THE MATURITY TO PARENTHOOD SCALE: ARE YOUNG ADULTS MATURE ENOUGH FOR BEING A PARENT?

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Despite the growing body of research investigating parenthood, the focus is mainly on family functioning, parenting and caring for the children. However, the understudied issue is maturity to parenthood of young adults.

The aim of the current study was to assess psychometric proprieties of the Maturity to Parenthood Scale, a new instrument to evaluate young adults’ maturity for being a parent, in three areas: Valence, Behavioral and Cognitive-Emotional. Additionally, empathy and resiliency were analyzed as predictors of maturity to parenthood for both, women and men.

A total of 708 Polish young adults ($M_{age}= 23.49$; $SD= 2.89$; 20-35 years; 479 women) participated in the study. Participants were in relationships for at least six months ($M_{year}= 3.5$; $SD= 2.38$) and yet childless. Participants were asked to fill in the Maturity to Parenthood Scale (Łada & Kaźmierczak) and a sociodemographic survey. Moreover, another 204 young adults filled in Resiliency Assessment Scale (Ogińska-Bulik & Jućzyński, 2008) and Empathic Sensitiveness Scale (Kaźmierczak, Plopa, & Retowski, 2007).

Confirmatory analyses showed satisfactory fit indices for the 26 item model: $\chi^2(296)= 1579.89$, $p< .001$, RMSEA=.07; CFI=.94, TLI=.93. Such model evidenced 3 different factors of maturity to parenthood with high internal reliability values. The Cronbach’s $\alpha$ for the factors were as follows: for Valence $\alpha= .85$, for Behavioral $\alpha= .88$ and for Cognitive-Emotional $\alpha= .87$. Furthermore, the reliability for general maturity to parenthood was $\alpha= .94$.

In addition, multiple linear regression analyses evidenced that empathy and resiliency were significant predictors of maturity to parenthood, with significant gender effects.

The results of this study show that the Maturity to Parenthood Scale could be a useful instrument to assess young adults’ maturity for being a parent. Furthermore, the outcomes confirm that individual differences in empathy and resiliency might impact maturity to parenthood of young adults.