

## An Analysis of Family Values in Lee Woo-jung's Korean Drama Reply 1988

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### ABSTRACT

The dynamics of family bonding values depicted in Lee Woo-jung's Reply 1988 offer valuable perspectives on how families preserve love and closeness amidst daily struggles. This research seeks to examine how the drama depicts family values utilizing Van Wel's (1994) Family Bonding Theory as a framework. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach through semiotic and content analysis, the study investigates the depiction of love, harmony, and conflict among five families residing in a neighborhood in Seoul during the late 1980s. Information was gathered from 87 chosen scenes, conversations, and visual symbols depicting emotional connection, parental duty, and generational disparities. The results indicate that the seven bonding values are: attachment, commitment, interdependence, closeness, trust, intimacy, and love. Establish the emotional base that reinforces family bonds, with attachment occurring most often (13.64%), succeeded by commitment (18.18%), interdependence (13.64%), closeness (18.18%), trust (4.55%), intimacy (13.64%), and love (18.18%). These values are evident in parental sacrifice, community unity, gestures of care shown subtly through daily habits, and emotional healing following disputes, showing that conflict within families frequently leads to enhanced understanding and stronger connections. In summary, the research finds that Reply 1988 depicts robust familial ties as a cultural and emotional influence that preserves togetherness, strength, and enduring relationships through generations

## **INTRODUCTION**

Drama is a visual art form that reflects human life through emotion, dialogue, and action. Bordwell and Thompson (2010) highlight that drama serves as a medium that combines narrative and performance to communicate moral and social messages to its audience. Dramas are not merely for entertainment; they can also act as cultural mirrors that depict values, beliefs, and traditions within a society. When analyzed through the perspective of family and social studies, dramas become more powerful educational tools that reveal how individuals relate to one to another and how the values are transmitted across generations. According to Wajdi et al. (2025), the family represents the emotional core of human experience, that serves the main source of support, identity, and shared values within society as well. It is within the family that individuals first learn empathy, cooperation, and even moral understanding, which is the values that later shape their broader social relationships. Moreover, understanding how family values are portrayed in visual media can deepen our emotional awareness and also our cultural dynamics that influence modern life. Through cinematic portrayals of family relationships, audiences are able to observe and realize the balance between affection and conflict that exists in our everyday life. So, in this way, drama not only entertains but it also reflects and reinforces the moral values that connect individuals to their cultural identity. Furthermore, that representations help viewers appreciate the universality of family bonds as well as recognize their unique expressions across different societies.

The family is usually defined as a small social system that formed through the shared responsibilities, emotional bonds, and also continuous interaction. Bahri, et. al (2024) highlight that family is a distinct social unit that built upon structured roles and mutual functions as well, that allow its members to meet one another's needs. It further operates as an interrelated network in which each person's actions and emotions influence the entire group. Building on this, Van Wel's (1994) theory of family bonding emphasizes that the strength of family relationships lies in seven essential aspects, it includes attachment, commitment, interdependence, closeness, trust, intimacy, and love. Bahri et al. (2024) further emphasized that family values not only reinforce emotional bonds but it also can maintain balance between independence and interdependence among family members. When nurtured properly, these values can foster trust, intimacy, and love, creating resilience in facing internal challenges. Therefore, the family can be seen as a dynamic space where affection and tension coexist, which shapes each individual's emotional growth and also sense of belonging.

Lee Woo-jung's Korean drama *Reply 1988* serves as a meaningful reflection of these family dynamics. Set in a small neighborhood in Seoul during the late 1980s, the drama highlight the intertwined lives of five families and their children as they navigate love, friendship, and also their everyday challenges. Beyond its nostalgic tone, *Reply 1988* illustrates how family values including respect for elders, togetherness, and sacrifice coexist with conflicts caused by misunderstanding and differing expectations. As Kim (2019) notes, Korean family dramas often emphasize the balance between traditional values and modern struggles, revealing both affection and emotional distance among family

members. Through the lens of family value, this study aims to analyze how Reply 1988 represents the complex emotional realities of family life in Korean culture, which reflects broader themes of unity, love, and generational change as well. In the drama Reply 1988, the characters often display strong emotional bonds that reflect the values outlined in Van Wel's (1994) theory of family bonding, such as attachment, commitment, love, and so on. The primary data of this study is taken from a scene in Reply 1988 (Episode 5, minute 10:29-10:52) where Sunwoo's mother offers to cook beef bone soup after he injures his leg, showing her affection and concern through her actions rather than words.

