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Psychological maturity of young men and women for marriage as the predicator for the observance of contemporary family law

Through their mutual relationship the woman and man create the atmosphere of the married life which is either favourable for their development and for the development of their children, or which hinders the development. The higher is their psychological maturity, which is reflected in self-acceptance, in their internal integrity and in the positive attitude towards marriage and family life, the more likely the spouses would follow the rules of contemporary family law and, as a result, they will create the atmosphere which favours proper development of all the family members.

Key words: psychological maturity for marriage, self-acceptance, internal integrity, attitude towards marriage and family life, contemporary family law.

Introduction

Psychological maturity for marriage, which consists in the ability to create a satisfying interpersonal relationship for a lifetime results from the personal level of psychological maturity of both spouses¹.

¹ M. Braun-Gałkowska, *Miłość aktywna. Psychiczne uwarunkowania powodzenia w małżeństwie* (Warszawa: 1985), 24-27; A. Dakowicz, *Powodzenie małżeństwa. Uwarunkowania psychologiczne w perspektywie transgresyjnego modelu Józefa Kozielskiego* (Białystok: 2014), 55.

Assuming a certain psychological concept concerning man would lead to emphasising different aspects of the psychological sphere which feature psychological maturity and it is difficult to collect these aspects into a compact canon which would integrate various attitudes. However, it is possible to define the most essential dimensions of a mature personality. Zdzisław Chlewiński² brings it to: 1) autonomy in thinking, in aspirations, decisions and conduct – consisting in following one's own principles and the system of values in life; 2) treating everyone with due respect that is: as the highest value, without treating this person in an instrumental manner; 3) accurate detailed insight into one's own motivation – that is understanding the reasons of one's behaviour without resorting to the defence mechanisms. Piotr K. Oleś³ mentions the following criteria of a mature personality: 1) the inner riches – which is expressed in experiences, convictions, knowledge, attitude towards life, which is connected with broadening the horizons of thinking, the scope of understanding phenomena and the variety of interpersonal contacts; 2) feeling of happiness – the developing ability to feel and express the joy of life which results from satisfying one's needs or from effective realization of tasks and achieving the goals which are considered valuable; 3) the choice of goals and aspirations – the ability based on clear criteria with realistic planning and the effective and efficient realization; 4) flexibility in reacting – the ability of the adequate, adaptive attitude towards various challenges, tasks and events; 5) resistance to frustration – the ability to independently react to the conditions of stress and anxiety; 6) hierarchy of values – allows to know what is the most important in potential or in real-life conditions; 7) the commitment for others – formulating goals and choosing the tasks which go beyond one's own interests, the ability to submit the pro-social goals over individual goals; 8) transcendence – going beyond what is typical, well-known and tested, the ability to create new and progressing aspirations which aim at the personal development with the commitment into the essential life matters; 9) respect for others – subjective attitude towards others which is mainly expressed in respecting the dignity and freedom of others; 10) responsibility – the ability to make important existential choices with the readiness to bear the direct and distant consequences; 11) autonomy – readiness for the risk of acting on an individual basis without expecting the support or example of others; 12) moral maturity – the ability to develop one's

² Z. Chlewiński, *Dojrzałość: osobowość, sumienie, religijność* (Poznań: 1991), 15-31.

³ P.K. Oleś, *Psychologia człowieka dorosłego. Ciągłość – zmiana – integracja* (Warszawa: 2011), 247-255.

own inner criteria of valuing and understanding the contextual nature of respecting the rules.

The criteria of a mature personality mentioned above reflect the degree of the psychological maturity for marriage.

Psychological maturity for marriage

The analysis of the factors which determine the maturity for marriage prepared by Maria Ryś and Tomasz Sztajerwald resulted in creating the Psychological Maturity Scale for Marriage which comprises the aspects concerning self-acceptance, that is; the proper self-esteem, the ability to satisfy one's needs, to properly function in the sphere of emotions as well as the personal integrity and the personal attitude to marriage and family life⁴.

