

Motivation for Parenthood

1. Description of the scale

This scale aims to measure individuals' motivation for becoming parents. The scale is an adaptation of the Motivation to have a Child Scale (MCS; Gauthier et al., 2007), which was developed to assess the quality of motivation to have a child. Although the original MCS was a promising measure to assess motives for parenthood, some of the correlations between the types of motivation were not fully in line with the simplex-like structure expected on the basis of SDT (Gauthier et al., 2007). Therefore, Brenning et al. (2015) made a couple of adaptations to further optimize the instrument. The resulting measure includes 20 items (see below) rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (do not agree at all) to 5 (strongly agree). Each item is presented with the introductory stem "An important reason for me to have a child is . . ." Depending on the research interests, the questionnaire can be administered before, during or after pregnancy, in both women and men.

2. Scale

Motivation to become a parent

Different parents may have different reasons for becoming a parent. Below is a list of reasons that were given by future parents. These reasons are very personal and can also change during pregnancy/parenthood. For each reason, please indicate to what extent it applies to you at this time. We understand that these may be sensitive questions. Still, we invite you to answer these questions as honestly as possible.

1	2	3	4	5
Do not agree at all				Strongly agree

An important reason for me to have a child is ...

1. that this is a way to realize my most important plans in life.	1	2	3	4	5
2. for the pleasure of having a child.	1	2	3	4	5
3. to feel accepted by people in my social network (partner, family, friends).	1	2	3	4	5
4. because only then I can really feel like a woman (or man).	1	2	3	4	5
5. because I can only feel proud of myself when I become a mother.	1	2	3	4	5
6. that having a child is part of the life style I chose.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I don't know. Increasingly I think that I don't have what it takes to raise a child.	1	2	3	4	5
8. that having a child is one of the valuable ways to realize my goals	1	2	3	4	5
9. to meet the expectations of others (partner, family, friends).	1	2	3	4	5
10. for the pleasure of seeing my child grow up.	1	2	3	4	5
11. to please people in my social network (partner, family, friends).	1	2	3	4	5
12. because I would feel failed as a person if I would not have children.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I don't know it anymore. People in my social network seem to be more happy about this than me.	1	2	3	4	5
14. for the pleasure of being part of my child's development (from birth over childhood to adolescence, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5

15. I sometimes wonder why I decided to become a parent.	1	2	3	4	5
16. that having a child allows me to realize my most important life objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
17. because I want to prove to myself that I can handle parenthood.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I used to have good reasons for having a child, but now I wonder why.	1	2	3	4	5
19. That it is expected of a woman (man) that she (he) becomes a mother (father).	1	2	3	4	5
20. for the satisfaction of the beautiful moments I will share with my child.	1	2	3	4	5

3. Scoring instructions

Intrinsic Motivation: mean score of items 2, 10, 14, 20

Identified/Integrated Regulation: mean score of items 1, 6, 8, 16

Introjected Regulation : mean score of items 4, 5, 12, 17

External Regulation : mean score of items 3, 9, 11, 19

Amotivation: mean score of items 7, 13, 15, 18

An overall score for autonomous motivation can be obtained by computing the mean of all items for intrinsic motivation and identified/integrated regulation. An overall score for controlled motivation can be obtained by computing the mean of all items for introjected regulation and external regulation.

It is also possible to compute an overall score for relative autonomy (i.e., a Relative Autonomy Index) by assigning each different regulation subtype a weight in alignment with its location on the self-determination continuum (i.e., 2 for intrinsic motivation, 1 for identified regulation, -1 for introjection, and -2 for external regulation).

4. References

- Brenning, K., Soenens, B., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2015). What's your motivation to be pregnant? Examining relations between pregnant women's motives for having a child and their prenatal functioning. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 29, 755-765. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000110>
- Gauthier, L., Senecal, C., & Guay, F. (2007). Construction and validation of the Motivation to have a Child Scale (MCS). *European Review of Applied Psychology*, 57, 77-89. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erap.2006.09.001>