

RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND QUALITY OF SOCIAL INTERACTION: A REVIEW OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

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Abstract - Psychological well-being and social interactions have a complex reciprocal relationship, where they influence each other through social exchange mechanisms. This literature review aims to analyze this relationship through the perspective of social exchange theory, by exploring how the principles of reciprocity, fairness and dependence shape psychosocial dynamics. The synthesis results suggest that individuals with high levels of psychological well-being tend to engage in higher quality social interactions, characterized by emotional support, trust and long-term commitment. Conversely, imbalances in exchanges-such as injustice or exploitation-can worsen mental health and disrupt relationships. Factors such as cultural norms, power structures and personality also moderate this relationship. These findings have important implications for clinical and social interventions, including the need for an integrated approach that improves both the psychological state of individuals and their patterns of interaction. This abstract highlights the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in understanding the link between psychological well-being and social interactions, with recommendations for future research that considers contextual variables such as digitalization and social change.

Keywords: psychological well-being, social interaction, social exchange theory, reciprocity, fairness, mental health, psychosocial dynamics

INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being, as a multidimensional construct that includes self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, life purpose, and positive relationships with others (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), has become a major focus in contemporary positive psychology. This phenomenon reflects less on the absence of mental disorders, and more on optimal psychological functioning that allows individuals to develop fully. In social interactions, psychological well-being serves as the foundation for an individual's ability to engage in mutually beneficial and meaningful relationships (Keyes, 2002). Recent neuropsychological studies suggest that individuals with high psychological well-being show more coordinated activation between the prefrontal cortex and limbic system, which facilitates emotion regulation and adaptive social responses (Davidson et al., 2000).

The increasingly complex dynamics of modern social interactions place high demands on individuals' psychological capacity to maintain healthy relationships (Amri & Khayru, 2022). In today's digital society, where interactions are often virtual and fragmentary, psychological well-being is a protective factor against social isolation and loneliness (Primack et al., 2017). Individuals with good levels of psychological well-being tend to be able to utilize social technologies wisely, maintain a balance between online and offline interactions, and build authentic relationships even through digital mediums (Verduyn et al., 2017). In contrast, deficits in psychological well-being are often manifested in compulsive and unsatisfactory patterns of social media use, which can further deteriorate mental health (Twenge et al., 2018). The cultural sphere also plays an important role in moderating the relationship between psychological well-being and social interaction. In collectivist societies, psychological well-being is more related to the ability to meet expectations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a unique context for examining the relationship between psychological well-being and social interaction. Globally imposed social restrictions created a natural experiment that demonstrates how important social interactions are for psychological well-being (Brooks et al., 2020). Longitudinal studies during the pandemic revealed that individuals with high levels of psychological resilience were able to maintain the quality of their social interactions through creative adaptation, while those who were already vulnerable experienced significant declines in mental health (Prati & Mancini, 2021). These findings strengthen our understanding of the reciprocal nature of the relationship between psychological well-being and social interactions.

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One of the key issues in the relationship between psychological well-being and social interaction is the presence of emotional imbalances that trigger interpersonal conflicts (Amri & Khayru, 2022). Individuals with high levels of depression or anxiety tend to have difficulty in expressing feelings adaptively, potentially leading to misunderstandings in relationships (Cacioppo et al., 2006). They may withdraw from social interactions, reducing the opportunity for support that is needed to improve their psychological state.

Another problem is the lack of awareness of the importance of psychological well-being in building healthy relationships. Many people think of social interactions as mere verbal exchanges, without considering the underlying psychological factors (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). As a result, when problems occur in relationships, solutions are often superficial without addressing the root of the problem, such as the need for acceptance or belonging. This exacerbates the cycle of dissatisfaction in relationships, both personally and professionally.

The complex dynamics of social interactions in modern society demand an understanding of how psychological well-being affects the way individuals connect with others. Without this understanding, efforts to improve social relationships may only be temporary and not solve the underlying problems stemming from mental health.

This review aims to analyze the relationship between psychological well-being and the quality of social interactions through a literature review from various perspectives to understand how an individual's mental state affects the dynamics of social relationships.

