The Role of Interpersonal Perception in Mental Well-Being: A Psychological Exploration

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Abstract: *Interpersonal Perception is the manner in which people interpret and comprehend others thoughts, feelings, and actions plays an essential role in influencing Mental Well-being. Accurate perception cultivates empathy, trust, and social support, whereas inaccurate perception can lead to conflict, isolation, and psychological discomfort. This research paper investigates the influence of interpersonal perception on mental health, highlighting its importance in both personal and therapeutic settings. To answer this research question, Quantitative method was employed using correlational research design and standardized psychological scales measured level of interpersonal perception and mental well-being among 80 Adults participants selected through random sampling technique. The results emphasize a notable connection between how one perceives others and their mental well-Being. People who are more accurate in understanding the feelings and motives of others indicated better emotional stability, deeper social relationships. These findings imply that improving interpersonal perception abilities could be an important factor in fostering mental well-being and creating successful psychological strategies.*

Introduction

Interpersonal Perception (IP)

The process by which people arrange and interpret their sensory perceptions to give their surroundings meaning is known as Perception, according to S. P. Robbins.

This is the ability to accurately perceive, interpret, and understand the thoughts, feelings, intentions, and personality traits of others from their verbal and non-verbal cues. It's often called "social intelligence" or "empathic accuracy." Key components include:

- Accuracy in reading emotions: Correctly identifying if someone is sad, angry, happy, etc.
- Recognizing social cues: Deciphering facial expressions, tone of speech, and body language.
- Perspective-taking: The capacity to view a situation from the viewpoint of another individual.
- Attributional accuracy: Correctly inferring the causes behind someone's behavior (e.g., "they snapped because they're stressed," not "because they are a mean person").

Interpersonal perception—the process of interpreting and judging others—plays a pivotal role in social interactions and mental health. Accurate perceptions foster trust, empathy, and connection, while distorted perceptions, influenced by biases or negative schemas, can lead to emotional distress and relationship conflicts. Research links unhealthy perception patterns to issues like depression, loneliness, and attachment insecurity, whereas healthy perception enhances resilience through social support and empathy. This paper explores the impact of accurate versus distorted social cognition on emotional well-being and recommends strategies to promote adaptive interpersonal perception for improved mental health.

Distorted interpersonal perception refers to when someone consistently misinterprets or over-personalizes others' actions, intentions, or emotions. This can affect relationships, communication, and social functioning. Here are common signs to look for:

- **Cognitive Signs**
    - **Mind-reading:** Assuming without proof that you know what someone else is thinking or feeling is known as mind-reading.
    - **Jumping to Negative Conclusions:** Interpreting neutral or ambiguous remarks as hostile or critical.
    - **Overgeneralization:** Seeing one difficult interaction as a reflection of all relationships with the same person or people in general.
    - **Catastrophizing:** Expecting the worst-case scenario in social interactions.
- **Emotional Signs**
    - **Hypervigilance in Social Settings:** Constantly scanning others for threat or judgment.
    - **Feeling Overly Defensive:** react strongly to minor social feedback or criticism.
    - **Being Overly Self-Conscious or Inferior:** Thinking that people constantly criticize you.
- **Behavioral Signs**
    - **Withdrawal or Avoidance:** Distancing yourself from social situations to avoid potential judgment.
    - **Misreading Cues:** Consistently misinterpreting facial expressions, tone, or body language (e.g., assuming a neutral smile means mockery).
    - **Sarcasm or Animosity in Reaction to Innocuous Comments:** Reacting defensively or angrily to everyday encounters.
    - **Self-Fulfilling Prophecies:** Acting as if others are hostile, which then elicits hostile responses from others.
- **Relational Signs**
    - **Persistent Relationship Strain:** Repeated conflicts or misunderstandings with friends, family, or colleagues.
    - **Having Trouble Trusting People:** Persistent mistrust of others' motives.
    - **Sensitivity to Rejection:** Perceiving rejection where none was intended or communicated.
- **Contextual Signs (may indicate underlying issues)**
    - **Anxiety or Mood Symptoms Alongside Perception Distortion:** Elevated worry, irritability, or mood swings in social contexts.
    - **Poor Impulse Control in Social Settings:** Saying things impulsively that escalate conflict.
    - **Strict Views on People:** binary thinking such as "People are either all good or all bad.

