



RELATIONSHIP. FAMILY VALUES

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Abstract: This study aimed to examine how family values influence the quality of relationships between older siblings and their partners in long-term, intimate relationships.

Keywords: Adult siblings, family loyalty, interpersonal commitment, strong relationships

The family is considered as the first environment of human development, where a person learns basic life experiences, behavior patterns and important knowledge about the world. Here, people begin to understand moral and social norms, as well as values related to marriage, family, relationships, and basic life experiences such as joy, suffering, life, and death. Psychologists emphasize the decisive role of the family in the transmission of values that shape the self, relationships and understanding of the world. This transmission of values helps to stabilize and control social behavior, influence personal identity, and shape the ability to manage interpersonal relationships and solve problems. Relationship. Family values.

According to systems theory (de Barbaro, 1999), a person's value system affects their relationships in various groups - from family (parents, children, brothers and sisters) to school, work and romantic partnerships. In recent decades, social and economic changes in Poland under the influence of globalization have changed family structures. Currently, cohabitation is on the rise, divorces are on the rise, marriages are on the decline, and more couples are choosing not to have children. These shifts create challenges for family members as they try to adapt to an increasingly unpredictable world. In addition, there have been changes in values, with more emphasis on individuality and personal satisfaction rather than family unity.

Modern families often face a conflict between the values of solidarity and independence. This issue is central to the intergenerational theory of family systems, suggesting that certain patterns—particularly those related to closeness and autonomy—are transmitted and influence behavior in broader social contexts. Systemic theory also emphasizes that personal growth, self-actualization, and the ability to achieve one's goals depend on cooperation with





immediate family members. Relationships within the family require mutual support, which contributes to the development of each individual.

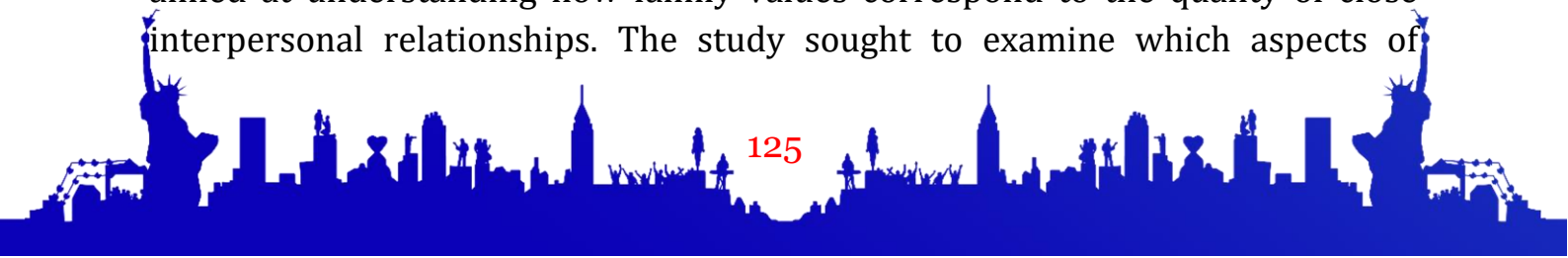
In the context of these social changes, it is very important to find protective factors for the well-being of family members. Research suggests that one such factor may be familism, a cultural value that emphasizes strong family loyalty, trust, and togetherness. In familism, individuals feel a deeper sense of loyalty and devotion to family members than to other social groups.

Familism includes five main aspects: three traditional values and two focused on individualism. Traditional dimensions are family support, respect and religion. Family support includes efforts to help and care for family members who are closely related by blood. Respect means maintaining strong bonds between generations, where children value their parents' wisdom and rely on it when making decisions. Religion represents spiritual connection and belief in a higher power. And individual dimensions are material success and individuality. These emphasize financial well-being and independence.

Research shows that familism positively affects the quality of adult sibling relationships, although research on this topic is limited. Relationships between siblings are considered closely related to family communication. Kinship bonds are formed from childhood through interactions, shared experiences, beliefs, and emotions. These sibling relationships are typically seen along three dimensions: warmth, conflict, and competition. Warmth represents loving, supportive and intimate relationships based on similarity and mutual admiration. Conflict reflects low-level agreements, power struggles, and competitive behavior. Competition involves perceptions of fairness or unfairness in how parents treat siblings in similar situations.