RESEARCH METHODS

This review uses a literature study approach to analyze the relationship between psychological well-being and social interaction by collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing findings from various academic sources. Data were obtained from scholarly journal articles, books, and reputable publications that address psychological and sociological aspects related to the topic. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to identify patterns, consistencies, and differences in previous research findings without conducting primary data collection (Snyder, 2019). The literature selection process was conducted systematically by considering relevance, year of publication (especially within the last 10 years), as well as source credibility.

Data analysis was done thematically to categorize findings based on theoretical perspectives, such as the positive psychology approach (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and social exchange theory (Homans, 1958). By comparing different perspectives, the review aims to find similarities or contradictions in the understanding of how psychological well-being affects social interactions. In addition, a critical review of the methodology of previous studies was also conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the findings so as to provide a strong foundation for the conclusions drawn.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Social exchange theory has long been an important theoretical framework in understanding the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Since its development by Homans (1958) and Blau (1964), the theory offers the unique perspective that social interactions are essentially a series of exchanges driven by the principle of gains and losses. In the area of psychological well-being, this approach has become increasingly relevant as it is able to explain the reciprocal mechanisms underlying the relationship between individuals' mental health and the quality of their social interactions (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

Recent developments in social exchange theory have broadened its scope to include emotional and psychological dimensions in the analysis of social relationships (Lawler, 2001). This approach enables an understanding of how social exchange is material, and involves the exchange of emotional and psychological resources. Psychological well-being in this case acts as both an input and output in the complex process of social exchange (Narwin, 2016).

The study of social exchange theory in relation to psychological well-being is important for several reasons. First, it provides a lens for understanding imbalances in social relationships that may impact mental health (Mitchell et al., 2012). Second, it helps explain why some individuals are able to maintain quality social relationships despite facing psychological challenges (Porter, 2018). Third, this understanding has practical implications for interventions aimed at improving both psychological well-being and the quality of social interactions (Stafford, 2017).

Social exchange theory developed by Homans (1958) and Blau (1964) provides a strong theoretical framework for understanding the reciprocal relationship between psychological well-being and social interaction. The basic concept of this theory states that all social relationships are essentially a form of exchange where individuals seek to maximize gains and minimize losses in their interactions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange theory explains that individuals with high levels of psychological well-being tend to have more emotional resources to invest in social interactions (Fredrickson, 2004). They are able to provide emotional support, empathy and positive responses that will in turn attract similar reciprocation from their social environment, creating a continuous positive cycle (Abdullah et al., 2021).

Individuals with low psychological well-being face significant challenges in fulfilling the norm of reciprocity on which healthy social relationships are based (Buunk & Schaufeli, 1999). Their inability to provide emotional support,

respond to others' needs or actively participate in social interactions often creates an imbalance in relationships. According to social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), this imbalance can trigger a withdrawal of social support from the environment, exacerbating the feelings of isolation and worthlessness that the individual is already experiencing. This sets up a negative cycle in which psychological deficits worsen social relationships, and worsening social relationships further erode psychological well-being.

From the perspective of psychopathology, these difficulties in fulfilling social exchange obligations often manifest in the form of maladaptive behaviors such as social avoidance, inconsistent interpersonal responses or over-dependence (Coyne, 1976). Impairments in emotion regulation - a hallmark of various debilitating psychological conditions - make it difficult for individuals to adapt their responses to the demands of social situations (Gross & Muñoz, 1995). As a result, their social networks gradually shrink, reducing access to social resources that are essential for psychological recovery. This process explains why interventions that focus only on individual symptoms without improving social interaction patterns are often less effective in the long run (Yang et al., 2018). The importance of developing appropriate interventions not only includes efforts to improve the quality of social relationships, but also involves developing individuals' emotional intelligence skills as well as improving supportive environmental conditions, by addressing each of these dimensions in an integrated manner, organizations can create a culture oriented towards psychological well-being, which can ultimately result in long-term benefits for individuals (Roellyanti, 2024).

