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# Assessing parenting in racially and ethnically diverse families: A lack of measurement equivalence

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## Abstract

The present study explored measurement invariance of the Multidimensional Assessment of Parenting Scale (MAPS; Parent & Forehand, 2017) across White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian American parents. Participants included 2,734 parents, 58% of whom were mothers. On average, parents were 36.32 years old ( $SD = 9.54$ ); the parent sample was 66.9% White non-Hispanic, 10.1% Black, 5.3% Asian, and 17.7% Hispanic regardless of race. Child ages ranged from 3 to 17 years ( $M = 9.84$ ,  $SD = 3.71$ ), and 58% were identified as male. Parents completed a demographics questionnaire about themselves and their target child, and the 34-item MAPS. We explored measurement equivalence of the MAPS Broadband Positive and Negative parenting scales using item response theory to identify differential item functioning (DIF). Univariate analyses for Positive and Negative Parenting showed reliability was excellent. Twelve items assessing negative aspects of parenting exhibited bias by race/ethnicity. Specifically, when comparing racial and ethnic groups, three items had nonuniform DIF comparing Black and Asian participants, two items had nonuniform DIF comparing Black and Hispanic participants, and one item showed nonuniform DIF comparing Asian and Hispanic participants. When looking at Positive Parenting, no items showed evidence of DIF. Results from the present study suggest broadband Positive Parenting can be compared across ethnoracial groups, while findings raise concern about assessing Negative Parenting items when examining invariance across race and ethnicity. Findings from the present study imply that racial and ethnic comparisons are potentially invalid. These findings offer guidance for improving parenting assessment for racially/ethnically diverse populations. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2023 APA, all rights reserved).

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