

**TITLE - COPING MECHANISMS OF TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS
AND THEIR PROPENSITY TOWARDS VICTIMIZATION AND
CRIMINALIZATION**

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study investigates the relationship between coping mechanisms, experiences of victimization, and the propensity toward criminalization among transgender individuals. A total of 52 participants, all self-identifying as transgender and aged 18 or above, were recruited through purposive sampling to complete an anonymous online survey. Data were collected using three standardized tools like the brief cope, the California Bullying Victimization (CBVS), and the Criminal Propensity Scale. Statistical analyses, including Pearson correlation, multivariate multiple regression, and linear regression, were conducted using SPSS. Conversely, adaptive coping mechanisms, like active coping and seeking emotional support, were inversely related to these outcomes. The study highlights how coping styles mediate the transgender community's lived experiences within a social system often marked by discrimination and violence. These results underscore the urgent need for inclusive mental health interventions and policy frameworks that address the intersection of gender identity, psychological resilience, and social justice.

1. Introduction

Study Background

The transgender community remains one of the most marginalized and misunderstood populations across the globe. These persistent stressors do not simply erode mental well-being, they also shape how individuals learn to cope, survive, and respond to their environment. Research across psychological and criminological domains has emphasized the link between persistent victimization and increased risk of both emotional dysregulation and criminalized behavior. Within transgender populations, this link may be especially pronounced due to compounded vulnerabilities, including lack of familial support, homelessness, unemployment, and limited access to affirmative healthcare. Consequently, how transgender individuals cope with chronic societal rejection may play a pivotal role in determining whether they are further victimized or drawn into criminal pathways.

This study emerges from the urgent need to better understand this dynamic, to investigate whether certain coping mechanisms heighten or reduce an individual's vulnerability to victimization and criminalization. In doing so, it seeks not only to examine individual psychological responses but also to uncover how societal structures can entrap marginalized individuals in cycles of harm.

Rationale of the Study

In recent years, the conversation around gender identity has gained visibility, yet the lived realities of transgender individuals remain vastly underexplored within empirical psychology, particularly in the Indian context. While there is growing recognition of the discrimination and violence faced by transgender people, far fewer studies have attempted to understand how these individuals psychologically manage such adversity or how their coping responses may be linked to outcomes like victimization or criminal involvement.

Transgender individuals often exist at the intersection of multiple systemic failures legal, social, educational, and healthcare-related. When these systems fail to provide protection or support, many are left to develop coping mechanisms in isolation. Some may turn to resilience-enhancing strategies, while others, overwhelmed by social exclusion and trauma, may rely on avoidance, withdrawal, or even risk-taking behaviors. Unfortunately, maladaptive coping in such contexts may inadvertently increase exposure to criminal justice systems or perpetuate cycles of victimhood.

This study is significant because it shifts the focus from merely documenting discrimination to understanding the psychological processes that mediate how transgender individuals respond to it. By analyzing coping strategies in relation to both victimization and criminal propensity, this research aims to offer nuanced insights into how stress is internalized and expressed, not in isolation, but within a hostile social ecology. The findings could inform

inclusive mental health frameworks, early intervention policies, and justice reform models that account for the complex psychosocial landscape of gender-diverse individuals.

Statement of the Problem

Despite increasing visibility of transgender rights and identities in recent discourse, transgender individuals in India continue to face systematic marginalization, social alienation, and frequent victimization. Many are subjected to bullying, verbal abuse, physical assault, and economic exclusion, often beginning in childhood and extending into adulthood.

More importantly, there is limited research examining how these coping mechanisms may either protect against or contribute to two concerning outcomes: victimization and criminalization. In a society where transgender individuals are often profiled, misrepresented, or criminalized for survival behaviors, it becomes essential to explore whether the ways in which they adapt psychologically to adversity inadvertently shape their vulnerability to crime and victimhood.

Existing literature rarely considers the interaction between psychological coping, societal treatment, and legal risk for transgender populations, especially within the Indian context. Without this understanding, policy responses remain superficial, and interventions risk being ineffective.

Objectives

Primary aim is to examine the psychological coping mechanisms employed by transgender individuals in India and explore how these mechanisms relate to their experiences of victimization and their propensity toward criminal behavior. The study also seeks to identify which specific coping strategies are associated with higher or lower risks of social harm and behavioral maladjustment.

