Embarking on the SAFE Route: Exploring the Psychological Maturity Scale

ABSTRACT

Background: Psychological maturity has been a subject of interest in various cultures, but a comprehensive instrument tailored to specific cultural contexts has been lacking. Existing scales often do not consider relevant cultural factors, creating a gap in psychological research. This study aimed to address this gap by introducing the “Psychological Maturity Scale” designed to be culturally sensitive.

Methods: This study used a cross-sectional design to develop and validate the scale across diverse age groups, involving 2 sample groups of 194 and 213 individuals. The study included exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses and reliability and validity tests. The scale was also compared with established metrics like the Life Satisfaction and Positive–Negative Affect Depression Anxiety Stress Scales.

Results: The research yielded a 4-dimensional model to understand psychological maturity, represented by the acronym SAFE, which stands for Self-Awareness, Autonomy, Flexibility, and Ego Resilience. The findings indicated that the scale is valid and reliable.

Conclusion: Additionally, it was concluded that the dimensions of the developed scale are consistent with theoretical explanations. This scale is more than just an assessment tool; it serves as a culturally sensitive framework and is a crucial, fine-tuned instrument for future psychological research.

Keywords: Psychological maturity, self-awareness, autonomy, flexibility, ego resilience

Introduction

Psychological maturity is a concept that has been studied for a very long time. Firstly, psychological maturity is examined based on age. In this direction, a characteristic that increases with age is considered more mature than unimproved. The second important criterion is the increased complexity and functionality of the developing characteristic.1 This leads us to consider developmental theories, as numerous explanations about psychological maturity originate from theories in developmental psychology. According to theorists who explain the cognitive development process, such as Piaget,4 people go through 4 important cognitive development stages: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational. Cognitively, individuals who reach the formal operational stage have achieved the final stage of cognitive maturity. This usually happens during adolescence.

Similarly, Kohlberg5 states that people experience the process of moral maturity by going through 3 stages and 6 periods. The moral maturation process progresses in parallel with cognitive development. Erikson4 centered the process of psychological maturation on ego development. People possessing characteristics related to the ego, such as basic trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity, and ego integrity over time, mean they are psychologically maturing. Marcia1 also considered the achievement of a successful identity as a criterion for psychological maturity, and adolescents go through the process of forming a successful identity during this period.
Psychological maturity is also explained through the lens of ego. A significant concept representing individuals’ ability to respond to changing contexts is ego resilience. Individuals with resilient egos are considered psychologically mature because they adapt quickly and can plan for future goals. On the other hand, those with fragile egos struggle to recover from traumatic situations, show low levels of flexibility, are disturbed by new and altered circumstances, and feel anxious in competitive environments. Ego control is another criterion for psychological maturity. Lack of ego control implies a preference for small and immediate rewards over delayed and larger ones. In other words, it means an inability to restrain impulses. In conclusion, ego resilience and control are vital sources of an individual’s ego strength. These 2 crucial characteristics are indicators of an individual’s psychological maturity.

From the perspective of developmental stages, the transition from childhood to adolescence and then to adulthood is considered a critical indicator of psychological maturity. Particularly during adolescence, developments in cognitive, moral, sexual, social, and biological areas, along with the growth in autonomy, identity, and self-concept, contribute significantly to an individual’s maturation into adulthood. Following adolescence, individuals reach adulthood by taking on their responsibilities, making independent decisions, and achieving financial independence.

Certain researchers have suggested that establishing intimate social connections and acquiring a coherent identity serve as indicators of psychological maturity. According to the principles of self-determination theory, psychologically mature individuals are skilled in satisfying their fundamental psychological needs in their everyday lives. Concurrently, they set goals aligning with their self-conception and diligently work toward realizing them. In contrast, less mature individuals tend to set goals inconsistent with their self-concept and demonstrate a lack of effort in fulfilling their essential needs.

Empirical research findings suggest that the assessment of psychological maturity can be predicated on the cultivation of intimate social connections, the development of a cohesive and well-defined identity, and the adeptness in fulfilling essential psychological needs during daily existence. Self-determination theory provides a framework for understanding this, analyzing goal-setting motivations across 4 dimensions: external, introjected, identified, and intrinsic. It has been found that individuals with intrinsic motivation in their pursuits often show higher levels of psychological maturity, known as “personality integration”. This maturity is also reflected in their goals and aspirations. Those aligned with self-acceptance, emotional intimacy, and societal contribution indicate psychological growth. At the same time, goals focused on financial success, physical attractiveness, and social status, driven by external rewards, suggest a lack of psychological maturation.

