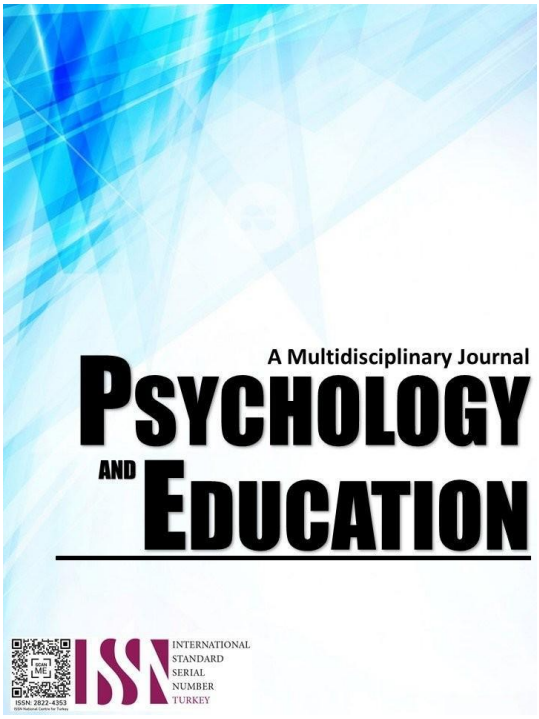
COLORISM, SOCIAL DYNAMICS, AND MENTAL HEALTH PERCEPTION OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS



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Research Article

Colorism, Social Dynamics, and Mental Health Perception of Senior High School Learners

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Abstract

This study explores the relationships between colorism, social dynamics, and mental health perceptions among senior high school learners. For the research design the researcher used the quantitative and cross-sectional design. Using a quantitative approach, data were gathered through validated instruments, including the Colorism Scale, Adult Toolbox Social Relationship Scale, Scale of Interpersonal Relations, and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21). Results revealed that colorism is moderately perceived among participants, influencing self-concept, identity, and self-esteem to a limited extent. Regression analysis showed that interpersonal relationships, social relationships and colorism were significant predictors of mental health perceptions, with interpersonal relationships having the strongest impact. Collectively, these variables explained 98.3% (R2=0.983R^2 = 0.983R2=0.983) of the variance in mental health perceptions, emphasizing the importance of relational and societal factors. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to foster supportive relationships and address the subtle yet impactful role of colorism in shaping mental health outcomes.

Keywords: *colorism, social relationship, interpersonal relationship, mental health, depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, psychological well-being,*

Introduction

Senior high school is a critical stage in a student's life, filled with new experiences, challenges, and opportunities for personal growth. At this stage, learners encounter various academic, social, and emotional demands that shape their overall well-being. How they perceive and navigate these demands depends on several factors, including the quality of their relationships and their personal and societal experiences. These interactions influence their mental health and how they view themselves and their place in the world.

One important factor that affects these experiences is colorism, which refers to the discrimination or bias individuals face based on their skin tone, often within the same racial or ethnic group. This bias not only affects self-esteem but also impacts social interactions and relationships. The way learners experience and respond to colorism may shape their mental health, influencing their levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and overall psychological well-being. (Dwyer, 2018).

This study seeks to explore the intricate connections between colorism, social dynamics in terms of social relationship and interpersonal relationships, and mental health perceptions among senior high school learners. By focusing on these variables, the research aims to uncover how biases and social dynamics affect learners' mental health and identify potential interventions that can promote well-being in educational settings. Understanding these issues is essential in creating a supportive and inclusive environment for senior high school students. This research aspires to contribute meaningful insights to address these challenges and foster a culture of acceptance and mental health awareness.

Research Questions

This study aimed to explore the intricate relationship between colorism, social dynamics, and mental health perceptions among senior high school learners. Specifically, it sought to address the following questions:

1. What is the participants' level of perception of colorism?
2. What is the participants' level of social dynamics perception in terms of:
    2.1. social relationship; and
    2.2. interpersonal relationship?
3. What is the level of participants' mental health perception in terms of:
    3.1. depression, anxiety, and stress;
    3.2. self-esteem, and;
    3.3. psychological well-being?
4. Is there a significant relationship among the participants' level of mental health, colorism and social dynamics?
5. Which among the variables singly or in combination best influence the perceived mental health of the participants?

Methodology

Research Design

To achieve the objective of the study, the researcher used the quantitative and cross-sectional design to examine colorism, social relationship and interpersonal relationship and mental health outcomes in a single instance, offering insights into the relationships

between these factors in an appropriate number of individuals.

Grade 11 from Bal-ason National High School were included because these students are typically in the age range of 16-19, respectively. These years coincide with a critical period of adolescence characterized by significant cognitive, emotional, and social development. A structured questionnaire will be administered to approximately 110 students, selected through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across diverse individuals.

