

## Emotional Regulation, Resilience and Life Satisfaction in Transgender

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between emotional regulation, resilience, and life satisfaction. With a focus on identifying the variable that contributes the most to the life satisfaction among 85 transgender individuals aged between 20 - 35 years using purposive sampling. Three standardized tools were utilized ERQ (Gross & John), NMRQ (McBride), and SWLS (Diener). The results revealed a positive relationship among the three selected variables. Stepwise linear regression identified resilience as the most significant predictor of life satisfaction, with income further enhancing the effect. However, the impact of emotional regulation on life satisfaction was found to be insignificant. These findings highlight the vital role that resilience plays in fostering transgender people's well-being and sense of fulfillment in life. The study urges more investigation into other psychosocial factors affecting life satisfaction in this demographic and emphasizes the necessity of focused interventions meant to increase resilience.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Regulation, Resilience, Life Satisfaction, Transgender, Well-being*

According to "Understanding Transgender People, Gender Identity and Gender Expression," 2014, transgenders are those whose gender identity, gender expression, or conduct do not correspond to what is often associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth. A transgender person is someone who, based on their physical sex characteristics, identifies as a gender other than the one assigned to them at birth. It is crucial to realise that being transgender does not mean having a certain sexual preference. To gain a better understanding, be aware of several terminologies that appear to have the same meaning but are actually quite distinct such as Gender identity is not the same as body type or biological sex. It's a very personal and internal sense of being male, female, or another totally, but a person's reproductive system and physical characteristics frequently reflect their biological sex. On the other hand, the term "transgender" refers to a person's deeply held belief that they are either male, female, a combination of both, or neither.

India has a rich yet paradoxical history with its transgender community, commonly referred to as Hijras. Historically respected as spiritual figures, temple guardians, and royal advisors, they were integrated into cultural and religious life (Kalra G., 2012).

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References to transgender figures such as Ardhanarishvara and Shikhandi in Hindu mythology reflect this longstanding cultural recognition. However, colonial laws such as the Criminal Tribes Act institutionalized their marginalization, leading to decades of social exclusion and discrimination. Legal protections and acceptance of transgender people in India.

Following the 2014 Supreme Court ruling recognizing transgender individuals as a third gender, India introduced the *Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2018*, later enacted as the *Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019*. This legislation aims to safeguard transgender individuals from discrimination and promote their rights across domains such as healthcare, education, employment, and housing (Bhattacharya et al., 2022). While these legal provisions mark progress, transgender individuals in India continue to face systemic challenges.

Persistent social stigma and discrimination contribute to exclusion, marginalization, and limited access to services. Many transgender persons report harassment, workplace bias, and social isolation (Blotner & Rajunov, 2018). Legal protections are often insufficient or poorly implemented, and trans individuals still encounter institutional violence, coercive medical requirements, and limited access to culturally competent healthcare (Schwend, 2020; Bhattacharya & Ghosh, 2020).

Mental health outcomes are particularly concerning, with high rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation (Virupaksha & Muralidhar, 2018; Drabish & Theeke, 2021). Family rejection, lack of support systems, and exposure to transphobia-related violence exacerbate emotional distress (Puckett et al., 2019; Klemmer et al., 2021). Education levels remain low among the transgender population, further limiting opportunities for social mobility (Chavada et al., 2021b).

Despite these barriers, transgender advocacy and representation are growing in India. Increased visibility in media, policy reforms, and community-based support efforts signal positive change. However, continued work is essential to ensure equal rights, access to gender-affirming care, and improved quality of life for transgender individuals. Strengthening mental health services and resilience-building interventions remains a key priority.

### EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Emotional self-regulation refers to the ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in ways that are socially appropriate, flexible, and constructive. It involves cognitive, behavioral, and physiological strategies to understand emotions, tolerate distress, and express feelings effectively (Rammensee et al., 2023). According to Self-Determination Theory, emotion regulation can be classified as integrative (emotion-aware), controlled (avoidant or suppressed), and amotivated (dysregulated) (Arbulu et al., 2023).