Mental Well-Being (MWB)

Mental well-being refers to a favourable condition of emotional and psychological health that encompasses feeling positive and performing effectively, rather than merely the lack of mental disorders. It is defined by an individual's capacity to regulate their emotions, handle life's challenges, foster meaningful connections, recognize their potential, and give back to their community. This flourishing state is shaped by various internal and external influences and exists on a spectrum, indicating it changes over time and differs among individuals.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines *mental well-being as a condition in which a person is able to reach their full potential, manage everyday stressors, work well, and give back to their community.*

Mental well-being as a state where individuals feel their abilities, cope with stress, and contribute to their community. (Newson et al., 2024).

This is a broader, multi-dimensional concept that goes beyond just the absence of mental illness. It encompasses:

- **Psychological Well-Being:** Having a sense of purpose, personal growth, autonomy, and self-acceptance.

- Carol Ryff (1995), *defines psychological well-being as a multidimensional construct encompassing six key aspects of positive human functioning. These dimensions are: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.*

- **Subjective Well-Being:** According to Diener (1984,2000), *subjective well-being refers to how people experience and evaluate their lives both in terms of affect (emotions) and cognition (life satisfaction).*

- **Emotional Well-Being:** Experiencing positive emotions (joy, contentment, peace) and effectively managing negative emotions.

- Emotional well-being (EWB) includes a positive balance of pleasant to unpleasant affect and a cognitive appraisal of satisfaction with life in general (Keyes 2003).

- **Social Well-Being:** Having satisfying relationships, a sense of belonging, and contributing to one's community.

Common signs of poor mental wellbeing can affect how people think, feel, and behave. They aren't a diagnosis, but they can indicate that support or changes might help.

Emotional and Mood Changes

- Persistent sadness, emptiness, or hopelessness

- Excessive worry, irritability, or anger

- Feeling overwhelmed or stuck

- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed

Cognitive and Concentration Changes

- Difficulty concentrating or remembering things

- Racing thoughts or constant worry that's hard to control

- Self-criticism, guilt, or worthlessness

Physical and Energy Changes

- Chronic fatigue or low energy

- Sleep disturbances (insomnia or oversleeping)

- Appetite or weight changes

- Frequent headaches, muscle tension, or other unexplained pains

Behavioral Changes

- Withdrawal from friends, family, or activities

- Avoidance or reduced functioning at work, school, or home

- Riskier behavior or neglecting personal care

- Substance use to cope (alcohol, drugs, etc.)

Social and Functioning Signs

- Difficulty maintaining relationships

- Low motivation or sense of purpose

- Difficulty maintaining relationships
- Low motivation or sense of purpose
- Trouble meeting responsibilities or deadlines

Red Flags that Require Urgent Attention

- Thoughts of self-harm or harming others
- Sudden, dramatic changes in behavior or mood
- Severe anxiety or panic attacks that don't improve with coping strategies

Review of Literature

The paper emphasizes that interpersonal support significantly influences psychological well-being by fulfilling basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and social relationships. It highlights that adequate interpersonal support enhances intrinsic motivation and overall well-being, suggesting that positive social environments are crucial for mental health. While the paper does not specifically address interpersonal perception, it underscores the importance of supportive relationships in fostering a healthy psychological foundation, which is essential for improving individual well-being and performance in various contexts. (Wadi & Mukminin, 2025)

Mental well-being in adolescents encompasses awareness of potential, overcoming challenges, productivity in life, and societal contribution. Key factors include regular physical activity, secure parental attachment, perceived social support, and limited social media use, all positively influencing mental well-being levels. (Ekinci, 2024)

The paper explores that the relationship between interpersonal relationship and subjective well-being of college students. The findings are the interpersonal distress has a negatively correlated with psychological capital and SWB, while psychological capital has a positively correlated with SWB. Psychological capital has Partial mediating effect between interpersonal distress and SWB, and the indirect effect accounts for 57% of the total effect. This study indicates that schools should pay attention to education and intervention in psychological capital, except for strengthening knowledge and skill training of college students in how to communicate with others. (Zhang et.al,2024)