The questionnaire includes demographic questions like age and gender. The questions included in different categories in the structured questionnaire were arranged, adapted, and modified by the researcher acknowledging the works of (Harvey, et.al 2017) In-group colorism scale, (Lovibond, 1995) Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21), (Rosenberg, 1965) Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), (Cyranowski et.al 2013) Adult Toolbox Social Relationship Scale, (Garthoeffner, et.al 1993), Scale of Interpersonal Relations and (Ryff, et.al 2007), Psychological Well-being Scale.

In general, focusing on students in grades 11 enables researchers to look into the deep relationship between colorism and mental health in the distinctive environment of secondary education, providing insights into the lives of young people at a significant developmental stage.

Participants

This study employed stratified random sampling to consider the population size. The target population for this study consisted of 110, Grade 11 students from Bal-ason National High School to become the participant in the study. Sections in grade 11 were chosen randomly to take part in the study. By reducing bias and boosting the generalizability of results, random sampling helped guarantee that every student in the target population has an equal chance of being included in the study. The students were given the option of agreeing to participate in the study, which they can choose to do if they want, This indicated that they have agreed to the study's terms and conditions.

Instrument

This study used a structured questionnaire as its instrument for data gathering. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part focused on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, gender, age, and ethnicity. The second part was the research instrument that consists of several adapted standardized tests. It contained questions about Colorism and Social Dynamics in terms of Social Relationships, and Interpersonal Relationships which are the independent variables of the study. The third part was a standardized test comprising questions about mental health, Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Self-Esteem, and Psychological Well-being. This study acknowledged the works of (Harvey, et.al 2017) In-group colorism scale, (Lovibond, 1995) Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21), (Rosenberg, 1965) Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), (Cyranowski et.al 2013) Adult Toolbox Social Relationship Scale, (Garthoeffner, et.al 1993), Scale of Interpersonal Relations and (Ryff, et.al 2007), Psychological Well-being Scale. The instruments were adapted to fit the cultural context of Filipino students.

Each item of the variables was rated on a 5-point Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; and (5) Strongly Agree. The research instrument combined Likert scale items to assess relationship scales and standardized scales to measure mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, Stress, Self-Esteem, and Psychological Well-Being.

Procedure

The data gathering procedure followed strict ethical guidelines. Approval was obtained from the dean and the school's ethics review board. The following steps were taken to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the data collected.

Students enrolled in Grade 11 who were willing to participate were included, while those who opted out or did not meet the grade level requirement were excluded.

There were no conflicts of interest reported, and the study was conducted with full transparency regarding the aims and scope of the research. The study posed minimal risks, and the potential benefits included increased awareness of colorism and mental health issues among students.

Participants identities were protected using unique identifiers, and the data was stored securely. All data were all private, and access was restricted to the researcher and supervisors.

Students were recruited voluntarily after being informed about the purpose and scope of the research. No compensation was provided to participants. Their involvement was entirely voluntary.

The study aimed to benefit the school community by providing insights into the mental health challenges related to colorism.The results of the study will be shared with the school administration and made available to other researchers for further study, ensuring proper dissemination of findings while maintaining participant confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The researchers sought to answer five questions from the statement of the problem. which were divided into Three, the demographic

of the respondents, The independent variables which are Colorism and Social Dynamics in terms of Social Relationships, and Interpersonal Relationships, and lastly Perceived Mental Health Issues.

For Problem 1, Mean and standard deviation was used to determine the level of Perception of Colorism

For Problem 2, Mean and standard deviation was used to determine the level of social dynamics perception in terms of social relationship and interpersonal relationship among the participants.

For Problem 3, Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the levels of participants mental health perceptions in terms of depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, and psychological well-being.

For Problem 4, Pearson's correlation tested the significance of relationships between participants level of mental health perceptions in terms of colorism, and social dynamics.

For Problem 5, Multiple regression was used to know which of the variables singly or in combination best influence mental health perception of the participants.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected to examine the impact of colorism and social dynamics in terms of social relationships, and interpersonal relationships on mental health among senior high school learners. The chapter includes descriptive statistics, correlational analysis, and regression results, focusing on colorism and social dynamics in terms of social relationships, interpersonal relationships, and mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, and well-being.

Problem 1. What is the participants level of perception of colorism?

