status. <https://www.ris.gov.tw/app/portal/346>
- Taiwan Ministry of the Interior. (2022). Number of people aged 15 and above by age, education level and marital status. <https://www.ris.gov.tw/app/portal/346>
- Wang, Y. T., & Yang, W. S. (2019). Changes and trends in family structure in Taiwan, 1990 to 2010. *Journal of Family Issues*, 40(14), 1896-1911.
- Wu, H. J., & Lin, Y. S. (2023). Singlehood among Middle-aged and Older Adults in Taiwan, 1996-2022 (CG-112-GP-09, Changes in Family Demography, Health and Well-being, and Caregiving in later life in Taiwan: Past, Present, and Future). National Center for Geriatrics and Welfare Research, National Health Research Institutes, Taiwan. <https://reurl.cc/q0gZDE>