Examining the role of familism in long-term romantic commitment is also valuable. Commitment is a key component of love in formal and informal relationships and can be seen in three dimensions: connection with the partner, concern for the well-being of the partner, and the value of the relationship. Bonding with a partner reflects the intimacy and emotional connection in the relationship, how committed each person is and the importance of the partner in life. Concern for a partner's well-being can include a sense of obligation in the relationship. Relationship importance reflects how seriously a relationship is viewed and prioritized.

These ideas have provided a theoretical basis for psychological research aimed at understanding how family values correspond to the quality of close interpersonal relationships. The study sought to examine which aspects of





familism are most influential in guiding people's choices in intimate relationships. The study examined a group of adults to determine whether familism could predict the quality of close relationships, focusing on both sibling and long-term partner relationships. Previous research on interpersonal commitment in close relationships suggests that gender does not significantly influence relationship commitment. However, most research in this area focuses on young people. Given these findings, the study aimed to examine the predictors of interpersonal commitment in two age groups: early and middle adulthood. This age division is based on Erikson's life stages, specifically the sixth and seventh stages, which are concerned with developing relationships and caring for others.

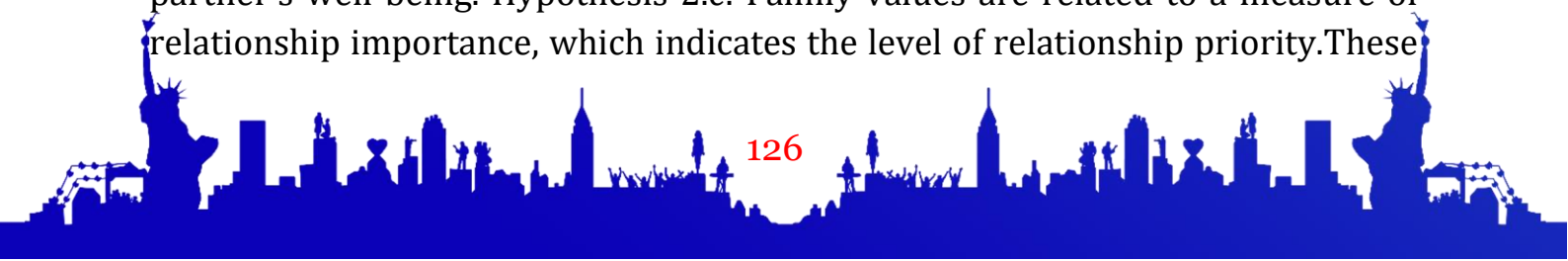
In examining sibling relationships, the study looked at gender as a possible factor influencing sibling warmth, analyzing males and females separately. However, the analysis for conflict and competition includes the whole sample. Given the exploratory nature of this study on age- and gender-adjusted family relationships and commitments, the hypotheses are broad. The study addressed two main research questions:

1. Which aspects of familism are most common among the participants?
2. Are dimensions of familism related to intimate relationship quality, and if so, how?

In this study, familism was considered as a multidimensional concept. Previous studies show that Polish society is gradually moving from a collectivist to an individualist direction, but traditional values remain strong. Family, nation, and religion are highly valued, suggesting that Poland fits South America rather than Western culture.

Based on these observations, the first hypothesis was formulated: Hypothesis 1: Collective family values (respect, religion and family support) prevail among the sample of participants. Research has shown that collectivist cultures such as Latin American, Vietnamese, and African American communities often exhibit stronger family-oriented values, emphasizing care and support for family members. With this in mind, the study aims to examine the relationship between family values and commitment in long-term relationships, leading to additional hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2.a: Family values are related to the Bond dimension in relationships and reflect emotional closeness with the partner. Hypothesis 2.b: Family values are related to the dimension of concern, indicating concern for the partner's well-being. Hypothesis 2.c: Family values are related to a measure of relationship importance, which indicates the level of relationship priority. These





hypotheses highlight the role of family values in influencing relationships with partners and siblings, especially within collectivist cultural settings. This research seeks to deepen our understanding of how these values impact the strength and quality of close interpersonal bonds.

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