In the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, perceptions of fairness play a central role in determining the quality and sustainability of social interactions (Gani et al., 2021). The concept of distributive justice in social exchange theory (Adams, 1965) is particularly relevant in understanding how perceptions of unfairness in relationships can affect psychological well-being. When individuals feel that their emotional investment is not proportionally rewarded or reciprocated, this can lead to psychological distress and a decrease in the quality of interactions. This emphasizes the importance of creating balance in social relationships as the foundation of mental health, implying that psychosocial interventions need to consider aspects of fairness in social exchange as one of the key factors in improving individuals' psychological well-being (Jepsen & Rodwell, 2010). The role of interpersonal relationships in the social exchange model, as we have seen, has at least three perspectives: first, the relationship formation paradigm emphasizes that favorable exchanges can lead to the formation of close relationships. Second, the relational-attribute paradigm emphasizes relationship qualities that may be resources for exchange. Third, the relationship-context paradigm emphasizes that interpersonal closeness can moderate the way goods are exchanged as well as how people respond to these transactions (Mitchell, Quisenberry, & Cropanzano, 2012).

In the context of interpersonal relationships, the fundamental principle of reciprocity plays a crucial role in shaping psychological dynamics, where the principle of reciprocity at the core of social exchange theory (Gouldner, 1960) explains why balanced social relationships tend to promote psychological well-being. Individuals who receive adequate social support feel more valuable and are motivated to maintain those relationships, creating a mutually beneficial pattern of interaction. This phenomenon suggests that healthy social relationships function as a mutually reinforcing emotional support system, where each party feels valued and contributes (Udjari et al., 2021). Furthermore, this understanding highlights the importance of building awareness of balance in social relationships as an integral part of efforts to improve individual mental health and the overall quality of social interactions (Berli et al., 2016). Furthermore, it is important to design and implement educational initiatives aimed at individuals to effectively manage their interpersonal relationships, given the benefits that can be derived from being socially competent in terms of social adjustment and well-being (Lopez et al., 2022).

Understanding the complexity of human interactions requires an in-depth analysis of different forms of social exchange, where Molm's (2010) study shows that forms of social exchange can be distinguished between negotiated (explicit) exchange and reciprocal (implicit) exchange. Psychological well-being tends to be higher in individuals who engage in long-term reciprocal exchanges, where elements of trust and commitment predominate over short-term gain-loss calculations (Ismail, 2021). These findings reveal that relationships based on trust and mutual understanding create more stable social networks, and serve as important psychological buffers. Furthermore, the implications of this exchange pattern highlight the importance of building a culture of reciprocity in society to create a social environment that supports optimal psychological development (Gill et al., 2019).

Human relationships are essentially built through complex interdependence, where the concept of interdependence in social exchange theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) explains how good quality social interactions can improve psychological well-being through fulfilling the basic human need for relatedness, as also emphasized in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). On the other hand, we must remember that mental health and social networks are both complex and multidimensional constructs (Schwartz & Litwin, 2019). This interdependent pattern of interaction creates a reciprocal support system that fulfills fundamental psychological needs, and strengthens individuals' resilience in the face of life's challenges. This finding also underscores the importance of building authentic and mutually supportive social relationships as a foundation of mental health, while challenging individualistic views that ignore the interdependence aspect of human psychological development.

In organizational settings, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) social exchange theory explains that when supervisors and subordinates build high-quality relationships - characterized by mutual trust, a balanced exchange of support, and open communication - employees tend to experience better levels of psychological well-being (Dulebohn et

al., 2012). These good working relationships create a positive cycle: supervisors provide recognition and development opportunities, while employees respond with better engagement and performance, ultimately reinforcing feelings of competence, autonomy and social connectedness - three key components of psychological well-being according to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Conversely, poor working relationships, where exchanges are purely transactional or unequal, can lead to job stress, burnout and reduced mental health. This phenomenon occurs in the world of work, and in many other forms of social relationships, proving that balanced and mutually beneficial interactions are an important foundation for one's psychological well-being in various life contexts.

A longitudinal analysis by Song et al. (2021) revealed that the relationship between psychological well-being and the quality of social interactions is dynamic and mutually influencing over time. A positive social exchange pattern in one period will predict an increase in psychological well-being in the next period, and vice versa (Wulandari & Halizah, 2021).

The sociological perspective of social exchange theory emphasizes that social norms and the structure of power relations moderate the relationship between psychological well-being and social interaction (Emerson, 1976). In power imbalanced relationships, individuals in subordinate positions may continue to invest in the relationship despite the detriment to their well-being.