Self-acceptance has an important influence on the functioning of marriage. Too low self-esteem would lead to the lack of confidence in one's abilities while the heightened self-esteem may lead the spouses to undertake tasks which are just beyond their capabilities⁵ or even to assume the attitude of egocentrism. The proper self-esteem will always be connected with self-acceptance of a person who knows his or her strengths and weaknesses. A mature person lives in truth, respecting and valuing himself or herself without the fear of rejection or disapproval. He or she does not aim at imaginary goals, is aware of his or her aspirations and knows the reasons behind the undertaken actions⁶.

The inner integrity of the spouses is very important for their marriage because every person consists of an instinct and reflective layer, of the psychological layer and of the spiritual layer. The process of the inner integrity of man may lead to the balance between all the elements of personality as well as between the aspirations and actions, attitudes, values, ambitions, needs and feelings⁷, which would be reflected in the

⁴ M. Ryś, T. Sztajerwald, "Psychologiczne aspekty dojrzałości młodych do małżeństwa. Skala Dojrzałości Psychicznej do Małżeństwa SKALDOM II", *Kwartalnik Naukowy Fides et Ratio* 1(37) (2019): 164.

⁵ B. Tomaszewska, U. Dębska, "Psychologiczne aspekty dojrzałości do małżeństwa. Badania studentek pod kątem ich oczekiwań wobec przyszłego partnera życiowego", in: *Młodość w zmieniającym się świecie*, ed. A. Keplinger (Wrocław: 2001), 133.

⁶ M. Ryś, *Psychologia małżeństwa w zarysie* (Warszawa: 1999), 33.

⁷ M. Ryś, *Ku dojrzałości osobowej w małżeństwie. Rozwijanie dojrzałej osobowości* (Warszawa: 1997), 10; M. Ryś, *Psychologia małżeństwa w zarysie* (Warszawa: 1999), 33.

higher quality of the created marriage relationship, and in case of the lack of harmony, it will be reflected in its low quality⁸.

The attitude towards marriage and family life is of great importance in the psychological maturity for marriage. When the wife and the husband are mature in their decisions, and when they make choices in accordance with the proper, well-thought and acknowledged system of values, they act in an autonomous way, have insight into their own motivational system and take into account the social requirements, while preserving their independence from the social pressure⁹, they have a chance to create a marriage relationship which would be satisfactory for both spouses¹⁰.

Creating the marriage relationship, the spouses undertake highly responsible challenge of creating a relationship for a lifetime, which will give them satisfaction or which will lead to dissatisfaction. The former family law¹¹, as well as the current Family and Guardianship Code¹², through the framed regulations, are supposed to support the spouses on their common path of married life and in the effective undertaking of the parental functions.

The procedure of the Authors' research

The aim of this article is to make an attempt to determine whether the psychological maturity of young women and men for marriage can influence the way they perceive the contemporary family law. In order to achieve this goal we should have determined whether there are any essential differences in the level of the maturity among the surveyed women and men. The main problem consists in establishing the relation between the psychological maturity for marriage of young women and men and the way they perceive the contemporary family law. Therefore, the following research questions were posed:

⁸ B. Harwas-Napierała, "Dojrzałość osobowa dorosłych jako czynnik chroniący rodzinę", *Czasopismo Psychologiczne* 21, 1 (2015): 47.

⁹ M. Ryś, *Ku dojrzałości osobowej w małżeństwie. Rozwijanie dojrzałej osobowości* (Warszawa: 1997), 12-13.

¹⁰ A. Dakowicz, *Zadowolenie z małżeństwa. Pedagogiczne implikacje dotyczące osobistego rozwoju małżonków, relacji małżeńskich i rodzicielskich* (Białystok: 2021), 109-115.

¹¹ Rev. M. Sopoćko, *Rodzina w prawodawstwie na ziemiach polskich. Studium etyczno-prawne* (Wilno: 1926).

¹² The Act from February 25th 1964 The Family and Guardianship Code, annex to the announcement to the Marshal of the Sejm of the Polish Republic from July 15th 2020 r. (item 1359).

