

Family values as predictors of the quality of close relationships

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ABSTRACT

Aim

The aim of this study was to determine if and in what way family values influence the quality of interpersonal relationships of adult siblings and the partners in close long-term relationships.

Method

In the conducted quantitative research three self-descriptive tools were used: Familism Scale, Adult Sibling Relationship Questionnaire and Commitment Inventory. The research included 234 adults ($M = 35$; $SD = 9.128$). Women accounted for 64.1% of the sample ($n = 150$).

Results

Among the most frequently chosen family value dimensions were *Individualism*, *Family support* and *Respect*. Family values appeared to be significant predictors for both the quality of adult sibling relationships and interpersonal commitment in a close long-term relationship.

Conclusion

Familism contributes to developing proper interpersonal relationships in close relationships.

Keywords: adult siblings, familism, interpersonal commitment, long-term relationship

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Introduction

It is the family, the primary environment of human development, where a human being acquires their first experiences, behavioural patterns, basic knowledge about the world as well as moral and social norms. It is the place of assimilating values, beliefs about marriage, family, other people, joy and suffering, life and death (Ryś, 1997). The process of transmitting values in the family has been assigned an important role by psychologists in the aspect of creating meanings about the self, the world and the individual's relationship with the world. It plays a role stabilizing and regulating social behaviours, influences the development of an individual's identity, their functioning in interpersonal relationships through shaping the ability to solve problems (Farnicka & Liberska, 2014). Following the assumptions of the systemic theory (de Barbaro, 1999), it is believed that one's own system of values affects interpersonal relationships in various subsystems, from the family of origin (parents, children, siblings, etc.), through extra-familial relationships (at school, in a workplace), up to the bond with the partner in a close long-term relationship.

The system transformation and the globalization process ongoing in Poland in the last decades have been continuously shaping macro- and micro-economic changes, which has been modifying the structure of societies and families. Examples of these changes include a decreasing number of marriages and older age of marriage contracts, increasing numbers of consensual unions, divorces and childless couples by choice (Janicka, 2017). The mentioned areas can indicate threats faced by family members, who are trying to find themselves in the reality which is not stable and predictable enough. What is also emphasized is the changes ongoing in the system of values (Bakiera, 2006; Szlendak, 2015). More and more importance is being given to individualism, self-realization, ego-trip placed before the good of the family (Plopa, 2019; Straś-Romanowska, 2014). A lot of modern families are confronted with the conflict between the values of community and autonomy (Straś-Romanowska, 2016; Wałęcka-Matyja, 2020). This issue is a central point in the inter-generational theory of family systems, which assumes that specific relationship patterns are inherited and recreated by an individual in extra-familial environments. The indicated patterns are mainly those of autonomy and closeness, understood as two interweaving concepts of family life, affecting the healthy functioning of the family. The assumptions of the systemic approach that were adopted in the study indicate that the development and self-realization of every human being as well as satisfying their aspirations and needs and putting their values into practice cannot be done without cooperation with the closest people. There are mutual connections and a necessity of cooperation which affect the development of family members (de Barbaro, 1999; Plopa, 2019).

In the context of some problem areas that have been mentioned above, it is important to look for factors that could protect the health of family members. As some research results prove, one of determinants of this kind is *familism*. It is understood as a culture value, characterized by strong identification and attachment to the family, loyalty, trust, stronger solidarity with the family members than with other social groups (Sabogal et al., 1987). In this study, it is assumed

that familism consists of five dimensions. Three of them refer to traditional values whereas two concern individualistic ones. *Family support* means the effort to keep and support the people related with the person by close family ties. *Respect* is a dimension expressed in the need to maintain proper inter-generational relationships and increase the importance of the parents for their children both in the aspect of attitudes and relying on their wisdom while making decisions. *Religion* refers to the sphere of spirituality and demonstrating belief in a supernatural power. The individualistic dimensions, i.e. *Material success and achievements* and *Individualism*, emphasize the importance of material prosperity and independence (Wałęcka-Matyja, 2020).

Researchers have noticed that familism coexists with the quality of the relationships between adult siblings (Killoren et al., 2015; White & Huges, 2021). However, there are still not enough psychological studies in this field. It is assumed that interpersonal relationships are strictly connected with family communication. Referring to the relationships between brothers and sisters, it has been assumed that the interpersonal relationship between siblings is a resultant of interactions based on actions and communication between two or more people having the same natural parents (or at least one natural parent) and a specific attitude to mutual experiences, beliefs and affections towards each other from the moment these people have been aware of each other's existence (Cicirelli, 1995). Considering the nature of the sibling relationship, its three dimensions have been indicated, i.e. *Warmth*, *Conflict* and *Rivalry* (Stocker, Lanthier, & Furman, 1997). The dimension of *Warmth* describes affectionate, accepting, close sibling relationships based on similarity, admiration, knowledge and emotional and instrumental support. The dimension of *Conflict* describes a low level of agreement, a high level of domination, mutual opposition as well as behaviours competitive towards siblings. The dimension of *Rivalry* describes the perceptions of the siblings concerning fair or unfair treatment by their parents in comparable situations (Wałęcka-Matyja, 2018).