The study highlights the positive impact of self-efficacy, goal setting and growth consciousness on individual well-being. Mental health is seen as the cornerstone of emotional regulation and stress management, which is directly linked to an individual's well-being. The self-perception section emphasizes that self-efficacy, goal setting, and growth consciousness positively affect individual well-being. Mental health is described as foundational for emotional regulation and stress management, which directly influence well-being. The role of relationships focuses on emotional support and social belonging provided by family and friends. A systematic review of the current literature demonstrates that these factors influence college students' well-being not only on their own but also through their interactions, forming a complex interconnected network that shapes overall well-being. (Zhao,2024)

The paper explores interpersonal perception's impact on couple relationship quality, highlighting that idealization benefits relationship quality, while accuracy in perception affects men and women differently, suggesting implications for mental well-being and therapeutic interventions based on gender differences. (Salla & Feixas,2023)

The paper emphasizes that interpersonal perception is crucial for mental well-being, as it fosters attuned communication and connection with others. This relational aspect of the mind, as outlined in the Interpersonal Neurobiology framework, highlights how our self-experience is influenced by social interactions. By understanding and integrating our inner experiences with those of others, we can enhance emotional regulation and resilience, ultimately promoting personal and collective mental health in the context of our interconnected social and cultural systems. (Siegel & Drulis.,2023)

Research Gap

Existing research on interpersonal relationships (IP) and mental well-being has predominantly focused on:

- **Western populations**, limiting generalizability to diverse cultural contexts where social dynamics, family structures, and workplace interactions differ significantly.

- **Organization-specific studies**, where the emphasis is on **organizational climate** (e.g., employee morale, leadership styles) rather than broader adult populations (e.g., non-working adults, freelancers, caregivers, or retirees).

- **Interpersonal support as a cornerstone of well-being.** Interpersonal support fulfills basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—which in turn enhances intrinsic motivation and general well-being. Positive social environments serve as a critical training ground for mental health, underscoring that healthy relationships are not peripheral but foundational to individual flourishing (Wadi & Mukminin, 2025).

- **Adolescent well-being and the social ecology.** For adolescents, mental well-being is tied to regular physical activity, secure parental attachments, perceived social support, and prudent social media use. These factors collectively foster resilience, productivity, and constructive societal contribution, highlighting the protective and promotive role of supportive environments during developmental years (Ekinci, 2024).

- **Interpersonal distress, psychological capital, and subjective well-being in college students.** In higher education contexts, interpersonal distress negatively relates to psychological capital and subjective well-being (SWB), while psychological capital positively relates to SWB. Notably, psychological capital partially mediates the distress–SWB link, accounting for a substantial portion of the effect. This suggests that interventions aimed at building psychological capital (e.g., communication skills, resilience, optimistic attribution) can buffer the negative impact of interpersonal difficulties on well-being (Zhang et al., 2024).

- **Self-efficacy, goal setting, and growth orientation as wellsprings of well-being.** Individual well-being benefits from self-efficacy, goal setting, and growth consciousness, which support emotional regulation and effective stress management. Relationships provide emotional support and a sense of belonging, and their interplay with personal development creates a dynamic network that shapes well-being. In the college context, these factors influence well-being both directly and through their interactions within this interconnected system (Zhao, 2024).

- **Interpersonal perception and relationship quality.** Perceptions within intimate relationships matter for relationship quality and, by extension, mental well-being. Idealization can bolster relationship quality, while accuracy of perception interacts with gender in ways that have implications for mental health and therapeutic approaches. This highlights the nuanced role of perception in romantic contexts and the need for gender-sensitive interventions (Salla & Feixas, 2023).

- **Interpersonal perception and the broader mind–brain–social system.** The Interpersonal Neurobiology perspective emphasizes that interpersonal perception and attuned communication foster emotional regulation and resilience. Understanding the bidirectional influence between inner experiences and social interactions underscores the potential for individuals and communities to enhance mental health through healthier relational patterns, rooted in a connected social and cultural milieu (Siegel & Drulis, 2023).

