

## ABSTRACT

Presented doctoral dissertation is a series of five thematically coherent scientific publications (four articles published in high-scoring scientific journals in English and one book chapter in a collective work in Polish). The aim of the presented research was to analyze selected personal and relational factors related to maturity to parenthood and the fulfillment of parental roles (reflected in parental responsiveness and parental attitudes). Therefore, the purpose of the research presented in Publication 1 (Lipowska, Łada, & Lipowski, 2021) was the verification of models concerning the predictors of parental attitudes of fathers of preschool children, taking into account the role of fathers' individual characteristics - coping strategies, as well as child characteristics - temperament and gender. The biological fathers of only children ( $N = 146$ ; Mage of fathers = 35.07;  $SD = 5.71$ ) participated in the study. The results indicate that the father's coping strategies and the child's temperament predict parental attitudes relatively independently. In addition, the results confirmed that active coping strategies are conducive to the development of high parenting skills. In this study, we also observed differences in the prediction of fathers' parental attitudes by the child's temperamental traits, depending on the child's gender. In the subsequent stages of the doctoral thesis, research on the role of personal factors in the process of preparing for parenthood, as well as factors related to individual functioning in close relationships between women and men, was presented. Publication 2 (Kaźmierczak, Pawlicka, Łada, & Anikiej, 2020) presents the Polish development of the Ainsworth Sensitivity Scale (1974), an observational measure for assessing the quality of parent-child interaction, as well as its innovative application in research in the context of studying couples. The study involved 220 heterosexual couples, aged 22 to 35. Half of the study group consisted of couples expecting their first child (third trimester of pregnancy, activation of the parental role), while the other half were couples who had no children and were not currently pregnant. The results of the study indicate that activation of the parental role is conducive to higher responsiveness, and also confirms the importance of relational context for responsiveness – thus, factors related to functioning in close relationships. The conclusions of the above study led to the research presented in Publication 3 (Kaźmierczak, et al., 2020), in which we conducted a broader analysis of relational factors for the quality of childcare, taking into account factors related to functioning in the family of origin and in a close romantic relationship, during transition to parenthood. The study involved 111 young adult couples ( $N = 222$ ) who were expecting their first child. The obtained results indicate that women were perceived by their partners as more empathetic, while men more often reported experiencing abuse in childhood compared to women. In addition, we showed that women's (but not men's) empathic concern as perceived by their partners was related to the parental responsiveness of couples expecting their first child. Our results also confirmed the mediating role of perceived partner empathy in the relationship between retrospectively assessed negative caregiving experiences in childhood and the couple's responsiveness to baby crying. The results of the research conducted so far (Publications 1-3), have directed my scientific and research interests towards factors that may potentially be important for better coping with the challenges of parenthood. In particular, towards psychological resources related to parental competence, responsiveness or empathy. Therefore, the aim of the research presented in Publication 4 (Łada-Maśko & Kaźmierczak, 2021) was to operationalize the maturity to parenthood construct and create a questionnaire enabling the assessment of parenthood maturity, as well as verification of its psychometric properties. The Maturity to Parenthood Scale (SDR; Łada-Maśko & Kaźmierczak, 2021) proved to be a reliable and valid measure for assessing maturity to parenthood. In addition, the research emphasized the multidimensionality of the above construct, which manifests itself in various spheres of human functioning: in the area of individual values, behavioral and cognitive-emotional functioning. Since maturity to parenthood is not only an intra-

individual construct, but also closely related to functioning in close relationships, the aim of the next study presented in the Publication 5 (Łada-Maśko & Kaźmierczak, 2023) was to analyze the role of attachment in predicting parenthood maturity of couples in adulthood, taking into account developmental factors (age, activation of the parental role) and gender. The study involved 300 heterosexual young adult couples aged 20-35. The couples were divided into three groups: 1) 110 couples aged 20–25 (emerging adulthood); 2) 90 couples aged 26-35 (early adulthood); 3) 100 couples aged 20-35 expecting their first child (third trimester of pregnancy, assuming the parental role). The obtained results indicate that attachment avoidance is an universal predictor of couples maturity to parenthood in adulthood, regardless of the activation of the parental role. Surprisingly, no significant effects were found between attachment anxiety and maturity to parenthood. In addition, the study confirmed that the negative effects of attachment avoidance are weaker in the group of couples expecting the first child. Furthermore, the analysis of the role of developmental factors such as age and activation of the parental role showed that the expectation of a child in the near future is conducive to greater maturity to parenthood and is probably more important for maturity to parenthood than age