It is also interesting from the cognitive point of view to determine the significance of familism for *interpersonal commitment* in long-term relationships. It is believed that interpersonal commitment is this component of love which, in the greatest degree, refers to long-term relationships, both formal and informal ones. Due to heterogeneity and breadth of the concept of commitment, its three dimensions have been taken under consideration. *Bond with the partner* describes the strength of closeness and emotional ties with the partner, the degree in which they keep their commitments, devote themselves to the partner and treat the partner as the most important person. *Concern for the partner's well-being* is demonstrated in the feeling of being trapped in the relationship. And *Relationship Importance* shows us how seriously the relationship is treated and if it is a priority (Janicka & Szymczak, 2017).

The above considerations were the theoretical background for undertaking psychological research on the issue of coexistence of family values with the quality of interpersonal relationship in close relationships. The aims of the research referred to two issues. It was considered interesting from the cognitive point of view to find out which familism dimension would dominate in the choices of the

examined group of adults. Moreover, a question was asked if familism would help to predict the quality of close interpersonal relationships. The analysis covered relationships in the subsystem of adult siblings and in long-term relationships. The results of the research conducted so far on the issue of interpersonal commitment in close relationships indicate the lack of significance of the main effect of gender (Kaczuba & Janicka, 2018). It is stressed that the analyses conducted in the discussed area first of all concern people in early adulthood (Janicka & Janicka, 2014; Janicka & Kaczuba, 2018; Kałaczyńska, 2018; Mamot & Smykowski, 2021). The conclusions from the study of the related literature were the reason for conducting, in the first part of the analyses, verification of predictors of interpersonal commitment in a close long-term relationship in the groups of people selected following the age criterion, i.e. early and middle adulthood. The development periods adopted in this study referred to the assumptions of developmental psychology, particularly Erikson's life cycle theory (1997), assuming division of the human life into eight development stages. It is emphasized that the experiences of building interpersonal relationships and their role in personality development are especially concentrated in stage six (intimacy vs. Isolation, leading to the virtue of love) and seven (generativity vs. stagnation, leading to the virtue of concern) (Erikson, 1997), which refer to the sub-periods of early and middle adulthood applied in the study.

Taking into account the assumption that the variable of gender is a factor differentiating adult sibling relationships mainly in respect of *Warmth*, the analyses were conducted separately for women and men. For the variables *Conflict* and *Rivalry*, the indicators were estimated for the whole sample group (comp. Cicirelli, 1999; Walęcka-Matyja, 2018).

Due to a partially exploratory nature of the research concerning the issues of familism and commitment in interpersonal relationships (of adult siblings and long-term partners), taking into consideration the criteria of age and gender, the hypotheses were formulated in a general way.

The presented aims of the study are included in the two research questions.

1. Which of the familism dimensions dominates in the choices of the examined people?
2. Do the familism dimensions correlate with the quality of close interpersonal relationships and in what way?

The variable adopted in the analyses was familism as a multidimensional construct. The empirical studies conducted so far have shown that the Polish society is slowly transforming from a collectivist into an individualistic one. However, it is believed that this fact shall not be linked with a complete decay of collectivist values (Bańska, 2012; Kagitcibasi, 2002). The Polish society is characterized by strong attachment to traditional values, i.e. the family, the nation, religion (Ziółkowski & Koralewicz, 1990). It has been observed that in this respect Poland is closer to the countries of South America than western cultures (Ziółkowski, 2000). Taking into account the above observations, the following hypotheses were formulated.

Hypothesis 1. Family values of a collectivist nature (*Respect, Religion, Family support*) shall dominate in the choices of the respondents.

It was noticed that people coming from collectivist cultures, e.g. Latin American, Vietnamese and Afro American ones, demonstrate more family-oriented intentions connected with care and concern for family members (Scharlach et al., 2006). Therefore, it was considered appropriate to carry out analysis of correlations between the dimensions of family values and the ones of interpersonal commitment in long-term relationships, which resulted in formulating next research expectations.

Hypothesis 2.a. Family values are correlated with the dimension *Bond with the partner*.

Hypothesis 2.b. Family values are correlated with the dimension *Concern for the partner's well-being*.

Hypothesis 2.c. Family values are correlated with the dimension *Relationship importance*.

The results of the research have shown that family values are positively correlated with warm interpersonal sibling relationships (Azmita et al., 2009; Killoren et al., 2015). It has also been found out that familism can mitigate potentially dangerous effects of unfair treatment of children by their parents (White & Huges, 2021). Taking into account the presented content, in the next hypotheses it was expected that family values would be correlated with the quality of interpersonal sibling relationships.