Methodology

Objectives

- To explore the relationship of Interpersonal Perception and Mental Well-being of Adults.

- To study the role of Interpersonal Perception in shaping Mental Well-being among Adults.

- To evaluate overall Mental Well-being of Adults.

Hypothesis

- There should be a significant positive relationship between Interpersonal Perception and Mental Well-being of Adults.

For the purpose of this current study, a total sample size of 80 adults in the age criteria of (18-25years) voluntarily participated in the study. Data was collected through random sampling technique using google forms.

Procedure

In order to investigate the connection between Adult Mental Well-being and Interpersonal Perception, this study will use a **Correlation Design**. The study will employ a quantitative methodology and administer validated measures, such as the Perceived Interpersonal Closeness Scale (PICS), which was created by Popovic et al. WHO created the WHO-5 Well-Being Index.

Tools

- **The Scale of Perceived Interpersonal Closeness Scale (PICS)** Popovic created the Perceived Interpersonal Closeness Scale (PICS), According to the PICS format, a person must arrange other people in a circular "closeness" space so that the distance between them can be represented as an ordinal distance rating. The PICS is made to be simply comprehended by responders by eliminating the need for verbal ratings.

- **The WHO-5 Well-being Scale** is a self-report instrument measuring mental well-being. Five assertions about the previous two weeks make up this document. A 6-point rating system is used for each statement, with higher scores denoting greater mental well-being.

Statistical Analysis

The correlation coefficient (R) equals **0.5957**. This means that there is a **strong positive correlation** between independent variable (IP) and dependent variable (MWB).

Table 1 represents the coefficient of determination (R2) equals **0.3548**. This means that **35.4839**% of the variation in the dependent variable (MWB) is explained by the independent variable (IP) included in the regression model.

Table 3 represents the slope of the regression line b1 equals **0.1719**. This indicates that the dependent variable (MWB) is predicted to rise by 0.1719 units for every unit increase in the independent variable (IP).

Table 2 represents the F-test (1, **58**) equals **31.9000** and its p-value is equal to **5.1452e-7**. This indicates that the regression model is **statistically significant** at **1% level of significance**.
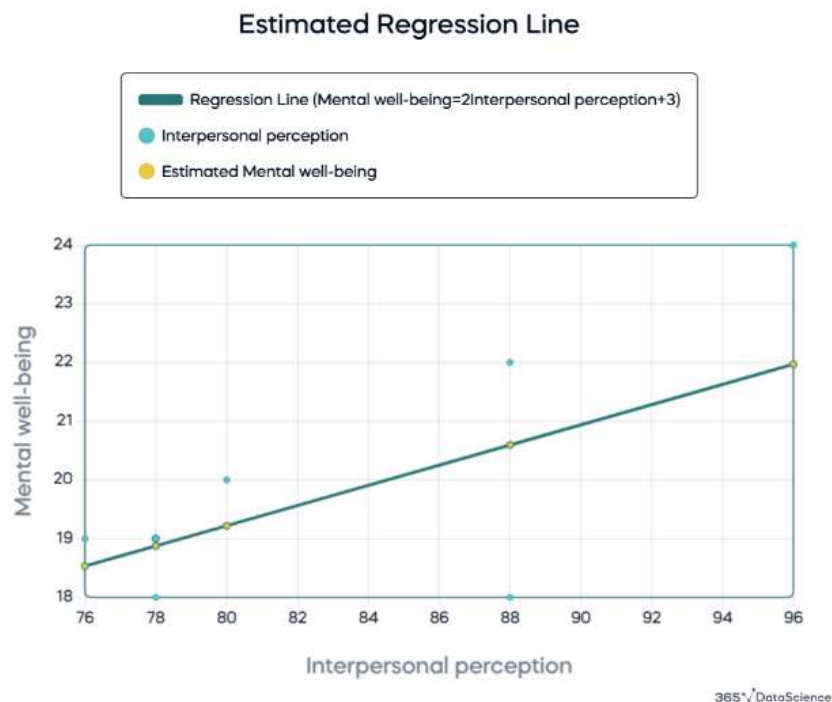
Result Table