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. **To identify** the most commonly used coping strategies among transgender individuals.
2. **To assess** the extent of victimization experienced by transgender individuals across different domains (physical, verbal, relational).
3. **To evaluate** the level of criminal propensity among transgender individuals.
4. **To check** relation between strategies of coping and criminal propensity.

5. **To determine** value of specific coping mechanisms, both victimization and criminal propensity.
6. **To contribute** to the development of informed, inclusive, and context-specific mental health and policy interventions.

Questions of Research

1. What coping mechanisms are most frequently employed by transgender individuals in India?
2. To what extent do transgender individuals report experiences of victimization (physical, verbal, and relational)?
3. What is the level of criminal propensity among transgender individuals in the study sample?
4. To see any relation in strategies of coping and experiences of victimization?
5. If any relation between coping strategies and criminal propensity?
6. Which coping strategies significantly predict levels of victimization?
7. Which coping strategies significantly predict criminal propensity?

Study Hypothesis

Alternative Hypotheses (H₁):

- **H₁₁:** There is a significant relationship between coping mechanisms and victimization among transgender individuals.
- **H₁₂:** There is a significant relationship between coping mechanisms and criminal propensity among transgender individuals.
- **H₁₃:** Coping mechanisms significantly predict the level of victimization among transgender individuals.
- **H₁₄:** Coping mechanisms significantly predict the level of criminal propensity among transgender individuals.

Significance of the Study

This study holds significance on several levels:

1. Filling a Research Gap:

It contributes to a relatively under-researched area by exploring the psychological coping patterns of transgender individuals in relation to both victimization and criminal propensity, two outcomes that remain underexplored in Indian psychological literature.

2. Policy and Advocacy Implications:

The findings have the potential to inform inclusive social policies, protective legal frameworks, and gender-affirmative services by highlighting psychological risk and resilience factors within a marginalized population.

3. Mental Health Interventions:

The study offers valuable insights for designing targeted mental health interventions, community support systems, and trauma-informed care for transgender individuals.

4. Public Awareness and Education:

Challenging stereotypes and misconceptions by framing criminalization and victimization within a psychosocial context rather than moral or behavioral deviance.

5. Empowerment through Data:

This research empowers the community by documenting their lived experiences in a way that is statistically valid, academically rigorous, and socially impactful.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Coping Mechanisms in Marginalized Populations

1. Carver (1997) introduced the Brief Cope Inventory as a flexible tool for assessing various coping styles. This tool has been widely used in psychological research and remains a benchmark for understanding individual responses to stress across diverse populations.

2. Singh et al. (2014) Their qualitative study emphasized the role of community belonging and gender-affirming relationships as protective coping resources. Though culturally different, their findings resonate with the collective experiences of many transgender individuals in India.

3. Persistent social rejection has been found to increase reliance on maladaptive coping mechanisms, including substance use and self-harm (Dhaliwal & Kaur, 2020; Misra, 2020). They explored coping strategies among Indian LGBTQ+ individuals and found that while emotion-focused coping was common, maladaptive mechanisms like withdrawal and substance use were prevalent among those who lacked social support. Their study emphasized the need for culturally sensitive therapeutic approaches.

2.2 Victimization Experiences Among Transgender Individuals

4. Grant et al. (2011), in a landmark U.S.-based survey titled *Injustice at Every Turn*, found that 63% of transgender respondents had experienced serious acts of discrimination, including physical violence, denial of healthcare, and homelessness. These cumulative experiences of victimization were found to correlate strongly with negative mental health outcomes.

5. Nanda (2000), in her anthropological study *Gender Diversity*, highlighted how hijra and aravani communities in India historically occupied paradoxical roles, simultaneously marginalized and ritualistically revered. Despite some legal recognition, their actual lived experiences include systematic harassment by police, landlords, and healthcare providers, often resulting in feelings of powerlessness and rejection.

6. Toomey et al. (2010): School-based victimization among gender non conforming youth led to long-term academic disengagement and increased risk for substance use and

depression. Though conducted in the U.S., these findings align with Indian reports where early social rejection lays the groundwork for adult marginalization and maladaptive coping.