Hypothesis 3.a. Family values are correlated with the quality of interpersonal adult sibling relationship based on the *Warmth* factor.

Hypothesis 3.b. Family values are correlated with the quality of interpersonal adult sibling relationship based on the *Conflict* factor.

Hypothesis 3.c. Family values are correlated with the quality of interpersonal adult sibling relationship based on the *Rivalry* factor.

Method

Respondents

238 people took part in the research. Due to a failure to meet the required conditions for group selection, 4 test sets were excluded from the research. Finally, the results of 234 respondents were accepted for analysis (Table 1, p. 142).

Research Tools

Three research tools with good psychometric properties were applied, such as Familism Scale, Adult Sibling Relationship Questionnaire and Interpersonal Commitment Inventory and a demographic questionnaire.

Table 1

Number and percentage distributions of the sample group

Variables	N	%
Gender		
Women	150	64.1
Men	84	35.9
Age		
Total	234 ($M = 35$; $SD = 9.128$)	100.0
Early adulthood	127 ($M = 28.55$; $SD = 4.673$)	54.3
Late adulthood	107 ($M = 43.43$; $SD = 5.992$)	45.7
Place of residence		
City	140	59.8
Country	94	40.2
Education		
University	158	67.5
Secondary	68	29.1
Vocational/primary	8	3.4
Marital status		
Marriage	141	60.3
Consensual union	67	28.6
Engagement	26	11.1

Adult Sibling Relationship Questionnaire (ASRQ) by Lanthier, Stocker, & Furman (1997) in the Polish adaptation of K. Walęcka-Matyja (2014) is used to measure relationships between siblings in adulthood. It is an instrument with which the examined person evaluates their behaviours and feelings towards their adult siblings as well as the perception of the siblings – of the behaviours and feelings toward the respondents. The sibling relationship is described by three dimensions: *Warmth*, *Conflict* and *Rivalry*. ASRQ includes 81 items. All the ASRQ items (except rivalry) are assessed on the Likert scale, from “Hardly Anything” (1 point) to “Extremely Much” (5 points). The items measuring a level of rivalry in siblings were assessed on a scale from 0 to 2 points. The psychometric properties of ASRQ are good and enable carrying out scientific research (Cronbach’s α .87–.97) (Walęcka-Matyja, 2014).

Familism Scale (Mexican American Cultural Values Scales for Adolescents and Adults, Knight et al., 2010) in the Polish adaptation of Walęcka-Matyja (2020) is designed to measure five aspects of familism. *Familism Scale* was created in a 44-item version and is used to examine adult people. Three dimensions refer to collectivist values (*Family support*, *Respect*, *Religion*), two to individualistic ones (*Material success and achievements* and *Individualism*). The values

of internal consistency indicators measured by the Cronbach α coefficient are within the range (.95–.63) (Wałęcka-Matyja, 2020).

Commitment Inventory by Stanley and Markman (1992) in the Polish adaptation of Janicka and Szymczak (2017) is designed to examine commitment in both marriages and consensual unions. The questionnaire consists of 19 statements, which make up the following dimensions: *Bond with the partner*, *Relationship importance* and *Concern for the partner's well-being*. The respondent assesses in what degree they agree with a statement on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 means: I strongly disagree, and 7: I definitely agree. Commitment Inventory is a valid and reliable tool. The examined factors are characterized by a satisfying internal consistency (Cronbach α from .70 to .88) (Janicka & Szymczak, 2017).

Research Procedure

The research was carried out from October 2020 to April 2021 in the Łódź district. The sample group was selected in a non-probabilistic way. The following criteria were taken into account: early adulthood from 18–20 to 30–35 years of age and middle adulthood – from 30–35 to 55–60 years of age (Brzezińska, Appelt, & Ziółkowska, 2015), declaring readiness to participate in the research, having at least one adult (minimum 18 years) living sibling (with whom they were raised in childhood), living currently in a close formal or informal relationship.

The research participants were informed about a scientific purpose of the research, a guarantee of anonymity and voluntary participation as well as an option to resign from the research without any consequences. They gave their consent to their active participation in the scientific project without any financial gratification.

It was research of a self-descriptive nature conducted with the use of the CAWI method. The main source of the respondents was social media and family forums.

Data Analysis Methods

The collected data were analysed with the use of the special software IBM SPSS Statistics 25, licensed by [name of school has been anonymized]. The adopted level of significance was $\alpha < .05$.

According to the assumed research model four types of variables were included in the analyses: *Warmth*, *Conflict*, *Rivalry*; variables concerning the adopted family values, i.e. *Respect*, *Religion* and *Family support*, *Material success and achievements* and *Individualism*; variables concerning interpersonal commitment, i.e. *Bond with the partner*, *Relationship importance* and *Concern for the partner's well-being*. Socio-demographic variables include the gender and age of the respondents.

