



Congruence, Stress Adaptation and General Health of Transgender

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Transgender, Stress Adaptation, Congruence, General Health</p>	<p>Background: Transgender congruence quantifies the extent to which transgender people feel authentic and comfortable with their external appearance and presence, and how much they accept their identity over their socially prescribed identity. Transgender congruence affects their stress adaptation and general health.</p>
<p>Corresponding Author: Laiba Qayyum, ^aRiphah Institute of Clinical & Professional Psychology, Lahore, ^bDepartment of Psychiatry & Behavioural Sciences, Mayo Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9880-0199 Email: laiba90012@gmail.com</p>	<p>Objective: This study is designed to deduce transgender individuals' ability to stress adaptation, congruence and its impact on their health. To see the differences in Stress Adaptation and General Health regarding different work professions</p> <p>Methods: A Qualitative cross-sectional correlational research design was used. A sample of 150 transgender individuals from Lahore was selected. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and analysed using SPSS 27. Descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses were conducted to find the correlation and prediction.</p> <p>Results: Results indicate that congruence, stress adaptation and general health are positive and significantly correlated with each other.</p> <p>Conclusion: It was concluded that when transgender individuals have more congruence, they have stronger adaptive skills for managing their stress (resilience and thriving) and above-average general health.</p>

Introduction

Gender is a term used to describe how men/boys, women/girls, and related individuals behave, feel, and perceive themselves. The biological aspect of gender is consistent across different cultures, but the social aspect of gender varies. Transgender is not a fabrication of their "assigned gender", but the state of their "identity" (USI LGBT Campaign Transgender Campaign, 2007).

Intersex is the medical term that is used for transgender. Intersex people have sex characteristics such as chromosomes, gonads, or genitals that "do not match standard binary concepts of male or female bodies," according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Free & Equal Campaign Fact Sheet, 2015). Examples of such variations include, but are not limited to, physical genital ambiguity and combinations of chromosomal genotype and sexual phenotype, beyond the standard XY-male and XX-female (John & Ehrhardt, 1972).

The term transgender broadly refers to people whose gender expression, identity, and/or behaviour departs from what is expected of their biological sex according to social norms. This category includes transgender male, transgender female, male-to-female (MTF), and female-to-male transgender identities (FTM). It also includes cross-dressers (people who dress as the opposite gender), gender queer people (people who believe they belong to both or neither genders), and transsexuals (Athreya, 2012).

In Pakistan, transgender people live their lives in maladjustment and loneliness. In addition, they are also in need of health and psycho/psychotherapy. Unstable and jobless teens with an interest in transgender societies can easily make money. Second, due to a lack of knowledge of the psychological treatment of the problem, most downstream families have their children taken shelter in the so-called shelter transgender community.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, which protects transgender individuals, was passed by Parliament in 2018. In a landmark judgment in 2009, the Supreme Court of Pakistan ruled in favour of transgender persons' civil rights, and subsequent court rulings have both upheld and further expanded these rights. In early March 2018, the Pakistani Senate passed the bill overwhelmingly. The National Assembly passed the law on May 8, 2018. Acting President Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani granted his approval on May 18, 2018, and the law took effect.

Transfeminism believes in building one's sexual identity based on the feeling that being transgender is authentic, comfortable, and honest when it comes to life. To others, under the restrictions of societal and cultural norms (Koyama, 2003). This honesty and authentic self-expression is referred to as congruence (Rogers, 1959). "Transgender congruence" is defined as "the degree to which transgender people feel genuinely authentic and at ease in their external appearance/presence and accept their true identity rather than the one given by society."

Arold (1960) defined stress as all conditions that interfere with normal functioning. Stress is basically a physiological, behavioural, and cognitive response to events assessed as a threat. Stress management can be defined as an intervention designed to mitigate the effects of stress in the workplace. These interventions may focus on increasing the individual's ability to cope with stress. A relaxation response is a state of deep relaxation that alters both physical and emotional responses to stress. If it triggers a resting reaction, the metabolism eases later, and the comfortable breathing of your muscles becomes the latest blood pressure. Stress is everyday for everyone. Stress is your reaction to changes that require adjustment or response. It is essential to remember that stress depends on how we react to stressful events, allowing us to learn how to manage and control it. The human body is designed to feel and respond to stress, as it keeps us alert and ready to avoid risks. The meaning of health has evolved; for example, the former definition of health from a biological perspective focused on the body's functional abilities. Health is

