TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS EGO STATES VIA ADJECTIVE CHECK LIST AT SINDH UNIVERSTY CAMPUS [#]

Nagina Parveen & Abdul Haque
Department of Psychology
University of Sindh
Jamshoro, Pakistan

Transactional analysis conceptualizes human personality in terms of Parent, Adult, Child ego states, each of which represents an entire system of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The present investigation was designed to examine how university teachers and students perceive self and each other in terms of three ego states. Fifty teachers and 150 students at Sindh University campus described self and each other on five functional ego states via Adjective Check List. Results showed that both teachers and students perceived 'students' higher on Child ego state. However, contrary to our prediction, students perceived themselves almost as high on Nurturing Parent and Adult ego states as the teachers were perceived by themselves and students. The discussion offers possible explanation of the results.

Transactional analysis ego states theory of personality, developed by Berne (1961, 1966) and Woolams and Brown (1978), focus on transactions, that is, communications and interactions between persons. Just as in Erikson's (1950) and Sullivan's (1953) theories, personality is viewed as being influenced in important ways by the social matrix in which the person functions. Berne's original purpose was to understand the nature of interpersonal behavior (transactions between persons) in terms of the psychological situations of "ego states" from which each person was performing at a given point in time. This system has accumulated a substantial literature (MaGahey & Blair, 1976), and is used extensively by applied psychologists, in variety of settings, particularly in clinical area.

Some researchers (see for example, Williams & Best, 1982; 1990a, 1990b; Williams, Satterwhte & Best, 1999) have analyzed gender stereotypes in terms of three ego states. Best and Williams (1997) have presented a comprehensive review of studies on gender

[#] Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Nagina Parveen, Department of Psychology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan. <mail_soomro@yahoo.com>

stereotypes that have focused on five ego states (Nurturing Parent, Critical Parent, Adult, Free Child, and Adapted Child). In Pakistan, Haque (1982) also analysed stereotypes of men and women as perceived by the students of Sindh University with respect to five functional ego states.

The three primary ego states postulated by Berne (1961, 1966) were termed as child, adult, and parent. Although every person operates from each of the ego state at one time or another, Berne also identified that some persons tend to use certain ego states more often than others do. Consequently, the transactional analysis system could be used to describe relatively stable personological differences in the use of ego states (Williams & Best, 1990a).

The first of the ego-states is called the Child. The Child ego state is composed partly of the feelings in relation to early life experiences of an individual. It also includes the memories and behavioral patterns from childhood. The Child ego state is subdivided into Natural or Free Child and Adapted Child. Free Child is manifested by fun, self-indulgence, impulse, and spontaneous feelings. The Free Child thinks and acts in ways which are not socially approved and never stops to evaluate his or her personal adequacy (Carver & Scheier, 1988). On the other hand, Adapted Child is characterized by conforming and compromising behaviors. The Adapted Child is a child-like orientation that also reflects the impact of parental evaluations. This version of the child is less spontaneous than the free child and more focused on transactions, which always occur from a child's point of view (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

The second ego state is termed as the Adult. This part of personality is rational and logical and is oriented toward activities such as gathering information and making decisions. Behaviors in the Adult ego state deal impassively with the objective qualities of social reality. Adult Ego state represents patterns, which are adapted to current reality and are used for logical reasoning and precise predictions. The Adult ego state has little or no sense of excitement or emotion (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

The third ego state is named as the Parent. It is a set of behaviors, attitudes and feelings, which resemble those of parental figures. More specifically, these thoughts, attitudes, and feelings are derived from experience with our own parents in early childhood and reflect memories of our parent's point of view during those earlier interactions (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

Parents appear in two different ways, Nurturing Parent and Critical Parent. The Nurturing Parent is supportive and sustaining (Steiner, 1974). It represents a parental figure, which nurtures and promotes growth and directs to the attitude of protecting and taking care of other members of a relationship. The Critical Parent is controlling, punishing, fault-finding, criticizing, and domineering.

Berne also pointed out that all ego states are important to healthy functioning and that no ego state is inherently positive or negative. These ego states are assumed to be present in each and every individual. Each ego state is potentially active at any time. Persons differ from each other how often they adopt one or another orientation. Different ego states also tend to emerge in different situations. For example, the Child Ego state is likely to come to the fore when we are in a situation that creates a sense of fear or a sense of play. The parent is more likely to emerge when we see someone in trouble or acting foolishly. The Adult Ego state is most likely to be adopted when efficiency is called for in doing any task.