Sun-woo : "You leave too, mom. I just stretched a ligamen. I'm fine. Go do what you need to."  
Sun-woo's mom : "Is there anything you want to eat??"  
Sun-woo : "Am i a kid? No, there isnt..  
Sun-woo's mom : "I'm making beef bone soup"  
Sun-woo : "What?"  
Sun-woo's mom : "Beef bone soup"  
Sun-woo : "Ahh mom..."  
Sun-woo's mom : "**Isn't there anything you want to eat? I'll buy you anything**"  
Sun-woo : "I'm fine. I dont need anything, mom"

This scene clearly shows the value of Attachment, which is one of the seven values of family bonding, which emphasizes the emotional closeness and mutual care among family members. When Sunwoo injures his leg at school, his mother immediately expresses concern by repeatedly asking what he wants to eat and offering to prepare beef bone soup for him. Her heartfelt question, "**Isn't there anything you want to eat? I'll buy you anything**," becomes a touching expression of maternal attachment revealing her instinct to comfort and care for her son through small acts of love. Although Sunwoo refuses her offer and insists that he is fine, his response reflects a quiet form of affection and consideration, as he does not want to trouble his mother. Meanwhile, his mother's insistence on cooking for him symbolizes her love and comfort, showing that her way of expressing care is through acts of service. Their dialogue reveals a deep emotional connection where affection is communicated through concern, warmth, and small gestures rather than direct expressions. This unspoken understanding between Sunwoo and his mother clearly illustrates the Attachment value, highlighting how family members maintain emotional intimacy and support in simple as well as in meaningful ways. It also highlights how parental care coexist silently, which forms a strong emotional foundation that sustains their relationship despite the absence of verbal affection.

Several previous studies that have explored similar topics from diverse cultural and theoretical perspectives, including (1) Bahri, S., et al. (2024) in their study "*Family Values in Domee Shi's Movie Turning Red*" analyzed how cultural expectations and also generational gaps affect family relationships. The researchers then found that conflicts between parents and children often arise from differences in values and self-expression as well. They also emphasized that communication and empathy play an important roles in maintaining family

harmony. Moreover, the study also demonstrate that family bonding becomes stronger when emotional understanding replaces strict parental control. (2) Karies, A. A. (2021) conducted a study titled "*Representation of Family Values in the Film Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini.*" The research focused on the portrayal of Indonesian family dynamics, where unspoken emotions and pressure for perfection often lead to conflict. Karies found that the film reflects the importance of emotional openness to heal family wounds. It also suggested that shared vulnerability among family members can restore affection and strengthen emotional connections. (3) Wajdi, M. (2025) in "*Nostalgia and Bonds: Exploring Themes of Friendship, Family, and Love in K-drama Reply 1988*" explored how family bonding is portrayed through everyday interactions in a neighborhood community. The study revealed that familial love is expressed through simple acts of care, humor, and sacrifice rather than verbal affection. Wajdi noted that intergenerational relationships in the drama illustrate both tension and warmth that shape personal growth. The research concluded that family conflict can coexist with deep emotional bonds, reflecting the realistic complexity of human relationship. (4) Fowowe-Ogunmilugba (2025), in the article "*The Influence of Family Values, Socioeconomic Status, and Parenting Styles on the Career Aspirations of Secondary School Students,*" analyzed how family background shapes students' career goals. The study revealed that family values were the strongest factor influencing students' aspirations, followed by socioeconomic status and parenting style. Supportive families with clear expectations helped students form higher and more realistic career goals. Meanwhile, socioeconomic limitations and unsupportive parenting reduced students' confidence and career clarity. The article emphasized that collaboration between families and schools is essential to help students build positive and achievable career pathways. (5) Arslan, et al. (2023), through their article "*The Investigation of the Relationship Between Positive Childhood Experiences and Family Values,*" examined how supportive childhood environments shape young adults' views on family life. The study found that individuals who reported warm, stable, and emotionally supportive childhoods tended to value marriage more, show stronger emotional bonds with family, and support democratic decision-making at home. The research also showed that higher income and the desire to build a future family were linked to more positive memories. (6) Huang, M., et al. (2023) in "*An Analysis of Characters' Personalities and Emotions in Korean TV Series Reply 1988*" explored how different personalities influence emotional expression. The study showed that understanding and tolerance among family members are built through daily interactions. It also found that personality differences often cause emotional friction, but they can enhance empathy when properly managed. The research highlighted that emotional maturity is essential to sustaining long-term family bonds. (7) Fitria, T. N. (2023) in "*An Analysis of Moral Values Found in a Korean TV Series The World of the Married*" examined the breakdown of trust and loyalty within a family unit. The study focused on how betrayal and revenge affect moral values and emotional well-being. Fitria concluded that despite severe conflicts, the process of self-reflection and forgiveness allows individuals to rediscover

personal growth. The study ultimately portrayed family conflict as both a destructive and transformative force in shaping one's moral understanding

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Van Wel's proposition from 1994 gives importance to understanding the different aspects that help make family bonds that are powerful, withstand the test of time, and stay balanced. Van Wel argues that a family's ability to bounce back does not just come from who they are related to but more from the feelings and mental connections made when they share moments, have faith in one another, and show love. Families are the first place where people learn important qualities, like how to understand others' feelings, show kindness, and work together. Called the Family Bonding Theory, it points out that a family that works well is like a team where everyone helps each other, talks honestly, and makes sure everyone feels safe. When these things are nurtured, families grow stronger at facing problems and keep things steady by showing they care and respect each other. This idea focuses on seven important values that help bring families together: connection, dedication, reliance on each other, nearness, faith, deep understanding, and affection. Each of these has its own special job that is linked to the others in creating a strong and well-balanced family structure.