A big size of the sample group ($N = 234$) made it possible to use the assumptions of the Central Limit Theorem, according to which it is correct to use

parametric tests in analyses if the number of the examined people is big enough (more than 30 in each compared group (Szymczak, 2018).

In order to find out which family values were the most valued ones among the respondents, a repeated measure analysis of variances was used. Next, the homogeneity of the examined variables was checked, which enabled multiple comparisons with the use of the Bonferroni parametric test. For the revealed differences in the mean expected values, the strength of the effect was determined, assessing the measure of η^2 coefficient. The values of η^2 are included in the range from 0 to 1 and it should be interpreted as weak/small with the values from .01 do .06; average (moderate) with the values from .06 do .14, whereas the values $< .14$ indicate a big (strong) effect (Szymczak, 2018).

In order to verify family values as indicators of the quality of close interpersonal relationships, multi-variable models of linear regression in the hierarchical model were applied. It is a method that enables checking in what way a few independent variables are correlated with the dependent one. The interpretation of standardized Beta coefficients allows us to determine the direction and strength of the correlation, which makes it possible to find out which of the indicators has a stronger influence on the dependent value (Bedyńska & Cyprińska, 2013).

The applied methods were selected, taking into consideration the specificity of the formulated research questions and hypotheses, the characteristics of variables and the sample group.

Results

Family Values in the Perception of the Respondents

The analysis of variance with repeated measures for the whole sample group ($N = 231$) (Table 2) enabled determining the dominant dimension of family values.

Table 2

Family values in the sample group

Family values	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
Respect*	3.38	.74			
Material success and achievements*	2.28	.69			
Individualism*	3.93	.55	205.46	< .001	.47
Religion*	2.86	1.18			
Family support*	3.70	.62			

* Difference of means is significant on the level of .05

Considering the obtained results (Table 2), we confirmed the existence of a difference in the strength of family values of a statistically significant nature. The effect of this difference reached a high level $\eta^2 = .47$ ($\eta^2 > .14$). The results obtained after performing the pairwise comparison test (Bonferroni Test) showed that the means of all the values were significantly statistically differentiated. They also allow for the statement (Figure 1) that the biggest strength was observed for the dimension *Individualism* ($M = 3.93$), then *Family support* ($M = 3.70$) and *Respect* ($M = 3.38$), *Religion* ($M = 2.86$) and *Material success and achievements* ($M = 2.28$). Therefore, these findings did not confirm the assumption of hypothesis 1.

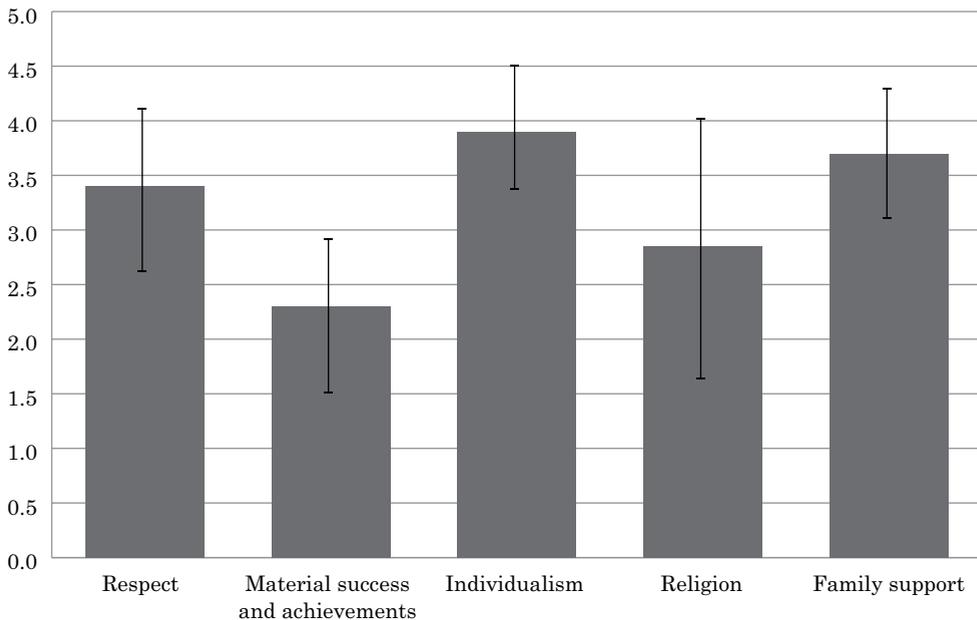


Figure 1. Strength of examined family values.