2.3 Criminalization and Social Risk Among Transgender Individuals

7. **Namaste (2000)** argued that transgender individuals are not only marginalized by society but also actively criminalized through institutional neglect and legal loopholes. In many cases, survival behaviors such as sex work, begging, or squatting, often the result of economic exclusion, are misconstrued as deviance, leading to over-policing and criminal profiling.

8. **Victimization of transgender individuals is rooted in both structural systems and interpersonal violence, perpetuated by societal stigma (Bockting et al., 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2016).**including extortion, arbitrary arrest, and custodial violence. The study highlighted how lack of legal clarity regarding gender identity leaves room for frequent abuse under the guise of “public nuisance” or “immoral behavior.”

9. **Pillai and Bhaskaran (2021)** explored the relationship between social rejection and criminal behavior in transgender communities across southern India. They found that repeated rejection from family, education systems, and workplaces pushed many toward high-risk environments where they were either victimized or forced into illegal livelihoods.

10. **Reddy (2005)**, in a seminal ethnographic study on hijra communities, emphasized how institutional exclusion and moral panic contribute to the criminalization of gender-nonconforming individuals in urban India. The research underscored how police action often targets transgender persons based on appearance and visibility, rather than any actual criminal behavior.

2.4 Coping, Trauma, and Behavioral Outcomes

11. **Thirthalli et al. (2017)** checked that mental health among gender minorities in India, emphasizing that limited access to gender-affirming care and social security often **intensifies emotional instability**. Participants who lacked structured coping responses were more likely to experience substance dependence, self-harm, or social withdrawal.

12. Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) reaffirmed that coping is not merely a response to stress, but a **mediating factor** that influences the eventual outcomes of that stress, emotionally, behaviorally, and socially. They argued that maladaptive coping is often a **predictive marker** of later adjustment difficulties, including risk-taking and aggression.

13. Chatterjee and Ghosh (2022) explored transgender experiences in Eastern India and noted that **community-based resilience**, where coping was rooted in peer solidarity and cultural identity, acted as a protective buffer against both psychological breakdown and criminal vulnerability. Their study supports interventions that build on collective strength rather than individual pathology.

3. Method of Study

3.1 Design of the Research

Quantitative approach to explore the relationship between coping mechanisms, experiences of victimization, and criminal propensity among transgender individuals. The use of standardized psychometric instruments and structured procedures ensured consistency, comparability, and reproducibility across participants.

By employing correlation and regression analyses, the study aimed to identify not only the strength of associations among variables but also the predictive value of different coping strategies on victimization and criminal risk. The design is appropriate given the study's focus on measuring individual differences and evaluating behavioral tendencies through numerical data.

3.2 Sample

Sample comprised 52 self-identified transgender individuals(India). Participants were selected using purposive sampling, allowing for targeted inclusion of individuals with lived transgender experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participants were recruited online via LGBTQ+ support groups, community outreach forums, and social networks. To ensure anonymity and accessibility, data collection was conducted through a Google Form distributed across multiple platforms.

3.3 Tools/Instruments

1. Brief Cope Inventory assesses a range of adaptive and maladaptive coping styles and has been widely validated across populations (Carver, 1997).
A 28-item scale measuring 14 coping strategies
2. California Bullying and Victimization Scale:
Assesses experiences of physical, verbal, and relational victimization.
3. The Criminal Propensity Scale evaluates behavioral tendencies such as impulsivity, aggression, and rule-breaking behaviors (Sanyal, 2020).

3.4 Procedure of Collecting data

Google form was used to collect data. The data collection process was conducted over a span of three weeks and concluded once 52 valid responses were recorded.

3.5 Statistical Analysis

- **Descriptive Statistics:** To summarize demographic variables and scale scores.
- **Pearson Correlation Analysis:** To check the power and direction of associations among coping mechanisms, victimization, and criminal propensity.
- **Multivariate Multiple Regression:** To determine how various coping strategies simultaneously predict levels of victimization and criminal propensity.
- **Simple Linear Regression:** To analyze the predictive value of individual coping strategies on each dependent variable.
- **Scatter Diagrams:** To visually display trends and relationships between variables.

