



REVIEW ARTICLE / DERLEME YAZISI

Transactional Analysis: A Fundamental Approach and Modern Applications in Psychotherapy

Transaksiyonel Analiz: Psikoterapide Temel Yaklaşım ve Modern Uygulamalar

Tahmina Chalabi Kurt¹, Hülya Şenol², Erdem Lif³

Abstract:

This study examines Eric Berne's Transactional Analysis (TA) within the context of psychotherapy, aiming to systematically explore the fundamental concepts of the theory, its historical development, and its intersections with contemporary therapeutic approaches. In this context, the study does not remain limited to a theoretical framework but also examines the role of Transactional Analysis in explaining the interaction between internal processes and interpersonal dynamics. Its connections with contemporary psychotherapy approaches are also addressed from a broader perspective. TA is defined as a humanistic psychotherapy model that explains personality through three core ego states—Parent, Adult, and Child—and analyzes interpersonal communication patterns. This article provides a comprehensive, literature-based evaluation of TA's principal components, including ego states, types of transactions, life script, racket system, time structuring, and Karpman's drama triangle. The research was conducted using a qualitative document analysis method, and primary sources published between 1950 and 2025 were examined through content analysis techniques. Within this process, the relationships between the core concepts of the theory were thematically organized, and the role of TA in therapeutic change was interpreted. This approach aims to make the model more comprehensible in both theoretical and practical terms. Findings indicate that TA significantly contributes to the development of individuals' awareness, autonomy, communication skills, and emotional maturity. In addition, TA appears to support the restructuring of self-perception, the development of relational awareness, and the establishment of more functional communication patterns. The findings also indicate that the theory can be applied across different psychological contexts. The study concludes that TA possesses a broad range of applicability across psychotherapy, education, and organizational psychology.

Keywords: Transactional Analysis, Psychotherapy, Ego States, Communication, Eric Berne.

¹Final International University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Psychology, Kyrenia, TRN, Cyprus.

²Cyprus Health and Social Sciences University, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Department of Business Administration, Güzelyurt, TRN Cyprus.

³Maastricht University, Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience, Department of Psychology, Maastricht, Netherlands.

Address of Correspondence/Yazışma Adresi: Tahmina Chalabi Kurt, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Psychology, Kyrenia, TRN, Cyprus, Email: tahmina.chalabi@final.edu.tr.

Date of Received/Geliş Tarihi: 02.11.2025, **Date of Revision/Düzeltilme Tarihi:** 13.12.2025, **Date of Acceptance/Kabul Tarihi:** 01.02.2026, **Date of Online Publication/Çevrimiçi Yayın Tarihi:** 27.04.2026

Citing/Referans Gösterimi: Kurt, T.C., Şenol, H. & Lif, E. (2026). Transactional Analysis: A Fundamental Approach and Modern Applications in Psychotherapy, *European Archives of Social Sciences*, 3, e262009, Doi: 10.35365/eass.26.1.09

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Cyprus Mental Health Institute / European Archives of Social Sciences (www.eassjournal.com). This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution, and reproduction in any medium or format, provided the original work is properly cited and is not used for commercial purposes. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Öz:

Bu çalışma, Eric Berne tarafından geliştirilen Transaksiyonel Analiz (TA) kuramını psikoterapi bağlamında ele alarak kuramın temel kavramlarını, tarihsel gelişimini ve çağdaş psikoterapi yaklaşımlarıyla ilişkili yönlerini sistematik biçimde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu kapsamda çalışma, yalnızca kuramsal bir çerçeve sunmakla sınırlı kalmayıp, Transaksiyonel Analiz'in bireyin içsel süreçleri ile kişilerarası ilişkileri arasındaki dinamik etkileşimi açıklamadaki rolünü de ele almaktadır. Ayrıca kuramın güncel psikoterapi yaklaşımlarıyla kurduğu ilişkiler, daha bütüncül bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirilmiştir. TA, bireyin kişiliğini üç temel ego durumu; Ebeveyn, Yetişkin ve Çocuk üzerinden açıklayan ve kişilerarası iletişim süreçlerini analiz eden hümanistik bir psikoterapi modeli olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu makalede TA'nın kuramsal çerçevesini oluşturan ego durumları, Karpman'ın drama üçgeni gibi temel bileşenler literatüre dayalı olarak bütüncül biçimde ele alınmıştır. Araştırma, nitel doküman analizi yöntemiyle yürütülmüş ve 1950–2025 yılları arasında yayımlanan temel kaynaklar içerik analizi tekniği kullanılarak çözümlenmiştir. Bu süreçte kuramın temel kavramları arasındaki ilişkiler tematik olarak sınıflandırılmış ve Transaksiyonel Analiz'in terapötik değişim sürecindeki işlevi yorumlanmıştır. Böylece çalışma, kuramın hem teorik hem de uygulamaya dönük yönlerini daha anlaşılır hale getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın bulguları, TA'nın bireylerde farkındalık, özerklik, İletişim becerileri ve duygusal olgunluk düzeylerinin gelişimine önemli ölçüde katkı sağladığını göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte, TA'nın bireyin kendini algılama biçimini yeniden düzenleme, ilişkisel farkındalığı artırma ve daha işlevsel iletişim kurma süreçlerinde etkili olduğu görülmektedir. Elde edilen bulgular, kuramın farklı psikolojik bağlamlarda uygulanabilirliğini desteklemektedir. TA'nın psikoterapi, eğitim ve örgütsel psikoloji alanlarında geniş bir uygulama potansiyeline sahip olduğu sonuçlarına ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Transaksiyonel Analiz, Psikoterapi, Ego Durumları, iletişim, Eric Berne.

