TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS: A STUDY OF THE INDIVIDUAL EGO STATE

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: In the realm of transactional analysis, people are perceived as possessing three fundamental ego states, which function as mental frameworks that shape their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. **Methodology:** The researcher conducted a descriptive research study aimed at assessing the ego state of individuals engaged in various activities within health care institutions. **Instrument:** A standardized checklist comprising a total of 10 items, which included both positive and negative responses, was utilized for data collection through Google circulation. **Result:** A total of 78 participants provided their responses over the course of one month. Among these participants, 14 were male, while 64 were female. **Conclusion:** Despite the constraints of this study, the results align with Transactional Analysis (TA) theory and could influence the application of TA therapy through the Parent-Adult-Child (PAC) model.

Key Words: Transactional analysis, ego state, Nurturing Parent, Critical Parent, adult, Child Ego State.

INTRODUCTION: Transactional Analysis is a psychological framework for understanding personality and communication, established by Eric Berne during the 1950s. This theory emphasizes the analysis of transactions, or interactions, that occur between individuals in various social contexts. TA offers valuable insights into the mechanisms of communication, the reasons behind individual behaviours, and strategies for enhancing interpersonal relationships through deliberate analysis[1].

 Comprehending Ego State: In the realm of transactional analysis, people are perceived as possessing three fundamental ego states, which function as mental frameworks that shape their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours[2].
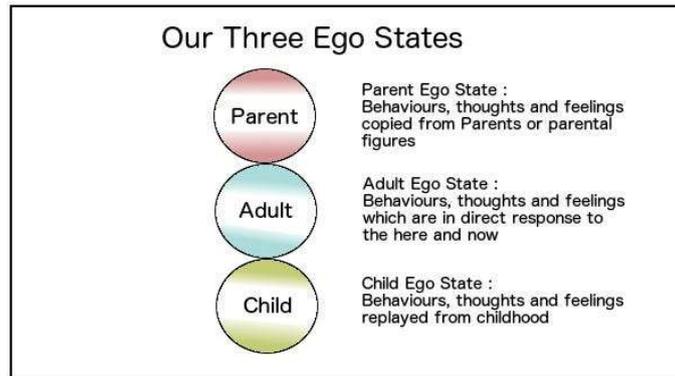
Parent Ego State: This state reflects the influence of parental and authority figures, including learned behaviours, values, and attitudes.

Nurturing Parent: This aspect of the Parent ego state includes the behaviours and beliefs instilled by caregivers, such as parents and grandparents, who provided love and support. It is characterized by compassion, empathy, and a desire to protect and nurture ourselves and others.

The **Critical Parent ego** state includes attitudes and behaviours learned from critical or demanding authority figures. It manifests as an internal voice that constantly judges our actions, leading to self-doubt, guilt, and perfectionism[3].

The **adult ego state** represents a person's ability for rational, objective, and logical thinking, free from emotional bias[4].

Child Ego State: This particular ego state includes the emotions, feelings, and behaviours that were acquired and experienced throughout childhood[5].

TA encourages analysing personal interactions by identifying the ego states involved in communication, helping to understand when it is effective or falters[6].

Avoiding Adverse Transactions: Adverse transactions often stem from conflicting ego states, leading to misunderstandings. Transactional Analysis (TA) advises individuals to choose constructive ego states for better communication[7].

Complementary transactions happen when both parties share the same ego state, leading to effective communication. Encouraging these interactions can enhance understanding and strengthen relationships[8].

Crossed Transactions occur when one person's ego state conflicts with another's, leading to miscommunication. Transactional Analysis provides strategies to improve these interactions[9].

17 techniques of transactional analysis help individuals explore their ego states, interactions, and behaviours. Here are key techniques used in therapy or group training[10]:

1. **Ego state** analysis involves identifying and understanding the three ego states: parent, adult, and child. By recognizing which state is active in themselves and their patients, healthcare professionals can tailor their communication and interventions more effectively[11].

2. **Transactional diagramming** provides visual representations of interactions between individuals, clarifying communication patterns. This approach is useful for illustrating relationship dynamics to patients and analysing team interactions[12].

3. **Examining positive and negative strokes** (recognition units) reveals key aspects of a patient's interpersonal dynamics and self-esteem[12].

4. **Life script analysis** involves uncovering and examining the life scripts that shape a person's actions and choices, particularly useful for addressing ongoing health behaviours or coping strategies[13].

5. **Contracting:** Establishing clear agreements on therapy goals is crucial for setting expectations, boosting motivation, and enhancing patient engagement and adherence to treatment[14].

