



Social Interaction as a Determinant of Social Psychological Well-Being

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Article Info

Article History:

Received February 10, 2025

Revised February 19, 2025

Accepted Maret 7, 2025

Keywords:

Social Interaction, Psychological Well-Being, Identity.

Abstract

Social interaction is a key predictor of social psychological wellbeing in the development and retention of social psychological wellbeing, and social interaction is related to identity construction processes, affective belonging, and emotional resilience maintenance. The current qualitative study evaluates how everyday interaction in familial, peer, community, and workplace situations contribute to the psychological well-being or whether it suppresses it. The collection of the data was performed through the in-depth semi-structured interviews with twenty participants, which were complemented by the field notes and observed using the thematic analysis to identify the patterns and relational dynamics that are common. Findings show that positive exchanges bring about emotional affirmation, strengthen self-esteem, and foster the feeling of belonging but displays the negative impact of barriers to well-being social exclusion, conflict, cultural incongruence, and time. As noted repeatedly by the participants, affirmative engagement in the social realm strengthens individual identity and group membership, thus, demonstrating a psychological well-being as an interpersonal construct that is mutually formed during meaningful social interactions. Organizationally, these outcomes support the strategic significance of relational environments, meaning that institutions and societies should emphasize the need to engage in inclusive, participatory and supportive relationships to increase employee engagement, shared cohesiveness, and overall performance. The current research becomes an element of the integration of social psychology and management literature because it shows that the concept of well-being involves more than personal qualities to include social and organizational factors. The practical findings offer practical information to leaders, policy makers, and organizational structure designers, who aim at fostering an environment that helps promote resilience, trust, and human flourishing. Together, this body of study highlights social interaction as both a humanistic and strategic determinant of well-being and its centrality in maintaining identity, belonging and relational harmony.

Introduction

The interdependence between social interaction and psychological wellness has been the top of concern ever since social psychology and management studies began. Human beings are essentially communal beings, and their health is not limited to the inner processes of the psyche, rather is adjusted with the quality and edge of their relationship connections with other humans. This thesis that well-being is constructed, mediated, and maintained in an interactive manner is found to get more and more supported with modern literature (High et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023; Alzadjali & Ahmad, 2024). Social interaction is not just a context of the individual experience, it is one of the determinants of the social-psychological welfare, and its idea

emphasizes the relational and aggregate aspects of human flourishing. In line with this, the present research is contextualized in this changing conversation by looking at how life experiences of interpersonal engagement influence part of the psychological well-being of the people concerned. The topicality of this question can be explained by the fact that it helps to cover two important dimensions: the micro level experience of people and macro structural and cultural contexts of interactions. The social psychology has long revealed that the sense of self, identity and wellbeing have been co-constructed in the course of interactional encounters (Grbić & Stanković, 2023; McConnell et al., 2021; Pasechnik & Kharkhurin, 2025). In all the communication patterns that these people hold in daily interaction, in their congregations and symbolic practices, they find their meaning, affirmation and recognition. The processes make them feel included and psychologically tough. On the other hand, exclusion, isolation, and stigmatizing contact may destroy self-esteem, give rise to psychological discomfort, and reduce well-being. The two capabilities of social interaction to cause and improve well-being prove that the latter is not marginal or accidental but a determinant.