1. Do the surveyed young women differ from one another as far as the level of psychological maturity for marriage is concerned?
2. Do the surveyed young men differ from one another as far as the level of psychological maturity for marriage is concerned?
3. Are there any differences among the surveyed which refer to the three essential dimensions of the psychological maturity for marriage: self-acceptance, the inner integrity and the attitude towards the world and towards marriage and the family life?
4. Can the psychological maturity for marriage influence the way they observe the contemporary family law?

The analysis of the publications on the discussed issues¹³ induces to make the following hypotheses:

H_0 – Psychological maturity for marriage among the surveyed young women and men can exert influence on their way of observing the contemporary family law.

H_1 – We can presume that young women and men who are more psychologically mature for marriage are more likely to observe the contemporary family law than the surveyed with the lower level of psychological maturity for marriage.

The research¹⁴ was conducted with the Psychological Maturity Scale for Marriage SKALDOM II, which determines three essential dimensions of psychological maturity for marriage: 1) Self-acceptance; 2) The inner integrity and the attitude towards the world; 3) Attitude towards marriage and family life¹⁵. Researchers obtained complete

¹³ M. Braun-Galkowska, *Psychologiczna analiza systemów rodzinnych osób zadowolonych i niezadowolonych z małżeństwa* (Lublin: 1992); I. Janicka, T. Rostowska (ed.), *Psychologia w służbie rodziny* (Łódź: 2003); M. Plopa, *Więzi w małżeństwie i rodzinie. Metody badań* (Kraków: 2005); L. Dyczewski (ed.), *Małżeństwo i rodzina w nowoczesnym społeczeństwie* (Lublin: 2007); M. Jeziorański, D. Opozda, A. Rynio (ed.), *Rodzina przestrzenią rozwoju osoby. Perspektywa pedagogiczna* (Lublin: 2012); J. Augustyn (ed.), *Sztuka relacji międzyludzkich. Miłość, małżeństwo, rodzina* (Kraków: 2014); I. Janicka, H. Liberska (ed.), *Psychologia rodziny* (Warszawa: 2014).

¹⁴ Within the research project called: “Dojrzałość psychiczna do małżeństwa młodych kobiet i mężczyzn” [Psychological maturity of young women and men for marriage] conducted in the academic year 2021/2022 at the licentiate seminar under the supervision of Andrzej Dakowicz PhD by the students of III year grade of Cognitive and Communication Studies in the Institute of Philosophy of Białystok University: Natalia Artemiuk, Iga Baranowska, Patrycja Bielska, Martyna Kołosowska, Izabela Olchanowska, Julia Ostrowska, Karolina Sienkiewicz, Julia Winnicka and Emilia Zawadzka.

¹⁵ M. Ryś, T. Sztajerwald, “Psychologiczne aspekty dojrzałości młodych do małżeństwa. Skala Dojrzałości Psychiczej do Małżeństwa SKALDOM II”, *Kwartalnik Naukowy Fides et Ratio* 1(37) (2019): 164.

and correctly prepared results of the Psychological Maturity Scale for Marriage SKALDOM II from 90 women and 90 men. The surveyed women and men were divided into two 30-person groups with the higher and lower psychological maturity for marriage. Taking into account the specification of the surveyed women from both groups, they were very similar as far as the average age, the level of education, paid activity, type of their parents' relationship and the number of siblings (table 1) are concerned.

Table 1. The characteristics of the surveyed women

Selected features		Women with the level of psychological maturity for marriage	
		higher (N=30)	lower (N=30)
The average age		22,1 years old	21,9 years old
Level of education	secondary	23 (76,7%) 7 (23,3%)	24 (80,0%) 6 (20,0%)
	high (university)		
Paid activity	Yes	22 (73,3%)	21 (70,0%)
	No	8 (26,7%)	9 (30,0%)
The type of the parents' relationship	Formal	20 (66,7%)	26 (86,7%)
	Separated	0 (0,0%)	1 (3,3%)
	Divorced	10 (33,3%)	3 (10%)
Siblings	Has	28 (93,3%)	29 (96,7%)
	doesn't have	2 (6,7%)	1 (3,3%)

The situation is analogous in the case of the surveyed men, both groups with higher and lower level of psychological maturity for marriage were similar as far as the average age, the level of education, the paid activity, the type of their parents' relationship and the amount of siblings (table 2) are concerned.