6. **Redefining**: Helping patients reframe challenging situations can lead to new perspectives and solutions, which is crucial for managing chronic illnesses and health-related anxiety[15].

7. **Decontamination**: This procedure assists patients in differentiating between their parental or child-related contaminations and their adult condition, which facilitates more logical decision-making regarding health and treatment alternatives[16].

8. **Reparenting:** This method is especially effective in tackling profound emotional challenges, offering nurturing experiences that facilitate the healing of early childhood traumas which could influence present health behaviors[17].

9. **Permission and protection Granting:** psychological permission for change, along with providing protection (support), can significantly aid patients in surmounting obstacles to enhancing their health[18].

10. **Game evaluation:** Recognizing and tackling the psychological games that patients engage in can foster more genuine interactions and improve health results[19].

11. **Racket analysis:** in Transactional Analysis (TA) describes a cycle of behaviors, thoughts, and emotions stemming from early experiences and script beliefs. This leads to 'racket feelings'—distorted emotions that replace genuine ones. By examining these patterns, individuals can understand and change their unhelpful emotional responses to health issues[20].

12. **Life position analysis:** Assessing a patient's core beliefs about themselves and others (e.g., I'm okay, you're okay) provides valuable insights into their views on healthcare and relationships[21].

13. **Redecision therapy**: This approach assists individuals in forming new choices to substitute restrictive decisions made during childhood that could be influencing their health behaviours[22].

14. **Confrontation**: Effectively addressing inconsistencies or self-sabotaging behaviours can assist patients in identifying aspects of their health management that require modification[23].

15. **Time Organization:** Examining the ways in which patients organize their time can uncover significant trends associated with health behaviours and compliance with treatment[24].

16. **Discounting and grandiosities:** Identifying areas where patients minimize or exaggerate aspects of their health situation can lead to more realistic and effective treatment approaches[25].

17. **Options technique:** Expanding a patient's perceived options in dealing with health challenges can lead to more flexible and effective coping strategies[26].

Ego-state or Parent–Adult–Child (PAC) models: Analysis of Ego state:

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a psychotherapeutic framework that explains personality, cognition, emotions, and behaviours using the PAC (Parent, Adult, Child) model[27]. This model suggests our personality consists of three states: Parent, Adult, and Child. The Parent represents values and morals, the Adult is the rational decision-maker, and the Child embodies emotions[28]. Interactions can occur between these ego-states in individuals or between individuals, often leading to inner dialogues that can be influenced by a critical Parent, resulting in negative experiences[29]. Recognizing these dynamics can help manage their impact. TA's ego-states are effective in addressing issues like anxiety, depression, and eating disorders[30].

Individuals express their personality through behaviours, thoughts, and emotions, often reflecting three ego states in Transactional Analysis (TA)[31]:

1. **Parent ("exteropsyche"):** This state reflects behaviours and thoughts learned from parental figures, such as yelling in frustration because it was modelled in childhood.

2. **Adult ("neopsyche"):** This state processes information objectively, akin to an AI, aiming to enhance rational evaluation of reality.

3. **Child ("archaeopsyche"):** This state mirrors childhood responses, such as sulking after criticism or smiling after praise, embodying emotions, creativity, and spontaneity[32].

Methodology: The researcher undertook a descriptive research study with the objective of evaluating the ego states of individuals involved in a range of activities within health care institutions. This approach was chosen to gain insights into the psychological profiles of these individuals as they navigate their professional environments.

Instrument: For the purpose of data collection, a standardized checklist was employed, consisting of 10 items designed to capture a spectrum of responses, both positive and negative. This checklist was disseminated via Google, allowing for efficient circulation and collection of responses from participants.

Result: Over the span of one month, a total of 78 participants completed the checklist and submitted their responses. The demographic breakdown of the participants revealed that 14 were male and 64 were female, highlighting a predominance of female respondents in this study.

Table: 1: Response of the study participants for all items

N=78
Female=64(82%)
Male=14(18%)

Sl. No.	Items	Response of the participants				Total	
		Positive response		Negative response		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Positive	Negative
1.	Teenagers would be better off if they tried harder to understand and utilise the experiences of older people.	57(82%)	12(18%)	7	2	69(89%)	9(11%)
2.	I enjoy fast driving.	18(75%)	6(25%)	46	8	24(31%)	54(69%)
3.	Generally, I manage to keep a calm appearance even when I am all upset inside.	58(90%)	6(10%)	6	8	64(82%)	14(18%)
4.	There are too few people nowadays with enough courage to stand up for what is right.	53(84%)	11(16%)	12	3	63(81%)	15(19%)