considered a state of normal functioning that can be occasionally interrupted due to illness. Good health can be defined as "a physical, biological, psychological, and social condition characterised by anatomical, physiological, and psychological integrity, as well as the ability to execute personally valued family, workplace, and community tasks." "Stress tolerance" is a term used to describe a person's ability to cope. The World Health Organisation (WHO) then announced in 1948 that "health is not physical, mental, and social well-being, but" physical, mental, and social well-being, which was a significant departure from the prior definition. He proposed a higher-level definition that is connected to the concept of happiness. Absence of illness and weakness. "Some people welcomed the definition as innovative, but criticised it as ambiguous and unable to measure overly extensively. For a long time, it has been regarded as an unrealistic ideal, and most discussions of health have returned to the practicality of biomedical models.

Transgender people often face abuse for personal gender inadequacy. An investigation was conducted by Williams, Mann, and David (2017). The outcomes found that exposure to daily disgrace and personalised transphobia are related to more mental health issues, while perceived social favour from parents remarkably diminished the power of the relation between daily dishonour and mental well-being.

This investigation by Jaclyn, Sari and John (2015) found that transgender individuals in the United States experience extensive prejudice, disgrace, brutality, and other types of disgrace. The practical social biological framework is used to explain that transgender stigma works at various levels (i.e. individual, interpersonal, operational level) to affect health. Stigma precaution and managing interventions hold promise for reducing disgrace and its contrary health-associated results in transgender people.

Cohen, Underwood, and Gottlieb (2000) studied the unique aspect of social support in relation to stress and found a negative relationship between social support and individuals' health. In a study by Smith and Tooley (2012), it was found that resilience was associated with health-related measures (less negative affect and more positive affect), both alone and when controlling for the other variables. In Study 2, resilience was associated with all four health-related measures (less adverse effect, more positive effect, fewer physical symptoms, and less perceived stress), both alone and when controlling for the other variables.

According to Diamond, Pardo, and Butterworth (2011), this gender paradigm does not include all transgender people. The authors proposed a flexible model of gender identity development, providing evidence that some individuals experience a linear growth in their gender identities. In contrast, others undergo identity development more recursively and fluidly.

Methods

A correlational research design was used in this research. The sample consisted of 150 transgender individuals (aged 18-61 years) from Lahore. A purposive sampling strategy was used to collect the data. Inclusion criteria for this study included transgender individuals of the intersex category who are not male or female by birth. Participants were carefully selected, and it was ensured that transgender individuals of any other category were excluded from the sample. Exclusion criteria for this study were that people who were not transgender by birth, and those below 18 years of age, were not included.

Operational definitions are (1) the degree to which transgender people feel genuinely authentic and comfortable in their exterior appearance/presence, and accept their true identity over the socially assigned one, which is known as transgender congruence. "The amount to which an individual or group can fulfil objectives and meet wants, as well as alter or cope with the environment," according to health. To recruit transgender participants, we sent an email to

transgender communities and LGBT individuals throughout Pakistan, describing our study of Stress Adaptation, Congruence, and General Health among transgender individuals. However, unfortunately, it was in vain. We then visited transgender communities and their educational institutions to collect data. First of all, they were frightened when they saw us and shut their doors, talking to us through the windows and telling us to leave. That was a tough time for us to earn their trust. We made them comfortable through rapport building and introduced ourselves as philanthropists, never causing them any harm. We then described our research, and they welcomed us with pleasure.

To detect duplication and inaccurate data, we used a variety of methodologies. To avoid duplicate surveys, we first checked the date and time of submission; no duplicate surveys were found. Second, we randomly distributed 10 items across the survey, each of which required participants to select a specific response option (e.g., to ensure they were paying attention). Three participants were eliminated because they failed to pass the validity check questions. After collecting the data, all the data were entered into SPSS, and the results were analysed.