Using proper statistical tests¹⁶, the researchers compared the selected groups of young women and men using the software IBM SPSS Statistics 28. The surveyed women (table 3, diagram 1) of the higher level of psychological maturity for marriage are to a greater extent able to accept themselves as they are (table 3: $t = 8,49$, $p < 0,001$). The inner integrity and the attitude towards the world are much higher among them than among the women with the lower psychological maturity

¹⁶ M. Cypryańska, S. Bedyńska, "Testy t-Studenta i ich nieparametryczne odpowiedniki", in: *Statystyczny drogowskaz 1. Praktyczne wprowadzenie do wnioskowania statystycznego*, editors S. Bedyńska, M. Cypryańska (Warsaw: 2013), 179-185.

for marriage (table 3: $t = 10,27$, $p < 0,001$). Among the women with the higher psychological maturity for marriage level the researchers could observe a better approach to marriage and the family life than among the women with the lower level of psychological maturity for marriage (table 3: $t = 5,39$, $p < 0,001$).

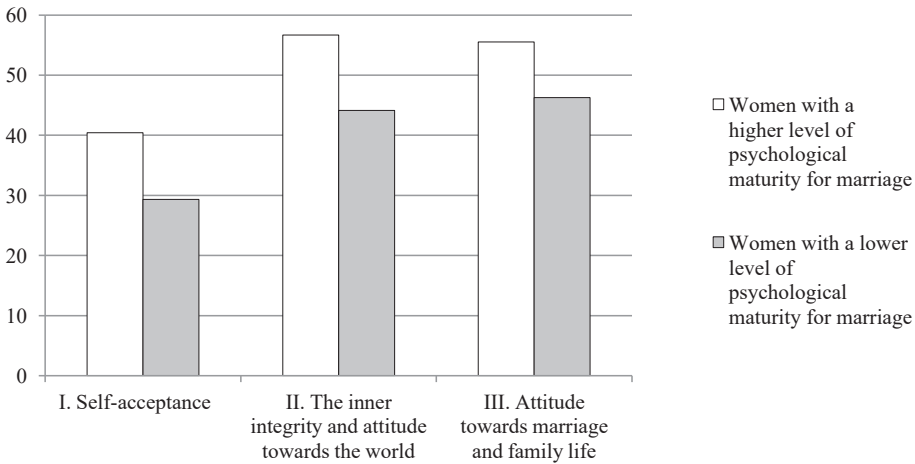
Table 2. The characteristics of the surveyed men

Selected features		Men with the level of psychological maturity for marriage	
		higher (N=30)	lower (N=30)
The average age		21,5 years old	22,4 years old
Level of education	secondary	23 (76,7%)	28 (93,3%)
	high (university)	7 (23,3%)	2 (6,7%)
Paid activity	Yes	20 (66,7%)	23 (76,7%)
	No	10 (33,3%)	7 (23,3%)
The type of the parents' relationship	formal	23 (76,7%)	22 (73,3%)
	separated	0 (0,0%)	0 (0,0%)
	divorced	7 (23,3%)	8 (26,7%)
Siblings	Has	26 (86,7%)	26 (86,7%)
	doesn't have	4 (13,3%)	4 (13,3%)

Table 3. The results concerning women with the higher and lower level of maturity for marriage obtained in the Psychological Maturity Scale for Marriage SKALDOM II

Dimensions of psychological maturity for marriage	Women's level of maturity for marriage				Significance of differences	
	higher (N=30)		lower (N=30)			
	M	SD	M	SD	T	p<
Self-acceptance	40,43	3,70	29,33	6,13	8,49	0,001
The inner integrity and attitude towards the world	56,70	4,60	44,13	4,87	10,27	0,001
Attitude towards marriage and family life	55,53	7,24	46,27	6,03	5,39	0,001