Introduction

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a holistic psychotherapy theory that explains an individual's personality structure, interpersonal communication, and psychological functioning (Zümbül, 2021). The fundamental distinctive feature of the theory is its approach to human behavior, not only through internal processes but also within interpersonal contexts (Stewart, 2011). Eric Berne's approach, rooted in psychoanalytic thought yet seeking to explain human behavior in a simpler, more understandable, and observable framework, establishes a unique theoretical position for TA by directly linking the client's inner world to interpersonal relationships (Berne, 1996).

In Transactional Analysis (TA) theory, personality is addressed through the parent, adult, and child ego states, allowing an understanding of which internal structure a person responds from in different situations, thus providing a concrete analytical basis in the psychotherapy process (Sills, 2014). Within this framework, TA analyzes complementary, crossed, and ulterior interactions that occur in communication, revealing the sources of interpersonal problems (Bugental, Shennun, and Shaver, 1984). It has been shown that conflict resolution styles in romantic relationships are closely related to family origin relationships and internal relationship models (Ünsal Gülseven & Türer, 2025). This finding is consistent with Berne's ego states and game theory, which explain the repetitive cycles of interaction during conflicts between couples.

This study approaches Transactional Analysis not by limiting it to its classical definitions and fundamental concepts, but by systematically evaluating its historical development, theoretical components, and its relationships with contemporary psychotherapy practices through a comprehensive literature review. In the existing literature, Transactional Analysis has mostly been examined within specific application areas; for example, in marriage harmony (Ömür, 2021), it has been analyzed in the context

of teacher-student interactions and learning processes in the field of education (Barrow and Newton, 2015), and in educational counseling processes (Netrawati et al., 2018).

As the research findings indicate, TA's therapeutic change occurs not only at the symptom level but also intersects with theoretical approaches that focus on communication and meaning-making processes (Rosenblatt, 2018). Studies conducted within the Turkish context also demonstrate that TA concepts provide a functional framework for analyzing cultural and artistic texts (Zengin, 2019; Çelikel, 2023). This research combines the TA literature within a thematic framework, examining the theory's internal consistency, mechanisms of change, and modern applications as a holistic therapy model.

The Fundamentals of Transactional Analysis

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a theory developed to systematically analyze human behavior and interpersonal relationships within psychotherapy. It is observation-based and structured. The founder of the theory, Eric Berne, proposed the concept of 'transaction' as the fundamental unit of observation in analyzing human behavior and placed interpersonal interaction at the core of psychological functioning (Berne, 1961).

Ego States

The transactional analysis theory conceptualizes an individual's personality through three basic ego states: parent, adult, and child (Shustov and Tuchina, 2019); it describes each ego state as a dynamic system shaped by past experiences but functioning in the present moment (Widdowson, 2010).

Parent Ego State

In the literature on TA, the Parent ego state is addressed under two substructures: the Critical Parent and the Nurturing (Supportive) Parent. The Critical Parent represents the individual's rule-making, judgmental, and disciplinary side; meanwhile, the Nurturing Parent is the

source of behaviors such as compassion, support, and care (Turhal, Kalyoncu, and Keçeci, 2018). Especially in the context of education and working life, research shows that communication environments dominated by the Critical Parent can increase conflict and psychological stress (Hall, 2019). Conversely, balanced use of the Nurturing Parent aspect supports relational trust and empathy (Stewart and Joines, 1987).

Adult Ego State

The adult ego state is based on the principle of 'here and now' and operates independently of emotional baggage from the past or internalized authority messages (Hay, 2017). When this ego state is active, the individual analyzes current data and makes healthier decisions.

Child Ego State

The Child ego state represents the psychological domain in which spontaneity, creativity, and emotional expression naturally emerge, developed through the integration of early childhood experiences, allowing for an intuitive perception of the world (Cornell, 2018).

This ego state includes the dimensions of the Natural Child and the Adapted Child. The Natural Child is the source of curiosity, enthusiasm, creativity, and sincerity; whereas the Adapted Child involves responses aimed at conforming to social expectations and maintaining relational security.

Recent studies emphasize that strengthening the healthy aspects of a child's ego state enhances emotional resilience, self-expression, and psychological durability (Comendant, 2025).