Key components of effective emotional regulation include emotional awareness, acceptance, cognitive reappraisal, affect labelling, distraction, and physiological modulation (Ford & Gross, 2018; Troy et al., 2017; Torre & Lieberman, 2018). Skills like reappraisal help reframe negative experiences, while techniques such as mindfulness, breathing exercises, and muscle relaxation aid in physiological control (Garnefski et al., 2001). Acceptance is particularly crucial in mindfulness-based approaches and emotional clarity enhances resilience and quality of life (Lindsay & Creswell, 2019; Panayiotou et al., 2021).

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Emotional regulation is closely tied to resilience—the ability to recover from adversity. Individuals with strong emotional control are better equipped to manage stress, adapt to change, and maintain psychological well-being (Cloitre et al., 2019). Conversely, emotional dysregulation may result in impulsivity, prolonged distress, and increased vulnerability to mental health issues.

For transgender individuals, emotional regulation is particularly critical. Experiences of gender dysphoria, stigma, discrimination, and social rejection can provoke intense emotions such as anger, anxiety, and despair. Difficulty in managing these emotions may lead to poor mental health outcomes. Emotional isolation and lack of support further exacerbate these challenges. However, those who develop effective emotion regulation strategies are better able to mitigate the psychological impacts of gender dysphoria and societal marginalization (Gruhn & Compas, 2020).

Despite structural barriers, many transgender individuals in India demonstrate resilience by building support networks and advocating for their rights. Strengthening emotion regulation skills through therapeutic interventions can significantly enhance their mental health, coping abilities, and overall life satisfaction.

### RESILIENCE

Resilience refers to the ability to adapt, recover, and grow in the face of adversity. It involves managing setbacks, pressure, and trauma through a combination of personal traits, social supports, and coping strategies (Harms et al., 2018). Resilience can be viewed both as a trait—enduring hardship without being broken—and as a dynamic process of bouncing back and thriving.

Key components of resilience include:

- Positive outlook: Optimism and a growth mindset enable individuals to reframe challenges as opportunities (Arampatzi et al., 2020; Frydenberg, 2017).
- Social support: A strong network of friends, family, or peers offers emotional and practical help, enhancing coping and reducing trauma impact (Ozbay et al., 2007).
- Effective coping: Strategies like mindfulness, problem-solving, and adaptive thinking regulate stress and emotional responses.
- Self-efficacy: Belief in one's capacity to overcome challenges fosters motivation and control, crucial for resilience (Bender & Ingram, 2018).
- Purpose in life: Having meaning and long-term goals contributes to perseverance during hardships (Karataş & Tagay, 2021).
- Adaptability: Resilient individuals can adjust their goals, behaviors, and thoughts in response to changing circumstances.

For transgender individuals, resilience is particularly vital due to systemic discrimination, violence, stigma, social exclusion, and lack of access to healthcare, education, and employment. These stressors often contribute to poor mental health, emotional distress, and reduced life satisfaction. Studies indicate transgender people tend to report lower resilience, highlighting the need for supportive interventions (Chavada et al., 2021b; Virupaksha & Muralidhar, 2018).

Building resilience in this population involves enhancing protective factors such as education, social inclusion, emotional regulation, and community support. Research shows that transgender and gender-diverse individuals cultivate resilience through self-acceptance,

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advocacy, connection with the community, and pride in their identity (Puckett et al., 2022). Teacher, peer, and family support also positively influence emotion regulation, which in turn strengthens resilience (Izaguirre et al., 2021b).

In essence, fostering resilience among transgender individuals empowers them to manage stress, maintain mental well-being, and navigate life with confidence despite societal challenges.

### LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction reflects how content individuals are with their lives as a whole, encompassing areas like health, work, relationships, and personal growth. It is different from happiness, which is often temporary and emotion-based. Life satisfaction is deeper and more stable, shaped by how individuals interpret their experiences, maintain meaningful relationships, and pursue purpose. It involves appreciating the present while working toward goals, and it requires resilience, optimism, and emotional regulation.

A sense of satisfaction often stems from meeting basic needs such as safety, belonging, and esteem, and feeling competent, connected, and autonomous. When people feel supported by their families and communities, and when they are able to make choices freely and pursue meaningful goals, they tend to experience higher satisfaction.