Results

Through the demographic information, we found that 60% transgender individuals are illiterate, 20% studied till primary, 13% till middle, 6.6% till matric, 7.3% till intermediate, while 2.6% have graduated. By profession 66% were dancers, 33% were beggars, and 4% were beauticians. Twenty per cent of transgender people have their own houses, 45% live in rented houses, 18% live in sheltered housing, and 16% live in community residences.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of The Sample (N=150)

Demographic details of transgender	
Variable	M (SD)
Participant age	29.64(9.84)
Variable	f(%)
Education	
Illiterate	90 (60%)
Primary	20 (13%)
Middle	15 (10%)
Matriculation	10 (6.6%)
Intermediate	11 (7.3%)
Graduation	04 (2.6%)
Profession	
Professional dancer	100(66%)
Beggar	45(30%)
Beautician	05(4%)
Residence	
Own house	30(20%)
Rented house	68(45%)
Shelter home	28(18%)
Community residence	24(16%)

Figure 1: Graphical representation of means and standard deviation of congruence, stress adaptation, and general health.

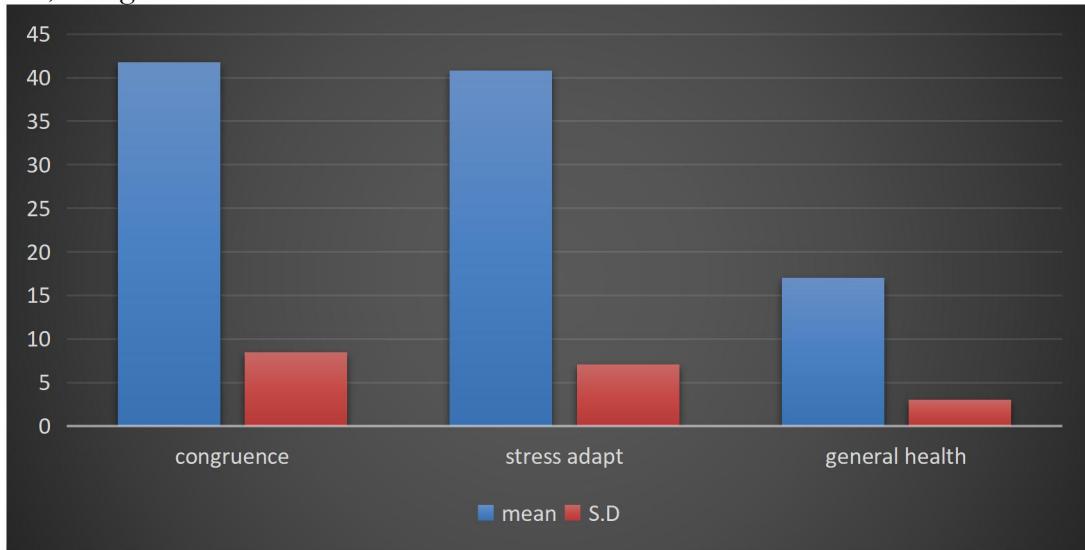


Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Analysis of Congruence, Stress Adaptation, and General Health (N=150)

Measure	k	α	$M (SD)$	Range (Min-Max)	
1. Congruence	12	.63	41.8(8.5)	12-48	26-89
2. Stress Adaptation	12	.69	40.8(7.1)	12-60	28-86
3. General Health	12	.90	17(302)	12-60	9-26

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were computed to determine the internal consistency of the scale items in this study. Various academics have proposed various criteria for interpreting Cronbach's alpha, with Nunnaly (1978) claiming that an alpha value of .70 or higher is required for good dependability. Tuckman (1970) assumes the value .50 (and above) lies in the acceptable range, while George and Mallory (1993) tag the alpha value lower than 0.50 as unacceptable. The closer the alpha coefficients are to 1, the more they are considered internally reliable, with higher values indicating higher internal consistency. Considering these criteria, the alpha reliabilities of the scales and their subscales used in our research fall within the acceptable range. The results also indicate that stress adaptation has a positive and significant relationship with resilience, thriving, congruence, appearance, and acceptance, while also showing a significant relationship with GHQ, GHQ positive, and GHQ negative (Table 3). Resilience has a positive and significant relationship with thriving, congruence, appearance, acceptance, and GHQ positive, while a significant relationship with GHQ and GHQ negative. Thriving has a positive and significant relationship with congruence, appearance, acceptance, and GHQ positive, while a non-significant relationship with GHQ and GHQ negative. Congruence has a positive and significant relationship with acceptance and appearance, while it has a significant relationship with GHQ, GHQ positive, and GHQ negative. Appearance has a positive and significant correlation with acceptance, and GHQ positive, while a significant relationship with GHQ and

GHQ negative. Acceptance has a significant relationship with GHQ positive, while a non-significant relationship with GHQ and GHQ negative. GHQ has a significant positive relationship with GHQ positive and GHQ negative. GHQ positive has a significantly positive relationship with GHQ negative.