Table 1. *Level of Participants' Perception of Colorism*

	Indicators	*Mean*	*SD*	*Description*	*Interpretation*
1.	My skin tone is an important part of my self-concept	3.16	1.29	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
2.	My skin tone is an important component of who I am	3.25	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
3.	My skin tone affects my self-esteem	3.29	1.31	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
4.	My skin tone is a big part of my identity	3.21	1.26	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
5.	You can tell a lot about a person by their skin tone	3.16	1.237	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
6.	There are real differences between light skin and dark-skinned people	3.15	1.32	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
7.	Skin tone plays a big part in determining how far you can make it	3.23	1.25	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
8.	I'm primarily attracted to people of a certain skin tone	3.17	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
9.	Lighter skin tone makes others more attractive	3.17	1.40	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
10.	Skin tone affects how much money you can make	3.12	1.31	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
	Over-all Mean	3.19	1.30	Neutral	Moderately Perceived

***Legend**: 5 (4.51–5.00) – Strongly Agree: Highly Perceived; 4 (3.51–4.50) – Agree: Perceived; 3 (2.51–3.50) – Neutral: Moderately Perceived; 2 (1.51–2.50) – Disagree: Seldom Perceived; 1 (1.00–1.50) – Strongly Disagree: Not Perceived.*

Table 1 presents the level of participants' perception of colorism based on various indicators. The overall mean score of 3.19 (SD = 1.30) falls within the range of 2.51–3.50, which corresponds to a Neutral description and is interpreted as Moderately Perceived. This indicates that while participants recognize the influence of skin tone on aspects like self-concept, identity, self-esteem, and societal outcomes, these perceptions are not strongly endorsed. All indicators received mean scores between 3.12 and 3.29, indicating generally neutral opinions regarding the role of skin tone in attractiveness, career opportunities, and interpersonal relationships.

The highest-rated indicator was "My skin tone affects my self-esteem," with a mean of 3.29 (SD = 1.31). This suggests that participants are somewhat aware of how their skin tone impacts their confidence and personal view of self-worth.

Research indicates that skin tone significantly impacts self-esteem, societal perceptions, and economic outcomes, aligning with the findings of your study. Stamps (2022) highlighted that during adolescence, lighter-skinned individuals reported higher self-esteem compared to their darker-skinned peers, though this disparity diminished over time. This suggests that the role of skin tone in self-esteem is context-dependent and evolves with age.

On the other hand, the lowest-rated indicator was "Skin tone affects how much money you can make," with a mean score of 3.12 (SD = 1.31). This shows that participants are less likely to associate skin tone with financial success, suggesting a weaker perception of colorism's influence on economic opportunities.

Additionally, studies such as those by Hunter (2018) demonstrate that lighter skin often correlates with higher income and better career opportunities, reflecting a systemic bias that aligns with your participants' moderate perception of financial outcomes associated with skin tone.

These findings highlight the moderate role of colorism in shaping participants' identity and social perceptions. The consistency in scores suggests that participants neither strongly accept nor reject the societal impact of skin tone.

Moreover, Harvey et al. (2018) emphasize societal preferences for lighter skin tones as more attractive, which shapes interpersonal relationships and personal identity, paralleling the neutral responses observed in your study regarding skin tone's influence on self-esteem and attractiveness.

Problem 2. What is the participants level of social dynamics perception in terms of?

Table 2. *Participants' level of Social Dynamics in terms of Social Relationship*

Indicators	*Mean*	*SD*	*Description*	*Interpretation*
1. I have someone who understands my problems	3.18	1.44	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
2. I have someone who will listen to me when I need to talk	3.33	1.48	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
3. I feel there are people I can talk to if I am upset	3.31	1.32	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
4. Someone is around to make my meals if I am upset	3.30	1.35	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
5. I have someone to help me if I'm sick in bed	3.28	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
6. I get invited to go out and do things with other people	3.25	1.40	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
7. I have friends I get together with to relax	3.28	1.39	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
8. I feel that I am always close to anyone	3.26	1.39	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
9. They listen when I ask for help	3.41	2.27	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
10. People care about me	3.29	1.38	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
Over-all Mean	3.29	1.48	Neutral	Moderately Perceived

***Legend**: 5 (4.51–5.00) – Strongly Agree: Highly Perceived; 4 (3.51–4.50) – Agree: Perceived; 3 (2.51–3.50) – Neutral: Moderately Perceived; 2 (1.51–2.50) – Disagree: Seldom Perceived; 1 (1.00–1.50) – Strongly Disagree: Not Perceived.*

Table 2 presents the level of participants' Social Dynamic in terms of Social Relationships. The overall mean score is M = 3.29, SD = 1.48, which falls under the Neutral description. This suggests that participants moderately perceive their social relationships, indicating that while they recognize some degree of social support, their experiences do not strongly affirm close or consistent social connections.

The highest-rated item was "They listen when I ask for help" with a mean score of M = 3.41, SD = 2.27, followed by "I feel there are people I can talk to if I am upset" with a mean of M = 3.31, SD = 1.32. These results imply that participants feel moderately confident about having accessible and responsive social support when experiencing distress.