Dusay (1972) suggested the use of "egogram" as a symbolic representation of the relative strength of the different types of ego states. In computing an egogram, one first evaluates the strengths of the five functional ego states and then illustrates them relative to one another in terms of percentage. Dusay (1977) believes that each person has a unique egogram profile that proposes a consistency in style of performing over situations and over time. Woolams and Brown (1978) noted that "a person learns to respond from certain ego states at certain times in order to get what he or she wants. Different people tend to spend varying amounts of time and energy in different ego states, and these tendencies can be illustrated by egograms" (p. 29).

The present study was carried out to determine the degree to which each ego state is most prevalent among teachers and students. On the other hand, since, Role theory asserts that behavior of a person is influenced by the role that she/he is playing it was hypothesized that teachers will be receive high scoring on Adult and Parent Ego States, whereas student will be described as child-like, irrespective of whether the person who gives the description is teacher or student.

METHOD

Sample

The sample studied in the present study was 50 (33 men and 17 women) senior teachers (i.e., professors & associate professors) and

150 (81 men and 69 women) senior students (students of Hons, III & Final year). The respondents were randomly selected from various academic departments of Sindh University at Alama I. I. Kazi Campus, Jamshoro. The mean age of the men and women teachers was 50.3 and 45.3 years, and men and women students was 24.7 and 24 years, respectively. Most of the teachers and students belonged to middle class families.

Instrument and Procedure

An adapted version of Adjective Checklist (Parveen, 1999), consisting of 128 items, was used to collect information from teachers and students regarding their perception about themselves and their counter parts. This checklist was originally developed by Gough and Heilburn (1965).

In order to identify the adjectives distinctively associated with each ego state, the checklist of 128 adjectives (Parveen, 1999) was provided to two judges, with a list of adjectives strongly associated with a particular ego state identified by Williams and Best (1982). The judges were instructed to allocate adjectives to Parent, Adult, Child ego state categories by comparing the list of 128 adjectives with that of Williams and Best (1982). The criterion of more than 60% inter-raters' agreement was used to place an adjective to a particular category of ego state.

In the present study, both men and women teachers and students were administrated the Adjective Check List (Parveen, 1999). The respondents were requested to consider each adjective and decide whether it is more frequently associated with teachers or students.

After data collection, the obtained scores were analysed according to the categories of five functional ego states developed by the judges to check the traits assigned to teachers and students and their relative percentages on each "ego state". The analyses were used to compare the traits in terms of the degree to which they are adult-like, parental or child-like in nature and also to make comparisons along these dimensions between the traits found in the teacher as well as in the student.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 displays the percentages of senior teacher's ego state scores for the self and other on adjectives associated with Critical Parent, Nurturing Parent, Adult, Free Child, and Adapted Child.

Table 1

Percentages of Teacher's Ego-state Scores for Self (S) and Other (O) on Adjectives Associated with Critical Parent, Nurturing Parent, Adult, Free Child, and Adapted Child.

Critical Parent			Nurturing Parent			Adult			Free Child			Adapted Child		
Traits	S%	O%	Traits	S%	O%	Traits	S%	O%	Traits	S%	O%	Traits	S%	O%
Autocratic	56.0	38.0	Affectionate	66.0	32.0	Capable	58.0	24.0	Uninhibited	34.0	50.0	Anxious	50.0	34.0
			Helpful	66.0	36.0	Clear-thinking	58.0	30.0	Pleasure-seeking	30.0	58.0	Complaining	30.0	56.0
			Kind	62.0	28.0	Efficient	54.0	20.0	Excitable	28.0	56.0	Hurried	28.0	54.0
			Forgiving	58.0	26.0	Realistic	50.0	38.0				Arrogant	24.0	62.0
			Sympathetic	54.0	34.0	Reasonable	50.0	36.0				Nervous	24.0	50.0
			Gentle	52.0	34.0									
			Warm	38.0	56.0									
Average Mean of S&O%	56.0	38.0		56.6	35.1		54.0	29.6		30.6	54.7		31.2	51.2
Mean Percent S−O	(56.0−38.0) = +18%			56.6 − 35.1 = 21.5%			54.0 − 29.6 = +24.4%			30.6 − 54.7 = −24.1%			31.2 − 51.2 = −20.0%		

The results of the Table 1 show that the mean percentages of teacher's scores is 56% for the self and 38% for other on the Critical Parent, and on the nurturing parent, the mean percentages for the self and other are 56.6 % and 35. l%, respectively. On the Adult, the mean percentages for the self and other are 54%, and 29.6%, respectively; on the Free Child, mean percentages for self is 30.6% and 54.7%, for other; and on the Adapted Child, the mean percentages for the self and other are 31.2% and 51.2 %, respectively. These figures indicate that on the Critical Parent, Nurturing Parent, and Adult ego states the teacher's mean percentages are higher for the self than for other (i.e., student), whereas on the Free Child and Adapted Child, the mean percentages are lower for the self than for other (i.e., student).

