

## Self- Esteem and Interpersonal Support Among Transgender. A Correlational Study

Pavitira M<sup>1\*</sup>, Manoj R<sup>2</sup>, Divya Devi<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The present study explored the relationship between self-esteem and interpersonal support among transgender. A quantitative correlational research design was adopted, and 100 transgender individuals were selected through purposive sampling technique. The tools used to collect the data were the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965 and Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL), developed by Sheldon Cohen, Harry M. Hoberman, Ronald Mermelstein, and Thomas Kamarck in 1983, along with demographic details. The data collected for this study were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The results indicated a significant association between self-esteem and interpersonal support among transgender.

**Keywords:** *Self- Esteem, Interpersonal Support and Transgender*

Transgender individuals are those who do not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. Transgender people are a very diverse group, and they often have to deal with the stigma attached to being transgender and the consequent lack of acceptance. Such experiences can severely affect the mental health of transgender individuals. Traditionally, people have not placed a lot of emphasis on issues such as self-esteem and social support, but there are indications that, as awareness of the transgender population has increased, much more focus has been placed on these elements.

Someone's level of self-esteem is based on how satisfied that person is with their life as well as how worthy they feel inside. Self-esteem is also very important from a psychological standpoint, as it serves as a protective factor when individuals experience difficulties or challenges in their lives. Interpersonal support consists of the emotional support and assistance that an individual receives from others (friends, family, society) when going through hard times. The provision of such support reduces stress and makes people feel accepted and valued by those who provide them with assistance. For many transgender individuals who often find themselves being rejected and experiencing various forms of social pressure, supportive relationships will assist in the development of self-esteem and psychological well-being. Therefore, this study will explore the relationship between self-esteem and interpersonal support among transgender individuals.

<sup>1</sup>Student, Dr. M.G.R Educational and Research Institute

<sup>2</sup>Head of the Department, Department of Psychology, Dr. M.G.R Educational and Research Institute

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Dr. M.G.R Educational and Research Institute

\*Corresponding Author

Received: March 25, 2026; Revision Received: April 22, 2026; Accepted: April 26, 2026

## Self- Esteem and Interpersonal Support Among Transgender. A Correlational Study

As transgender individuals frequently face discrimination, intolerance and alienation from society due to their chosen gender identity, there exists a need to explore self-esteem in regard to transgender individuals. Unpleasant experiences may greatly impact the transgender self-perception and self-worth. Individuals can experience many challenges at home, school, work and in receiving medical care today, which can give rise to feelings of guilt, feelings of isolation, and self-esteem.

Understanding self-esteem is essential to understanding how the psychological well-being of individuals is impacted by societal beliefs and experiences. Exploration of self-esteem is necessary in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the psychological well-being needs of transgender individuals.

Coping strategies and overall mental health are closely related to self-esteem. Low self-esteem has been shown to be associated with depression and other mental illness. There are numerous negative incidents that can occur in the lives of transgender individuals that could adversely impact their self-perception and sense of self-worth. Many transgender individuals face difficulties throughout their homes, educational settings, work environments and health care facilities on a daily basis, which may lead to feelings of guilt, loneliness, and/or low self-esteem. Understanding self-esteem has implications for aiding researchers' comprehension of what mental health entails for this population. Self-esteem is critical to understanding mental health from the perspective of the transgender population due to the significant connection between self-esteem and identity.

Self-esteem is also a significant factor in linking the two concepts of coping and psychological well-being. Low self-esteem is often related to mental health-related problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, and life dissatisfaction. Consequently, developing a society that supports and promotes the dignity and psychological well-being of transgender individuals will be accomplished through research conducted on self-esteem. Additionally, research on self-esteem can assist mental health professionals in identifying risk factors for transgender individuals and in creating intervention strategies specific to their psychological needs. The findings of self-esteem research will enable mental health professionals to identify those individuals who may require counselling, emotional support, or resilience-building activities to improve the mental health and quality of life of transgender individuals. Because transgender individuals face considerable minority stress and societal rejection, they are more likely to be affected by the impacts of low self-esteem. Research findings will assist in developing service delivery systems and community awareness initiatives that promote affirmation and acceptance of transgender individuals. The scientific data that will be gathered in these studies will be applicable to reducing stigma against, and improving public education about, the challenges faced by transgender individuals.