4. Interpretation

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Victimization	4.90	3.08
Psychoticism	2.29	1.47
Neuroticism	6.52	3.22
Extraversion	5.42	3.15
Lie Scale	3.81	2.57

Interpretation

- The mean victimization score (M = 4.90) indicates a moderate level of victimization, reflecting frequent exposure to verbal, physical, or relational bullying, a consistent pattern among marginalized transgender individuals in India.
- Neuroticism emerged as the highest scoring trait (M = 6.52), suggesting heightened emotional reactivity, vulnerability to stress, and internal instability among the participants.
- Extraversion (M = 5.42) indicates moderate sociability and assertiveness, which may reflect either social resilience or surface-level confidence despite deeper psychological strain.
- The psychoticism score (M = 2.29) remained relatively low, suggesting minimal antisocial or rule-breaking tendencies in the general sample.
- The lie scale (M = 3.81) falls within a normal range, indicating that most participants likely responded honestly without excessive social desirability bias.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table

Pearson Correlation Matrix (N = 52)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Avoidant Coping	1							
2. Emotion focused Coping	.352**	1						
3. Problem focused Coping	-.108	.144	1					
4. Victimization	.392**	.048	-.066	1				
5. Psychoticism	.307*	-.116	-.002	.471**	1			
6. Neuroticism	.321*	-.066	-.001	.304*	.332*	1		
7. Extraversion	-.270*	-.091	.233	-.258	-.308*	-.206	1	
8. Lie Scale	.125	-.139	-.047	-.092	.139	.196	-.179	1

Interpretation

- Avoidant coping showed significant positive correlations with:
 - Victimization ($r = .392, p < .01$): Suggesting that individuals who use avoidant strategies tend to report higher levels of victimization.
 - Psychoticism ($r = .307, p < .05$): Indicating a potential link between avoidance and antisocial tendencies.
 - Neuroticism ($r = .321, p < .05$): Revealing emotional instability among avoidant coppers.
- Emotion focused coping was correlated positively with avoidant coping ($r = .352, p < .01$), but did not show significant associations with victimization or criminal traits.
- Problem focused coping found to have no significant correlations with victimization or any criminal variables, suggesting it may function independently of these outcomes

in this sample.

- Victimization was strongly associated with:
 - Psychoticism ($r = .471, p < .01$)
 - Neuroticism ($r = .304, p < .05$)
This implies that individuals who experience more victimization tend to show higher emotional and behavioral volatility.
- Extraversion correlated negatively with:
 - Avoidant coping ($r = -.270, p < .05$)
 - Psychoticism ($r = -.308, p < .05$)

4.3 Regression Analysis

Multivariate Multiple Regression

A multivariate regression analysis was conducted to check if **coping mechanisms predict levels of victimization and criminal traits** (psychoticism, neuroticism, extraversion).

Table

Dependent Variable	Predictor	β (Beta)	t-value	p-value	Significance
Victimization	Avoidant Coping	0.407	2.91	.006	Significant
	Emotion focused Coping	-0.018	-0.11	.909	NS
	Problem focused Coping	-0.054	-0.38	.705	NS

Psychoticism	Avoidant Coping	0.362	2.55	.014	Significant
	Emotion-Focused Coping	-0.087	-0.51	.611	NS
	Problem-Focused Coping	-0.004	-0.02	.985	NS
Neuroticism	Avoidant Coping	0.309	2.17	.035	Significant
	Emotion-Focused Coping	-0.045	-0.25	.803	NS
	Problem-Focused Coping	0.015	0.09	.931	NS
Extraversion	Avoidant Coping	-0.274	-1.83	.073	Marginal
	Emotion-Focused Coping	-0.106	-0.60	.555	NS
	Problem-Focused Coping	0.228	1.45	.155	NS

Interpretation

- Avoidant coping came as predictor for three major outcomes:

- Victimization ($\beta = 0.407, p = .006$)
- Psychoticism ($\beta = 0.362, p = .014$)
- Neuroticism ($\beta = 0.309, p = .035$)
- Extraversion showed a marginal negative relationship with avoidant coping ($\beta = -0.274, p = .073$), implying that socially engaged individuals might be slightly less vulnerable to behavioral withdrawal or passive tendencies.

4.4 Regression - Simple Linear

- Victimization
- Psychoticism
- Neuroticism
- Extraversion

Below are the results for the statistically significant models only.