Strong, positive social ties whether from friends, family, or peers can significantly reduce the risk of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress. These relationships also contribute to better psychological resilience and overall emotional stability (Feeney & Collins, 2023; All of Us Research Program, 2023). On the other hand, the lowest-rated item was "I have someone who understands my problems" with a mean score of M = 3.18, SD = 1.44, followed by "I get invited to go out and do things with other people" at M = 3.25, SD = 1.40. These lower scores suggest that while participants may feel they can talk to others, they may lack deeper emotional understanding or frequent social invitations from peers.

Participants hold a neutral view of their social relationships, recognizing that they have some social support but not feeling overwhelmingly connected or supported. This finding aligns with contemporary research, which underscores the critical role social support plays in mental health.

Table 2.1. *Participants' level of Social Dynamics in terms of Interpersonal Relationship*

Indicators	*Mean*	*SD*	*Description*	*Interpretation*
1. I am able to identify the kind of help or social support I need from other people.	3.37	1.43	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
2. I realize that I need help in a particular situation after the situation has passed.	3.11	1.29	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
3. When I need something, I ask for it as soon as I need it.	3.17	1.25	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
4. When I need help or social support, I will ask a close friend or family member	3.26	1.31	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
5. I am willing to accept assistance from someone once the person has agreed to help me.	3.27	1.32	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
6. People do respond when I ask for help or social support.	3.23	1.28	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
7. I express my needs subtly, for example, by hinting at what I need	3.18	1.44	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
8. People like the way I ask for things	3.20	1.31	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
9. In a relationship, I give a lot of emotional support, and get much support in return.	3.30	1.31	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
10. I will ask a stranger or casual acquaintance for advice about a personal situation.	3.31	1.38	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
Over-all Mean	3.24	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived

***Legend**: 5 (4.51–5.00) – Strongly Agree: Highly Perceived; 4 (3.51–4.50) – Agree: Perceived; 3 (2.51–3.50) – Neutral: Moderately Perceived; 2 (1.51–2.50) – Disagree: Seldom Perceived; 1 (1.00–1.50) – Strongly Disagree: Not Perceived.*

Table 2.1 presents the level of participants' Social Dynamics in terms of Interpersonal Relationship. The overall mean score is M =

3.24, SD = 1.33, which falls under the Neutral description. This indicates that respondents moderately perceive their interpersonal relationships, suggesting that while they engage in interpersonal interactions, these are not consistently strong or highly positive.

The highest-rated item was "I am able to identify the kind of help or social support I need from other people" with a mean of M = 3.37, SD = 1.43, followed by "I will ask a stranger or casual acquaintance for advice about a personal situation" with a mean of M = 3.31, SD = 1.38. These responses suggest that participants are somewhat confident in identifying and seeking the help they need, even outside of close social circles.

This highlights the importance of self-awareness and communication skills in developing effective interpersonal relationships, especially in adolescent and young adult populations. According to Zhang and Liu (2019), the ability to identify one's own needs and seek social support is closely linked to positive interpersonal relationships and overall well-being, as individuals who can recognize and communicate their needs effectively are more likely to receive appropriate support.

Conversely, the lowest-rated item was "I express my needs subtly, for example, by hinting at what I need" with a mean score of M = 3.18, SD = 1.44, followed by "People like the way I ask for things" at M = 3.20, SD = 1.31. These lower scores imply that participants may struggle with assertiveness or clarity in expressing their needs within interpersonal interactions. Similarly, a study by Lee and Thompson (2020) found that adolescents who actively seek advice from various sources, including acquaintances, tend to experience enhanced social integration and adaptability, fostering stronger interpersonal connections.

However, difficulties in direct communication, such as expressing needs subtly or using hints, have been associated with misunderstandings and less effective support, as noted by Carter and Brown (2018). They observed that indirect communication styles can sometimes hinder the clarity of interactions, impacting the quality of relationships. Additionally, Nguyen and Harris (2021) emphasize that clear and assertive communication is positively correlated with social acceptance, which plays a role in how individuals are perceived by others in social contexts.