In addition to other explanations in this study, Kegan’s model has also been referenced for the conceptualization of psychological maturity. According to Kegan’s influential subject–object theory, psychological maturity unfolds through several developmental stages. This model outlines 5 key stages that characterize the evolution of psychological maturity: (0) incorporative mind, (1) impulsive mind, (2) instrumental mind, (3) socialized mind, (4) self-authoring mind, and (5) self-transforming mind. The third and fifth stages are notably relevant for emerging adults and mature individuals. Research indicates that about 80% of adults are predominantly in the third stage, characterized by conscientious consideration for others and self-regulation. In the fourth stage, individuals attain autonomy in their decision-making, thought processes, and behaviors, grounding their actions in their internal locus of control. The fifth stage represents a shift from a self that defines its identity to one that actively transforms it. Here, internal authority and self-scripting no longer dictate one’s existential purpose. This stage imbues individuals with a sense of relativity, preventing the projection of their internal constructs onto conflicts and removing conflicts as barriers to intimacy. The attainment of the fifth stage is seen as the zenith of psychological maturity.

In summary, psychological maturity is a fundamental and thoroughly researched psychological concept. It has attracted extensive attention from numerous scholars who seek to unravel its complex dimensions. As per Hersey and Blanchard’s perspective, psychological maturity is characterized by an individual’s ability and willingness to take on responsibility, combined with a profound desire for achievement. This concept is integral to studying human development, encompassing internal and external factors. It includes an individual’s commitment to their own values, inclinations, and ambitions. It also covers the proficient use of functional defense mechanisms, the cultivation of ego resilience and control, and the nurturing of a healthy identity development.

Within the scholarly exploration of psychological maturity measurement, organizational and personnel psychology discipline is notably prominent, emphasizing the assessment of psychological maturity in professional settings. This focus has catalyzed the development of nuanced scales identifying signs of psychological maturity in the workplace. Such a framework encapsulates several crucial elements, including the meticulous fulfillment of professional duties, steadfast dedication to task completion, and the strategic formulation of individual career paths. Additionally, research by Morales-Vives et al. delineates psychological maturity into specific dimensions: “work orientation”, “identity”, “social desirability”, and “self-reliance”. Complementing these approaches, the use of sentence completion tests to gauge psychological maturity offers a trajectory mapping, progressing from a rudimentary “impulsive” state to more advanced levels, ultimately achieving an “integrated” stage of maturity.

Psychological maturity is a prerequisite for healthy development and contributes to individuals’ resilience against risks. For instance, as individuals’ levels of psychological maturity increase, they tend to exhibit fewer aggressive behaviors, exercise better impulse control, and make decisions with consideration for others. Higher levels of psychological maturity have been associated with reduced suicidal

**MAIN POINTS**

- The 4 crucial elements for psychological maturity are self-awareness, autonomy, flexibility, and ego resilience.
- The dimensions of psychological maturity are congruent with Kegan’s object–subject theory.
- Psychological maturity is essential for both healthy development and mental health.
ideation,21 enhanced academic achievement,22 and improved cognitive performance.15

In research conducted within the framework of Self-Determination Theory, significant associations have been observed between psychological maturity and the spectrum of positive and negative emotional experiences. Accordingly, it has been concluded that as individuals’ levels of psychological maturity increase, they experience more positive and fewer negative emotions.35 Additionally, it has been found that as the level of psychological maturity increases, individuals’ levels of depression decrease, and their life satisfaction increases.21 Based on all this information and findings, it is considered necessary to examine the relationships between psychological maturity and variables such as positive and negative emotions, life satisfaction, and depression in the context of scale development.

Despite the paramount significance of this psychological construct, no scale is developed within the Turkish cultural context to measure it. In this context, this study aims to develop an assessment tool capable of measuring psychological maturity and examine the psychometric properties of the devised measurement tool.
psychological maturity because according to theories in developmental psychology and research findings, this age group reflects significant aspects of cognitive, emotional, and social development, and includes critical stages of transition into adulthood. Data obtained during this period enable a more accurate and comprehensive evaluation of individuals’ levels of psychological maturity. Therefore, in this study, individuals aged 17 and over have been included in the sample. There are very few individuals under 18 years of age in the study. Consent for participation has also been obtained from the families of these individuals. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Yıldız Technical University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (Approval No: 2023/04).