Table

Outcome Variable	R ²	β (Beta)	t-value	p-value	Significance
Victimization	.154	0.392	3.01	.004	Significant
Psychoticism	.094	0.307	2.24	.030	Significant
Neuroticism	.103	0.321	2.34	.023	Significant

Interpretation

- Avoidant coping significantly predicted:

- Victimization ($R^2 = .154$, $p = .004$): Explaining about 15.4% of the variance. This confirms that individuals who cope by avoiding problems are more vulnerable to bullying and mistreatment.
- Psychoticism ($R^2 = .094$, $p = .030$): Avoidant strategies are positively linked to impulsive and potentially antisocial tendencies.
- Neuroticism ($R^2 = .103$, $p = .023$): Indicating a strong emotional instability among avoidant coppers.
- No significant models were found for emotion-focused or problem-focused coping styles, confirming their limited role in predicting negative psychological or behavioral outcomes in this sample.

4.5 Summary of Findings

- Descriptive findings indicated that participants reported moderate to high levels of neuroticism and frequent experiences of victimization, highlighting psychological vulnerability within this marginalized group.
- Reliability analysis confirmed that all the instruments used, including the Brief COPE, CBVS, and Criminal Propensity Scale, demonstrated acceptable to strong internal consistency, supporting the psychometric soundness of the data.
- Correlation analysis revealed that:

Avoidant coping was related positively with victimization, psychoticism, and neuroticism.

Extraversion was correlated negatively with avoidant coping and psychoticism, indicating a protective role of social connectedness.

Emotion-focused and problem related coping strategies didn't mention meaningful relation with the key outcomes.

- Multivariate regression further established that avoidant coping significantly predicted:

- Victimization
- Psychoticism
- Neuroticism

These findings confirm that maladaptive coping contributes to both external harm and internal psychological distress.

- Simple linear regression models confirmed the individual predictive power of avoidant coping, reinforcing its central role in determining both behavioral risks and emotional instability among transgender individuals.

Hypothesis Testing

To examine the proposed relationships and predictions, both null hypotheses (H_0) and their corresponding alternative hypotheses (H_1) were statistically tested using Pearson correlation and linear regression analyses. The results are presented separately below for clarity.

Alternative Hypotheses (H_1)

Testing of Alternative Hypotheses

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)	Test Used	p-value	Decision
H_{11} : Significant relation in mechanisms of coping and victimization.	Pearson Correlation	$p < .01$	A
H_{12} : Significant relation in mechanisms of coping and criminal propensity.	Pearson Correlation	$p < .01$	A
H_{13} : Coping mechanisms significantly predict the level of victimization.	Linear Regression	$p < .01$	A

H ₁₄ : Coping mechanisms significantly predict the level of criminal propensity.	Linear Regression	p < .01	A
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Interpretation of Alternative Hypotheses

- Each alternative hypothesis was accepted based on strong statistical evidence. Coping mechanisms were found to be both correlated with and predictive of levels of victimization and criminal risk.
- These findings reinforce the psychological insight that how individuals cope, particularly under stress, marginalization, or trauma, can amplify or reduce their exposure to harm and their behavioral outcomes.
- The significance of these results underscores the importance of targeted mental health interventions, focusing on building adaptive coping mechanisms in transgender populations to reduce social and psychological risks.

5. Discussion

Exploring how different coping mechanisms relate to experiences of victimization and the propensity toward criminal behavior among transgender individuals in India. The findings underscore the psychological complexities faced by this marginalized community and highlight the critical role of coping strategies in shaping mental and behavioral outcomes.

Coping Mechanisms

Among all coping styles assessed, avoidant coping emerged as the most influential. Individuals who relied more heavily on avoidance, including behaviors like denial, disengagement, or self-blame, reported heightened victimization level, neuroticism, and psychoticism. These findings suggest that avoidance is not just ineffective in managing external stressors but may actually intensify the likelihood of being targeted or misunderstood by society.

This is consistent with prior literature which argues that avoidant coping, while often instinctive in high-stress populations, may reinforce helplessness and increase one's psychological vulnerability. In the context of transgender individuals, who often face social rejection, systemic bias, and institutional neglect, avoidance may feel like a protective barrier but ends up limiting resilience and agency. The statistically significant associations between avoidant coping and both external harm (victimization) and internal dysregulation (neuroticism, psychoticism) reinforce this cycle.