5.	People who tend to be "Bossy" actually lack self-confidence although they may not realise this.	51(88%)	7(12%)	13	7	58(74%)	20(26%)
6	I do not like it when people are not clear about what I say and ask me to repeat.	29(74%)	10(26%)	35	4	39(50%)	39(50%)
7	Effective leadership means to enable people to give the best of themselves rather then seek the best for themselves.	50(85%)	9(15%)	14	5	59(76%)	19(24%)
8	There is too much sex and violence on TV nowadays.	50(83%)	10(17%)	14	4	60(77%)	18(23%)
9	In my opinion, it is healthy to freely discuss sex, bodily functions, intimacy, etc.	55(89%)	7(11%)	9	7	62(49%)	16(21%)
10	I find it difficult to stick to a diet, to quit smoking, etc.	49(91%)	5(9%)	15	9	54(69%)	24(31%)

Table 1 shows that out of 69 participants, 57 females (82%) and 12 males (18%) positively responded to item one, while 9 (11%) gave negative feedback. For item two, 24 participants responded, with 18 females (75%) and 6 males (25%) giving positive responses, and 54 (69%) responding negatively. Item three received 64 positive responses, primarily from 58 females (90%) and 6 males (10%), with 14 (18%) negative responses. In item four, of 63 positive responses, 53 were from females (84%) and 11 from males (16%), with 15 (19%) negative responses. For item five, 58 positive responses included 51 females (88%) and 7 males (12%), with 20 (26%) negative responses. Item six recorded 39 positive responses, with 29 females (74%) and 10 males (26%), alongside 39 (50%) negative responses. The majority of 59 positive responses to item seven came from 50 females (85%) and 9 males (15%), with 19 (24%) negative responses. In item eight, 60 positive responses included 50 females (83%) and 10 males (17%), with 18 (23%) negative responses. For item nine, 62 positive responses were from 55 females (89%) and 7 males (11%), with 16 (21%) negative feedback. Finally, item ten had 54 positive responses, with 49 females (91%) and 5 males (9%), and 24 (31%) negative responses.

Table: 2: Response of the study participants according to ego states for all items

N=78

NURTURING PARENTS				ADULT					Items	CHILD			
	F		M		Score						F		M	
	P	N	P	N		F	F	M			P	N	P	N
						P	N	P	N					
Teenagers would be better off if they tried harder to understand and utilise the experiences of older people.	57 (83%)	7	12 (17%)	2	Generally, I manage to keep a calm appearance even when I am all upset inside.	52 (83%)	12	11 (17%)	3	I enjoy fast driving.	18 (75%)	46	6 (25%)	8
There are too few people nowadays with enough courage to stand up for what is right.	56 (89%)	8	7 (11%)	7	Effective leadership means to enable people to give the best of themselves rather than seek the best for themselves.	49(84%)	15	9 (16%)	5	I do not like it when people are not clear about what I say and ask me to repeat.	32 (82%)	32	7 (18%)	7
People who tend to be "Bossy" actually lack self-confidence although they may not realise this.	48 (83%)	16	10 (17%)	4	In my opinion, it is healthy to freely discuss sex, bodily functions, intimacy, etc.	52 (84%)	12	10 (16%)	4	I find it difficult to stick to a diet, to quit smoking, etc.	19 (79%)	45	5 (21%)	9
There are too much sex and violence on TV nowadays	53 (88%)	11	7 (12%)	7										

*F represent Female and M for Male.

*P represent Positive and N for Negative.

The information displayed in **Table 2** elucidates the Interpretation of Parent-Adult-Child Profiles. The highest percentage score among the three scores signifies the specific Ego State predominantly utilized by the participants in the study. Among the female participants, the highest percentage score is 56 (89%), whereas male participants have a score of 6 (25%). This indicates that the dominant Ego State for female participants is the nurturing parent, while for male participants, it is the child.

The constraints of the research and recommendations for future investigations

This research assesses functional ego states according to Berne's descriptive framework, emphasizing observable behaviours. The participant group is restricted to adults residing in urban India, populations. Future investigations should encompass a broader demographic and

adapt assessment instruments. The sample exhibits a notable gender disparity, with merely 18% of participants being male in contrast to 82% female, which fails to accurately reflect the overall Indian population. Therefore, conclusions pertaining to gender require additional validation through enhanced sampling techniques.

Conclusion: In conclusion, while this study faced certain limitations, the findings are consistent with the principles of Transactional Analysis (TA) theory. These results have the potential to impact the practical application of TA therapy, particularly through the framework of the Parent-Adult-Child (PAC) model. This alignment suggests that the insights gained could enhance therapeutic practices and inform future research in the field.

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