Figure 1: Showed Linear Regression between Variables

Table 1: Showed Summary of the Results

Metric	Value
Regression Equation	ŷ = 5.4687 + 0.1719 x1
Correlation	0.5957
R Square	0.3548
Standard Error	1.5086
F-Value	31.9000
Probability (F-Value)	5.1452e-7

Table 2: Showed Values of the Statistical Analysis of ANOVA

	Df	Sum of square(ss)	Mean of Square (MS)	F- value	Probability (F- Value)
Regression	1	72.60	72.60	31.90	5.14
Residual	58	132	2.27		
Total	59	204.60			

Table 3: Showed Values of the Coefficient

	Coefficient	Standard error	t stat	P- value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	5.46	2.52	2.16	0.03	0.41	10.52
Interp…. Variable	0.17	0.03	5.64	5.14	0.11	0.23

Discussion

The aim of the study was to Explore the relationship of Interpersonal Perception and Mental Well-being of Adults. The findings provide the preliminary support for the hypothesized relationship.

The descriptive analysis of psychological constructs in this study provides a robust overview of various variables within the sample population. The distribution, central tendency, and variability of responses can be better understood by carefully examining the sample size, minimum and maximum values, mean, standard deviation, and variance. These insights are crucial for understanding the characteristics of each variable, comparing different constructs, and identifying areas of strength and improvement within the sample. Overall, this descriptive analysis serves as a solid foundation for informing interventions, program development, and further research aimed at enhancing well-being and addressing psychological concerns within the population.

The figure 1 showed simple linear regression graph between the variables (Interpersonal perception and Mental well-being). This figure showed us the line of best fit. Interpersonal perception on the X-axis and Mental well-being on Y-axis.

The Table 1 showed the summary of the results where Correlation between the variables is r 0.059, R square is 0.35, standard error is 1.50, F-value is 31.900, probability of F value is 5.1452e-7. This indicates that the regression model is **statistically significant** at **1% level of significance**.

The first hypothesis (H1) proposed that **there would be a significant relationship between Interpersonal Perception and Mental Well-being in adults.**

The most critical finding is that the regression model is **statistically significant.** This is confirmed by the extremely low probability value (p-value) of the F-statistic: 5.1452e-7. This notation is scientific shorthand for 0.00000051452, which is far below the common alpha level of 0.01 (1%). This means there is less than a 1 in a million chance that the relationship we see between Interpersonal Perception and Mental Well-being in the sample data occurred by random chance alone. Therefore, we can confidently reject the null hypothesis (which states there is no relationship) and conclude that a significant relationship exists.

- **Correlation (r = 0.059):** The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.059 indicates a **very weak positive relationship** between the two variables. This means that as scores on Interpersonal Perception increase, scores on Mental Well-being also tend to increase, but the tendency is minimal.

- **Coefficient of Determination (R² = 0.35):** This is a crucial statistic. It means that **35% of the variance in individuals' Mental Well-being scores can be explained by their level of Interpersonal Perception.** This suggests that Interpersonal Perception is a meaningful, though not exclusive, contributor to mental well-being. The remaining 65% of the variance is attributed to other factors not measured in this model (e.g., genetics, other life circumstances, personality traits).

- **F-value (31.900):** A large F-value relative to its degrees of freedom indicates that the regression model (using Interpersonal Perception to predict Mental Well-being) fits the data significantly better than a model that uses the mean of Mental Well-being as a predictor.

- **Standard Error (1.50):** This value represents the average distance that the observed data points fall from the regression line. A lower standard error indicates that the data points are closer to the line of best fit, meaning the predictions are more precise. The context of this value depends on the scale of the Mental Well-being measure.

The hypothesis is supported. There is a **statistically significant, positive relationship** between Interpersonal Perception and Mental Well-being in adults.

- **Statistical vs. Practical Significance:** While the relationship is statistically significant (very unlikely to be random), it is **practically very weak** (r = 0.059). This is a critical distinction.

- **Meaning of R²:** Despite the weak correlation, the R² value of 0.35 is substantial. This apparent discrepancy can happen and suggests that while the linear relationship is weak, Interpersonal Perception is still able to account for a meaningful portion of the changes in Mental Well-being across the population. This often occurs when there is high variability in the data.