Family Values vs. the Quality of Long-Term Relationships

In order to determine if family values are significant predictors of the quality of long-term relationships in the examined persons, multi-variable linear regressions in the hierarchical model were performed. As explanatory variables, we successively analysed the indicators of family values and belonging to two sub-periods of adulthood as well as the interaction effects between belonging to one of these sub-periods and the indicators of family values. The results are shown in Table 3 (p. 146).

It was found out that the people in middle adulthood had obtained significantly statistically lower results on the scale *Bond with the partner*. No statistically significant interaction effects were found, therefore the final model of regression analysis was verified on the whole sample. The results are shown in Table 4 (p. 146).

Table 3

Correlations between the indicators of family values and the variable Bond with the partner, taking into account the development period of the respondents

	β	t	p	R^2
Respect	.26	4.24	< .001	.12
Adulthood	-.20	-3.14	.002	
Adulthood \times Respect	.04	.62	.537	
Material success and achievements	-.06	-.97	.335	.05
Adulthood	-.21	-3.32	.001	
Adulthood \times Material success and achievements	.00	.06	.951	
Individualism	-.11	-1.71	.088	.06
Adulthood	-.21	-3.27	.001	
Adulthood \times Individualism	.09	1.37	.171	
Religion	.17	2.74	.007	.08
Adulthood	-.21	-3.30	.001	
Adulthood \times Religion	.02	.35	.729	
Family support	.29	4.54	.000	.12
Adulthood	-.17	-2.72	.007	
Adulthood \times Family support	.03	.46	.648	

Table 4

Predictors for the variable Bond with the partner

Family values	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	4.54	.68		6.67	< .001
Respect	.29	.14	.21	2.16	.032
Material success and achievements	-.18	.10	-.12	-1.75	.082
Individualism	-.22	.12	-.12	-1.74	.083
Religion	-.05	.07	-.05	-.67	.502
Family support	.28	.15	.17	1.84	.067

The analysed model explained 13.1% of variance of the variable *Bond with the partner* [$F(5.225) = 6.80; p = .001; R^2 = .13$]. Considering the obtained results, it could be established that the dimension *Respect* ($p = .032$) appeared to be a statistically significant indicator of the variable *Bond with the partner*. A prediction with its positive sign is interpreted as an increase of the value of variable *Bond with the partner*, with increasing the value of variable *Respect*.

In the next regression analysis, a dependent variable was *Concern for the partner's well-being*. Again, in the first place we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis, taking into account interaction effects between the development period and the indicators of family values. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Correlations between the indicators of family values and the variable Concern for the partner's well-being, taking into account the development period of the respondents

	β	t	p	R^2
Respect	.24	3.74	< .001	.06
Adulthood	-.04	-.62	.534	
Adulthood \times Respect	.11	1.69	.092	
Material success and achievements	-.07	-1.11	.269	.01
Adulthood	-.06	-.86	.388	
Adulthood \times Material success and achievements	.10	1.48	.141	
Individualism	-.11	-1.63	.104	.01
Adulthood	-.05	-.81	.420	
Adulthood \times Individualism	.13	1.91	.057	
Religion	.13	2.05	.042	.02
Adulthood	-.05	-.82	.411	
Adulthood \times Religion	.09	1.43	.154	
Family support	.19	2.91	.004	.04
Adulthood	-.03	-.42	.676	
Adulthood \times Family support	.02	.35	.728	

No statistically significant interaction effects were found, therefore the final model of regression analysis was verified on the whole sample. The results are shown in Table 6 (p. 148).

Table 6

Predictors for the variable Concern for the partner's well-being

Family values	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	4.70	.94		5.01	< .001
Respect	.49	.19	.26	2.62	.009
Material success and achievements	-.24	.14	-.12	-1.71	.088
Individualism	-.22	.17	-.09	-1.29	.198
Religion	-.07	.10	-.06	-.67	.506
Family support	.06	.21	.03	.31	.755

The model describing the results of the regression analysis was considered to be well-adjusted to the data [$F(5.225) = 3.98$; $p = .002$; $R^2 = .08$]. It explained 8.1% of variance for the variable *Concern for the partner's well-being*. Analysing the obtained results, it could be stated that for the variable *Concern for the partner's well-being*, a statistically significant indicator was the dimension *Respect* ($p = .009$). A positive indicator β ($\beta = .26$) informs that with an increase of the strength of the value *Respect*, the strength of the value of the dimension *Concern for the partner's well-being* shall also be increased. The other explanatory variables appeared statistically insignificant for the adopted level of significance $\alpha < .05$.