Regarding the inclusion criteria, participants are required to express their willingness and volunteer to participate in the study. In order to facilitate researchers’ access to the sample group, individuals are also expected to provide their basic demographic information with the assurance of strict confidentiality. Figure 1 outlines the methodical steps taken in the research process, from defining the core concept to providing final recommendations, ensuring a structured and comprehensive approach to investigating psychological maturity.

Item Generation

During the development phase of the “Psychological Maturity Scale”, the concept of psychological maturity was initially defined. Psychological maturity entails “the ability and willingness to take responsibility, and a desire for success”.

When creating the items, a preliminary literature review was conducted. Previously developed similar measurement tools by different researchers were examined. The study then progressed with qualitative interviews conducted with high school students (25 females and 25 males), university students (25 females and 25 males), and adult individuals (25 females and 25 males). During the interview process, participants were posed the following questions:

A. What are the characteristics of a psychologically mature individual?

a. How do they think?

b. How do they behave?

c. How do they respond emotionally?

Content analysis was conducted on the responses to these questions. As a result, a trial scale form consisting of 43 items was prepared. This form was reviewed by 3 experts with doctoral degrees in psychological counseling and guidance, educational psychology, and psychology. The draft form was evaluated by experts regarding clarity, language, alignment with purpose, and appearance. Based on the expert feedback and subsequent analyses, 22 items were removed from the trial form of the scale, resulting in a final version containing 21 items.

Participants

Exploratory Factor Analysis Participant Group: The group involved in the exploratory factor analysis consisted of individuals residing in the Republic of Turkey. A total of 194 participants, including 58 males and 136 females, participated in the study. The educational levels of the participants were as follows: ninth grade (13 individuals), 10th grade (16 individuals), 11th grade (12 individuals), 12th grade (9 individuals), first year of undergraduate studies (18 individuals), second year of undergraduate studies (16 individuals), third year of undergraduate studies (15 individuals), fourth year of undergraduate studies (17 individuals), non-thesis master’s (30 individuals), thesis master’s (30 individuals), and doctoral (20 individuals). Participants’ responses regarding their economic status were as follows: very poor (14 individuals), poor (38 individuals), moderate (95 individuals), good (42 individuals), and very good (5 individuals).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Participant Group: The group involved in the confirmatory factor analysis consisted of individuals residing in the Republic of Turkey. The participants included 98 males and 115 females, totaling 213 participants. Their educational levels were distributed as follows: ninth grade (19 individuals), 10th grade (20 individuals), 11th grade (18 individuals), 12th grade (8 individuals), first year of undergraduate studies (22 individuals), second year of undergraduate studies (18 individuals), third year of undergraduate studies (23 individuals), fourth year of undergraduate studies (19 individuals), non-thesis master’s (32 individuals), thesis master’s (26 individuals), and doctoral (8 individuals). Participants’ responses regarding their economic status were as follows: very poor (17 individuals), poor (37 individuals), moderate (99 individuals), good (53 individuals), and very good (7 individuals).

Instruments

Life Satisfaction Scale: The Life Satisfaction Scale was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Grifﬁn and adapted to Turkish by Dağlı and Baysal. The scale consists of 5 items, evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale. The reliability analysis of the scale yielded a Cronbach’s alpha coefﬁcient of α = 0.76. In this study, the internal consistency coefﬁcient was found to be α = 0.77.

Positive and Negative Affect Scale: The Positive and Negative Affect Scale, developed by Watson et al and adapted to Turkish by Gençöz, was used. The scale contains 10 positive and 10 negative emotion items, evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale. In the adaptation study, the Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefﬁcients were α = 0.83 for the negative affect and α = 0.86 for the positive affect. In this study, the internal consistency coefﬁcients were α = 0.81 for positive affect and α = 0.78 for negative affect.