Diagram 1. Presentation of the results of women with higher and lower level of maturity for marriage obtained in the Psychological Maturity Scale for Marriage SKALDOM II



Analogically to women, the surveyed men (table 4, diagram 2) with the higher level of psychological maturity for marriage possess the feature of high self-acceptance (table 4: $t = 10,00$, $p < 0,001$). The inner integrity and the attitude towards the world are much higher among them than among the men with the lowest level of psychological maturity for marriage (table 4: $t = 10,13$, $p < 0,001$). Another specific feature of the men with the higher psychological maturity for marriage is a better attitude for marriage and family life than among the men with the lower psychological maturity for marriage (table 4: $t = 3,63$, $p < 0,001$).

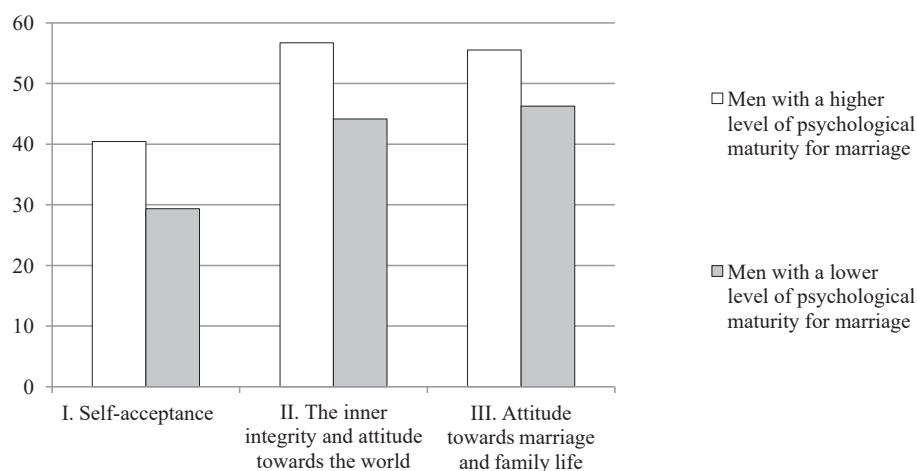
Table 4. Presentation of the results of women with higher and lower level of psychological maturity for marriage obtained in the Psychological Maturity Scale for Marriage SKALDOM II

Dimensions of psychological maturity for marriage	Men's level of maturity for marriage				Significance of differences	
	higher (N=30)		lower (N=30)			
	M	SD	M	SD	t	p<
Self-acceptance	41,90	4,73	28,93	5,29	10,00	0,001

The inner integrity and attitude towards the world	57,20	4,23	44,90	5,13	10,13	0,001
Attitude towards marriage and family life	52,37	5,35	47,70	4,47	3,63	0,001

Theology of Family

Diagram 2. Presentation of the results of men with higher and lower level of maturity for marriage obtained in the Psychological Maturity Scale for Marriage SKALDOM II



The interpretation of the obtained results

Due to the fact that they accept themselves more, have a better inner integrity and a more positive attitude towards the world and a positive attitude towards marriage and the family life, young women and young men with the higher level of psychological maturity for marriage have a greater potential which enables them to deal with the problems that would definitely accompany their married and family life.

At the beginning of their married life together, when the identity of the married couple is created¹⁷, the effective way of dealing with the

¹⁷ M. Walczak, "Dylematy życia małżeńskiego. Rzecz o dynamice i kryzysach w relacjach małżeńskich", in: *Psychologia w służbie rodziny*, edited by I. Janicka, T. Rostowska (Łódź: 2003), 106.

problems¹⁸ leads to a better communication¹⁹ and to settlement which make the spouses more eager to help and support each other and not only to focus on their own needs and treat the spouse as a threat in realization of one's own business. When the couple have children, the previous roles connected with wifely and husband's duties in marriage and the spouses' occupational duties are combined with parenthood role which are highly absorbing, and which require additional effort usually 24/7 but which also give the satisfaction of being the mother²⁰, or the father²¹. In the situation when the roles of spouses, parents and employees are accumulated, which definitely require more efforts, the previous experience of good communication among the spouses, which results from psychological maturity for marriage allows to achieve a better quality of life and to enjoy everything which they experience together²². The research concerning this sphere clearly indicates that psychological maturity for marriage of young women and men alike is combined with a higher level of the sense of security²³, psychological flexibility²⁴ and emotional intelligence²⁵. Lack of communication be-

¹⁸ Sz. Chrząstowski, "Konflikty w parze w perspektywie narracyjnej terapii więzi", *Psychoterapia*, 3(194) (2020): 31-44.