### *Attachment*

Attachment refers the emotional connection linking parents and their offspring nurtures a family setting characterized by safety, ease, and acceptance. It flourishes via displays of love, dependability, and mutual activities that develop confidence and insight. This connection serves as the foundation for all family ethics, establishing a continuing sense of emotional security and membership. Substantial connection additionally supports the growth of compassion, self-assurance, and the ability to recover from hardships in children's lives (Bahri et al., 2024). For instance:

Yang geum myeong : "I missed my mom's food"

Yang geum myeong's mom : "hi, baby. You didn't say you were coming"

Yang geum myeong : "I used vacation days"

Yang geum myeong's father : "ah, but why didn't you call me? It's pretty late"

Yang geum myeong : "I'm hungry, mom"

Yang geum myeong's mom : "yeah! We've got food. We do"

The exchange showcases the attachment-based family principle, which is made especially obvious by Yang Geum Myeong's phrase, "I missed my mom's food" This declaration conveys sentimental yearning and the intense relationship he has with his mother. Wanting her food is about more than just wanting to eat; it stands for the solace, kindness, and affection that he connects with his home. His remarks emphasize that his family gives him a sense of safety and membership, demonstrating that emotional nearness remains strong even when they are separated. This single statement gets to the heart of attachment, when love and connection are strongly felt through ordinary moments.

### *Commitment*

Commitment signifies the steadfast devotion and faithfulness exhibited by family members towards each other, even when encountering hardships or personal costs. This unwavering support frequently surfaces through collaborative efforts, shared duties, and a readiness to place the family's overall well-being before individual desires. It necessitates perseverance, a disposition to find common ground, and the sustaining of robust emotional connections irrespective of obstacles. Families, through commitment, exhibit strength, togetherness, and enduring faithfulness that underpins robust and lasting relationships (Razzak et al., 2022). For instance:

Lim ju kyung : "I'm too embarrassed to go back to school. Mom, I want to transfer schools, will you please let me?"

Lim ju kyung's mom : **"we're moving back to our old place, so you have to transfer"**

Lim ju kyung : really? you mean that, right?

Lim ju kyung's mom : "yes!"

Lim ju kyung : "I feel like dancing!"

Lim ju kyung's mom : "change you clothes right now!"

This dialogue showcases the family principle of commitment, which is distinctly highlighted in the mother's statement: **"We're moving back to our old place, so you have to transfer."** This statement indicates that the mother is prepared to implement a substantial shift in their circumstances to bolster her daughter's emotional state. Rather than disregarding Lim Ju Kyung's difficulties, she pledges to assist her by consenting to relocate and enabling her to switch schools. This conduct illustrates faithfulness, accountability, and allegiance to her daughter's welfare. With this reply, the mother validates that commitment within a family entails supporting one another and undertaking sacrifices.

### *Interdependence*

Interdependence emphasizes the deeply entwined characteristics of family existence, in which the deeds, feelings, and welfare of one person bear upon everyone else. If a member of the family goes through difficult times, the rest step in with heartfelt or functional help, which proves that the family operates as a cohesive whole, and this is interdependence. It underscores the idea of reciprocal dependence where each person adds to and gains from the family framework, echoing what Hooker et al. (2023) call an interdependence that is based on shared understanding, unity, and group resilience, thus making sure that nobody feels cut off from the family. For example:

Samdal's dad : "Samdal is innocent, so why criticize her? They should get to the bottom of this. Are mainland people always this rash?"

Samdal's sister: "That's not it. People in the industry are avoiding her just to avoid trouble"

Samdal's dad : "she went through so much to become a photographer. **So don't let your mom find out about this"**

Samdal's sister: "of course"

Samdal's dad : " she'll be carried off again if she finds out"

Samdal's sister: "carried off again? What do you mean?"

Samdal's dad : "what I mean is, she'll be shocked"

The dialogue brings to light how much the family values interdependence, and this means that relatives depend on one another for backing, safety, and a sense of security. You can see this plainly in the father's words to Samdal, "**So don't let your mom find out about this,**" and the sister's reply, "Of course." These statements highlight their collaborative attitude to watch over Samdal and give each other comfort. The father trusts the sister to maintain order in the situation, which shows shared duty and teamwork. Their joint goal to shield the mother from being shocked shows how family members lean on one another and pull together in order to get over challenges.