Depression Anxiety Stress Scale: The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS), developed by Lovibond and Lovibond, consists of 42 items. The scale is rated on a 4-point Likert scale. High scores from the depression, anxiety, and stress dimensions indicate the presence of the respective problem. The scale does not contain reverse-scored items, and the total scores for each subscale range from 0 to 42. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Akin and Çetin. After the item analysis of the DASS, the corrected item–total correlations were found to range between 0.51 and 0.75. The Cronbach’s alpha (α) coefﬁcients of the DASS were 0.89 for the whole scale, 0.90 for depression, 0.92 for anxiety, and 0.92 for stress subscales. Test–retest reliability ﬁndings indicated correlation coefﬁcients of 0.98 (P < .001) between 2 administrations for all 3 subscales and 0.99 for the whole scale. Spearman–Brown split-half reliability coefﬁcients were 0.96 for the whole scale and 0.95, 0.98, and 0.95 for depression, anxiety, and stress factors, respectively.
Results
Findings Regarding Item Analysis
In the study, item analysis was conducted on the data from the exploratory factor analysis group before conducting exploratory factor analysis. In this regard, a 27% upper and lower group method was used for item analysis, and the groups were compared. Independent samples t-tests were employed to analyze the results. According to the analysis outcomes, all scale items significantly distinguished between lower and upper groups. All items in the trial form of the scale were found to be significant at the $P < .01$ level. In other words, the items demonstrate high discriminant validity.31

Findings Regarding Exploratory Factor Analysis
The factor structure of the Psychological Maturity Scale was examined. Factor analysis was conducted using principal component analysis on the data obtained from the study group. The assessment considered the results of Barlett’s test of sphericity and Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) values. According to the analysis results conducted by the researchers, the Barlett’s test of sphericity value was 3142.154, and the KMO value was found to be 0.931 ($P < .00$). The obtained values exceeding 0.800 indicated that the sample size was adequate for the analysis.23,24

As a result of exploratory factor analysis, a 4-dimensional scale was obtained. A value of 0.10 was considered for the occurrence of a difference in items that contributed to multiple factors.24,26 Items that did not meet this condition were excluded from the analysis, and the study continued accordingly. Following rotations, 22 items were excluded from the analysis.

According to the analysis results, Barlett’s test of sphericity value was 2771.475, and the KMO value was determined to be 0.940. Since the obtained values were greater than 0.800, it was concluded that the sample size was sufficient for the analysis. According to the analysis results, a 4-factor measurement instrument was obtained, including “Ego Resilience”, “Autonomy”, “Self-Awareness”, and “Flexibility” (Table 1 and Figure 2).

Validation Results of the Scale
In this study, it has been ascertained that the newly developed Psychological Maturity Scale effectively captures the intricate facets of individuals’ psychological maturity traits. Within this conceptual framework, the associations between the subscales and aggregate scores of the scale with positive emotional dimensions were meticulously examined through the Pearson correlation technique (Table 2). The analytical outcomes underscore a robust and affirmative correlation ($r = 0.670; P < .01$) between maternal attachment and the cumulative score of the positive maternal scale. This discernment substantiates the absence of multicollinearity and underscores the discrete nature of psychological maturity, life satisfaction, positive emotion, negative emotion, anxiety, depression, and stress as distinct and independent constructs.

Reliability Assessment of the Scale
The evaluation of the scale’s reliability encompassed an exploration of its subscales and the scale as a whole, utilizing the internal consistency method. The internal consistency coefficients for the various dimensions were calculated in this regard. The Ego Resilience

### Table 1. Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (Psychological Maturity Scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I believe that the challenges I face align with the flow of life, and I cope with them accordingly.</td>
<td>0.830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can persevere and overcome difficulties without giving up.</td>
<td>0.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I confront and tackle problems rather than avoid them.</td>
<td>0.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can handle sudden, urgent, and challenging situations.</td>
<td>0.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I can effectively cope with losses.</td>
<td>0.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Being prepared for potential adversities, I manage to deal with them.</td>
<td>0.753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am aware of my desires.</td>
<td>0.799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I recognize my strengths and weaknesses.</td>
<td>0.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I am fully aware of my own needs.</td>
<td>0.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My level of self-insight has developed.</td>
<td>0.716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I am aware of my negative traits and strive to improve them.</td>
<td>0.660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am someone who recognizes what I can and cannot control.</td>
<td>0.622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I have goals to unleash my potential.</td>
<td>0.533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I have healthy relationships with others without being dependent.</td>
<td>0.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. In my relationships, I can maintain my boundaries.</td>
<td>0.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I boldly express my values.</td>
<td>0.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I am capable of making my own decisions.</td>
<td>0.617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I don’t dismiss the possibility that various criticisms may be valid.</td>
<td>0.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I believe that everyone can make mistakes.</td>
<td>0.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I strive to understand events without prejudice.</td>
<td>0.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I can evaluate situations from different perspectives.</td>
<td>0.547</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Explained variances       | 22.568  | 20.305  | 12.187  | 10.860  |
| Egin values               | 4.739   | 4.264   | 2.559   | 2.281   |