The self-minus-other mean percentage differences of teacher's scores on all the five ego states (see Table 1) are as follows: + 18 % on the Critical Parent, + 21.5% on the Nurturing Parent, and + 24.4% on the Adult, whereas -24.1% on Free Child and -20% on the Adapted Child. These differences indicate that ego state scores are very high on adult, and higher on nurturing parent and critical parent. On the other hand, the students are perceived by the teachers as high on Free Child and Adapted Child ego states.

Fig. 1: Egograms Showing Ego-state Percentages for Self and Other as Perceived by Sindh University Teacher.
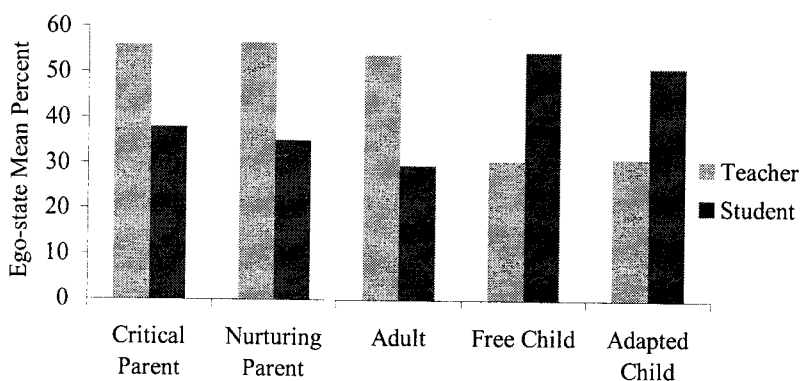

Figure 1 shows that the egogram mean percentages for self as compared to other are much higher on Adult and Parental ego states, whereas they are much lower on Free child and Adapted Child. The data demonstrated through the egogram supports the hypothesis that teachers will receive high scores on Adult and Parent ego states.

Table 2

Percentages of Student's Ego-state Scores for Self (S) and Other on Adjectives Associated with Critical Parent, Nurturing Parent, Adult, Free Child, and Adapted Child.

Critical Parent			Nurturing Parent			Adult			Free Child			Adapted Child		
Traits	S%	O%	Traits	S%	O%	Traits	S%	O%	Traits	S%	O%	Traits	S%	O%
Autocratic	48.6	54.0	Helpful	61.3	62.0	Realistic	59.3	61.3	Uninhibited	62.6	56.0	Argumentative	48.6	52.0
			Sympathetic	56.0	43.3	Capable	57.3	60.0	Excitable	56.0	41.3	Anxious	63.3	34.0
			Kind	52.6	48.0	Efficient	50.0	58.0	Humorous	54.6	47.3			
			Praising	52.6	50.0	Clear-thinking	52.6	48.0						
			Affectionate	54.6	53.3									
			Gentle	54.0	71.3									
			Forgiving	52.6	57.3									
			Considerate	50.0	38.0									
			Understanding	49.3	54.0									
Average Mean of S&O%	56.0	38.0		53.6	53.0		54.8	56.8		57.7	48.2		55.9	43.0
Mean Percent S − O	48.6 − 54.0 = − 5.4%			53.6 − 53.0 = + 0.6%			54.8 − 56.8 = − 2.0%			57.7 − 48.2 = + 9.5%			55.9 − 43 = + 12.9%		

Table 2 presents the percentages of senior students' ego state scores for self and other on adjectives associated with five functional ego states. On the Critical Parent, the student's mean percentages for the self and other are 48.6% and 54%, respectively; on Nurturing Parent, the mean percentage for self is 53.6%, and 53% for the other; on the Adult ego state, the mean percentages for self is 54.8%, and it is 56.8 % for the other; on the Free Child the student's mean percentage for the self is 57.7% and 48.2% for other; on the Adapted Child the mean percentage for the self is 55.9% and 43% for other (i.e., teacher). The results indicate that students' scores (in terms of mean percentages) are higher than teachers' scores on the Free Child, and Adapted Child, approximately equal on Nurturing Parent and Adult ego states but lower on Critical Parent. The self-minus-other mean percentage differences of students' scores appeared as -5.4% on Critical Parent; +0.6% on Nurturing Parent; -2% on Adult; + 9.5% on Free Child; and + 12.9% on Adapted Child. The values showing differences indicate that percentages of students' scores are very high on the Adapted Child, and higher on Free Child ego states.