The study successfully confirms that a relationship exists, and Interpersonal Perception is a relevant factor for mental well-being. However, it is not a strong predictor on its own. Mental well-being is a complex construct influenced by a multitude of factors, with interpersonal perception being one meaningful piece of a much larger puzzle.

Suggestions

This paper's findings on the relationship between Interpersonal Perception and Mental Well-being offer several practical implications for individuals, mental health professionals, and broader social systems.

Enhancing Emotional Stability and Social Relationships

- Cultivating Accurate Perception: The research suggests that individuals who are more accurate in understanding the feelings and motives of others tend to exhibit better emotional stability and foster deeper social relationships. This implies that interventions aimed at improving one's ability to accurately perceive others can lead to more stable emotional states and stronger social bonds.

- Fostering Trust and Empathy: Accurate interpersonal perception cultivates empathy, trust, and social support. Practically, this means that promoting skills like active listening, non-verbal cue interpretation, and perspective-taking can enhance the quality of relationships, which are crucial for mental health.

Strategies for Mental Well-Being Improvement

- Developing Psychological Strategies: The findings imply that improving interpersonal perception abilities could be an important factor in fostering mental well-being and creating successful psychological strategies. This opens avenues for therapeutic approaches and self-help techniques focused on enhancing these perceptual skills.

- Addressing Distorted Perceptions: The paper notes that inaccurate or distorted perception can lead to conflict, isolation, and psychological discomfort. Therefore, practical interventions should also focus on identifying and correcting distorted interpersonal perceptions, which can manifest as mind-reading or jumping to negative conclusions. Addressing these cognitive biases can reduce emotional distress and relationship conflicts.

Importance in Therapeutic and Personal Settings

- Foundational for Mental Health: Interpersonal perception plays an essential role in influencing mental well-being, highlighting its importance in both personal and therapeutic settings. This suggests that mental health professionals should incorporate assessments and training for interpersonal perception in their practice.

- Promoting Attuned Communication: Interpersonal perception is crucial for mental well-being as it facilitates attuned communication and connection with others. This implies that fostering environments that encourage open, empathetic communication can contribute significantly to individual and collective mental health.

In essence, the practical implications point towards the value of developing and refining interpersonal perception skills as a means to enhance emotional regulation, build healthier relationships, and ultimately improve overall mental well-being. This can be achieved through targeted psychological interventions, educational programs, and fostering social environments that prioritize accurate and empathetic understanding of others.

Conclusion

This study establishes a strong positive link between Interpersonal Perception and Mental Well-being, highlighting that accurate and positive social understanding enhances psychological health. It emphasizes fostering interpersonal skills and social awareness as key to improving mental well-being. Future research could examine causal mechanisms, personality traits, cultural influences, and interventions to further enhance these perceptions and their impact. The findings provide valuable insights for mental health professionals in developing strategies to support emotional health.

Limitations of the Study

- **Cross-Sectional Design:** Since the study used a single time-point assessment, it cannot establish causality or determine whether improved interpersonal perception leads to better mental well-being or vice versa. Longitudinal studies would provide stronger evidence of directional relationships.

- **Self-Report Bias:** The reliance on self-reported measures for interpersonal perception and mental well-being may introduce response biases (e.g., social desirability bias or subjective interpretation). Behavioral or observational data could complement future research.

- **Sample Characteristics:** If the study used a convenience sample (e.g., limited to a specific age group, culture, or region), the findings may not generalize to all adult populations. A more diverse sample would enhance external validity.

- **Simplified Measurement:** The study focused on linear correlation, which may overlook complex interactions (e.g., non-linear relationships or mediating factors like personality traits, social support, or past trauma). Advanced statistical models (e.g., mediation analysis) could provide deeper insights.

- **Lack of Control Variables:** Factors such as socioeconomic status, life stressors, or pre-existing mental health conditions were not accounted for, potentially confounding the results. Future studies should include these as control variables.

- **Homogeneity of Constructs:** If interpersonal perception was measured narrowly (e.g., only through trust or empathy), other relevant aspects (e.g., perspective-taking, social awareness) might have been missed. A multi-dimensional assessment could strengthen findings.

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