1-6, “Ego Resilience”; 7-13, “Self-Awareness”; 14-17, “Autonomy”; 18-21, Flexibility.”
dimension exhibited an impressive internal consistency coefficient of 0.93, while the Self Awareness dimension yielded a coefficient of 0.87. Similarly, the Autonomy dimension manifested an internal consistency coefficient of 0.77, with the Flexibility dimension aligning closely at 0.77 as well. Notably, the scale’s total score demonstrated a robust internal consistency coefficient of 0.91. These outcomes affirm the scale’s high-reliability levels, reinforcing its capacity to yield consistent and dependable results. The specific Cronbach’s α values for each dimension are delineated in Table 3 for comprehensive reference.

Fit Indices of the Scale
One of the commonly used fit indices is the Normed Fit Index (NFI), which ranges between zero and one. An NFI value greater than 0.95 indicates a good model fit. 32 Similarly, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), ranging between 0 and 1, signifies a good fit when values are close to 1. A value of exactly 1 indicates excellent model fit. Another fit index is the Relative Fit Index (RFI), which should be close to one for a good model fit. A value of exactly one indicates a very good fit.33 One of the most important indices used for evaluating model fit is the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). There are varying opinions on acceptable values for this index to indicate a good model fit. According to Arbuckle and Wothke, 33 a good-fitting model should have an RMSEA value between 0 and 0.05, not exceeding 0.05.

On the other hand, Byrne 32 suggests that values less than 0.05 indicate good fit. However, RMSEA values up to 0.08 are also considered acceptable. Information regarding the fit indices of the scale is presented in Table 4.

Confirmatory Factor Results of the Psychological Maturity Scale
Examining the values obtained from exploratory factor analysis through confirmatory factor analysis strengthens the scale validation process. 24 Therefore, in this study, the scale’s factor structure was examined through confirmatory factor analysis using a different sample group from the exploratory factor analysis sample group.

![Scree Plot](image-url)
The examination results confirmed that the scale is reliable in its 4 subscales, and the data are presented in Figure 3.

Discussion

In this research, a meticulously crafted instrument for assessing psychological maturity has been developed, revealing 4 essential and distinct subscales. An extensive review of the existing literature shows that these subscales have been individually investigated in various studies. No previous research has combined them into an overarching construct similar to the scale introduced in this study. Moreover, the study of psychological maturity has largely been conducted within the context of Western cultures, which are typically individualistic. Conducted within a distinct cultural context, the current study broadens our understanding of psychological maturity. Consequently, this study notably enhances the existing literature on the subject.

In this study, one of the dimensions identified by the scale is termed “ego resilience”. This term has been selected based on 2 main considerations. First, it accurately represents the semantic content of the items within the scale, which include statements that convey an individual’s ability to consistently face adversity, to approach...
rather than avoid problems, and to effectively handle unexpected, pressing, and challenging situations. Second, this concept relies on an extensive theoretical foundation from the literature. Block and Block's describe ego resilience as "the dynamic capacity of an individual to recalibrate their baseline level of ego control, adapting either towards augmentation or diminution, contingent upon the environmental context's demand characteristics". Individuals with high ego resilience can effectively use their resources to adapt and approach problem-solving skillfully. In contrast, those with lower levels of ego resilience struggle with adaptability, often finding it difficult to cope with changing circumstances and to organize effective responses in stressful situations.

In our study, a novel instrument for assessing psychological maturity has been developed, revealing 4 distinct and significant sub-dimensions. Our review of the academic literature shows that although these individual sub-dimensions have been explored in various studies, the integration of these sub-dimensions into a unified construct, as provided by the tool developed in this research, has not been extensively covered in prior work. Therefore, this research makes a valuable addition to the existing literature by enhancing the comprehension of psychological maturity across different cultural landscapes.