Table 3

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation among demographic sheet variables, Stress Adaptation (SA), Congruence and General Health(GHQ) and subscales.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	M	SD
SA	--	.90**	.76**	.49**	.49**	.25**	- .08	.04	-.11	40.9	3.2
Resilience	--	--	.41**	.42**	.42**	.21**	- .11	.24*	-.13	20.1	4.9
Thriving	--	--	--	.41**	.41**	.22**	- .01	.85***	-.07	20.8	3.2
Congruence	--	--	--	--	.87**	.67**	- .12	-.02	-.11	41.9	7.0
Appearance	--	--	--	--	--	.23**	- .09	.35*	-.11	30.9	6.4
Acceptance	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.1	.24*	-.02	11.0	4.1
GHQ	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.34**	.74**	17	1.7
GHQ positive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	.37**	9.8	2.3
GHQ negative	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	7.1	3.2

**P<0.01, *P<0.05

congruence is a negative and non-significant predictor of general health, both positive and negative. Appearance is a positive and significant predictor of GHQ positive and a significant predictor of GHQ negative. Acceptance is a significant predictor of GHQ positive and GHQ negative. Stress adaptation does not appear to be a significant predictor of overall health. As shown in the table, stress adaptation is not a significant predictor of general health. Resilience is a significant negative predictor of GHQ positive and not a significant predictor of GHQ negative. Thriving is not a significant predictor of a positive GHQ, but it is a significant predictor of a negative GHQ (Table 4).

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis for Predictors of General Health (N=150).

Variable	GHQ positive			GHQ negative		
	β	B	ΔR^2	β	B	ΔR^2
Congruence	-.07	-.02	.02	-.06	-.25	.02
Appearance	.26*	.00		-.29*	-.04	
Acceptance	.53*	-.07		-.27*	.00	
Stress Adaptation	.09	.03		-.09	-.04	
Resilience	-.21*	-.00		-.08	-.05	
Thriving	.12	.09		-.21*	-.01	

Discussion

The present study aimed to find out the literacy rate among transgender individuals. The results for the Regression analysis show that 60% transgender people are illiterate, 20% were primary pass, 13% were middle pass, 6.6% were matric pass, 7.3% were intermediate pass, while 2.6% were graduated. According to a previous study, 79 per cent of the eunuch population in Pakistan is ignorant. It is relatively typical for eunuchs to drop out of school. Gender discrimination, sexual and verbal harassment, instructor abuse, and a lack of funds are the leading causes. As a result, they become members of a eunuch community and engage in begging, dancing, and prostitution. Another aim of this study was to investigate the profession of transgender individuals. The results show that, by profession, 66% were dancers, 33% were beggars, and 4% were beauticians.

According to prior research, 55 per cent of the population supports giving transgender people a special quota in educational institutions and offices. In comparison, 25 per cent oppose the proposal (20 per cent gave no opinion). A vast proportion of the examined population (60%) did not want transsexual people to be their friends; only 14 per cent did. Older adults (51 years and older) are more likely (21%) than younger persons (13%) to be acquaintances of theirs.

Results of this research show that if transgender individuals have more congruence, they have more resilience and thriving. A prior study found that psychological well-being is strongly related to parental acceptance and rejection. Maternal rejection predicted all facets of psychological well-being in a stepwise regression analysis. The denial of paternal acceptance was erased. Transgender congruence was not associated with well-being, possibly because the majority of this category is related to appearance congruence. Another study found that persons with more comprehensive gender congruence had higher body-gender congruence and body image satisfaction, as well as reduced depression and anxiety, as compared to those who received less or no treatment at all.

Conclusion

It is established that transgender individuals with more congruence have better stress adaptation (resilience and flourishing) and overall health. They will not have stress adaptation (resilience and flourishing) if they are not congruent, and their overall health will suffer as a result.

Implications

This research also aids society in comprehending the significance of transgender people in society. It might be helpful in a social setting to comprehend transgender people's emotional feelings and to give them equal rights. Further research should look into providing basic health, educational, and other fundamental facilities for transgender people to raise their literacy rate.

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