Self-esteem can be defined as a perspective about the individual, which is related to an individual's beliefs about their competencies, capabilities, interpersonal relationships, and anticipated outcomes (Wren, 2006). It is important to understand how self-esteem differs from the broader term 'self-concept' as these terms are often mistakenly used interchangeably. Self-image is the totality of cognitive thought each individual has about themselves; it is everything individuals think they know about themselves. This includes their name; ethnicity; preferences and aversions; beliefs and values; and physical characteristics (height and weight). By contrast, self-worth is the emotional reaction individuals experience as they think about and evaluate the different parts of themselves.

## Self- Esteem and Interpersonal Support Among Transgender. A Correlational Study

While self-esteem relates to self-concept, it is possible for an individual to have confidence in objectively positive attributes (such as academic ability, athletic ability, or performing arts ability), but at the same time, have difficulty in having self-acceptance. Conversely, it is possible for an individual to love themselves (having high self-worth) even though they do not have any objectively demonstrated evidence that supports their positive thoughts about themselves. Self-esteem is not the same as self-concept and has therefore also been influenced by self-concept. Research in social support of the transgender implementation serves to assist individuals in managing the challenges associated with social support.

### *Need for Study*

Transgender persons frequently suffer from stigma, bigotry, or societal rejection which has a detrimental impact on their emotional quantity. The individual's self-esteem is a significant contributor to one's ability to manage stress as well as one's ability to identify positively with oneself. For this reason, it is important to understand that through family, friends and community, the level of support one receives will significantly influence a transgender individual's self-esteem.

Interpersonal support inclusive of emotional support, social acceptance, and continued validation create the foundation for self-worth. When a transgender individual is supported adequately, this person typically has higher self-esteem and develops the confidence and resiliency needed to manage life. When there is an absence of support, however, the resulting impact includes a lowered self-esteem, social isolation, anxiety, and other forms of mental distress. Although this relationship between interpersonal support level and self-esteem has been evaluated in some settings, limited research has focused on transgender persons in India. The objective of this research is imperative to the development of effective counselling services, mental health programs, and community- based interventions.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Yoon Hee-Sang, Kim Gyung-Hee, and Kim Jiyung, (2011) published in the Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing (Vol. 41, No. 6, 2011), examined the effectiveness of an interpersonal relationship program on improving interpersonal relationships, self-esteem, and depression among nursing students. Using a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control-group pre-post design, the researchers involved 64 nursing students from three colleges in Seoul, with 31 assigned to the experimental group and 33 to the control group. The intervention consisted of a structured interpersonal relationship program administered over 10 weekly sessions, each lasting 90 minutes. Standardized tools the Interpersonal Relationship Change Scale, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale, and the CES-D for depression were used to measure outcomes. Data analysis through chi-square tests, t-tests, and paired t-tests revealed significant improvements in the experimental group: students who participated in the program showed enhanced interpersonal relationships, increased self-esteem, and reduced depression compared to those in the control group. These results highlight the meaningful impact of interpersonal relationship-based interventions on the psychological wellbeing of nursing students. The study represents a commendable contribution to nursing education by emphasizing the value of structured relational training in promoting mental health and student development.

Rebekka Weidmann, Thomas Ledermann, and Alexander Grob, (2016) explores how the Big Five personality traits and self-esteem work together to shape relationship satisfaction in couples. Published by Elsevier, the study used data from hundreds of heterosexual couples and applied advanced statistical models to understand how partners influence each other.

## Self- Esteem and Interpersonal Support Among Transgender. A Correlational Study

The researchers found that self-esteem plays a key mediating role personality traits such as agreeableness and, to a lesser extent, neuroticism influence how satisfied individuals feel in their relationships largely through their self-esteem. Longitudinal results showed that agreeable partners tend to create happier relationships over time, and interestingly, relationship satisfaction itself can shape personality such as increasing a partner's extraversion. The study highlights the dynamic interplay between personality, self-worth, and romantic bonds, showing that relationships are powerful spaces where people grow and influence one another. Congratulations to the authors for offering meaningful insights into how our traits and self-esteem weave together to build healthier, more fulfilling relationships.

Manon A. van Scheppingen, Jaap J. A. Denissen, Joanne M. Chung, Kristian Tambs, and Wiebke Bleidorn, (2018) explored how self-esteem and relationship satisfaction change for women as they transition into motherhood. Published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, the research analysed an exceptionally large group of more than 84,000 Norwegian mothers over multiple years to understand how becoming a parent shapes emotional wellbeing. The findings revealed a clear pattern: women's self-esteem tends to dip during pregnancy, rises again during the first six months after giving birth, and then slowly declines over the following years showing a consistent, predictable cycle across first-time and experienced mothers. Relationship satisfaction also changed, but more sharply for first-time mothers, whose satisfaction dropped significantly around childbirth, while mothers having their second or later child showed a more gradual decline. Importantly, changes in self-esteem and relationship satisfaction were moderately linked, showing that how women feel about themselves is closely connected to how they feel in their relationship during this major life transition. Congratulations to the researchers for offering valuable insights into the emotional journey of motherhood and how parenthood shapes personal and relational wellbeing.