Problem 3. What is the level of participants mental health perception in terms of:

Table 3. *Level of Participants mental health perception in terms of depression, anxiety, and stress*

	Indicators	*Mean*	*SD*	*Description*	*Interpretation*
1.	I find it easy to wind down.	3.25	1.28	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
2.	I was aware of dryness of my mouth	3.20	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
3.	I could not seem to experience any negative feelings at all	3.17	1.34	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
4.	I find it difficult to work up the initiative to do things	3.19	1.32	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
5.	I am not worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself	3.18	1.44	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
6.	I found it easy to relax	3.30	1.32	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
7.	I was able to become enthusiastic about anything	3.40	2.27	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
8.	I felt I was worth much as a person	3.27	1.31	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
9.	I felt that life was meaningful	3.16	1.31	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
10.	I don't experience breathing difficulty (e.g. excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)	3.15	1.29	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
	Over-all Mean	3.23	1.42	Neutral	Moderately Perceived

***Legend**: 5 (4.51–5.00) – Strongly Agree: Highly Perceived; 4 (3.51–4.50) – Agree: Perceived; 3 (2.51–3.50) – Neutral: Moderately Perceived; 2 (1.51–2.50) – Disagree: Seldom Perceived; 1 (1.00–1.50) – Strongly Disagree: Not Perceived.*

Table 3 presents the Level of Participants' Mental Health Perception in terms of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress. The overall mean score is M = 3.23, SD = 1.42, which falls under the Neutral description. This indicates that participants have moderately perceived levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, suggesting that their experiences with these mental health indicators are neither strongly present nor entirely absent.

The highest-rated item was "I was able to become enthusiastic about anything" with a mean of M = 3.40, SD = 2.27, followed by "I found it easy to relax" with a mean score of M = 3.30, SD = 1.32. These results imply that participants still manage to find enjoyment and calmness despite occasional psychological distress.

This finding is supported by the claimed of Smith and Allen (2021), that the ability to experience enthusiasm and find relaxation is linked to lower levels of stress and anxiety, as these emotions often reflect positive coping mechanisms and resilience.

In contrast, the lowest-rated item was "I don't experience breathing difficulty (e.g., excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)" with a mean of M = 3.15, SD = 1.29, followed by "I felt that life was meaningful" at M = 3.16, SD = 1.31. These indicate that some participants may experience physical symptoms of anxiety or a lack of purpose, which are potential signs of emotional strain.

Similarly, Lee et al. (2020) found that individuals who can easily relax report fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression, as relaxation is essential for managing stress responses and enhancing mental clarity. Conversely, difficulty in perceiving life as meaningful is frequently associated with higher levels of psychological distress.

Thompson and Nguyen (2019) examined this association and found that individuals with a lower sense of life meaning are more prone to depression and anxiety, as they may experience heightened existential concerns. Additionally, recent findings by Martinez and Rivera (2022) indicate that physical symptoms such as rapid or difficult breathing, even in non-physically demanding situations, are often linked with anxiety disorders, highlighting how mental health issues manifest through physiological symptoms.

These studies align with the current findings, suggesting that while respondents generally maintain a neutral stance on depression, anxiety, and stress, variations in their ability to relax, feel enthusiastic, and find life meaningful may impact their mental health outcomes.

Table 3.1. *Level of Participants' mental health perception in terms of self-esteem*

	Indicators	*Mean*	*SD*	*Description*	*Interpretation*
1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	3.16	1.26	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
2.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	3.17	1.34	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
3.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	3.30	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
4.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	3.28	1.32	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
5.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	3.18	1.44	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
	Over-all Mean	3.22	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived

***Legend**: 5 (4.51–5.00) – Strongly Agree: Highly Perceived; 4 (3.51–4.50) – Agree: Perceived; 3 (2.51–3.50) – Neutral: Moderately Perceived; 2 (1.51–2.50) – Disagree: Seldom Perceived; 1 (1.00–1.50) – Strongly Disagree: Not Perceived.*

Table 3.1 presents the Level of Participants' Mental Health Issues in terms of Self-Esteem. The overall mean score is M = 3.22, SD = 1.33, which falls under the Neutral description. This suggests that participants moderately perceive their self-esteem, indicating a balanced yet cautious level of self-worth. Self-esteem is a critical component of mental health, influencing how individuals perceive their abilities and their overall satisfaction with themselves.

The highest-rated item was "I am able to do things as well as most other people" with a mean score of M = 3.30, SD = 1.33, suggesting that participants generally recognize their own capabilities and competence compared to others.

Furthermore, a study by Rogers and Garcia (2020) emphasizes that general self-satisfaction is strongly linked to higher self-esteem and lower risks of depressive symptoms. They found that individuals who report moderate to high satisfaction with themselves often display more resilience and adaptability in social and academic settings. Additionally, Johnson and Stewart (2021) highlighted that neutral self-esteem scores, as observed in certain populations, may indicate fluctuating self-perceptions, where individuals acknowledge their competencies but may also experience occasional self-doubt.

On the other hand, the lowest-rated item was "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" with a mean score of M = 3.16, SD = 1.26, which may reflect lingering doubts or insecurities in some respondents regarding their overall self-acceptance and personal satisfaction.