### *Closeness*

Family closeness is more than just being physically near each other; it involves deep emotional bonds, ease, and a sense of knowing each other well. It grows from constant communication, shared moments, and a commitment to spending meaningful time together. Things like sharing meals, enjoying films, talking about what happens each day, or honoring customs help to create this feeling of closeness. Green and Bryant (2023) suggest that frequent communication and being emotionally open make families closer, helping both parents and kids develop respect and understanding for each other. Feeling close also creates a secure and supportive environment where people feel valued and understood, building stronger trust and reducing disagreements. For Instance:

yeon ji yeong : "it's just bibimbap"

king lee heon : "just? Ot is a royal bibimbap that I, the king of Joseon, made for the first time, it is called hwanseban"

yeon ji yeong : "haa okay..!"

king lee heon : "do not eat if you do not want to"

yeon ji yeong : "**no. I will eat it**, thank you"

king lee heon : "then.. open up aa... does it taste good?"

This dialogue shows how much the family values helping each other, where family members depend on each other while keeping up respect and emotional help. When King Lee Heon says firmly, "If you don't want to eat, then don't," it shows he's thinking about how she feels and letting her decide, not making her do it. Yeon Ji Yeong answers by saying, **No. I will eat it, thank you,** which shows she wants to be involved, values what he does, and wants to keep things peaceful. This short talk shows they depend on each other because they both think about what the other person needs and help keep their relationship steady. They use teamwork and understanding instead of arguing, which proves that supportive actions make their relationship stronger.

### *Trust*

A crucial element for ensuring enduring peace within a family is trust. This is the feeling that each person in the family can have confidence in each other's truthfulness, moral principles, and faithfulness. Developing trust happens when family members continually keep their word, consistently demonstrate dependability, and offer mental or ethical assistance when things get tough. As stated by Bahri et al, (2024), building trust relies on sincerity, dependability, and caring for each other emotionally among relatives. However, lacking trust may cause relatives to drift apart emotionally and feel unsafe. For that reason, to keep trust alive, continuous effort, compassion, and consideration

are needed, guaranteeing that everyone in the family has a sense of security, respect, and significance. For instance:

Seokyeong's brother : "Im okay seokyeonga.."

Seokyeong : "**you know right? I have no one but you. You are the only who's on my side**"

Seokyeong's brother : "I'll make sure I keep you safe, so that no one will mess with you"

Seokyeong : im sorry..

Seokyeong's brother : it's okay.. im fine

The dialogue reflects how important trust is to this family, which is clearly highlighted when Seokyeong says, "**You know right? I have no one but you. You are the only one who's on my side.**" Her words show a strong need for emotional reliance and faith in her brother, proving she is sure that he is the only one she can count on and who will always be there for her. Because she says she has nobody else, Seokyeong is showing just how much she trusts in his faithfulness and protection of her. This sentence explains how trust in a family grows from being confident in each other's care and feeling secure enough to share your vulnerabilities. The dialogue here shows how trust makes the sibling connection stronger, creating feelings of safety and faithfulness.

### *Intimacy*

The concept of intimacy within familial bonds encompasses the profound exchange of emotions coupled with a shared comprehension. This extends beyond mere romantic attachment, incorporating transparent dialogue, understanding of feelings, and sincere regard for the emotional states of each individual. Parents who provide focused attention when their children express concerns, or siblings who share personal difficulties with one another, are examples of demonstrating this intimate connection. Such dynamics nurture emotional proximity and bolster the mental well-being of everyone within the family unit. Intimacy also strengthens the capacity to recover from emotional setbacks, fostering attributes such as kindness, the capacity to pardon, and tolerance - characteristics vital for navigating disputes and sustaining enduring peace in the family sphere (Sadowski & Eklund, 2021). For instance:

Ji seung wan's mom : "so do you want to throw away all the work you've put in the past year? You'll be throwing away a whole year from your life.. does this matter to you that much?"

Ji seung wan : "yes.. i'm sorry mom.."

Ji seung wan's mom : "Seungwan, you have to learn how to be flexible. You can't live in this world if you only know how to break."

Ji seung wan : "I know, but I just can't do it yet, mom. Im sorry mom.."

Ji seung wan's mom : "**that's okay.. I feel so sorry for you.**"

The dialogue reflects the significance of intimacy within the family, exemplified by the mother's emotionally resonant reply, "**That's okay. . . I feel so sorry for you.**" This statement highlights intimacy by illustrating emotional nearness, comprehension, and empathy between a caregiver and their offspring. Rather than reacting with displeasure or letdown, the maternal figure responds with kindness and validates Seungwan's emotions. Her readiness to offer solace

and encouragement during a trying circumstance portrays a strong emotional relationship where sentiments can be voiced candidly and securely. This interchange underscores that familial intimacy is cultivated through understanding emotions, verbalizing sentiments, and the capability to display vulnerability among one another.

### *Love*

Love stands as the most influential and inclusive virtue. It represents the energy that connects every other familial virtue, leading to equilibrium and peace. Love within the family manifests through attentiveness, compromise, pardon, and limitless affirmation. Affection goes beyond disagreements and disputes, given that it promotes compassion, tolerance, and making amends. Family members discover how to appreciate one another despite flaws due to affection, nurturing a continuous feeling of connection and togetherness. When affection turns into the main standard of family existence, it develops the sentimental connection that fastens people together through time and circumstances (Bahri et al., 2024).

