

Examining the Relationship between Life Satisfaction and Depression among Transgender Individuals

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Abstract

Background: This study investigates the relationship between life satisfaction and depression among transgender individuals, with an emphasis on identifying key predictors of depression.

Objective: To determine the inverse relationship between life satisfaction and depression and to identify factors influencing these variables among transgender individuals.

Methods: A cross-sectional correlational design was employed with a sample of 120 transgender participants, encompassing various gender identities, age groups, education levels, and employment statuses. Life satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and depression was assessed using the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II). Data were collected through online surveys and in-person interviews. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the data.

Results: The study found a significant negative correlation between life satisfaction and depression ($r = -0.60$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher life satisfaction is associated with lower levels of depression. Regression analysis showed that life satisfaction, education level, and employment status are significant predictors of depression. Specifically, higher life satisfaction and education levels were associated with lower depression, while unemployment was linked to higher depression levels. Age did not significantly predict depression.

Conclusion: Enhancing life satisfaction, improving educational attainment, and providing stable employment opportunities are crucial for reducing depression among transgender individuals. The

findings highlight the need for targeted interventions and support programs tailored to the unique needs of this population.

Keywords: Transgender, Life Satisfaction, Depression, Education Level, Employment Status, Mental Health, Correlation Analysis, Regression Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Transgender refers to individuals whose gender identity or expression differs from their birth-assigned sex (1). Gender identity is a deeply felt sense of being male, female, or something else, and it may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. For many transgender people, this discrepancy leads to a desire to transition, which can involve social, legal, and medical changes to better align with their gender identity (2). The National Transgender Discrimination Study found that transgender people are three times more likely to be unemployed than the general population. Moreover, the study also revealed that 40% of those surveyed had attempted suicide (3). The study hypothesizes that participant narratives will show varied identity development, common themes of risk and resilience, and that victimization will increase depression, anxiety, gender dysphoria, and grit while decreasing flourishing, with social support and transgender community connectedness mediating psychological well-being and reducing help-seeking behaviors (4).

Transgender people often face unique challenges that can significantly affect their mental health, including social stigma, discrimination, and lack of access to healthcare. These challenges may contribute to lower life satisfaction and higher rates of depression compared to the general population (5, 6). Research shows that transgender individuals often face greater dissatisfaction with mental health services and life in general compared to non-sexual minorities (7).

The relationship between life satisfaction and depression is a critical area of study, particularly within marginalized communities such as transgender individuals. Understanding the relationship between life satisfaction and depression in transgender individuals is essential for developing targeted interventions that address their specific mental health needs. Previous research has shown that life satisfaction is inversely related to depression in the general population, but limited studies have focused on how this relationship manifests in transgender individuals (8).

This study is significant because it addresses a critical gap in mental health research concerning transgender individuals. The findings could inform healthcare providers, policymakers, and mental health professionals about the unique factors that influence the well-being of transgender people. Understanding these factors is crucial for creating inclusive mental health strategies that enhance life satisfaction and reduce depression among transgender individuals. Additionally, this research could contribute to broader social change by raising awareness about the mental health challenges faced by transgender people and advocating for their rights.

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between life satisfaction and depression among transgender individuals. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether there is a significant inverse relationship between life satisfaction and depression in this population, and to identify the key factors that contribute to both life satisfaction and depression among transgender individuals.

Methodology

This study utilizes a cross-sectional correlational design to explore the relationship between life satisfaction and depression among transgender individuals. The sample includes 120 transgender participants with diverse gender identities, age groups ranging from 18 to 45+, varying levels of education, and different employment statuses. Demographic information such as gender identity, age, education level, and employment status is also collected.

Life satisfaction is measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), a validated instrument that assesses general life satisfaction through five items rated on a Likert scale (9).

Depression is evaluated using the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), a widely recognized self-report measure of depressive symptoms (10).

Data is gathered through both online surveys and in-person interviews, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize participant demographics, while Pearson's correlation analysis examines the relationship between life satisfaction and depression. Multiple regression analysis is conducted to predict depression levels based on life

satisfaction, age, education level, and employment status. The study adheres to ethical guidelines, with institutional review board approval, and ensures the confidentiality and anonymity of participants throughout the research process.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n=120).

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender Identity		
- Male-to-Female (MTF)	60	50%
- Female-to-Male (FTM)	40	33.3%
- Non-binary/Other	20	16.7%
Age Group		
- 18-24 years	50	41.7%
- 25-34 years	40	33.3%
- 35-44 years	20	16.7%
- 45+ years	10	8.3%
Education Level		
- No formal education	20	16.7%
- High school	50	41.7%
- College/University	40	33.3%
- Graduate/Post-graduate	10	8.3%
Employment Status		
- Employed	30	25%
- Unemployed	60	50%
- Student	30	25%

The table presents the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Of the participants, 50% (60 individuals) identify as Male-to-Female (MTF), 33.3% (40 individuals) as Female-to-

Male (FTM), and 16.7% (20 individuals) as Non-binary/Other. The majority of participants fall within the 18-24 years age group, comprising 41.7% (50 individuals), followed by 33.3% (40 individuals) in the 25-34 years range, 16.7% (20 individuals) aged 35-44 years, and 8.3% (10 individuals) aged 45 and above. In terms of education, 41.7% (50 individuals) have a high school education, 33.3% (40 individuals) have completed college or university, 16.7% (20 individuals) have no formal education, and 8.3% (10 individuals) have a graduate or post-graduate degree. Regarding employment status, 50% (60 individuals) are unemployed, 25% (30 individuals) are employed, and 25% (30 individuals) are students.