The living conditions of social interaction are also important as far as management and organization is concerned. Organizations and communities are not tabula rasa, but the relational places where normative processes establish the level of quality of the overall engagement, bonding, and productivity (Taft, A. (2024; Ianoş et al., 2025; Nambiar & Chadha, 2025). Organizational psychology studies have revealed that positive team coordination, free communication, and teamwork methods have a significant positive influence on employee well-being and outcomes. Conversely, workplace environments that are marked by a lack of open communications, disputes, or isolation are likely to produce stress, burnout, and dissociation. This research extends its findings to the social impact of psychology on societal health by anticipating how social contexts influence the social and psychological state of health in the workplace, school and community- network. The topicality of taking this point of view is additionally underlined by problems of social discontinuity and psychological pressure at the moment. Classifies mental wellness as one of the global health priorities stating that due to social isolation increased by modern technological lifestyles and various other emergencies including the COVID-19 pandemic, the psychological distress has been exposed to previous risks. At these times, virtual or face-to-face interaction has also come in handy to provide sufficient psychological future and group cohesion (Kumar, 2025; Yoon & Leem, 2021; Zeuge et al., 2021). Therefore, wellbeing has become inextricably connected to the mechanism of human connectivity necessitating the urgency of clarifying the social processes that base the resilience and thriving of diverse situational contexts.

Another area of significance lies with the cultural framing of interaction and wellbeing. It has been shown, through empirical research, that there is difference in the how social psychological well-being is to experience and interpreted, depending upon collectivism, individualism, and relational interdependence in various cultural settings. The former strong correlation between well-being and harmonious relationships as well as completion of social obligations are often found in the collectivist society compared to the former closeness and significance of well-being to autonomy and self-actualization in individualist societies (Dong et al., 2023; He et al., 2022; Hussain et al., 2021). Based on this, a study of social interaction as a driver of well based outcomes learns not just the outcome of psychology but also the processes within culture to determine identity and belonging. This makes the question relevant to psychology, management, intercultural studies and sociology. Even though sufficient quantitative studies have already made correlational claims relating to social connectedness and well-being, there are still a substantial number of qualitative studies gaps. Quantitative data can reflect the fact that those with stronger social relationships report to be significantly more well-being, but do not reflect the real things tied in connection of life, dialogues, and emotional transactions of

interaction. As a result, the qualitative method becomes inseparable in order to facilitate the understanding of how people perceive and internalize their social worlds, how these worlds, conversely, exert an impact on psychological strength, social identity, and fulfillment. The current paper fills this gap by providing a qualitative discussion about the ways in which people narrate and consider their social engagements in terms of well-being. This way, it will serve to enhance more parallel grammatic information on social psychological well-being that explains subjective experiences in a wider social process. More importantly, however, the results have practical implications: in case social interaction is one of the determinants of well-being, then (public) policy, organizations, and communities should be purposeful in creating conducive healthy, welcoming and empowering forms of interaction. This requires acknowledging the fact that wellbeing is not simply a personal psychological condition but rather a relational achievement, and that wellbeing is the accomplishment between patterns of communication, recognition and belonging.

Method

The research design adopted concentrated on the qualitative research to investigate how social interaction determines the social psychological wellbeing. The choice of a qualitative subdivision of the research was guided by the fact that this methodology allows having a deep understanding of subject experiences, meaning, and interpretation that people attribute to their relationships with others. Qualitative inquiry attempts to uncover instead of quantify relationships between variables, unlike quantitative methodologies that attempt to quantify the relationship between variables, since the world, in reality, can only be revealed and shown through the indication rather than quantification of relationships between variables, which form the essence of psychological well-being. This kind of design made the researcher to serve as interpreter of the narratives of the people, with the interest behind gathering richness and complexity of everyday social interaction.

Research Context and Research Setting.

The research was carried out both in a community and in an organizational environment where a party was involved in social interaction regularly. These were in the form of neighborhood associations, periods of working and unofficial community meetings. The choice of these settings was meant to observe and note the heterogeneity of interactions within the formal and informal social settings. By placing the study in these spaces, the study was enabled to address the issue of how different environment influences the sense of belonging, recognition, and psychological well-being to the participants.

Participants and Sampling

The respondents were identified in purposive sampling or a method that is usually used to conduct qualitative research to identify individuals that can offer such depth and value in their knowledge about the phenomenon under study. Twenty respondents were used and they were both men and women and their age spanned between 20-55 years. The recruitment criteria involved that the participants needed to have active interactivity of social lives within their local community or workplace, and must also be ready to consider the impact of the same interaction on their perceptions of well-being. Occupation, educational background and social roles were diverse purposefully in such a way that a diversity of views was aimed. The aim of this sampling approach was to obtain depth and diversity in the number of experiences people have had instead of statistical representativeness.