However, comparing oneself to others can influence this, especially in today's social media-driven world where such comparisons may impact self-esteem and feelings of contentment. For transgender people in India, life satisfaction is significantly impacted by social and structural challenges. Stigma, discrimination, and lack of access to basic rights such as education, employment, and healthcare greatly reduce their well-being. Many face bullying, harassment, rejection from family, and emotional distress, which contribute to depression, anxiety, and low self-worth. Lack of support, economic deprivation, and limited opportunities for self-growth further worsen their life quality.

Despite these challenges, resilience, community support, and access to gender-affirming care—like counselling and hormone therapy—can improve life satisfaction among transgender individuals. Transgender people who maintain contact with supportive family members or their community often report better well-being and greater satisfaction. Supportive environments that foster acceptance, understanding, and equal opportunities can significantly enhance their mental health and overall quality of life.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research highlights that individuals identifying as LGBT, particularly transgender people, face unique psychosocial challenges that impact their emotional regulation, mental health, and life satisfaction. Priyanka & Tilottama (2016) found that non-heterosexual individuals often rely on an internal locus of control and more negative cognitive emotion regulation strategies, with transgender persons exhibiting higher usage of these maladaptive strategies compared to other sexual minorities.

Resilience, a crucial factor for positive adjustment, has been shown to be influenced by emotional intelligence. Delhom et al. (2020) demonstrated that an emotional intelligence-based intervention enhanced resilience and life satisfaction in older adults, suggesting emotional clarity and regulation improve adaptive coping. Similarly, Liu et al. (2013) found that trait emotional intelligence positively impacts life satisfaction, mediated by resilience

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and affect balance. Ramos-Díaz et al. (2019) further confirmed that emotional intelligence and resilience are strongly related to life satisfaction among adolescents.

Several studies underline the direct connection between resilience and psychological well-being. Kalonia et al. (2022) noted a positive correlation between life satisfaction, resilience, and well-being in youth. Liang et al. (2022) revealed that mindfulness contributes to life satisfaction, particularly among individuals with higher self-control and resilience levels.

Among transgender populations, Gokilapriya & Annalakshmi (2021) identified key predictors of resilience and life satisfaction, including strengths such as wisdom, bravery, and social support. Pathak et al. (2020) emphasized how stigma, rejection, and violence negatively impact transgender individuals' mental health, often leading to loneliness and emotional distress.

Family and social support emerged as consistent protective factors. Simons et al. (2013) found parental support significantly reduced depression and improved life satisfaction in transgender youth. Similarly, Izaguirre et al. (2021) reported that emotion regulation and social support from family, friends, and teachers play crucial roles in fostering resilience and satisfaction.

Discrimination, harassment, and lack of acceptance reduce quality of life for transgender individuals. Pandey (2018) found that community leaders ("Gurus") experienced more harassment and poorer mental health than their followers ("Chellas"). Flynn & Bhambhani (2021) highlighted how internalised transphobia and non-disclosure of identity predict lower life satisfaction, influenced by psychological inflexibility.

Emotional intelligence also mediates the impact of family functioning on life satisfaction (Szczęśniak & Tułeczka, 2020), reinforcing that cohesive and communicative family environments foster emotional health. Moreover, social anxiety significantly predicts lower life satisfaction among transgender individuals (Guru and Chaila groups), as noted in recent Indian studies.

Life satisfaction is further shaped by social integration. Ori et al. (2020) found strong associations between internal communication satisfaction and life satisfaction in workplace settings. Amati et al. (2018) emphasized the role of friendship networks in supporting overall life quality.

Lastly, Liu & Mustanski (2012) revealed that LGBT youth face elevated risks of self-harm and suicidal ideation, with victimization, lack of social support, impulsivity, and hopelessness serving as key predictors. The study underlined that community belonging and character strengths like boldness may protect against these negative outcomes.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Hypotheses*

The following hypothesis were formulated as per the objectives of the present study:

- **H1:** There will be Significant relationship between Emotional Regulation and Life satisfaction in Transgender community.
- **H2:** There will be Significant relationship between Resilience and Life satisfaction in Transgender community.

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- **H3:** There will be Significant relationship between Resilience and Emotional regulation in Transgender community.
- **H4:** There will be significant Impact of emotional regulation on life satisfaction. **H5:** There will be significant Impact of Resilience on life satisfaction.

