

**Zuzana Horáková Hurychová**  
**Dissertation: Structure and dynamics of close personal relationships**

**ABSTRACT**

**Keywords:** Close personal relationship, components of close relationships, close relationship's dynamics, relationship type, methods of measuring close relationships, prototype approach, RCI, DOTEV

The thesis deals with close personal relationships and their specific characteristics. Even though this area has been extensively explored abroad, it has received little attention in the Czech Republic. We can see a certain paradox: While there are no standard methods of measuring or specifying relationship characteristics of the Czech population, foreign literature is abundant in theories on how close personal relationships work, offering methods of their measurement. These methods usually focus on a specific component of the relationship.

Therefore, it has not been possible to fully meet the objectives of this thesis. The first objective was to perform a theoretical mapping of close relationships, which is not fully possible due to the limited extent of the thesis. Thus, I only focused on the most frequently cited and most interesting, in my opinion, concepts that offer practical methods of measuring close relationships. The thesis offers a wide, though not exhaustive, overview that has served as a basis for devising an operational definition of close personal relationship. It is generally defined as a specific interpersonal relationship that can be quantitatively characterised by a degree of contentment, trust (intimacy), investment and gain, interdependence, commitment, shared activities and emotional closeness.

The second objective of this thesis was to map close personal relationships as perceived by the Czech society. This was only possible on a superficial level because this is the first study of its kind; a first probe that aims to set more solid foundation for further research.

This prototype study has shown that close personal relationships as perceived by the Czech general public are in line with the established concepts and that all types of close relationships (romantic, family and friend) have exclusively their own specific characteristics. Other findings, notably the temporal evolution of some close relationship components and differences in perception between men and women, are also in line with research in this field.

An analysis of theoretical concepts and the results of the prototype study of the Czech population led to the creation of the DOTEV questionnaire that is aimed primarily at assessment of romantic relationships. The questionnaire offers a method that comprises all the main components of close relationships (on the basis of the above mentioned operational definition). It is the first and only method that produces results that reflect the Czech reality. The resulting one-factor DOTEV\_7 method shows the same results for both men and women, as well as for all relationships disregarding their duration. However, its main benefit is the comparability of different types of relationships and their characteristics, similarly as in the case of the RCI method.

Intimacy can be considered the most interesting characteristic of close personal relationships, for many reasons. Firstly, it is one of the few components of relationships whose dynamics is studied in foreign literature. Secondly, the prototype study has also demonstrated that it has a unique position in the overall assessment of all close relationships. Thirdly, its unique character has also been confirmed by the DOTEV questionnaire; intimacy was the only component that showed significant temporal development (throughout the relationship). That is why intimacy has been placed as a specific subscale in the otherwise one-factor DOTEV\_7 method.

The results of the prototype study, as well as the proposed DOTEV\_7 method can serve as a basis for hypotheses in further research.

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