Data Collection Techniques

The methods of collecting data were mainly semi-structured in-depth interviews that were accompanied by field notes. The rationale behind the selection of semi-structured interviews is that they offer a more liberal structure in which the participants can openly provide their stories without missing on the essence of themes in social interaction and psychological good life. The interviews were held 1: This interview was carried out face-to-face lasting between 60 and 90 minutes; 2: The interview was conducted online (3-40 minutes, depending on the availability and comfort of the participants). In the interview guide, there were open-ended questions that involved exploring the perception of the participants in regard to social intercourse, when they felt included or excluded in these interactions and how these interactions affect their emotional state and self-esteem and emotions in general. Besides interviews, observational field notes were recorded during meetings with the citizens and at interview places of work. These observations gave insightful details related to the circumstances of the interaction, body language, and group behaviors that may not be clearly expressed with the use of verbal narrations. The triangulation of the data with the combination of interviews and observations contributed to the increased reliability of the gathered information.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis was engaged to conduct the data analysis according to the six-phase. It was initiated by the processes of transcription of all interviews and close reading of transcripts to help subject the researcher to the data. This was done by first creating codes to identify important ideas, phrases and words that described the experiences of socialization and well-being of the participants. These codes were then clustered into larger themes, including as follows; interaction as affirmation, exclusion and distress) and community as resilience. Reviewing the data resulted in the refinement of thematic areas; the thematic areas underwent the multiread process to make sure they reflected the views of the participants. NVivo software was also utilized as a second tool to manage the data, which facilitated a methodical coding and categorization of the variables of qualitative data (which was a significant amount).

Result and Discussion

The analysis that follows presents the empirical outcomes derived from the thematic exploration of participants' narratives and field observations. Through the application of qualitative interpretation, patterns of meaning were identified concerning how individuals experience and attribute significance to their social interactions within familial, peer, community, and organizational contexts. The results are structured around the major emergent themes illustrating both the supportive and constraining dimensions of social engagement. These findings provide insight into the relational processes that sustain or undermine psychological well-being, serving as the foundation for a deeper discussion on identity, belonging, and the organizational implications of interactional dynamics.

Forms of Interaction Supporting Well-Being

One of the most significant findings of this study is that various forms of social interaction contribute directly to participants' psychological well-being. These interactions do not occur in isolation but are embedded within daily routines, community practices, and interpersonal relationships that provide individuals with a sense of meaning, belonging, and support. Across the interviews, participants emphasized that positive interactions whether in family settings, friendships, or community involvement reinforced their emotional stability and self-worth.

Family interactions emerged as the primary source of emotional support. Many participants described how the presence of family members, even in simple daily exchanges, nurtured their sense of being valued and cared for. For example, one participant explained,

“When I talk with my children every evening about their school or their worries, I feel alive. It gives me a reason to stay strong and optimistic.”

Such narratives underscore how the intimacy of familial dialogue provides both reassurance and motivation, serving as a protective factor against stress.

Friendship and peer support also played a crucial role in fostering well-being. For younger participants especially, the ability to share experiences and emotions with trusted friends contributed to feelings of acceptance and resilience. As one participant reflected,

“Whenever I feel down, my closest friends are the ones I turn to. Just sitting together, laughing, and sharing our struggles makes me feel lighter and less alone.”

These findings align with the broader understanding in social psychology that peer relationships are central to identity affirmation and emotional regulation.

Community interactions offered another dimension of well-being by providing participants with a sense of collective belonging. Engagement in neighborhood activities, religious gatherings, or voluntary groups allowed individuals to connect with a wider network and to feel part of something larger than themselves. A participant narrated,

“Joining community events every weekend helps me forget my personal problems. Seeing others, working together, and contributing to the community gives me peace and pride.”