### *Objectives*

There are certain objectives of this study. Here, we want to achieve the following:

1. To study the influence of emotional regulation and resilience in transgender.
2. To study the influence of life satisfaction in transgender.
3. To study the most contributing variable towards life satisfaction.

### *Sample*

For the present study, a total of 85 Transgenders were included in the sample between the age range of 20-35 years. Purposive sampling is done to collect the samples. Three different questionnaires were asked to fill in order to measure their emotional regulation, resilience and life satisfaction.

### *Research Design*

Quantitative Research Design such as Correlation and Regression were used to conduct the study.

### *Statistical analysis*

For the present study, the individual was given three questionnaires to fill and the analysis was done via. MS Excel and SPSS. A correlational research design investigates the relationship between two variables (or more) without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them. In this method, researcher measures two variables and understands the statistical relationship between them with no influence from any extraneous variable. Linear Regression will help to establish cause and effect amongst chosen variables. The regression analysis attempts to answer which factors matters the most on the variable.

### *Variables*

#### **Independent Variable**

1. Resilience
2. Emotional Regulation

#### **Dependent Variable**

1. Life satisfaction.

#### **Controlled variable**

1. Age
2. transgender

### *Instruments*

In the present study, three psychological tools were used to assess parent-child relationship and self-esteem.

1. **EMOTION REGULATION QUESTIONNAIRE (ERQ) by Gross & John:** ERQ is a 10-item, self-report questionnaire developed by Gross, J.J., & John, O.P. in 2003 to assess individual differences in the habitual use of two emotion regulation strategies: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. On a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly concur), participants rate each

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item. It asks you some questions about your emotional life, in particular, how you control (that is, regulate and manage) your emotions. The questions involved two distinct aspects of your emotional life. One is your emotional experience, or what you feel like inside. The other is your emotional expression, or how you show your emotions in the way you talk, gesture, or behave. The ERQ is scored by adding the subscale responses. The cognitive reappraisal subscale consists of six items with a score range of 6 to 42, whereas the expressive suppression subscale consists of four items with a score range of 4 to 28. Higher scores on the cognitive reappraisal subscale indicate increased use of this emotion regulation strategy, whereas higher scores on the expressive suppression subscale indicate increased use of this emotion regulation strategy.

- 2. NICHOLSON McBRIDE RESILIENCE SCALE (NMRQ) by Mc Bride:** The NMRQ is based on the concept of resilience, which refers to the capacity to adapt, recover, and grow in the face of adversity or stress. The Nicholson McBride Resilience Scale is a 12-item, self-report questionnaire developed by Nicholson McBride in 2010 that has a Likert-type scale with items answered on a five-point scale. The scale measures a person's self-worth by measuring both, the positive and negative feelings about self.
- 3. SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE (SWLS) By Diener:** The SWLS consists of five statements that individuals respond to on a Likert-type scale, typically ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). These statements assess various aspects related to one's satisfaction with life, such as overall happiness, fulfillment, and the extent to which life goals and expectations have been met. Participants are instructed to indicate the extent to which each statement corresponds with their own feelings and experiences. To obtain the SWLS total score, the numerical values assigned to each response option for the five statements are summed. The total score can range from 5 to 35, with higher scores indicating higher levels of life satisfaction.

### *Procedure*

The study was carried out by obtaining consent from each participant. The participants were ensured that the results will be kept confidential and will not be misused. Preliminary instructions were provided on how to fill the questionnaire. After the consent was taken, the individual filled up the form. Once the questionnaire was filled up, each participant was given feedback.

### *Data Collection*

The research was conducted to understand the emotional regulation, resilience and life satisfaction among transgenders. The aim was to understand the relationship of variables amongst each other and how they impact satisfaction with life in them. To explore the topic 85 transgenders were identified and were asked to fill the questionnaire related to the same. Various hypotheses were made in order to elaborate the results and findings.

The study's median findings for emotional control, resilience and life satisfaction are provided in the table below along with standard deviations.

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**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	SD	N
Emotional Regulation	42.93	10.727	85
Resilience	39.24	10.316	85
Life Satisfaction	20.71	8.413	85

First hypothesis states that there will be significant relationship between Emotional Regulation and Resilience in Transgenders.