Table 2: Correlation between Life Satisfaction and Depression (n=120).

Variable	Life Satisfaction	Depression
Life Satisfaction	1.00	-0.60**
Depression	-0.60**	1.00

The table shows the correlation between life satisfaction and depression among the study participants. The correlation coefficient between life satisfaction and depression is **-0.60**, which indicates a strong negative relationship between the two variables. This means that as life satisfaction increases, depression tends to decrease, and vice versa.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Predicting Depression from Life Satisfaction, Age, Education Level, and Employment Status (n=120).

Predictor Variable	B (Unstandardized Coefficient)	SE (Standard Error)	β (Standardized Coefficient)	t	p-value
Constant	25.00	4.50	--	5.56	<0.001
Life Satisfaction	-0.45	0.08	-0.60	-5.63	<0.001
Age	-0.10	0.12	-0.08	-0.83	0.410
Education Level	-1.20	0.45	-0.25	-2.67	0.008
Employment Status	-2.50	0.70	-0.35	-3.57	0.001

The regression analysis results indicate that life satisfaction, education level, and employment status are significant predictors of depression. The constant value of 25.00, with a significant p-value of less than 0.001, suggests a baseline level of depression when all predictors are held constant. Life satisfaction has an unstandardized coefficient of -0.45 and a standardized coefficient of -0.60, indicating that as life satisfaction increases, depression decreases significantly, making it the strongest predictor in this model. Education level also shows a significant negative impact on depression, with a decrease of 1.20 units for higher education levels (p-value 0.008) and a standardized coefficient of -0.25. Employment status similarly predicts a decrease in depression by 2.50 units (p-value 0.001) and has a standardized coefficient of -0.35. Age, however, does not significantly predict depression, as indicated by its non-significant p-value of 0.410 and a small negative unstandardized coefficient of -0.10.

DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of participants in this study reveal a diverse sample in terms of gender identity, age, education level, and employment status. Specifically, 50% of participants identified as Male-to-Female (MTF), 33.3% as Female-to-Male (FTM), and 16.7% as Non-binary or Other. This distribution reflects the broader spectrum of transgender identities, which is consistent with research indicating that transgender individuals often vary significantly in terms of their gender identity and expression (11). The age distribution shows that the majority of participants were between 18-24 years (41.7%), followed by 25-34 years (33.3%), suggesting that younger transgender individuals may be more likely to participate in such studies. Previous research also supports the higher prevalence of younger age groups among transgender study participants, likely due to increased visibility and willingness to engage in research as societal acceptance grows (12).

The education levels in this study reveal that 41.7% had a high school education, and 33.3% had completed college or university, which aligns with existing studies that suggest educational attainment among transgender individuals is often comparable to or slightly lower than the general population due to discrimination and systemic barriers (13). Employment status shows that 50%

of participants were unemployed, highlighting the significant economic challenges faced by transgender individuals, a trend consistently reported in other research (14).

The negative correlation of -0.60 between life satisfaction and depression found in this study is significant, indicating that as life satisfaction decreases, depression tends to increase. This finding is consistent with the minority stress model, which posits that stigma, prejudice, and discrimination create a hostile and stressful social environment that leads to increased mental health problems, including depression, among transgender individuals (15). Previous research has also documented the inverse relationship between life satisfaction and depression in transgender populations, emphasizing the critical role of social support and acceptance in mitigating depressive symptoms (16).

The regression analysis further supports these findings by demonstrating that life satisfaction, education level, and employment status are significant predictors of depression. The strong negative association between life satisfaction and depression, with a standardized coefficient of -0.60 , underscores the importance of enhancing life satisfaction to reduce depressive symptoms among transgender individuals. This is consistent with findings from other studies that have identified life satisfaction as a crucial factor in mental health outcomes for transgender people (17). Education level also emerged as a significant predictor, with higher education levels associated with lower depression, aligning with research suggesting that educational attainment can provide transgender individuals with better economic opportunities and social support networks, thereby reducing depression (18).

Employment status also significantly predicted depression, with unemployed individuals more likely to experience higher levels of depression. This finding aligns with previous studies that have shown the profound impact of unemployment on mental health, particularly within the transgender community, where job discrimination and economic instability are pervasive (19). Conversely, age did not significantly predict depression in this study, suggesting that while age-related factors might influence mental health, other variables such as life satisfaction, education, and employment status play a more critical role in determining depression levels among transgender individuals (20).

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical role of life satisfaction, education level, and employment status in influencing depression among transgender individuals. A strong negative correlation between life satisfaction and depression highlights the need for improving life satisfaction to reduce depressive symptoms. Education and employment also emerge as significant predictors, with higher educational attainment and stable employment linked to lower depression levels. Although age did not significantly predict depression, these findings emphasize the importance of targeted interventions to enhance life satisfaction and provide better educational and employment opportunities to support the mental health of transgender individuals.

Conclusion and recommendation of this study

This study has several limitations. The sample may not fully represent the diversity of transgender individuals, as it is limited to specific regions and demographics. The cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality between life satisfaction, education, employment, and depression. Additionally, self-reported measures of depression and life satisfaction could be subject to response bias. To address these limitations, future research should include a more diverse sample across different regions and demographic groups to enhance generalizability. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into causal relationships between the variables. Utilizing a combination of self-report and objective measures might improve the accuracy of data on mental health outcomes. Furthermore, incorporating qualitative approaches could offer a deeper understanding of the experiences and needs of transgender individuals.

Recommendations include enhancing life satisfaction through targeted support programs, increasing access to education, and providing stable employment opportunities. Tailoring mental health services to address the specific needs of transgender individuals can also help improve their overall well-being.

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