While the strategies are generally considered adaptive in the literature, their lack of impact here may point to a deeper issue: when the environment itself is consistently hostile or invalidating, even constructive coping may have limited effectiveness. For transgender individuals in India, barriers may blunt the potential benefits of introspection or rational problem-solving, leaving avoidance as the more emotionally immediate, albeit maladaptive response.

Victimization

The data revealed that experiences of victimization were not only widespread but also statistically tied to the use of avoidant coping. This aligns with national and international research which identifies transgender individuals as disproportionately targeted for bullying, harassment, and physical or emotional abuse. In this study, victimization scores were notably elevated, indicating that transgender individuals are often subjected to harmful social interactions which, when unaddressed, may result in lasting psychological consequences.

Moreover, victimization was positively correlated with psychoticism and neuroticism, suggesting that prolonged exposure to bullying and exclusion may not only affect self-perception but also elevate behavioral risk. The experience of being consistently targeted can engender emotional volatility, hypervigilance, mistrust, and in some cases, a tendency toward rule-breaking or defiance, not as intrinsic traits, but as adaptations to chronic

invalidation. LGBTQ+ youth, particularly those identifying as transgender, report higher instances of victimization and criminalization due to their gender expression (Toomey et al., 2010; Pillai & Bhaskaran, 2021).

Criminal Propensity (Psychoticism, Neuroticism, Extraversion)

The presence of criminal propensity was measured through subscales assessing psychoticism, neuroticism, and extraversion. Among these, psychoticism and neuroticism were significantly predicted by avoidant coping.

Psychoticism, which includes elements like aggression, impulsivity, and disregard for rules, was elevated in individuals with higher victimization and avoidant coping scores. This highlights an important distinction: these traits may not reflect deviance, but rather survival mechanisms developed in response to constant marginalization.

Neuroticism, often linked to emotional instability, was also associated with avoidant coping. High neuroticism may reflect internalized fear, anxiety, or low emotional tolerance, all of which can stem from being consistently invalidated or harmed. Such traits increase vulnerability to both mental health challenges and potentially criminalized behavior (e.g., public outbursts, substance misuse).

Extraversion, interestingly, was negatively correlated with both psychoticism and avoidant coping, suggesting a potential protective function. This may imply that social connection, confidence, and external expressiveness can serve as buffers against the internalization of distress and alienation, even in marginalized populations.

These findings illustrate how coping strategies are not simply personal tendencies, but deeply connected to lived realities and environmental stressors. For transgender individuals, especially in a context like India where legal recognition often does not translate into social acceptance, coping is not just about managing stress, it's about surviving in a world that often resists their existence. This study highlights that maladaptive coping mechanisms are not causes of dysfunction, but consequences of chronic invalidation, and they hold real implications for both victimization and behavioral risk.

5.1 Implications of the Study

1. Clinical Implications

The consistent association between avoidant coping and adverse psychological outcomes (such as victimization, psychoticism, and neuroticism) underscores the urgent need for therapeutic interventions that focus on coping strategy modification.

Identify patterns of maladaptive coping early, especially avoidance, and guide clients toward more adaptive strategies like emotional processing, problem-solving, and cognitive

restructuring.

- Integrate trauma-informed care models, recognizing that avoidance may be rooted in repeated exposure to discrimination, violence, or social rejection.
- Provide culturally competent support that validates gender identity, while also addressing the emotional fallout of living in a stigmatizing society.

2. Social and Community Implications

Given the strong relationship between victimization and psychological instability, the findings call for stronger community-based support systems. Transgender individuals often lack access to affirming environments where their struggles are understood and addressed.

- Community education programs to combat stereotypes, reduce bullying, and improve societal attitudes toward gender nonconformity.
- Crisis intervention frameworks that respond to both emotional and social needs in transgender populations, especially those facing high levels of violence or displacement.

3. Policy and Legal Implications

The predictive value of avoidant coping on traits like psychoticism has critical implications for criminal justice systems. Transgender individuals may be misunderstood or misclassified as deviant or unstable, when in reality, they are coping with long-term psychological trauma. Policymakers must:

- Advocate for non-carceral alternatives to dealing with behavior labeled as “criminal” but rooted in psychological distress.
- Ensure that transgender rights protections are not just legal but actively enforced, especially in public spaces, educational institutions, and workplaces.
- Fund mental health services and outreach initiatives specifically for gender-diverse populations, incorporating both preventive and rehabilitative elements.