**Table 2: Pearson's Correlation between Emotional Regulation and Resilience**

S.No.	Variables	N	r	Significance
1	ER	85	0.358**	0.001
2	RES			

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

Findings of the study as shown in Table 1 depicts that there is significant correlation between the two mentioned variables, i.e. Emotional Regulation and resilience ( $r = 0.358$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Hence, hypothesis has been accepted. Study shows that there is positive correlation between the two variables.

Second hypothesis states that there will be significant relationship between Resilience and Life satisfaction in Transgenders.

**Table 3: Pearson's Correlation between Resilience and Life Satisfaction**

S.No.	Variables	N	r	Significance
1	RES	85	0.350**	0.001
2	LS			

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

Correlation analysis shows that there is significant correlation between the two mentioned variables, i.e. Resilience and Life Satisfaction ( $r = 0.350$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) as shown in Table 2 depicts. Hence, hypothesis has been accepted. Study show that there is positive correlation between the two variables.

Third hypothesis states that there will be significant relationship between Emotional Regulation and Life satisfaction in Transgenders.

**Table 4: Pearson's Correlation between Emotional Regulation and Life Satisfaction**

S.No.	Variables	N	r	Significance
1	ER	85	0.284**	0.008
2	LS			

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

Findings of the study as shown in Table 3 depicts that there is significant correlation between the two mentioned variables, i.e. Emotional Regulation and Life Satisfaction

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( $r = 0.284, p < 0.01$ ). Hence, hypothesis has been accepted. The two variables shows positive correlation between each other, i.e. if one increases other will increase too in positive direction.

**Table 5: Linear Regression with Resilience as predictor of Life Satisfaction**

Constant: Life satisfaction								
Predictor	B	S.E	$\beta$	t	r	R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.	F
<b>Resilience</b>	0.286	0.084	0.350	3.407	0.350	0.123	0.001	11.610

Table 4 shows stepwise linear regression analysis shows resilience as predictor of Life satisfaction. The best-fit model includes only Resilience dimension having impact on Life Satisfaction ( $F = 11.610, p < 0.01$ ). with R<sup>2</sup> of 0.123 demonstrating that the independent variable (Resilience) accounts for about 21.0% of the variance in the dependent variable (Life Satisfaction). Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there will be significant impact of resilience on life satisfaction has been accepted. It suggests that if resilience goes up by 1 unit, on average life satisfaction goes up by 0.123 units.

**Table 6: Linear Regression with Resilience as predictor of Life Satisfaction, case with income sources**

Constant: Life satisfaction								
Predictor	B	S.E	$\beta$	t	r	R <sup>2</sup>	Sig.	F
<b>Resilience</b>	0.286	0.093	0.459	3.965	0.459	0.210	0.000	15.722

Findings depict that individuals with a source of income increases the impact of resilience on life satisfaction ( $F = 15.722, P < 0.01$ ). Now with R<sup>2</sup> of 0.210 it suggests that 21% of variation in life satisfaction has been explained by Resilience. No difference in impact variations has been found in individuals with no income source.

**Table 7: Linear Regression with Emotional Regulation as predictor of Life Satisfaction**

Constant: Life satisfaction					
Predictor	B	S.E	$\beta$	t	r
<b>Emotional Regulation</b>	0.286	0.084	0.182	1.668	0.099

Table 6 findings shows that Emotional Regulation does not impact Life Satisfaction ( $r = 0.099, p > 0.01$ ). Therefore, there is insignificant impact of emotional regulation on life satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis stating there will be significant impact of Emotional Regulation on Life satisfaction in Transgenders, has been rejected.

The empirical findings of the study reveal a positive correlation among the three variables: emotional regulation, resilience, and life satisfaction. Additionally, the results show that resilience significantly impacts life satisfaction. The data also suggest that having a stable source of income strengthens the positive relationship between resilience and life satisfaction. These insights enhance our understanding of how employment and financial stability contribute to overall life satisfaction among transgender individuals. The study highlights that effective emotional regulation and the capacity to recover from adversity are closely linked to greater well-being and a higher quality of life.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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