One of the dimensions encapsulated by the developed scale has been aptly named “Ego Resilience”. The naming convention is derived from the inherent content of the scale items. This dimension encompasses statements such as “I can cope with difficulties without giving up, I confront problems rather than avoid them, and I can handle sudden, challenging events”. This naming choice is also substantiated by insights gleaned from the literature, such as Cramer’s work. Drawing from Block and Block, ego resilience is defined as “the dynamic capacity of an individual to modify his/her modal level of ego control, in either direction, as a function of the demand characteristics of the environmental context”. Individuals with high ego resilience levels adeptly adapt using their resources, employ problem-solving skills flexibly, and exhibit resilience in the face of adverse circumstances. On the other hand, those with lower ego resilience struggle to adapt, falter in responding to changing conditions and experience challenges in organized response to stressful situations.

Within the scale developed for this research is a dimension named “Flexibility”. This term is based on the content within the scale items, which include statements acknowledging human error, efforts to understand events without bias, and the ability to assess situations from multiple viewpoints. Moreover, theoretical contributions from the academic literature, especially Kegan’s subject–object theory, have influenced the naming of this dimension. Kegan describes the apex of psychological maturity as the state of relativity. Hence, our scale’s “Flexibility” dimension reflects the notion of relativity in Kegan’s subject–object theory, emphasizing the ability to perceive and adapt to the diversity of life’s circumstances.

Another dimension that the scale assesses is termed “Self-Awareness”. This term has been chosen to reflect the content of the scale’s items. This dimension includes statements indicating personal insight, such as awareness of one’s desires, knowledge of one’s strengths and weaknesses, and understanding one’s personal needs. The selection of this term is also supported by theoretical frameworks found in the literature, notably Kegan’s subject–object theory. Kegan posits that individuals at the fourth stage of development are characterized by their ability to make informed choices about their actions, thoughts, and behaviors, a process that necessitates a high level of self-awareness. Such self-awareness enables individuals to act and decide responsibly, guided by their internal sense of authority.

The other dimension identified by the scale is named “Autonomy”. This term is chosen based on the scale items themselves, which include statements that reflect an individual’s self-direction, such as confidently expressing personal values, the ability to make independent decisions, and the capacity to establish and maintain personal boundaries in relationships. Theoretical insights, especially from Kegan’s subject–object theory, have influenced this choice of nomenclature. According to Kegan, the “self-authoring mind” stage signifies the fourth level of psychological maturity, and our scale’s “Autonomy” dimension corresponds with this stage. This correlation is also supported by Loevinger’s psychological maturity framework, which designates “autonomy” as the fifth stage. The “Autonomy” dimension of our scale thus aligns with both Kegan’s and Loevinger’s theoretical perspectives on psychological maturity.

From the results of this study, it is feasible to suggest a hypothetical and theoretical framework that outlines the stages of psychological maturation in alignment with current academic discussions (Figure 4). This proposed framework can be thoroughly explained using Loevinger’s subject–object theory. In this theoretical context, we suggest that the development of ego resilience is an essential early stage, indicative of the progressive transition through Kegan’s initial and secondary stages. The dimension of autonomy is seen as a successful progression beyond Kegan’s “socialized mind” stage. Self-awareness corresponds closely with the “self-authoring” stage in Kegan’s model. Finally, flexibility is proposed to be in tune with the “self-transforming” stage of development.

In conclusion, this study significantly contributes to the field by introducing a new tool for measuring psychological maturity. This tool comprehensively explores multiple dimensions of psychological maturity, addressing a gap in the existing literature. Additionally, the study’s cross-cultural approach enhances our understanding of this concept. The dimensions identified by the scale—ego resilience, flexibility, self-awareness, and autonomy—are grounded in the scale’s content and insights from related academic sources.
This research is limited by its sample size, which includes 194 participants in the exploratory factor analysis group and 213 in the confirmatory factor analysis group. Further exploration of psychological maturity through diverse sample groups could yield more detailed insights. The extensive literature review highlights a lack of thorough research in this area. Notably, this study is a pioneering effort within the Turkish context to explore the complex concept of Psychological Maturity, thus laying a foundation for future studies using various measurement tools.

The value of empirical research in everyday life, especially in matters related to psychological constructs, cannot be understated. With a growing body of research focusing on Psychological Maturity, there is now an opportunity for experimental studies. These could use this and related research findings to enhance our understanding and application of Psychological Maturity concepts.

Availability of Data and Materials: All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in the article.

Ethics Committee Approval: The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Yildiz Technical University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (Approval No: 2023/04).

Informed Consent: Informed consent was obtained from the participants who agreed to take part in the study.


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