Ruth Yasemin Erol and Ulrich Orth (2012) from the University of Basel, explores how self-esteem shapes relationship satisfaction for both partners in a romantic relationship. Published in the *Journal of Research in Personality*, the research analysed data from multiple samples of couples using the actor-partner interdependence model to understand how partners influence each other. The findings revealed that people with higher self-esteem tend to feel more satisfied in their relationships, and their self-esteem also boosts their partner's relationship satisfaction showing both actor and partner effects. These patterns held steady across gender, age, and relationship length. The study also discovered that secure attachment feeling safe, connected, and trusting in the relationship helps explain why self-esteem has such a powerful impact. Lower attachment-related anxiety and avoidance acted as key mediators, meaning that individuals with higher self-esteem tend to form more secure bonds, which in turn strengthens satisfaction for both partners. Congratulations to the researchers for offering deep insights into how self-esteem and attachment work together to build healthier, more fulfilling romantic relationships.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Problem Statement:***

A study on correlation between self-esteem and interpersonal support among transgender.

#### ***Aim:***

- To study the relationship between self-esteem and interpersonal support among transgender individuals.

## **Self- Esteem and Interpersonal Support Among Transgender. A Correlational Study**

- To examine the level of self-esteem and interpersonal support among transgender individuals.

### ***Objectives:***

1. To investigate to correlation between self-esteem and interpersonal support to determine the nature and strength of the relationship.
2. To access the level of self-esteem among transgender.
3. To evaluate the level of interpersonal support received from family friends and significant others among transgender individuals.

### ***Hypothesis:***

- **H0:** There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and interpersonal support among transgender.

### ***Variables:***

- Independent Variable – Interpersonal support
- Dependent Variable – self esteem

### ***Research design:***

The Present study is a focus on quantitative approach to explore how interpersonal support links to self-esteem among transgender. The approach, which was selected for its fit, allows for the clear tracking of items using countable data. A technique to test connections in quantifiable ways is through numbers. Such a method, which is regarded as trustworthy, bolsters conclusions derived from systematic observation.

### ***Sample size and sampling technique:***

The samples for this study are transgender women. A total of 100 transgender women were included in the study. The sample selection was carried out using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting participants based on their characteristics, knowledge, experiences, or other specific criteria relevant to the study.

### ***Inclusion Criteria***

- Transgender women aged 18 years and above
- Self-identified as transgender women
- Residing in the community at the time of the study
- Ability to understand and respond to the questionnaire language

### ***Exclusion Criteria***

- Individuals who do not identify as transgender women
- Transgender women below 18 years of age
- Those with severe cognitive impairment affecting comprehension
- Individuals currently experiencing acute psychiatric crisis or hospitalization

### ***Tools Description***

#### **Tool 1: Self-esteem scale by Roenberg.**

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, is a widely used instrument for measuring an individual's overall self-worth and self-acceptance. The scale demonstrates good reliability and validity, with studies reporting a Cronbach's alpha ranging from .77 to .88, indicating strong internal consistency across its 10 items. The scale also

## Self- Esteem and Interpersonal Support Among Transgender. A Correlational Study

shows good test–retest reliability, typically around .82 to .85, confirming the stability of the measure over time. Furthermore, the scale has strong construct and convergent validity, as it correlates positively with measures of self-confidence and life satisfaction and negatively with measures of Depression and Anxiety, supporting its effectiveness in assessing global self-esteem.

### Tool 2: Interpersonal support evaluation list

The Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL), developed by Sheldon Cohen, Harry M. Hoberman, Ronald Mermelstein, and Thomas Kamarck in 1983, is a widely used instrument for measuring perceived availability of social support from others. The scale demonstrates good reliability and validity, with studies reporting a Cronbach’s alpha ranging from .80 to .90, indicating strong internal consistency across its items. The scale also shows good test–retest reliability, typically ranging from .70 to .87, demonstrating stability of the measure over time. Furthermore, the scale has strong construct and convergent validity, as it is positively associated with perceived social support and psychological well-being and negatively related to psychological distress and Depression, supporting its effectiveness in assessing interpersonal support.

### Statistical analysis:

Statistical method used for this research is Pearson correlation coefficient to compare the means between two variables. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and the results were used for the interpretation of the study.