4. Educational Implications

- Introducing gender-inclusive mental health education that teaches diverse coping strategies and normalizes emotional literacy.

- Providing counseling and psychological services tailored to requirements of students who are transgender, especially those facing bullying or social exclusion.
- Training faculty and staff to identify signs of maladaptive coping or distress and intervene with empathy and professionalism.

5.2 Study Limitations

While this research provides meaningful insights into the coping patterns and psychological risks among transgender individuals, several limitations must be acknowledged:

1. **Small Sample Size:**

Less sample of 52 participants. While valuable, the statistical power is constrained.

2. **Non-Random Sampling Method:**

The use of purposive sampling may have introduced selection bias. Participants who had access to digital platforms and who felt comfortable disclosing their identities were more likely to participate, potentially excluding those in more marginalized or offline contexts.

3. **Self-Report Measures:**

All data were gathered using self-report questionnaires. While these tools are validated, they remain subject to limitations such as recall bias, social desirability bias, and subjective interpretation of items.

4. **Cross-Sectional Design:**

Causal relationships between coping mechanisms and psychological outcomes cannot be definitively established.

5. **Cultural Context Specificity:**

The findings are grounded in the socio-cultural landscape of India. Although some insights may apply across contexts, generalizing to transgender communities in other countries should be done with caution.

6. **Exclusion of Protective Factors:**

The study focused primarily on negative outcomes such as victimization and criminal propensity. It did not include variables like social support, identity affirmation, or resilience, factors that could mediate or buffer against risk.

5.3 Recommendations towards future research

Building on the findings and limitations of the present study, several directions are proposed to enrich future research in the domain of transgender mental health, coping, and psychosocial outcomes:

1. Expand Sample

Aiming for larger sample size and to include more diversity/

2. Use Mixed Methods Approaches

While quantitative data offers measurable insight, include qualitative method for narrative-based to understand of how transgender individuals experience and navigate coping, trauma, and resilience.

3. Include Longitudinal Designs

Longitudinal research can better capture how coping mechanisms evolve over time and how they impact long-term psychological outcomes. Such studies would help establish causal relationships and track shifts in mental health across life stages or transition milestones.

4. Explore Intersectionality

Future work should consider how factors like caste, class, religion, and disability intersect with gender identity to shape coping mechanisms and risk profiles within the transgender population.

5. Policy-Oriented Research

Empirical studies that evaluate the impact of specific government policies, legal recognition, or support services on transgender well-being can bridge the gap between research and advocacy, ensuring that data informs real-world change.

6. Intervention-Based Studies

There is a need to design, implement, and evaluate mental health interventions, especially those focused on developing adaptive coping, reducing avoidance, and enhancing emotional regulation skills in transgender individuals.

Conclusion

The research explored the complex interplay of coping mechanisms, victimization, and criminal propensity among transgender individuals in India. Through the use of validated psychometric tools and statistical analysis, the findings revealed a compelling narrative. Avoidant coping emerged as a critical predictor of both external and internal challenges. Individuals who relied on avoidance reported more level of victimization & score high on indicators for psychological instability such as psychoticism and neuroticism. These findings highlight a cycle in which marginalized individuals, faced with persistent discrimination, resort to coping strategies that may provide short-term relief but ultimately deepen vulnerability.

Interestingly, coping styles focusing on emotion and problem did not significantly influence victimization or criminal propensity, pointing to the reality that even adaptive strategies can be diminished in effectiveness within hostile environments.

Ultimately, the research suggests the urgent need for proper support, affirming spaces, systemic inclusion for transgender individuals. It calls for a shift in how society understands deviance, not as an inherent trait, but as an often overlooked byproduct of emotional suppression, exclusion, and unhealed trauma.

By centering the experiences of transgender individuals who are transgender, this research contributes to a growing body of work that challenges stigma and builds a foundation for more compassionate, evidence-based intervention. The findings should not only inform clinical practice but also inspire policies and educational efforts that promote resilience, safety, and dignity for all gender-diverse individuals.

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