

## Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, Hope and Quality of Life among Transgenders and Cisgenders

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### ABSTRACT

Living in a homophobic society and with familial rejection have an impact on one's life. The current study examines the perceived social support, forgiveness, and hope as a predictor of quality of life among transgenders and cisgenders. This study also tries to determine the difference between transgenders and cisgenders with regard to all the four study variables. For the purpose of this research, convenience sampling design was used for cisgenders (N=81) and snowball sampling design for transgenders (N=60). Data was collected using Quality of Life Scale (WHO-QOL), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al.), Heartland Forgiveness Scale (Thompson et al.) and Adult Hope Scale (Snyder et al.). Results of Independent sample t-test indicated that there is difference in perceived social support, forgiveness, hope, and quality of life between transgenders and cisgenders. Linear Multiple Regression revealed that the Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, and Hope predicts the Quality of Life among transgenders and cisgenders. Understanding the magnitude and direction of such differences contributes important implications for both intervention development and decisions regarding the prioritization of mental health programmes within the gender- minority community.

**Keywords:** *Quality of Life, Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, Transgender, Cisgender.*

**H**umans live in a world where gender and sex play a significant role. The categorization of people as "male" or "female" dominates the society. Gender refers to how a culture correlates a person's biological sex with their beliefs, thoughts, and actions. (APA, 2012)

Cisgender people are those whose gender self-categorization is the same as their birth-assigned gender category—the latter beginning as genital labelling in the United States and other countries, with intra- and interpersonal social ramifications. (Tate, Youssef & Bettergarcia, 2014). Transgender people do not have the same protections, privileges, or access to services and opportunities as cisgender people. There are many instances where cisgender people get special care over transgender people.

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Quality of Life is defined as the capacity of a person to work physically, mentally, and socially within his or her surroundings at a level compatible with his or her own desires. Perceived social help refers to the provision of assistance when it is needed, and it can be measured and interpreted from a variety of subjective qualitative viewpoints. It is well known that a person's perception of social assistance has a stronger impact on their mental health. Forgiveness is "the interpretation of a known misbehaviour so that one's reactions to the victim, violation, and punishment associated symptoms are converted from hostile to neutral or optimistic"(Thompson, Synder, Hoffman, Michael, Rasmussen, Billings, Roberts et al.,2005).

Snyder, Irving & Anderson (1991) define hope as "*a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful agency (goal-directed energy) and pathways (planning to meet goals)*".

According to Roberts, Rosario, Slopen, Calzo, Austin. (2013) transgender people have higher rates of depression, anxiety, drug abuse, suicidality, and poor mental and overall self-rated health than cisgender people. The vast majority of transgender persons learn to manage with this, especially if they have family and friends who support them and are involved in transgender organisations and social networks. In the absence of assistance, many Transgender people, especially younger. Discrimination, not sexual orientation, is the cause of mental disorders. Long-term trauma, mental health concerns, and medical disorders are more common in transgender people than in cisgender persons. Overall, the study assumes that the variables perceived social support, hope and forgiveness predicts the quality of life among transgenders and cisgenders.

Transgender people are stigmatised in our society and are being discriminated against in every aspect of life. 56.9% of people were found to have good Quality of Life score as a whole. Marital status, current living status and occupation found to have a statistically significant association with Quality of Life (Naskar, Roy, & Gupta 2018). A study was also conducted among transgenders to assess the level of perceived stigma and quality of life. A negative correlation ( $r = -.38$ ) was found between perceived stigma. Educational status and occupation were significantly associated with perceived stigma ( $p=.02$ ). These are the two kinds of literature that apply to the Indian context which can help the government to plan conceptually to improve QOL in this special transgender group of population (Savarimuthu, Rogina & Nanzy ,2015).

Support from family, friends, and the community was a good predictor of positive outcomes. When other sources of encouragement were taken into account, family acceptance had the greatest overall effect. The implications for LGBT youth and young adult transition are explored, as well as the unique and parallel types of social support. (Snapp, Watson, Russell, Diaz, & Ryan, 2015). If social support can be a good predictor of positive outcomes, then it can be a predictor of quality of life.

The study examined how 86 social work students viewed themselves and others to self-esteem, empathy, and forgiveness. Female students reported a higher level of emotional empathy than that reported by male students. The study identified the need for social work educators to help students develop a strong sense of self. As various psychological correlates with forgiveness and can also foresee the quality of life (Turnage, Hong, Stevenson, & Edwards 2012).

## METHODOLOGY

### Hypotheses

H.1: Transgenders and Cisgenders will significantly differ with regard to Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, Hope, and Quality of Life.

H.2: Perceived social support, forgiveness and hope are the predictors of quality of life among Transgenders and Cisgenders.

**Independent Variable:** Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness and Hope

**Dependent Variable:** Quality of Life.

**Research Design:** The present study is a Comparative Research Design.

**Sampling Design:** For the purpose of this research, convenience sampling design was used for Cisgender and snowball sampling was used for transgenders. A total of 141 participants were procured which comprised of 60 transgenders and 81 cisgenders from different parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala.