In the next conducted regression analysis, a dependent variable was *Relationship importance*, and explanatory variables were family values. The results of the hierarchical regression analysis taking into account interaction effects between the development period and the indicators of family values are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Correlations between the indicators of family values and the variable Relationship importance, taking into account the development period of the respondents

	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	R^2
Respect	.22	3.54	< .001	.08
Adulthood	-.16	-2.45	.015	
Adulthood \times Respect	.00	.04	.967	
Material success and achievements	-.09	-1.32	.189	.04
Adulthood	-.17	-2.62	.009	
Adulthood \times Material success and achievements	-.01	-.16	.872	

continuation of Table 7

	β	t	p	R^2
Individualism	-.03	-.43	.668	.03
Adulthood	-.17	-2.64	.009	
Adulthood \times Individualism	.04	.68	.499	
Religion	.14	2.19	.030	.05
Adulthood	-.17	-2.61	.010	
Adulthood \times Religion	.02	.38	.705	
Family support	.28	4.37	< .001	.10
Adulthood	-.13	-2.00	.046	
Adulthood \times Family support	.01	.21	.835	

It was found out that the respondents in middle adulthood had obtained significantly statistically lower results on the scale *Relationship importance*. No statistically significant interaction effects were found, therefore the final model of regression analysis was verified on the whole sample. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Predictors for the variable Relationship importance

Family values	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	4.28	.71		6.07	< .001
Respect	.22	.14	.16	1.60	.110
Material success and achievements	-.22	.11	-.14	-2.10	.037
Individualism	-.07	.13	-.04	-.58	.564
Religion	-.06	.07	-.06	-.77	.442
Family support	.36	.16	.21	2.30	.022

The model presenting the results of the regression analysis appeared to be well-adjusted to the data [$F(5.225) = 5.54$; $p < .001$; $R^2 = .11$]. It explained 11.0% of variance for the variable *Relationship importance*. Statistically significant predictors for the variable *Relationship importance* were the following dimensions: *Material success and achievements* and *Family support*. The lower the results on the scale *Material success and achievements* and the higher the results on the scale *Family support*, the higher the level of relationship importance.

Family Values vs. the Quality of Adult Sibling Interpersonal Relationship

The presented results of the regression analysis refer to three factors, making up the quality of adult sibling interpersonal relationship, i.e. *Warmth*, *Conflict* and *Rivalry* (dependent variables). Explanatory variables were family values.

The results of the hierarchical regression analysis taking into account interaction effects between the gender of the respondents and the indicators of family values are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Correlations between the indicators of family values and the variable Warmth, taking into account the gender of the respondents

	β	t	p	R^2
Respect	.24	3.24	.001	.07
Gender	-.19	-2.89	.004	
Gender \times Respect	.00	.02	.982	
Material success and achievements	-.14	-1.95	.053	.04
Gender	-.09	-1.22	.224	
Gender \times Material success and achievements	-.02	-.29	.772	
Individualism	-.20	-3.01	.003	.05
Gender	-.17	-2.59	.010	
Gender \times Individualism	.07	1.14	.256	
Religion	.22	3.16	.002	.07
Gender	-.14	-2.14	.033	
Gender \times Religion	.00	.03	.978	
Family support	.34	5.30	.000	.14
Gender	-.12	-2.02	.045	
Gender \times Family support	-.01	-.13	.893	

It was found out that men had obtained significantly statistically lower results on the scale *Warmth*. No statistically significant interaction effects were found, therefore the final model of regression analysis was verified on the whole sample. The results are shown in Table 10 (p. 151).

Table 10

Predictors for the variable Warmth

Family values	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.83	.54		5.20	< .001
Respect	-.12	.11	-.11	-1.14	.257
Material success and achievements	-.20	.08	-.16	-2.40	.017
Individualism	-.23	.10	-.15	-2.33	.021
Religion	.03	.06	.05	.58	.561
Family support	.51	.12	.37	4.23	< .001

The model [$F(5.225) = 10.28$; $p < .001$; $R^2 = .19$] explained 18.6% of variance of the variable *Warmth*. A statistically significant indicator of the dependent variable *Warmth* was the variables *Family support* (positive correlation) and *Individualism* and *Material success and achievements* (negative variables).

For the factor *Conflict*, regression analysis was carried out for the whole sample group as the gender did not differentiate the respondents in this respect. The model appeared to be well-adjusted to the data [$F(5.230) = 5.97$; $p < .001$; $R^2 = .12$] and explained 12.0% of variance for the factor *Conflict* (Table 11).

Table 11

Predictors for the variable Conflict in the whole group

Family values	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	1.35	.35		3.85	< .001
Respect	-.08	.07	-.12	-1.19	.234
Material success and achievements	.23	.05	.29	4.29	< .001
Individualism	.05	.06	.05	.72	.475
Religion	.08	.04	.18	2.24	.026
Family support	-.09	.08	-.11	-1.16	.247

The conducted analyses allowed us to find two statistically significant positive predictors for the variable *Conflict*, i.e. *Material success and achievements* and *Religion*. Therefore, it can be inferred that the more highly these values are appreciated by the respondents, the bigger the strength of *Conflict* in adult sibling relationships is. The comparison of the values of β coefficient showed that

a stronger indicator of the dependent variable *Conflict* was *Material success and achievements* ($\beta = .29$) in comparison with *Religion* ($\beta = .18$).