### Procedure

A sample of 100 transgender individuals were selected using purposive sampling. After establishing rapport and obtaining informed consent, confidentiality was assured. Participants completed a personal profile sheet along with standardized measures of self-esteem and interpersonal support. The collected data were scored and statistically analyzed to examine the relationship between self-esteem and interpersonal support.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results and interpretation of the analysis done to understand the relationship between self-esteem and interpersonal support.

*Table 1 Descriptive statistics showing the mean and standard deviation of relationship between self esteem and interpersonal support among transgender.*

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TOTAL	100	16	34	24.53	3.986
TOTAL	100	22	73	48.85	10.172
Valid N (listwise)	100				

The descriptive statistics for the sample (N =100) are presented in Table 1. For the first variable, the total scores ranged from 16 to 34, with a mean of 24.53 (SD = 3.99). The 95% confidence interval for the mean ranged from 23.74 to 25.32, and the median score was 24.00, indicating a relatively symmetrical distribution. The variance was 15.89, and the inter quartile range was 5, showing moderate variability in scores. The skewness (0.378) and kurtosis (-1.97) values suggest that the distribution was slightly positively skewed but generally close to normal.

## Self- Esteem and Interpersonal Support Among Transgender. A Correlational Study

For the second variable, total scores ranged from 22 to 73, with a mean of 48.85 (SD = 10.17). The 95% confidence interval for the mean ranged from 46.83 to 50.87, and the median was 47.50. The variance was 103.46, with an inter quartile range of 15, reflecting greater variability compared to the first variable. The distribution was approximately symmetric, as indicated by the skewness (-0.045) and kurtosis (-1.46) values.

These descriptive statistics indicate that while the first variable showed moderate scores clustered around the mean, these variables exhibited a wider spread of scores, suggesting greater individual differences within the sample.

**Table 2 Correlational analysis showing the relationship between self-esteem and interpersonal support among transgender.**

### Correlations

			A-TOTAL	B-TOTAL
Spearman's rho	A-TOTAL	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.862**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	100	100
	B-TOTAL	Correlation Coefficient	.826**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	100	100

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

The correlation between the total scores was examined using Spearman's rho due to the non-normal distribution of the data, as indicated by the Kolmogorov- Smirnov ( $p = .001$ ) and Shapiro-Wilk ( $p = .032$ ) tests. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between the total scores ( $\rho = 0.862$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that higher scores on one measure were associated with higher scores on the other. This suggests a significant and consistent relationship between the variables, reflecting that as one variable increases, the other tends to increase as well.

## DISCUSSION

The current research looked at how self-worth relates to social support for transgender people, and how assistance from others impacts the way transgender people see themselves and their psychological well-being. Transgender people experience numerous social barriers such as discrimination, stigma, rejection from their family, and have fewer resources available to develop social support systems. These difficulties can adversely impact the psychological well-being and self-perception of transgender people therefore understanding the role that social support plays in creating positive self-worth is very necessary to improving the mental health of transgender individuals.

The descriptive results show transgender people have varying degrees of esteem and social support so there must be a strong correlation between their past experiences and how supported they currently feel by society. This correlation is magnified in those individuals with lower levels of esteem related to social isolation and/or prejudice and/or being unaccepted by family or society. These individuals face societal impediments to their confidence and self-image.

However, participants in the study that identified greater social support in some form were more likely to experience higher levels of self-worth. This finding supports the claim that

## Self- Esteem and Interpersonal Support Among Transgender. A Correlational Study

positive social relationships are critical to providing the foundation for a positive sense of self and emotional stability for transgender individuals.

A major finding from this study is that there is a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and interpersonal support. The more supportive one's social network is, the greater the likelihood for that person to have high levels of self-esteem. Transgender people often rely on their interpersonal support systems to aid them in overcoming difficulties with society and increasing their level of confidence when interacting with others in a social setting.

Overall results of the research suggest that there is considerable importance to providing strong social and interpersonal support for transgender individuals as it relates to their self-esteem development. Potentially, by providing positive, healthy, and inclusive environments for transgender individuals, they can create a positive self-concept, improve their psychological well-being, and create more positive, healthy, social relationships.

### *Summary*

The present study investigated how self-esteem interacts with interpersonal support among transgender people. Transgender people face multiple psychological and social difficulties which include experiencing stigma and discrimination and being excluded from social circles and facing rejection from their families. These obstacles lead to negative effects which damage their self-confidence and mental health and ability to maintain healthy relationships. The research aimed to determine how self-esteem affects transgender people who receive their social support from others while studying the connections between psychological and social elements.