### Inclusion criteria

Transgender:

- Individuals above the age 18 years
- Transgender includes transgender male, transgender female, male to female (MTF), and female to male (FTM).

Cisgender:

- Individuals above the age 18 years.
- Sufficient command of English language.

### Exclusion criteria

Geys, lesbians and bisexuals are not included in the study.

### TOOLS

1. **Quality of Life Scale** developed by World Health Organization WHO QOL-BREF consists of 26 questions and is organized into four domains i.e., physical Health, psychological Health, social Relationships and the environment.
2. **Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)** developed by Zimet et al. (1988). The MSPSS is a brief self-report questionnaire with 12 items that subjectively measure perceived social support using three subscales namely family subscale, friends' subscale and significant others subscale.
3. **Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS)** developed by Thompson et al. (1991) is an 18-item scale designed to measure level of forgiveness. Participants indicate each of the 18 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 Almost Always true of me to 1 Almost Always false of me.
4. **Adult Hope Scale (AHS)** developed by Snyder et al. (2018) is a 12-item measure of a respondent's level of hope. In particular the scale is divided into two subscales that comprise Snyder's cognitive model of hope: Agency (i.e., goal-directed energy) and Pathways (i.e., planning to accomplish goals).

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### *Procedure*

The approval was given from the College, the researcher started data collection by following the ethics of data collection in research, only the Adults and Transgenders willing to take part in the test were included in the sample. The participants were assured confidentiality of the data so that they could complete the test without any hesitation. Then the questionnaires for Perceived social support, forgiveness, hope and quality of life were given, one after the other. The instructions in the questionnaire were made clear. Once done with the answering, the questionnaires were collected back and they were thanked for their cooperation. Google form of questionnaires was also used in order to collect data from participants who were located in different states in India. In case of any doubt, it was clarified with the help of adding the researchers Gmail address in the Google form. The data will be also collected using online mode with the help of google forms.

### *Statistics*

The difference between transgender and cisgender was determined using the independent sample t-test. In addition, Multiple linear regression was done to estimate the relationship between two or more independent variables and one dependent variable.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

*Table 1 Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants at Baseline.*

Sociodemographic characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Group</b>		
Cisgender	81	57.4
Transgenders	60	42.6
<b>Resident</b>		
urban	75	53.2
semi urban	42	29.8
rural	24	17.0
<b>Socio Economic Status</b>		
Upper	2	1.4
Middle	82	58.2
Lower	57	40.4
<b>Education</b>		
High School	26	18.4
College	18	12.8
Graduate	92	65.2
Diploma	5	3.5
<b>Age</b>		
18-26	99	70.2
27-35	35	24.8
36-44	7	4.9

The sample comprises of 141 adults, transgender participants were 60 and cisgender participants were 81. The number of respondents who belong to the age category 18 -26 were 99, 35 respondents belonged to the age group of 27 – 35 and 7 respondents were in the age group of 36 – 44. The socio-economic status shows that there are 2 participants in upper class, 82 participants in middle class and 57 participants in lower class. Participants from different area of residents were considered in the study, there were 75 participants from urban, 42 from semi-urban and 24 from rural background. With regards to education a total

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of 92 are graduates, 26 participants have completed high school, 18 are still in college and 5 have done diploma.

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the study Variables.**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Perceived social support	62.57	10.949	141
Forgiveness	92.44	17.293	141
Hope	50.89	9.341	141
Quality of Life	105.04	15.944	141

The table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the four variables that are assessed in this study. The mean and standard deviation of Perceived social support ( $M=62.57$ ,  $SD=10.949$ ), Forgiveness ( $M=92.44$ ,  $SD=17.293$ ), Hope ( $M=50.89$ ,  $SD=9.341$ ), and Quality of Life ( $M=105.04$ ,  $SD=15.944$ ) respectively. There are 141 participants in the study.

**Table 3 Comparison of gender category with regard to Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, Hope, and Quality of Life among transgenders and cisgenders.**

	Gender Category	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Perceived Social Support	Cisgender	81	64.26	9.32	2.160	139	$p = .033$	Significant
	Transgenders	60	60.28	12.55				
Forgiveness	Cisgender	81	86.58	13.12	4.804	98.498	$p = .000$	Significant
	Transgenders	60	100.35	19.12				
Hope	Cisgender	81	50.27	9.00	.918	139	$p = .360$	Not Significant
	Transgenders	60	51.73	9.79				
Quality of Life	Cisgender	81	98.33	13.91	6.639	139	$p = .000$	Significant
	Transgenders	60	114.10	13.99				

The independent t test statistical technique for the scores of Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, and Hope on Quality of life among Transgenders and Cisgenders revealed that the level of Perceived Social Support of Cisgender ( $M = 64.26$ ,  $SD = 9.32$ ) is higher than that of Transgenders ( $M = 60.28$ ,  $SD = 12.55$ ). The difference is statistically significant  $t(139) = 2.160$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This indicates that the transgender individuals the perception of support from family, friends and others are not that satisfied when compared to normal population group.