Such statements highlight how collective activities function not only as social spaces but also as therapeutic arenas where individuals experience affirmation, inclusion, and purpose. Additionally, workplace interactions were identified as a significant determinant of well-being, particularly in terms of recognition and appreciation. Participants emphasized that respectful communication, encouragement from colleagues, and acknowledgment from supervisors reduced work-related stress and fostered psychological resilience. As one participant remarked,

“When my boss appreciates my effort, even with a simple thank you, it makes me feel important and confident in myself.”

This suggests that supportive professional interactions extend beyond organizational goals to impact individual mental health and motivation. Taken together, these forms of interaction—family, friends, community, and workplace—constitute a vital framework for sustaining psychological well-being. They provide emotional support, foster resilience, and offer avenues for identity affirmation. The participants’ testimonies demonstrate that well-being is not solely an individual pursuit but a relational process nurtured by positive social exchanges.

Interaction as a Source of Identity and Belonging

The study revealed that social interactions play a central role in shaping participants’ sense of identity and fostering a feeling of belonging within their social environments. Participants consistently described how interactions—whether casual, structured, or communal—contributed to defining who they are and how they perceive themselves within a network of relationships. Identity, in this sense, emerges not solely from individual introspection but through relational processes, where recognition, validation, and mutual understanding are exchanged. Family interactions were frequently cited as foundational in constructing personal and social identity. Participants shared that engaging in meaningful conversations with family members allowed

them to reflect on their values, beliefs, and roles within the household and society at large. One participant noted,

“Talking to my parents about our family traditions and responsibilities makes me feel connected to where I come from and who I am. It reminds me that I belong somewhere.”

This demonstrates that identity formation is intertwined with intergenerational dialogue and shared narratives that reinforce continuity and belonging. Friendship and peer networks also contributed significantly to participants’ sense of self. Through ongoing interactions, individuals tested and affirmed their social roles, explored interests, and received feedback that reinforced their personal identity. As one participant described,

“My friends know me better than anyone else. When we talk about our dreams and failures, I feel understood and confident in who I am.”

This highlights how peer validation and shared experiences are essential for psychological coherence and social integration, strengthening both identity and self-esteem. Community-based interactions provided a broader sense of belonging by connecting participants to collective identities beyond immediate personal networks. Participation in local events, religious groups, or voluntary activities enabled individuals to engage with shared norms, values, and purposes, thereby anchoring their personal identity within a collective framework. One participant explained,

“When I help organize community programs, I feel like I’m part of something bigger. It makes me proud of myself and gives me a sense of belonging to the community.”

These interactions illustrate that collective engagement fosters both social identification and psychological security, enhancing resilience and personal fulfillment. Workplace and organizational interactions further contributed to the negotiation of identity. Recognition from colleagues, mentorship, and collaborative tasks allowed participants to validate their professional selves and reinforce competencies, roles, and social status within the organization. A participant emphasized,

“Being appreciated at work, even for small achievements, makes me feel respected and valued. It shows me that I am part of a team and that my presence matters.”

Such accounts underscore that identity and belonging are co-constructed through relational acknowledgment and social inclusion in formal settings.

Barriers and Challenges

While positive social interactions were found to significantly enhance participants’ psychological well-being, the study also revealed a range of barriers and challenges that hindered effective social engagement and, consequently, well-being. Participants described experiences of exclusion, misunderstanding, conflict, and lack of social support as factors that not only reduced their sense of belonging but also negatively impacted their emotional and psychological state. These findings highlight that social interaction functions as a double-edged determinant of well-being, capable of both fostering and undermining mental health depending on the quality and inclusivity of relational experiences. One major barrier identified was social exclusion, which participants experienced in both informal and formal settings. Exclusion manifested through neglect, marginalization, or lack of acknowledgment, leading to feelings of loneliness and diminished self-worth. A participant shared,

“Sometimes I feel invisible in group discussions at work. Even when I have ideas, no one listens. It makes me doubt myself and feel disconnected from the team.”