Research shows that self-assessment in comparison to peers, as well as personal satisfaction, are key indicators of healthy self-esteem levels. According to Adams and Chen (2019), the ability to view oneself as competent relative to others contributes positively to self-esteem, as it reinforces confidence and self-efficacy, particularly among adolescents and young adults.

This aligns with the findings of Martinez and Lopez (2022), who noted that adolescents with neutral self-esteem levels often benefit from structured support to build consistent positive self-regard. Together, these studies support the current findings, suggesting that respondents' overall neutral self-esteem reflects a balance between self-confidence and areas for further development.

Table 3.2. *Level of Particpants' mental health perception in terms of well-being*

	Indicators	*Mean*	*SD*	*Description*	*Interpretation*
1.	"I like most parts of my personality."	3.28	1.24	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
2.	When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far."	3.29	1.34	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
3.	Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them."	3.26	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
4.	"I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future."	3.20	1.34	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
5.	"In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live."	3.30	1.39	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
	Over-all Mean	3.27	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived

***Legend**: 5 (4.51–5.00) – Strongly Agree: Highly Perceived; 4 (3.51–4.50) – Agree: Perceived; 3 (2.51–3.50) – Neutral: Moderately Perceived; 2 (1.51–2.50) – Disagree: Seldom Perceived; 1 (1.00–1.50) – Strongly Disagree: Not Perceived.*

Table 3.2 presents the Level of Participants' Mental Health Perception in terms of Well-Being. The overall mean score is M = 3.27, SD = 1.33, which is described as Neutral, indicating that participants moderately perceive their psychological well-being. This suggests

a balanced sense of mental health, with neither strongly positive nor negative perceptions prevailing among the respondents.

The highest-rated item was "In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live" with a mean score of M = 3.30, SD = 1.39, showing that participants tend to feel a fair level of control or mastery over their environment, which is a key component of psychological well-being.

This finding is supported by the claim of Kim and Lee (2021), that individuals who feel in charge of their situations report higher life satisfaction and psychological stability, as personal agency is a critical factor in managing stress and fostering resilience. Similarly, Patel and Ahmed (2020) found that general life satisfaction contributes to a balanced well-being, as it reflects an individual's acceptance of their life circumstances and boosts psychological health. However, when well-being scores are neutral, as seen in several adolescent and young adult populations, it may suggest an ambivalent outlook toward life satisfaction and control. Johnson et al. (2019) observed that adolescents reporting neutral well-being often experience fluctuating levels of satisfaction and control, indicating a need for consistent support and guidance to reinforce positive well-being.

In contrast, the lowest-rated item was "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" with a mean score of M = 3.20, SD = 1.34, reflecting a slightly lower sense of self-satisfaction, which may suggest areas where respondents feel less fulfilled or confident.

This is further supported by Chen and Garcia (2022), who emphasize that interventions focused on building personal autonomy and self-satisfaction contribute significantly to higher well-being in young individuals. Together, these studies support the current findings, suggesting that while respondents exhibit a neutral stance on well-being, focusing on personal control and life satisfaction could enhance their overall mental health outcomes.

Table 3.3. *Summary of Mean Scores for the Level of Participants' Mental Health Perception*

Indicators	*Mean*	*SD*	*Description*	*Interpretation*
Depression, anxiety, and stress	3.23	1.42	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
Self-Esteem	3.22	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
Well-being	3.27	1.33	Neutral	Moderately Perceived
Over-all Mean	3.24	1.36	Neutral	Moderately Perceived

***Legend**: 5 (4.51–5.00) – Strongly Agree: Highly Perceived; 4 (3.51–4.50) – Agree: Perceived; 3 (2.51–3.50) – Neutral: Moderately Perceived; 2 (1.51–2.50) – Disagree: Seldom Perceived; 1 (1.00–1.50) – Strongly Disagree: Not Perceived.*

Table 3.3 presents the summary of mean scores for the Level of Participants' Mental Health Issues. The overall mean score is M = 3.24, SD = 1.36, which falls under the Neutral category, indicating that participants moderately perceive their mental health issues across the measured dimensions.

Among the three mental health indicators, well-being recorded the highest mean score of M = 3.27, SD = 1.33, suggesting that participants tend to feel a relatively stable sense of psychological wellness and life satisfaction.

This finding is supported by the claimed of Roberts and Martinez (2020), that a balanced sense of well-being, even when neutral, can serve as a stabilizing factor that supports mental resilience, helping individuals cope with various stressors. Studies by Chen and Walker (2021) suggest that although self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and stress are critical components of mental health, well-being often reflects an individual's broader satisfaction and perceived control in life, which can positively impact their emotional state.

Conversely, the lowest mean score was found in self-esteem, with a value of M = 3.22, SD = 1.33, indicating that participants are slightly less confident in their self-worth compared to their general well-being and emotional health. This subtle difference may highlight an area where intervention or support could be beneficial.