Cha yuri : "Min-jeong is too nice. Will she divorce him?"

Cha yuri's sister : "I don't know. I told you, it's not your fault. It wasn't really working out between them anyway. They were too thoughtful and considerate because they found each other pitiful but that made them distant, that's not good. You have enough worries of your own. Smile..."

Cha yuri : "I feel bad with min-jeong"

Cha yuri's sister : "**It's okay, that's mean she loves you and let you with your daughter..**"

The dialogue mirrors the familial virtue of affection, which is displayed through the sister's declaration, "**It's okay, that's mean she loves you and let you with your daughter.**" This statement reveals affection because it stresses concern, compromise, and unselfishness. Min-jeong's actions permitting Cha Yuri to stay with her daughter exhibits her profound fondness and priority of other people's joy over her personal. The sister views these actions as a demonstration of affection, underlining that genuine affection often involves compassion, giving, and upholding the welfare of the individuals we appreciate. This conversation describes that affection in a familial or intimate association is conveyed via performances of benevolence, comprehension, and unselfish thoughtfulness for others.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with content-based scene analysis to examine the representation of family values in Lee Woo-jung's drama Reply 1988. This approach was chosen because it provides the researcher with an opportunity to present an in-depth and contextual interpretation of the social interactions and emotional dynamics depicted within the drama's narrative framework. All twenty episodes were watched to gain a thorough understanding of the storyline and the development of relationships between the characters. Relevant scenes depicting family interactions were selected, recorded, and coded according to the Family Values Theory categories proposed by Van Wel (1994), which include attachment, commitment, interdependence,

closeness , trust , intimacy , and love , so that the researcher could systematically classify the various dimensions of relational values .

Each selected scene was identified by episode number and time duration (minute and second markers) and supported by visual excerpts and key dialogues that explicitly reflect the targeted family value category . These elements were then analyzed through interpretive explanations to explain how and why the scene demonstrates certain family values . According to Arslan and Özyürek (2023), a descriptive approach is effective in capturing social and emotional realities as they exist in life experiences and interpersonal relationships , which supports the application of qualitative descriptive methods in this study . Research in media and cultural studies also notes that Korean dramas have an impact on shaping public perceptions of family relationships , emotional closeness , and cultural identity (Adler, 2023), further confirming the relevance of analyzing dramatized family interactions through an interpretive lens.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

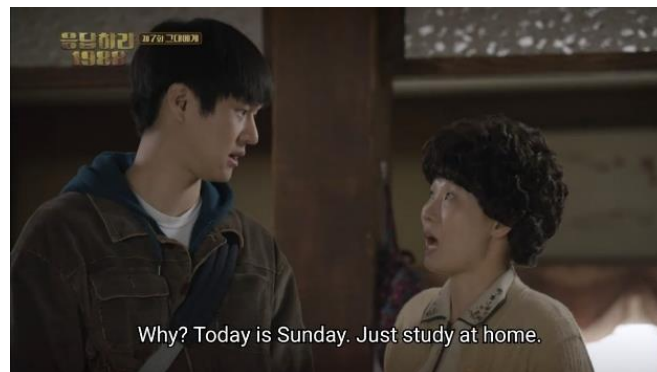
According to Van Wel's (1994) bonding theory identifies seven important components of family values: attachment, commitment, interdependence, proximity, trust, intimacy, and love. The examination of the Korean drama Reply 1988 revealed and examined all these aspects, demonstrating how relationships influence the dynamics and emotional ties. This part explores how these values are manifested in characters' interactions and everyday life, highlighting the significance of emotional connections, cultural customs, mutual comprehension, and common experiences in fortifying and upholding significant family bonds over the years.

Table 1

No	Family Bonding	Number	%
1	Attachment	3	13.64%
2	Commitment	4	18.18%
3	Interdependence	3	13.64%
4	Closeness	4	18.18%
5	Trust	1	4.55%
6	Intimacy	3	13.64%
7	Love	4	18.18%
Total		22	100%

### *Attachment*

Scene: Sun Woo expresses worry for his mother after he observes her wrist discomfort and suggests she go to the hospital. (episode 7, minutes 34:47–35:03).



Pic. 1

Sun woo : "Mom, I'm going to the study room"  
Sun woo's mom : "Why? Today is sunday. Just study at home. I'll make you some nice food"  
Sun Woo : "No, I'll be back by the evening"  
Sun Woo's mom : (Opening glass bottle)  
Sun Woo : "Dont do this thing like this when you have a sore wrist. Go to the hospital, mom"

The exchange between Sun Woo and his mother in this moment illustrates a profound sense of bond and emotional intimacy in their relationship. When Sun Woo says “Don’t do this thing like this when you have a sore wrist. Go to the hospital, mom,” his tone expresses a blend of worry, affection, and guardianship. Even though the conversation seems straightforward, it holds significant emotional depth, indicating that Sun Woo is very attuned to his mother's situation and feels a sense of duty regarding her health. His compassionate reminder to avoid overexertion and pursue medical help showcases the empathy and concern usually present in secure attachment bonds. This instance also emphasizes a subtle role reversal frequently observed in intimate parent–child dynamics, where the child starts to adopt a protective role as the parent ages or faces physical challenges. Rather than overlooking his mother’s suffering, Sun Woo shows his love through his actions and care, strengthening their emotional connection. The bond mentioned isn't shown through dramatic actions or spoken affirmations of love but rather through thoughtful, nurturing actions that denote trust, relationship, and a profound family connection.