The last of the regression analyses was aimed at determining predictors for the dependent variable *Rivalry*. Explanatory variables were family values. However, the model appeared to be poorly adjusted to the data [$F(5.230) = .86$; $p = .506$; $R^2 = .02$]. As a result of the conducted regression analysis, it was found out that the considered family values were not statistically significant predictors of the factor *Rivalry*. However, that does not mean that there is no correlation between the dependent variable and the explanatory variables; that only indicates that there is no linear correlation (Szymczak, 2018). The obtained results confirm hypotheses 3.a, 3.b, whereas they do not confirm the assumptions of hypothesis 3.c.

Discussion

The need to look for family values which promote the proper functioning of family members and influence their life quality combined with a small number of psychological studies in this area is a good reason for taking up these issues in this work. The aim of the presented research was to describe dominant family values from the perspective of the respondents and estimate their correlation with the quality of interpersonal relationships in close family relationships.

The research results concerning the dimensions of family values dominant in the choices of the respondents (respectively: *Individualism*, *Family support*, *Respect*, *Religion* and *Material success and achievements*) show certain discrepancies versus the findings from other studies, in which the hierarchy of values was as follows: *Respect*, *Material success and achievements*, *Family support*, *Individualism* and *Religion* (Walęcka-Matyja & Janicka, 2021). Justifying the obtained results of the own study, some differences in the age range of the respondents in the compared groups were pointed to – from 18 to 60 years in the own study (two sub-periods of adulthood) and three sub-periods of adulthood, from 18 to 81 years in the study of Walęcka-Matyja and Janicka (2021). The fact that the study covered the people in the age range of early and middle adulthood could be one of the reasons for the obtained results. This is because early adulthood is the time when a person intensively acquires competence in many areas connected with functioning in the society, family, workplace, which prepare them for effective fulfilment of various life roles (Kiliszek, 2019). And, on the other hand, middle adulthood is not only a period of the greatest opportunities and the highest productivity but also the time of serious challenges to meet numerous overlapping commitments (Oleś, 2012). Therefore, the biggest strength of the value *Individualism* among the respondents can, on the one hand, result from the characteristics of the sample group, but, on the other hand, it can show a growing strength of the influence of the value systems of western cultures, which are based on individualism (Kagitcibasi, 2002). Describing changes taking place in the Polish society, Dyczewski (2003), among other things, indicates dissemination of subjectivism in the norms and beliefs as well as individualism demonstrated in behaviours and

actions. He also pays attention to a growing prioritization of success and competition, freedom, independence, openness to the influences of different cultures. Despite that, the next two highly appreciated values, i.e. *Respect* and *Family support*, can indicate that traditional family values still have a dominant position in the Polish society. The obtained result is coherent with the previous findings in this respect (Bąbka, 2012; Ziółkowski, 2000).

It was found out that the persons in middle adulthood had obtained significantly statistically lower results on the scales *Bond with the partner* and *Concern for the partner's well-being* than the ones in early adulthood.

Therefore, it can be assumed that younger people more often base their relationships on the aspects referring to the bond between the partners and their relationship than older ones. That can result from the stage of their relationship development, in the assumption of Sternberg's theory (1986), e.g. infatuation, romantic beginnings (Wojciszke, 2018).

The lower mean results in the group of older people concerning commitment expressed as *Concern for the partner's well-being* may indicate changes which are taking place in the form and durability of modern long term relationships. It is believed that they are characterized not only by less formalism but also scarcer changes within these relationships, e.g. greater egalitarianism. That can result in the increasing homogamy of legalised and non-legalised relationships. One of the manifestations of this similarity is a growing number of divorces, which may indicate a low level of stability of marriages, thereby making them look more like a consensual union. Additionally, it is observed that among young spouses there is a tendency to gain more and more freedom and independence in taking marital and parental roles, which allows us to formulate the conclusion that both marriages and consensual unions shall be characterized by a bigger strength of liberalism (Janicka, 2014).

Further analyses allow for the statement that a statistically significant positive predictor for the dimensions *Bond with the partner* and *Concern for the partner's well-being* is the variable *Respect*. And, the predictors for the variable *Relationship importance* are the dimensions *Material success and achievements* (negative) and *Family support* (positive).

In the previous findings concerning interpersonal commitment taking into account the dimensions analysed in this study, familism was not taken into consideration, therefore it is difficult to refer in an explicit way to the empirical results in this scope. It can be assumed that the development of commitment in long term relationships is influenced by numerous conditions, such as stages of family life, individual development of family members as well as the maturity of the whole family system. The indicated problems cause difficulties in the assessment of importance of single factors affecting the formation of interpersonal commitment development paths in long-term relationships. The great number of influences and relational factors interweaving in family systems is, on the one hand, a limitation resulting from insufficient possibilities to interpret all the relationship factors in an unequivocal way and, on the other hand, it is a challenge for modern psychology – it is necessary to describe and fully explain the issues which become especially visible while conducting empirical research (comp. Ciecuch, 2021).