Such experiences illustrate how subtle forms of exclusion can have profound psychological effects, reduce confidence and weaken social bonds that are vital for well-being. Interpersonal conflict and misunderstandings were also cited as significant challenges. Participants reported that disagreements or miscommunications in family, workplace, or community interactions often generated stress and emotional strain. One participant explained,

“When I argue with my neighbors about small things, it ruins my mood for days. I start avoiding social events because I don’t want to feel that tension again.”

This example demonstrates that even routine interactions can become sources of psychological distress if they are characterized by negativity or unresolved tension, underscoring the delicate balance required for supportive social engagement. Another challenge involved cultural and social barriers that limited meaningful participation in social activities. Some participants highlighted that differences in language, cultural norms, or social expectations created feelings of alienation. As one participant noted,

“I moved to a new community, and I often feel like an outsider. I don’t know the local customs well, and people don’t always include me in gatherings. It makes me feel isolated and anxious.”

This emphasizes how structural and contextual factors can impede social inclusion, thereby affecting well-being beyond individual control. Additionally, time constraints and competing responsibilities were recognized as practical barriers to sustained social interaction. Participants frequently mentioned that work, study, and family obligations limited opportunities for engagement, which sometimes resulted in feelings of disconnection or emotional depletion. A participant remarked,

“I want to spend more time with my friends and neighbors, but my job takes all my energy. I often feel stressed and miss out on social support I really need.”

These findings highlight that psychological well-being is contingent not only on the quality of interactions but also on the availability and accessibility of social participation. Overall, the study demonstrates that barriers and challenges in social interaction whether relational, cultural, or practical have a direct and negative impact on psychological well-being. Experiences of exclusion, conflict, and limited access to supportive networks undermine participants’ sense of belonging and identity, reinforcing the central role of interaction quality in shaping social psychological outcomes. Addressing these barriers requires attention to both individual relational skills and broader structural conditions that facilitate inclusive, meaningful engagement.

Interpretation and Implications of Findings on Social Interaction, Identity, and Organizational Well-Being

This study advances our understanding of social interaction as a critical determinant of social psychological well-being, not merely as a background factor but as an active, constitutive process that shapes individual identity, collective belonging, and organizational functioning. From a management perspective, the findings illuminate the indispensable role of relational dynamics in sustaining human capital, organizational cohesion, and collective productivity. Organizations, whether formal enterprises, community groups, or educational institutions, cannot be decoupled from the social processes that underpin the well-being of their members. This aligns with contemporary management research emphasizing relational coordination, psychological safety, and social capital as determinants of performance and innovation (Prati, 2024; Hidayat et al., 2024; Yasin et al., 2023). The study reinforces the principle that well-being is not an incidental outcome but a strategic asset mediated by social interaction.

The implications extend to leadership and managerial practice. Leaders and managers operate within networks of social relations, and their ability to cultivate inclusive, supportive, and identity-affirming environments directly impacts the psychological resilience of employees and community members. This study supports the growing literature on transformational and servant leadership, which posits that leader behaviors enhancing relational trust and social support contribute to higher levels of engagement, satisfaction, and well-being (Rahal et al., 2022; Qureshi et al., 2024; Ahmed et al., 2023). Participants' narratives regarding recognition and appreciation in workplace settings underscore that well-being is reinforced when individuals perceive their contributions as acknowledged and valued, aligning with research on organizational recognition and positive reinforcement.