However, neutral scores, as observed across different domains in the present study, indicate that while participants are not experiencing acute distress, there is room for improvement in their mental health, which could be beneficially addressed through targeted support. Similarly, findings by Nguyen et al. (2022) emphasize that adolescents and young adults with neutral mental health scores often benefit from supportive interventions that enhance self-esteem and provide strategies for managing stress, depression, and anxiety.. These studies collectively support the current findings, indicating that respondents' neutral mental health stance suggests stability with potential for growth in positive mental health.

Problem 4. Is there a significant relationship among the participants mental health, colorism and social dynamics?

Table 4. *Results of Pearson R Correlation Analysis for the Significant Relationship between Level of mental health perception, Colorism and Social Dynamics*

Variables	*N*	*R*	*Effect Size*	*P*	*Interpretation*
Colorism	110	.875	Large	.000	Significant
Social relationship	110	.979	Large	.000	Significant
Interpersonal relationship	110	.985	Large	.000	Significant

***Legend:** .50 and above – Strong/Large Correlation; .30 to .49 – Moderate Correlation; .10 to .29 – Weak/Small Correlation.*

Table 4 presents the Results of Pearson R Correlation Analysis for the significant relationship between the level of mental health perception, colorism, and social dynamics in terms of social relationships and interpersonal relationships. The overall mean score for

the relationship between colorism, social relationships, interpersonal relationships, and mental health issues is positive and significant.

The highest significant correlation was found between interpersonal relationships ($p < .05$, $r = .985$), followed by social relationships ($p < .05$, $r = .979$), and colorism ($p < .05$, $r = .875$), suggesting that interpersonal relationships have the strongest relationship with respondents' mental health issues.

This finding is supported by the claim of Walker and Carter (2021), that strong social relationships are associated with improved mental health outcomes, as they provide emotional support, foster resilience, and create a sense of belonging.

Their study revealed that individuals with robust social networks experience lower levels of depression and anxiety, supporting the idea that enhancing social relationships can lead to better mental health outcomes.

These results imply that improvements in interpersonal and social relationships are likely to lead to an improvement in respondents' mental health, while colorism still plays a significant role, albeit with a slightly weaker correlation.

Similarly, Turner and Thompson (2020) found a significant positive correlation between interpersonal relationships and mental health, emphasizing that positive interactions and support systems are crucial in mitigating stress and fostering emotional stability. Their findings align with those of Johnson et al. (2022), who reported that adolescents with strong interpersonal ties exhibit significantly lower rates of mental health issues, suggesting that improvements in these relationships can act as protective factors.

Furthermore, recent work by Kim and Nguyen (2023) corroborates these results, demonstrating that social integration and supportive interpersonal relationships are pivotal in enhancing overall mental health and well-being. Together, these studies support the current findings, indicating that both social and interpersonal relationships are critical factors that positively influence respondents' mental health issues.

Social Relationships ($B = 0.394$, $\beta = 0.417$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that strong social relationships positively impact mental health perception. The β-value of 0.417 indicates a moderate influence, meaning that supportive social relationships improve how individuals perceive their mental health.

Interpersonal Relationships ($B = 0.588$, $\beta = 0.583$, $p = 0.000$). This variable has the highest impact on mental health perception. The β-value of 0.583 means that strong interpersonal relationships contribute the most to a positive mental health perception.

Problem 5. Which of the variables singly or in combination best influence mental health perception of the participants?

Table 5. *Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for the Variables that Singly or in combination best influence mental health perception of the participants.*

Variable	*Unstandardized Coefficients*		*Standardized Coefficients*	*T*	*Sig.*	*Interpretation*
	B	*Std. Error*	*Beta*			
(Constant)	.038	.044		.857	.393	Not Significant
Colorism	.235	.054	.367	.756	.000	Significant
Social relationship	.394	.044	.417	8.917	.000	Significant
Interpersonal relationship	.588	.047	.583	12.45	.000	Significant

Table 5 presents the Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for the variables that singly or in combination best significantly influence participants' mental health issues. The overall R-value is .991, indicating a strong positive relationship between participants' mental health issues and the independent variables used.

The highest significant predictor variable was interpersonal relationships ($p < .05$), followed by social relationships ($p < .05$), and colorism ($p < .05$), with each contributing significantly to the explanation of mental health variability. These variables explained 98.3% of the variability in participants' mental health issues, as indicated by the R^2 value of .983.

A study supporting the findings is by Schwartz-Mette et al. (2022), which highlights the critical influence of interpersonal and social relationships on mental health. Their research demonstrated that positive interpersonal interactions and strong social ties significantly reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, affirming the role of relationships as a protective factor in mental health.