The result of the inter-gender comparison referring to the factor *Warmth* is congruent with the findings from other studies, indicating a bigger strength of this factor in women than men (Cicirelli, 1995; Crouter et al., 2004; Walęcka-Matyja, 2018). It is stressed that a bigger strength of community values in women is expressed in a stronger focus on other people and the relationships with them (Wojciszke & Szlendak, 2010). Moreover, in interpersonal relationships women are characterized by higher emotionality, empathy, commitment, stronger striving for contact with brothers and sisters, thanks to which they have close and warm relationships with the siblings (Szymańska, 2019).

The results of the analyses describing correlations between family values with *Warmth* in sibling relationships are consistent with the findings from other studies (Azmita et al., 2009; Killoren et al., 2015; Walęcka-Matyja & Janicka, 2021). It was proved that relationships based on the dimension *Warmth* were positively correlated with the value *Family support* and negatively correlated with the value *Material success and achievements* (Walecka-Matyja & Janicka, 2021).

Family specialists emphasize the importance of family support for experiencing the feeling of security, belonging and love, which has a positive influence on well-being of family members. The family also plays the role of a buffer in difficult situations, protecting against negative consequences of stress. Its functions and the scope of commitment in relationships make it the most effective and unconditional source of support, which is essential for health and the quality of life. It should be emphasized that family support is regarded as the key dimension of familism (Campos et al., 2019; Jocson, 2020).

The dimensions of family values are not significant predictors in relation to the factor *Rivalry* in adult sibling relationships. In case of the factor *Conflict*, two values *Religion* and *Material success and achievements* appeared to be significant and positive predictors. The obtained results are considered to be consistent with the expectations in case of the values from the individualistic area. Nevertheless, the dimension *Religion*, which is a positive indicator of relationships based on the factor *Conflict*, is surprising. Taking into account the fact that only one person from a sibling dyad was examined, there is no information about the religious beliefs of the other sibling. Therefore, it cannot be excluded that there were world-view differences concerning their belief in supernatural power between the siblings, which can cause conflicts. It is emphasized that Christian *Religion*, except an individual aspect, also has a community nature. That results in an ability to build relationships based on deep affection and the feeling of union with the people who share similar ideals (Giguère, 1997; Walulik, 2017). In some other studies, it was noticed that the consensus of religious views between the spouses is expressed in less conflictual communication (Curtis & Ellison, 2002; Mahoney & Tarakeshwar, 2005 after: Rydz, 2014). Although marriage and sibling subsystems are not the same, it can be assumed that there is analogy relating to homogamy of religious views and the resultant less conflictual interpersonal relationships. Moreover, it is worth emphasizing that religiousness in young people is also developed outside the family environment by such factors as, for example, a peer group (Finke, 1996). That can be one of the reasons why there is a difference in religiousness in siblings from the same family. The obtained

result provokes reflection on the need to undertake deeper psychological research in this respect.

The examination of family values and their importance for the quality of interpersonal relationships is an advantage of multidimensional scientific exploration of the family system. However, it should be noticed that it is a real challenge to include a lot of variables important for the analysed problem in one study, taking into account both the selection of the sample, the applied research tools and the used methods of data analysis (i.e. non-probabilistic selection, self-descriptive tools, respondents in two adulthood sub-periods, quantitative research). Since a lot of psychosocial and relational factors should be taken under consideration, whose examination seems to be extremely difficult to carry out in a single research project.

Despite the mentioned limitations, the results of the conducted analyses can be useful for promoting axiological awareness, especially among adult people, who, on the one hand, are culture recipients and, on the other hand, transmit it to their children. It is particularly important in modern times, offering a wide range of opportunities and choices, frequently including conflicting goals and values, which requires the adoption of a consistent pattern of conduct. This type of matrix can be familism, which is assigned by the world literature an important protective role for mental health (Knight et al., 2010; Sabogal et al., 1987). At the same time, it shall be stressed that it is necessary to explore its mechanics on a continuous basis (Crouter et al., 2004). Additionally, focusing our attention on the fact that parents affect creating relationships between the siblings through their parenting measures and transmission of family values may result in the growth of awareness of this issue and, as a consequence, contribute to more care for the quality of family relationships. Since positive relationships with brothers and sisters are another important psychological resource in our adult life. Also, it is worth adding that in the world characterized by a great number of divorces or high frequency of changing partners in informal relationships, it is especially important to promote family values, which favour commitment in the relationship, which in turn translates into its quality and durability. In fact, that can contribute to reducing adjustment disorder in children and teenagers who are adapting to life in reconstructed or mono-parental families.

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