In the level of Forgiveness of Cisgenders ( $M = 86.58$ ,  $SD = 9.00$ ) is less than that of Transgenders ( $M = 100.35$ ,  $SD = 19.12$ ). The difference is statistically significant  $t(98.498) = -4.804$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This indicates that transgender adults could easily forgive when compared to cisgender even though they face a lot of stigma, racism, and violence in their daily lives.

In the level of Hope of Cisgenders ( $M = 50.27$ ,  $SD = 13.12$ ) is slight less than that of Transgenders ( $M = 51.73$ ,  $SD = 9.79$ ). The difference is not statistically significant  $t(139) = -.918$ ,  $p > 0.05$ .

Finally, in the level of Quality of Life of Cisgenders ( $M = 98.33$ ,  $SD = 13.91$ ) is less than that of Transgenders ( $M = 114.10$ ,  $SD = 13.99$ ). The difference is statistically significant  $t(139) = -6.639$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, Hypothesis 1 which states that Transgenders and Cisgenders

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will significantly differ with regard to Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, Hope, and Quality of Life has been failed to reject.

**Table 4** *The summary of Linear Multiple Regression Analysis for the scores of Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, and Hope on Quality-of-Life among Cisgenders (N= 81).*

Predictor variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	33.902	10.910		3.107	.003
Perceived social support	.147	.146	.099	1.012	.315
Forgiveness	.200	.101	.189	1.974	.052
Hope	.749	.158	.485	4.745	.000

The summary of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for the scores of Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, and Hope on Quality of life among Cisgenders are presented in Table 4 revealed that the Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, and Hope account for 39.3 percent of variance in the Quality of Life. The model summary indicated that the model was significant and acceptable  $F(3,77) = 16.65, p < .01$ . The result also shows that the three predictors are having positive b value which means that there is positive relationship with the outcome among cisgenders.

**Table 5** *The summary of Linear Multiple Regression Analysis for the scores of Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, and Hope on Quality-of-Life among Transgenders (N=60).*

Predictor variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	58.999	10.324		5.715	.000
Perceived social support	.263	.127	.236	2.073	.043
Forgiveness	.189	.104	.258	1.822	.074
Hope	.392	.195	.275	2.011	.049

The summary of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for the scores of Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, and Hope on Quality of life among Transgenders. The results indicated that the Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, and Hope account for 34.6 percent of variance in the Quality of Life. The model summary indicated that the model was statistically significant and acceptable ( $F(3,56) = 9.896, p < .01$ ).

In addition, the Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, and Hope are having positive b value which means that there is positive relationship with the Quality of life among Transgenders. On the whole the Hypothesis 2 states that the ‘Perceived social support, forgiveness and hope are the predictors of quality of life among Transgenders and Cisgenders’ has been failed to reject.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The aim of the study was to analyse the predictive role of perceived social support, forgiveness and hope on quality of life among transgenders and Cisgenders. It also intended to explore the difference between transgenders and Cisgenders with respect to perceived social support, forgiveness, hope, and quality of life. The study was conducted on 141 adults with 81 cisgender participants and 60 Transgender participants. The data was obtained by

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using the Quality-of-life scale, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, Adult Hope Scale. The data was subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS. The results suggest that there exists a significant difference between Transgenders and Cisgenders with regard to Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, Hope, and Quality of Life. Perceived social support, forgiveness and hope are the predictors of quality of life among Transgenders and Cisgenders.

### Conclusion

- There is significant difference between Transgenders and Cisgenders with regard to Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, Hope, and Quality of Life.
- Perceived social support, forgiveness and hope are the predictors of quality of life among Transgenders and Cisgenders.

### Limitations

- The sample size was small and has been restricted only to certain areas.
- Obtained results can be generalized only to those areas or states which hold the similar cultural and demographic characteristics as that of Karnataka and Kerala.
- The questionnaire used for this study was in English Language, for most of the samples English language is not easy to comprehend, so questionnaire administered to each sample directly, language used for administration was their mother tongue language for reduce their difficult to answer, so it took lot of time to obtains data.

### Implications

- This also fills in gaps that were identified in existing literature. Intervention can be postulated for individuals or group experiencing low levels of perceived social support, forgiveness and hope.
- The conclusions also contradict the stereotype of transgender people as outsiders, as other people, by emphasising that transgender individual, just like everybody else, have hopes for the future, gather strength to face daily challenges, and cope with rejection and failures.
- This study on transgender people will be helpful to educate social workers, health care professionals, and other skilled helpers.
- Understanding the magnitude and direction of such differences has important implications for both intervention development and decisions regarding the prioritization of mental health programming within the gender minority community.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

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## APPENDIX A

**Table Relationship among Perceived Social Support, Forgiveness, Hope and Quality of life (N = 141).**

Variables	Perceived social support	Forgiveness	Hope	Quality of Life
Perceived social support	1	.179*	.268**	.210*
Forgiveness		1	.481**	.544**
Hope			1	.507**
Quality of Life				1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).