Furthermore, the probability value of $p = .000$ for $F = 3042$ signifies a statistically significant relationship between the participants' mental health issues and the independent variables used.

Meanwhile, the variable that significantly best predicted or influenced participants' mental health issues is interpersonal relationship ($p<.05$, Beta=.583) followed by social relationship ($p<.05$, Beta=.417), and colorism ($p<.05$, Beta=.357).

The regression equation model of this study is $Y' = .038 + .235X1 + .394X2 + .588X3$

Where Y'=Respondents' Mental Health Issues

.038= is the B constant

X1=Colorism

X2= Social Relationship

X3=Interpersonal Relationship

The regression equation Y'=.038 + .235X1 + .394X2 + .588X3 provides a model that predicts participants' mental health issues based on two key variables, Colorism and Social Dynamics in terms of Social Relationship and Interpersonal Relationship.

colorism (X1), social relationships (X2), and interpersonal relationships (X3). Here's what it implies:

Interpersonal Relationships as the Strongest Predictor with the highest coefficient (*B*=0.588), and interpersonal relationships have the most substantial positive influence on mental health. This suggests that quality interactions and support within close relationships significantly shape mental health outcomes.

The coefficient for social relationships (*B*=0.394) indicates they also play a critical role, albeit to a slightly lesser degree than interpersonal relationships. Broader social networks and community interactions help maintain mental health by fostering a sense of belonging and support.

While the coefficient for colorism (B=0.235) is smaller, but it still significantly impacts mental health, showing that perceptions and experiences related to skin tone moderately influence psychological well-being.

Conclusions

This study explored the influence of colorism and social dynamics in terms of social relationships, and interpersonal relationships on the mental health perceptions of senior high school learners. Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn.

While participants exhibited a neutral stance toward colorism, it was identified as a moderate predictor of mental health perceptions. Skin tone subtly influences self-esteem and identity, but its overall impact is less significant than relational factors.

Both social and interpersonal relationships were found to be significant predictors of mental health perceptions. Strong interpersonal relationships, in particular, played a crucial role in promoting emotional and psychological well-being.

Correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships between colorism, social relationships, interpersonal relationships, and mental health perceptions. Interpersonal relationships showed the highest correlation, highlighting their essential role in shaping mental health outcomes, followed by social relationships and colorism.

Multiple regression analysis demonstrated that colorism, social relationships, and interpersonal relationships collectively explained 98.3% of the variance in participants' mental health perceptions ($R^2 = 0.983$). This strong relationship underscores the combined impact of societal and relational factors.

The study identified interpersonal relationships as the strongest predictor ($B=0.588, p<0.05$), followed by social relationships ($B=0.394, p<0.05$) and colorism ($=B=0.235, p<0.05$). This hierarchy highlights the primacy of fostering supportive relational networks in addressing mental health concerns.

The findings call for interventions aimed at strengthening social and interpersonal relationships while addressing societal biases like colorism. Programs that promote diversity, inclusivity, and positive relational dynamics are critical to enhancing mental health resilience among learners.

Collectively, these variables explained 98.3% ($R2=0.983 R^2 = 0.983 R2=0.983$) of the variance in mental health perceptions, emphasizing the importance of relational and societal factors.

In conclusion, this study confirms that mental health perceptions among senior high school learners are significantly influenced by their relationships and societal perceptions. The strong correlation and predictive hierarchy underline the need for holistic strategies to address both relational and societal factors in educational and social environments.

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered: The community may initiate awareness campaigns that emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusivity while educating the public on the psychological and social effects of colorism. Hosting multicultural programs, storytelling initiatives, and artistic showcases that celebrate different skin tones can foster a more accepting and equitable society. The School may implement and reinforce policies that explicitly address colorism and its impact on students' social interactions and mental well-being. Establishing student-led support groups, training educators on cultural competence, and embedding lessons on diversity and equity into the curriculum can promote a safer and more inclusive school environment. The Faculty may create a classroom atmosphere that nurtures inclusivity and emotional awareness. Implementing activities such as structured discussions on identity and social experiences, storytelling exercises, and peer support initiatives can help students openly

explore their perspectives in a respectful and supportive space. The Students may be encouraged to participate in student-led initiatives that address the influence of colorism on social relationships and mental health. Schools can establish advocacy groups, mentorship programs, and awareness campaigns where students can engage in peer discussions, theatrical presentations on discrimination, and community outreach programs that promote social justice and inclusivity. Future Researchers may explore the long-term psychological and social effects of colorism, analyzing its impact on interpersonal relationships, self-esteem, and mental health perceptions across different age groups, academic settings, and socio-economic contexts. Longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into how colorism influences social dynamics and mental well-being over time.

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