### *Commitment*

Scene: Sun Woo maintains that he will go with his mother to the market despite her urging him to remain at home (episode 11, minutes 14:12–14:27).



Pic. 2

- Sun Young : "Sun Woo, I'm taking Jin Jo and going to the market!"  
Sun Woo : "Let's go together, mom"  
Sun Young : "It's okay. Just stay home and study, I can go by myself "  
Sun Woo : "No, it'll be too heavy for you. I'll go with you, just wait a minute"  
Sun Young : "It's really fine though"

This scene symbolizes the bond upheld between Sun Woo and his mother through their daily exchanges. Despite the appearance of normalcy, Sun Woo's determination to assist his mother leads to her response "No, it'll be too heavy for you. I'll go with you, just wait a minute", indicates his commitment and sense of duty toward her. His readiness to join her, even after she claims it's not needed, emphasizes the depth of his dedication to support and care for his family. This scene illustrates that dedication in family bonds is usually demonstrated through steady acts of kindness instead of extravagant displays. Sun Woo's actions exemplify a reliable form of love that prioritizes the needs and comfort of those he cares for. His mother's kind refusal indicates her own dedication, as she desires her son to concentrate on his studies. Collectively, their behaviors demonstrate reciprocal commitment and dependability, establishing the basis of a dedicated family connection that persists in becoming stronger through their collective care and assistance for each other.

### ***Interdependence***

Scene: Deok Sun's father promptly assists his wife when she gets injured, demonstrating shared concern and accountability (episode 5, minutes 03:40-03:57)



Pic. 3

Deok Sun's mom : "Deok Sun, set the table! I'm bringin the food over!"  
Deok Sun : "Okay mom"  
Deok Sun's mom : "Aww.. It's hurt!" (tersandung)  
Deok Sun : "Oh no! Mom, are you okay?"  
Deok Sun's dad : "Let me see your foot.. oh my! it's bleeding! get a band-aid!"  
Deok Sun's mom : (Already treated) "I'm fine. It's nothing, so ho ahead and eat."

The scene between Deok Sun and her parents illustrates interdependence, indicating mutual reliance and emotional ties in family dynamics. When Deok Sun's father says, "Let me see your foot... oh my! it's bleeding! get a band-aid!" it clearly reveals his worry and readiness to assist when his wife is injured. This reaction emphasizes the way family members in the series naturally rely on and assist each other during even minor challenges. His swift reply demonstrates concern and highlights the mutual responsibility that connects them as a family. Additionally, the worries of Deok Sun and her father regarding the mother's injury symbolize the inherent flow of interdependence; the mother manages the family every day, but when she is injured, her family members respond by providing her care in return. This equilibrium of providing and receiving care demonstrates that their relationship is not unidirectional; rather, it flourishes on shared understanding and assistance. In this brief domestic scene, the drama depicts the affection of family life where emotional connection and practical assistance are closely linked

#### *Closeness*

Scene: Jung Hwan jokes with Jung Bung before the surgery, and his lighthearted remarks soothe his brother while displaying their sibling bond (episode 8, minutes 32:07-32:48).



Pic. 4

Jung Hwan : "Dont be so dramatic. It's just an hour operation, what are you doing now?"  
Jung Bong : "No matter what, it's still an operation"  
Jung Hwan : "Bro, the probability of failure is even lesser than 3%. I did some researchs about that."  
Jung Bong : "When I was young, they said the probability that I'll have a heart disease wa lesse than 2%. That's why, I'm so horrified by the 3%"

Jung Hwan : "Ahh, don't be so dramatic, please. Brother, the operation is just a piece of cake to the doctor. Stop talking nonsense and go to sleep."

This scene depicts a profound bond between Jung Hwan and his sibling, Jung Bong. Despite the playful banter, their interaction shows real warmth and ease. As Jung Bong voices his fears regarding the surgery, Jung Hwan responds with reassurances, attempting to alleviate his anxiety using humor and light-hearted language. The line "Ahh, don't be so dramatic, please. Brother, the operation is just a piece of cake to the doctor. Stop talking nonsense and go to sleep." This statement clearly indicates their closeness, as Jung Hwan's manner of caring comes off as natural and familiar. Instead of using serious or emotional words to comfort his brother, Jung Hwan opts for a playful tone, a common way for siblings to show affection without directly stating it. His effort to provide comfort and reassurance to his brother shows how intimacy can thrive in simple actions and routine dialogues, highlighting the affection and connection they share.