Studies of social exchange from a family perspective suggest that the balance between giving and receiving emotional support is an important predictor of family members' psychological well-being (Uehara, 1995). Chronic imbalances in these exchanges can lead to relationship strain and decreased mental health.

Research in the context of friendship by Clark and Mills (2012) distinguishes between exchange relationships and communal relationships. Their findings suggest that psychological well-being is higher in individuals who have more communal relationships, where exchanges are based on the needs of the other party rather than the principle of reciprocity.

Applications of social exchange theory in psychological interventions suggest that raising awareness of unbalanced exchange patterns can help individuals improve both the quality of their social interactions and their psychological well-being (van Dijke et al., 2019). This approach is particularly effective in couple and family therapy.

While social exchange theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, it is not immune to fundamental criticisms, one of which is its tendency to ignore personality factors that may influence both psychological well-being and patterns of social exchange (Clark et al., 2019). Individuals with high neuroticism traits may perceive imbalances in social exchanges even though the exchanges are objectively balanced. This conceptual weakness reveals the need to integrate personality psychology perspectives in the analysis of social exchange, while challenging the assumption of universality in social exchange theory that has tended to generalize individual responses. Furthermore, the findings highlight the importance of a more holistic approach to understanding interpersonal relationships, which considers factors external to the exchange, and the unique psychological characteristics that each individual brings to social interactions (Arifin et al., 2021).

In the evolution of thinking about interpersonal relationships, recent developments in social exchange theory have taken into account the previously often neglected emotional dimension, where the role of emotions in the exchange process is now recognized as a critical factor (Lawler, 2001). Positive emotions resulting from satisfying social exchanges temporarily enhance psychological well-being, and strengthen commitment to the relationship and motivation to maintain it. These findings revolutionize our understanding of the mechanisms underlying lasting social relationships, by showing that strong emotional ties are often more decisive than rational considerations of gain and loss (Oluwatoyin, 2021). Furthermore, this perspective paves the way for a more holistic intervention approach in improving the quality of interpersonal relationships, which focuses on the material aspects of exchange as well as on strengthening the emotional and psychological bonds between individuals (Yang & Mishra, 2018).

A review of the relationship between psychological well-being and social interaction through the lens of social exchange theory reveals the complexity of interpersonal relationship dynamics. Findings from various studies suggest that the exchange process in social relationships is linear, and involves mutually reinforcing reciprocal mechanisms between psychological health and interaction quality (Song et al., 2021). This understanding opens up opportunities for the development of more comprehensive clinical and social intervention models.

The theoretical implications of this synthesis point to the need for further development of social exchange theory that integrates psychological aspects more thoroughly. As argued by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), contemporary social exchange theory needs to take into account both the economic dimensions of exchange, and the emotional and psychological dimensions that underpin many modern social interactions. This is especially relevant in contemporary societies where social relationships are increasingly complex and multidimensional.

Finally, this theoretical exploration highlights the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in understanding the relationship between psychological well-being and social interaction. The integration of psychology, sociology and neuroscience perspectives can provide a fuller understanding of how social exchange mechanisms operate at different levels of analysis. As studies have shown, an understanding of these dynamics is academically valuable, and has significant practical implications for improving the quality of life of individuals and society as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Based on the entire description, it can be concluded that psychological well-being has a reciprocal relationship with the quality of social interactions, where individuals with optimal psychological conditions tend to be able to build more meaningful relationships, while positive social interactions also contribute to improving psychological well-being. Social exchange theory provides a clear framework for understanding this mechanism, particularly through the principles of reciprocity, fairness and mutual dependence. However, imbalances in social exchanges - whether interpersonal, familial or professional - can lead to psychological distress and reduced relationship quality. These findings reinforce the importance of effective approaches in understanding psychosocial dynamics, given the complexity of factors involved, ranging from neuroscientific aspects to cultural influences.

As a suggestion, psychosocial interventions should focus on improving individual well-being, and improving exchange patterns in social relationships, for example through training in empathic communication skills and conflict management. At the policy level, mental health programs need to integrate social support components, such as strengthening community networks and facilitating balanced interactions in the workplace. Future research could further explore the role of moderators such as personality and cultural norms in the relationship between psychological well-being and social interactions to better target interventions.

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