Fig. 2: Egograms Showing Ego-state Percentages for Self and Other as Perceived by Sindh University Students.
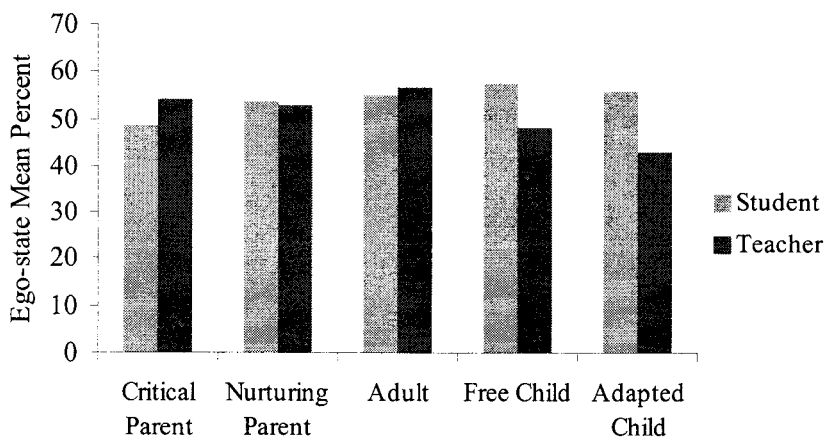

Figure 2 shows that the mean percentages of Sindh University students on egogram are lower on Critical Parent and slightly lower on Adult ego state. It is interesting to note that the students' mean percentage on Nurturing Parent is slightly higher than that of the teachers. However, on Free child and Adapted Child as expected, the mean percentages of students are higher for self than for the teacher.

The results obtained from ego-state analyses indicate teachers' scores for self to be higher on Critical Parent, Adult and Nurturing Parent, exposing those parts of the teachers' personality which support the teacher's image as it exists in Pakistani society. The Critical Parent ego state designates set of feelings, attitudes, and behavior patterns that resemble those of parental figures and represents that part of teacher's personality which criticizes, finds faults, and reflect the rules of the society (Berne, 1961). An adult-oriented teachers are rational, realistic, organized, reasonable, and problem solving persons. As a nurturing parent, the teacher has the quality to protect, nurture and promote growth (Gough & Heilbrun, 1980). These qualities of being adult and nurturing parent of the teacher could help in integrating the wants of the students. Whereas the teachers' viewed the students higher on Free Child and Adapted Child ego states. It, therefore, confirms the hypothesis, which states that the teachers will describe self higher in the direction of Adult and Parental ego states, whereas the student will be described higher in the direction of Child ego state.

The Free Child and Adapted Child ego states are the relics of the childhood period. The Free Child represents the natural, spontaneous aspects of the personality. As high-scorer on Free Child ego state, the student is characterized by fun and indulgence in natural feelings, not all inclined to exercise self-restraint or to postpone gratification (Williams & Best, 1982). The Adapted Child represents the compromising behaviors of "overly socialized" child. As high scorers on Adapted Child the student would experience great difficulty in setting aside subordinate childhood role. According to Gough and Heilbrun (1980) the 'adapted child' lacks independence, and is easily disorganized by stress. He seeks satisfaction in daydreams and fantasies, not in reality.

In the present study, while the teachers' results provide general support for the hypothesis, the students' results partially support it. The discussion offers explanation in terms of complementary/uncomplementary transactions as well as role theory.

Complementary/Uncomplementry Transactions

Transactions are interchanges of communication. The transactions are classified as complementary or uncomplementary. Complementary transactions occur when transactions are parallel, that is, a message sent from one ego state (e.g., Parent) receives an expected response from the appropriate ego state of the other party

(e.g., Child). In other words, "when stimulus and response on the P-A-C transaction diagram make parallel lines, the transaction is complementary" (Harris, 1969, p.70; Carver & Scheier, 1988). Uncomplementary transactions occur when a message from one ego state (e.g., Parent) receives a response from a different ego state (e.g., Adult) than intended. This happens when stimulus and response cross on P-A-C transaction diagram. Uncomplimentary (or crossed) transactions often create a sense of unconnectedness. Results of the present study on the ego states of students present an example of uncomplementry transactions. Here i.e., the teacher speaks to students' as 'an adult to the child', but students' responds as 'a nurturing parent to an adult.' One reason might be that in Pakistani society, teachers want their students to be obedient and submissive. Kagitcibasi (1984) found 'obedience' and 'faithfulness to parents' as a central value in traditional societies.