### **Trust**

Scene: Bo Ra's father informs her about her mother's health problem and requests that she keep it confidential, demonstrating their shared trust (episode 13, minutes 45:16-46:06)



Pic. 5

Bo Ra's Dad : "Bo Ra, Let's talk"

Bo Ra : "It's not something serious, right?"

Bo Ra's Dad : "Sure, It's not something serious. Just in case it's something else, they took a biopsy. Everything will be fine, don't worry. Despite everything, you're the eldest daughter, So I thought you should know. Keep it as a secret and don't tell your siblings"

Bo Ra : "All right, dad."

This scene illustrates the trust between Bo Ra and her father, conveyed through a silent yet significant dialogue. When her father remarks, "Despite everything, you're the eldest daughter, so I thought you should know. Keep it as a secret and don't tell your siblings," it shows his strong confidence in her responsibility and judgment. By deciding to disclose delicate details regarding her mother's health solely to Bo Ra, he demonstrates trust in her capacity to manage the reality maturely and shield the family from unwarranted anxiety. Bo Ra's composed reply, "All right, dad," further strengthens this trust, as she

willingly accepts the duty without dispute or delay. The interaction emphasizes that trust in a family typically manifests through honesty, respect, and confidentiality. Instead of intense displays, this serene instance reflects the emotional resilience of their bond, characterized by a shared understanding rooted in trust, accountability, and emotional transparency between a father and his daughter

### *Intimacy*

Scene: Jung Bong expresses his anxiety to his mother regarding the surgery, and she comforts him with affectionate words (episode 8, minutes 1:17:35–1:19:30).



Pic. 6

Jung Bom' Mom : "Are you afraid?"

Jung Bong : "A little"

Jung Bom' Mom : "What's wrong my son? You had been through a huge operation in the past.

Jung Bom : "Mom, You're a strong person. But your son has such a weak body and a weak heart"

Jung Bom's Mom : "Why is my kid weak? You're strong because you take it from me, Do you think everyone face such a difficult surgery like you did, Jung Bom, You're awesome. You're even stronger and greater than me."

This scene elegantly captures the closeness between Jung Bong and his mother during their sincere dialogue before his operation. When Jung Bong expresses his fear and insecurity, his mother promptly replies with warmth and reassurance, demonstrating her profound emotional bond with him. The line "Why is my kid weak? You're strong because you take it from me. Do you think everyone faces such a difficult surgery like you did? Jung Bong, you're awesome. You're even stronger and greater than me." emphasizes how she supports her son through both verbal reassurance and emotional intimacy and comprehension. Their interaction captures the core of intimacy in a family, characterized by openness, empathy, and emotional support. Jung Bong feels secure enough to show his vulnerability, as his mother responds with supportive love and encouragement. This moment illustrates that their relationship

transcends superficial affection and is founded on shared trust and emotional transparency, enabling both to openly express their fears and love authentically.

*Love*

Scene: Deok Sun's mother reassures her after the camera is lost, saying not to stress and to have fun with her friends (episode 3, minutes 42:33–42:53).



Pic. 7

Deok-sun : “Mom... ” (cries)

Mom : “It’s okay, Deok-sun. Just have fun, alright?”

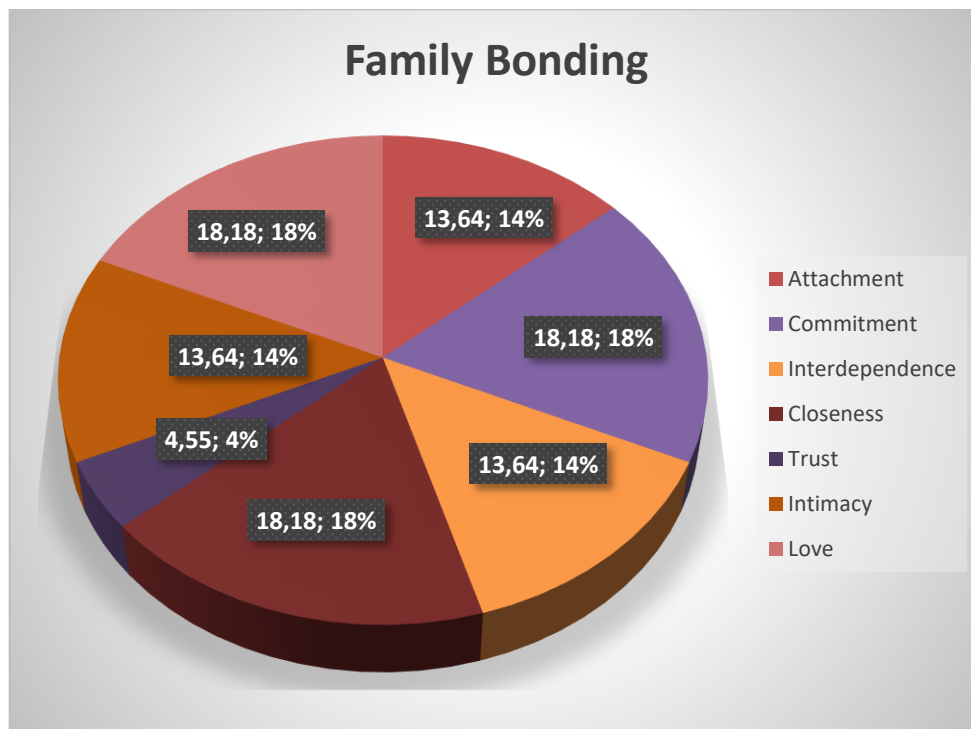
Deok-sun : “Really?? Really, Mom??”