The researchers used a quantitative approach to conduct their investigation. The researchers collected data through standardized scales which assessed self-esteem and interpersonal support among transgender study participants. The study included transgender people who matched the research objectives because they represented the necessary demographic for the research. The researchers used SPSS software to perform statistical analysis which included descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank-order correlation and the Kruskal-Wallis test to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and interpersonal support.

The findings established a strong positive relationship between self-esteem and interpersonal support which demonstrated that transgender people with more interpersonal support experienced higher self-esteem levels. The results indicate that individuals who obtain more emotional and social backing from their family and friends and their community networks will experience higher levels of self-esteem and psychological health.

The study shows how important social support systems help transgender people improve their self-esteem by showing that they provide essential assistance for this process. Social acceptance and supportive relationships enable people from this group to develop better psychological health and stronger resilience. The research results establish a base for creating intervention strategies and public awareness programs and community support programs which will help transgender people build social connections and improve their self-worth. Future research will examine how different cultural and social and community contexts affect the connection between self-esteem and interpersonal support.

## CONCLUSION

The researchers of the current research project studied how self-esteem connects with interpersonal relationships of transgender people. Transgender individuals encounter multiple psychological and social difficulties because of discrimination, social stigmatization, rejection by their families, social isolation, and restricted opportunities for work and medical treatment. Their self-image and emotional state experience negative impacts from these situations. The study of interpersonal support systems needs to exist because it helps transgender people develop better mental health and social integration.

The study results demonstrated that transgender people with higher self-esteem levels experience better interpersonal support from others. People who receive more support from their family and friends and their community achieve higher self-esteem levels. Interpersonal support enables transgender people to develop positive self-belief through emotional support and social acceptance and motivational support. Social support enables individuals to build their self-confidence and self-esteem which boosts their overall mental health. Transgender people use interpersonal support systems to handle stress and discrimination and social rejection. People develop positive self-perception together with resilience when they experience social acceptance from others.

### *Limitations of the Study*

1. The research included 100 transgender female participants between the ages of 20 and 50 years. The results of this study will demonstrate limited applicability to all transgender individuals.
2. The researchers gathered data through self-report questionnaires which assessed self-esteem and interpersonal support. The participants responded in a way they believed was socially acceptable while hiding their true emotions. This practice will lead to incorrect results because it distorts actual study findings.
3. The study used a cross-sectional design which makes it difficult to demonstrate how self-esteem affects interpersonal relationships. The study only demonstrates how two variables are connected during a specific moment.
4. The study did not control for other factors that might impact self-esteem and interpersonal support which included family acceptance and experiences of discrimination and socioeconomic status and education level and community support.
5. The research study examined the connection between self-esteem and interpersonal support. The study investigated other psychological aspects that included mental health and coping mechanisms and resilience and life satisfaction among transgender individuals.

### *Future Scope of the Study*

1. Future research needs to study more transgender participants who come from various cultures and economic backgrounds because this will help research results become applicable to a wider population.
2. The research will conduct extended studies which will monitor how transgender people experience changes in their self-esteem and their ability to receive support from others throughout their lifetime.
3. Researchers will create studies which develop programs that help transgender people build self-esteem and create support networks, while they study how well these programs perform.

## Self- Esteem and Interpersonal Support Among Transgender. A Correlational Study

4. Future studies will investigate various additional factors, including family acceptance and social stigma and discrimination and psychological well-being and coping strategies and community support, to reveal what impacts transgender people.
5. Research that uses mixed methods, which include interviews and focus groups, delivers deeper knowledge about transgender people who face personal challenges and their methods of obtaining assistance.
6. Future research outcomes will help create social policies and community support programs and counselling services and awareness campaigns which will support the psychological health and social integration of transgender people.

## REFERENCES

- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton University Press.
- Self-Esteem and satisfaction with social relationships across time. (2021). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology: Personality Processes and Individual Differences*, 173–191.
- Weidmann, R., Ledermann, T., & Grob, A. (2016). *Big Five Traits, Self-Esteem and Relationship Satisfaction* (By University of Basel, Utah State University, & Swiss National Science Foundation).
- Yoon, H. S., Kim, G., & Kim, J. (2011). Effectiveness of an Interpersonal Relationship program on interpersonal relationships, self-esteem, and depression in nursing students. *Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing*, 41(6), 805.

### **Acknowledgment**

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Pavitira, M., Manoj, R. & Divya, D. (2026). Self- Esteem and Interpersonal Support Among Transgender. A Correlational Study. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 14(2), 390-399. DIP:18.01.039.20261402, DOI:10.25215/1402.039