Role theory

Role theory is particularly helpful in explaining the teachers' ego state percentages for self and other (see Figure 1). Turner (2000) defines role as "a comprehensive pattern for behavior and attitude that is linked to an identity..." (p.112). The role of the teacher consists of patterns of behaviors that matches the role expectations of administrators, other teachers, students, parents, and of course the teacher's own beliefs (Guskin & Guskin, 1970). The theoretical basis for hypothesizing that a role will have effects on role occupants lies in the nature of these expectations. In the light of above account, it appears that the role theory is the most tenable to explain the teacher's data.

Although the students present their subordinate role as exhibited by high scores on 'Child' ego state but contrary to prediction, their percentages on Nurturing Parent and Adult ego states are as high as the percentages of the teachers. The minor differences on these ego states reflect role conflict. The role conflict is indicative of tension and overt hostility between such highly interdependent role partners. Fisher's (1976) study focused on high school students' perception and concerns. In that study, the major issues as perceived by students were teachers' authoritarian style of leadership, and lack of concerns for students' problems.

The findings of the present research as explored through transactional analysis ego states indicate that the role relationships between student and teacher are not conducive to good learning

atmosphere. A more direct investigation for improving the teacher-student relationship at the university campus might be a fruitful area for further research.

REFERENCES

Berne, E. (1961). *Transactional analysis in psychotherapy.* New York: Grove Press.

Berne, E. (1966). *Principles of group treatment.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Best , D. L., & Williams, J. E. (1997). Sex, gender, and culture. In J. W. Berry, (Ed.). *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (Vol., 3, pp. 164-212). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (1988). *Perspectives on personality.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Dusay, J. M. (1972). Egograms and the constancy hypothesis. *Transactional Analysis Journal, 2,* 133-137.

Dusay, J. M. (1977). *Egograms.* New York: Harper & Row.

Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society* (Ist ed.). New York: Norton.

Fisher, R. J. (1976). A discussion project on high school and adolescents' perceptions of the relationship between students and teachers. *Adolescene, 11,* 88-95.

Gough, H. G., & Heilbrun, A. B. (1965). *Adjective checklist manual.* Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Gough, H. G., & Heilbrun, A. B. (1980). *The Adjective checklist manual.* Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Guskin, A. E., & Guskin, S. L. (1970). *A social psychology of education.* Reading, Mass.: Addition-Wesley.

Haque, A. (1982). Sex stereotypes among adults and children in Pakistan. In R. Rath, H. S. Asthana, D. Sinha, & J. B. H. Sinha (Eds.), *Diversity and unity in cross-cultural psychology* (pp.238-249). Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger.

Harris, T. A. (1969). *I' am OK—You are OK: A practical guide to transactional analysis.* New York: Harper & Row.

Kagitcibasi, C. (1984). Socialization in traditional society: A challenge to psychology. *International Journal of Psychology, 19,* 145-167.

McGahey, C. C., & Blair, M. (1976). *Transactional analysis research index: An international reference book.* Tallahassee: Florida Institute for TA.

Parveen, N. (1999). *A social-psychological study of perceptions of senior teachers and senior students about themselves and each other at Allama Kazi Campus, University of Sindh, Jamshoro.* Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Department of Psychology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

Steiner, C. (1974). *Scripts people live.* New York: Grove Press.

Sullivan, H. S. (1953). *The interpersonal theory of psychiatry.* New York: Norton.

Turner, R. H. (2000). Role theory. In A. E. Kazdin (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of psychology* (Vol.7, pp. 112-113). New York: Oxford University Press.

Williams, J. E., & Best, D. L. (1982). *Measuring sex stereotypes*: A thirty nation study. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publication.

Williams, J. E., & Best, D.L. (1990a). *Measuring sex stereotypes*: *A multinational study* (rev. ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Williams, J. E., & Best, D. L. (1990b). *Sex and psyche: Gender and self-concepts viewed cross-culturally.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Williams, J. E., Satterwhte, R. C., & Best, D. L. (1999). Pancultural gender stereotypes revisited: The five factor model. *Sex Roles, 40,* 513-525.

Woolams, S., & Brown, M. (1978). *Transactional analysis.* Dexter, Ml: Huron Valley Press.