Mom : “Oh my... of course! Really. Don’t worry about the camera, just enjoy your time with your friends.”

Deok-sun : “Momm...!” (feeling relieved and happy)

This scene distinctly illustrates love, demonstrated through the tender and comforting exchange between Deok-sun and her mother. As Deok-sun weeps and uncertainly seeks comfort, her mother gently replies, “Oh my... of course! Really. Don’t worry about the camera, just enjoy your time with your friends.” This line expresses a type of maternal love that is nurturing and uplifting. Rather than criticizing or disregarding her daughter’s feelings, the mother reacts with compassion and empathy, placing Deok-sun’s happiness above all else. The manner in which her mother communicates embodies the spirit of unconditional love, as she embraces and consoles her child without any criticism. Her use of warm expressions such as “Oh my” and her soothing voice communicate feelings of intimacy and affection. Additionally, by advising Deok-sun not to worry and enjoy herself, the mother conveys her wish for her daughter’s happiness and emotional liberation. This indicates that love, within their relationship, is conveyed not just through physical touch but also through emotional encouragement and validation. Ultimately, this brief yet poignant interaction highlights how love in *Reply 1988* frequently manifests in small, ordinary instances through simple expressions, soft voices, and emotional reassurance that enhance familial connections.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Picture 8. Family Bonding

This study concludes that Lee Woo-jung's Reply 1988 serves as a remarkable and sincere representation of family values, skillfully reflecting the wide range of emotions that define family life, encompassing feelings such as affection, loyalty, and warmth, as well as patience, care, and sacrifice. Following Van Wel's Family Values Theory from 1994, the study recorded a total score of 22, indicating that positive family principles are consistently present throughout the show. The findings indicated that commitment, closeness, and love each account for the highest proportions at 18.18%, acting as the emotional foundation for the families residing in Ssangmun-dong. These aspects emphasize the strong connections and mutual comprehension that bind family members through both joyful and challenging times. At the same time, attachment, interdependence, and intimacy each represent 13.64%, showcasing the ongoing exchange of emotional assistance and shared responsibility among these families.

Although the frequency of trust was lower at 4.55%, it remained a crucial base for building affection, forgiveness, and understanding. Collectively, these values illustrate that Reply 1988 honors the spirit of family not just through loving expressions but also through quiet acts, communal meals, and simple yet profound gestures that foster a deep emotional bond among parents, children, and neighbors. The consistently high scores for bonding affirm that the series highlights unity, demonstrating that familial harmony thrives on empathy, compassion, and loyalty that surpass time and generations. This complements Fowowe-Ogunmilugba's research from 2025, which points out that strong family values have a significant impact on emotional growth and personal development, shaping individuals' sense of duty and future goals.

Moreover, the depiction of these values in *Reply 1988* emphasizes that familial relationships in Korean culture are rooted in emotional depth, communal care, and cultural heritage. Each episode reveals that genuine love in a family doesn't mean a lack of conflict, but rather the resilience to face it together with understanding and affection. The intertwined narratives of laughter, selflessness, and shared suffering exemplify Van Wel's 1994 idea that emotional closeness, commitment, and interdependence are the core components of strong family ties. Every character, whether they are a parent, a child, or a neighbor, represents these values in their small, genuine acts of care, illustrating that true connection often arises from everyday moments.

This perspective aligns with Özyürek's 2023 statement that family values foster emotional health, social cohesion, and moral grounding. Additionally, the community life in Ssangmun-dong broadens Van Wel's definition of family beyond mere biological ties, depicting a neighborhood bound by trust, empathy, and collaborative responsibility. In the end, *Reply 1988* conveys a universal truth: that the essence of family lies in the ongoing commitment to love, forgive, and stay connected despite life's imperfections. Through its humor, nostalgia, and poignant storytelling, the series breaks through cultural divides, encouraging viewers to contemplate the enduring importance of family values in cultivating compassion, resilience, and unity. It teaches that love persists not because it is effortless, but due to the conscious choice to keep it alive, demonstrating that the lasting strength of a family is anchored in its steadfast promise to support each other through all joys and sorrows.

#### **FURTHER STUDY**

This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to conduct further research related to the topic of *An Analysis of Family Values in Lee Woo-jung's Korean Drama Reply 1988* in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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