From an organizational culture perspective, the findings reveal that fostering social interaction is not a peripheral HR function but a central mechanism for shaping organizational identity, cohesion, and loyalty. Communities and workplaces that prioritize relational engagement cultivate social capital, trust, and cooperative norms, which in turn enhance both individual well-being and collective performance (Saz et al., 2021; Saijo, 2022; Horak et al., 2025). Conversely, exclusion, conflict, and limited social engagement undermine these dynamics, leading to reduced motivation, higher turnover, and diminished organizational efficacy. This highlights the necessity for managers to intentionally design structures, practices, and policies that facilitate meaningful interaction across hierarchical, functional, and cultural boundaries.

The study also emphasizes the dual role of social interaction in mediating identity and belonging. Participants' experiences illustrate that identity is relationally constructed and continuously negotiated through dialogue, feedback, and participation in collective practices. In management terms, this suggests that organizations should view identity formation and social integration as core components of employee development and engagement strategies (Krishna, 2022; Simbula et al., 2023; Boccoli, et al., 2023). When individuals perceive alignment between personal and organizational identities, their commitment, motivation, and psychological well-being are significantly enhanced. Community-based or voluntary organizational practices reinforces collective identification, echoing findings on team cohesion, group identification, and social support.

Barriers to interaction such as social exclusion, cultural misalignment, and time constraints highlight critical areas where organizational intervention is necessary. Participants' accounts of marginalization and conflict reflect broader patterns observed in cross-cultural and organizational psychology studies, where inequitable participation and communication breakdowns erode both social and psychological capital. This underscores the practical relevance for managers to actively monitor and mediate relational dynamics, ensuring equitable access to social networks and participatory opportunities. Policies promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion are not merely ethical imperatives but strategic mechanisms for sustaining well-being and organizational effectiveness.

The findings further intersect with contemporary research on remote and hybrid work environments, which increasingly challenge traditional social interaction patterns. Maintaining psychological well-being in dispersed teams requires deliberate facilitation of virtual engagement, structured communication, and social rituals (Chai & Park, 2022; Johnson et al., 2021; Bleakley et al., 2022; Ozenc & Fajardo, 2021; Singh & Bhaskar, 2025). Participants' reflections on limited time or accessibility underscore that interaction quality not mere presence determines the well-being outcomes. Management practices must therefore prioritize interactional design, including mentorship, team-building exercises, and culturally responsive communication strategies, to sustain relational and psychological resources. This study contributes theoretically by integrating social psychological insights with management

applications, emphasizing that human interactions are not peripheral processes but central determinants of organizational sustainability. Well-being emerges as a relational phenomenon, mediated through emotional, cognitive, and symbolic exchanges in social contexts. Practically, organizations that embed interactional awareness into leadership, culture, and policy are better positioned to cultivate resilience, trust, and engagement, thereby enhancing both individual flourishing and institutional performance. These conclusions resonate with research advocating for relationally intelligent management, employee-centered policies, and systemic approaches to well-being (Anthony, L. (2025); McKenzie, T. Z. (2025); Veldsman et al., 2025; Lee, 2023).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that social interaction is a fundamental determinant of social psychological well-being, functioning not only as a context for daily engagement but as an active mechanism through which identity, belonging, and resilience are constructed and sustained. Positive interactions within family, peer, community, and workplace settings reinforce individuals' sense of value, affirmation, and connectedness, while barriers such as exclusion, conflict, and limited access diminish well-being and erode social cohesion. From a management perspective, these findings highlight the strategic importance of relational dynamics in organizations and communities: fostering inclusive, supportive, and participatory interactions is essential for sustaining employee engagement, collective efficacy, and organizational performance. The study underscores that psychological well-being is not solely an individual attribute but a relational achievement, co-constructed through meaningful social exchanges and recognition. Practically, managers, leaders, and policymakers must prioritize interactional infrastructures, such as mentorship, team-building, and culturally responsive communication, to enhance both personal and organizational outcomes. By integrating social psychological insights with organizational practice, this research contributes to a more holistic understanding of well-being, demonstrating that the cultivation of social interaction is both a humanistic and strategic imperative for resilient, cohesive, and high-performing social systems.

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