¹⁹ A. Dakowicz, L. Dakowicz, "The quality of marital communication of spouses with a higher and lower level of satisfaction with their relationship", *Kwartalnik Naukowy Fides et Ratio* 1(46) (2021): 129-141

²⁰ W. Półtawska, "Macierzyństwo darem", in: *Oblicza macierzyństwa*, edited by D. Kornas-Biela (Lublin: 1999), 41-47.

²¹ M. Braun-Gałkowska, "Być ojcem", in: *Oblicza ojcostwa*, edited by D. Kornas-Biela (Lublin: 2001), 201-210.

²² T. Rostowska, *Małżeństwo, rodzina, praca a jakość życia* (Kraków: 2008), 132-147.

²³ J. Ostrowska, "Dojrzałość psychiczna do małżeństwa młodych kobiet o wyższym i niższym poziomie poczucia bezpieczeństwa", *Archiwum Prac Dyplomowych Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku* (2022); I. Olchanowska, "Dojrzałość psychiczna do małżeństwa młodych mężczyzn o wyższym i niższym poziomie poczucia bezpieczeństwa", *Archiwum Prac Dyplomowych Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku* (2022).

²⁴ M. Kołosowska, "Dojrzałość psychiczna do małżeństwa młodych kobiet o wyższym i niższym poziomie sprężystości psychicznej", *Archiwum Prac Dyplomowych Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku* (2022); K. Sienkiewicz "Dojrzałość psychiczna do małżeństwa młodych mężczyzn o wyższym i niższym poziomie sprężystości psychicznej", *Archiwum Prac Dyplomowych Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku* (2022).

²⁵ N. Artemiuk, "Dojrzałość psychiczna do małżeństwa młodych kobiet o wyższym i niższym poziomie inteligencji emocjonalnej", *Archiwum Prac Dyplomowych Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku* (2022); J. Winnicka "Dojrzałość psychiczna do małżeństwa młodych mężczyzn o wyższym i niższym poziomie inteligencji

tween the spouses, which results from the lower level of psychological maturity for marriage, leads to a series of conflicts²⁶, to transferring all duties on the other spouse²⁷, to the sense of shame²⁸, or even to depressive conditions²⁹. This may end in disharmony which reduces the quality of life of all the family members.

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to determine the influence of psychological maturity of young women and men for marriage on compliance with the contemporary family law. The comparative analysis between women and men with higher and lower level of psychological maturity for marriage indicates the differences reaching the level of statistical significance, which leads to the conclusion that the higher level of psychological maturity for marriage, due to the self-acceptance, internal integrity and the attitude towards the world as well as the positive attitude towards marriage and the family, can constitute a significant predictor of compliance with the principles contained in the Family and Guardianship Code, and as a consequence, constitute a good basis for creating a positive atmosphere for development of all the family members. It would be advisable to conduct research which would verify the presumed correlation.

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- ²⁶ A. Lipińska-Grobelny, "Marital communication and relationship satisfaction – the differential role of gender schemat", *Quarterly Journal Fides et Ratio* 2(50) (2022): 92-102.
- ²⁷ M. H. Herudzińska, "O (nie)idealnej żonie w czasach dynamicznych zmian – dylematy i wyzwania", *Wychowanie w Rodzinie* vol. XXI(2) (2019): 147-167.
- ²⁸ I. M. Mudrecka, "Wybór między rodziną a pracą zawodową. Doświadczenie i rozwiązywanie konfliktu wewnętrznego", *Family Forum* (2021): 35-50.
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