Table 1. Basic features of ego states

Ego State	Behavioral Characteristics	Typical Expression Examples	Therapeutic Goal
Parent	Displays authoritarian, protective, and rule-based behaviors.	"You should do this." "I want what's best for you."	Developing flexibility and understanding+
Adult	Makes realistic, rational, and balanced decisions.	"I'm assessing the situation." "How do I feel right now?"	Conscious awareness and maintaining balance
Child	Spontaneous, shows creative and emotional reactions.	"I want this!" "I'm scared."	Healthy emotional connection

This table is prepared based on Berne's Transactional Analysis theory.

Transaction Types

In Transactional Analysis theory, a transaction is the basic unit of communication between two individuals, involving a stimulus and the response to that stimulus (Gürgan and Bilge, 2021).

According to the TA approach, the healthy continuation of communication depends on the messages sent and the responses given, progressing on the same level. Berne emphasizes that when this harmony is disrupted, the flow of communication is hindered and relational conflicts can arise. Within this framework, transactions are categorized into three main types: complementary, crossed, and ulterior. This classification enables analysis of overt, implicit, or conflictual communication patterns that emerge in interpersonal relationships (Stuart and Joines, 2012).

Complementary Transactions

Complementary transactions are a type of communication in which the parties involved send and receive messages from their ego states that meet expectations, and their responses proceed as anticipated. In these transactions, messages and responses are mutually supportive and can be sustained without interruption (Berne, 1964).

Studies conducted in educational environments show that complementary transactions in teacher-student communication support the learning process and enhance

the quality of the relationship (Turhal, Kalyoncu, and Keçeci, 2018). Similarly, it is noted that complementary transactions strengthen an individual's cognitive clarity in decision-making and problem-solving.

Crossed Transactions

Crossed transaction refers to situations in which communication is interrupted because a response is given from an ego state different from the one expected in the original message. The mismatch between the ego states at the message's origin and destination is the fundamental factor that disrupts the flow of communication (Stewart and Joines, 2022).

For example, an emotional or defensive response from a child's ego state to a question directed at the adult ego state creates a crossed transaction. In relationships where crossed transactions are frequent, conflict cycles and emotional exhaustion have been reported to increase (Hall, 2019). Especially in work life and organizational contexts, research shows that these types of communication can increase psychosocial risks (Preda, 2013).

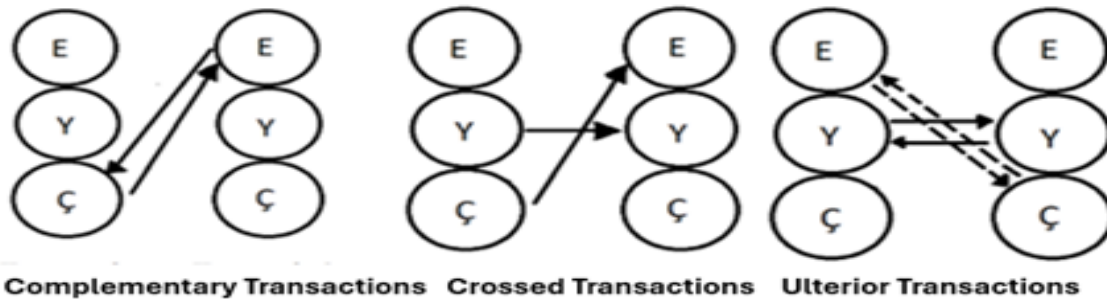
Ulterior Transactions

In this type of transaction, while a verbally and socially acceptable message is conveyed on the surface, an emotional or guiding message is transmitted at a psychological level from a different ego state (Berne, 1964). Ulterior transactions often underlie interpersonal

games and manipulative communication patterns. In this form of communication, two distinct ego states are active simultaneously: one conveys the message on a social level, while the other conveys the implicit meaning on a psychological level.

The literature emphasizes that this type of dual-layered messaging can lead to uncertainty and trust issues in relationships (Stuart and Joines, 2012).

Figure 1. Transaction Diagrams (This figure is based on Berne's Transactional Analysis theory)



This form is based on Berne's Transactional Analysis theory (Berne 1961).

Table 2. Transaction types, definitions, example cases, and therapeutic meanings

Transaction Type	Definition	Sample Case	Therapeutic Understanding
Complementary (Parallel) Transaction	The message receives the expected response from the same ego level; the communication flow continues.	A: Let's evaluate this issue together.	It is a sign of healthy communication; it increases cooperation and empathy.
Crossed Transaction	The message receives a response from an unexpected ego state; communication is cut off.	A: What are you thinking about this?	Communication is the source of conflicts and misunderstandings. Awareness is brought in therapy.
Ulterior Transaction	A verbal message is different from an emotional or behavioral message.	A: Do it if you want. (angrily)	It shows the expression of repressed feelings and analyzes the difference between surface communication and implicit feelings.

This table is prepared based on Berne's Transactional Analysis theory

Life Scenario

In Transactional Analysis, the life script is considered a fundamental psychological organization developed by the individual during childhood, often operating at an unconscious level, and guiding behaviors, relational choices, and decision-making processes throughout life. During early years, the child develops some core beliefs about themselves and the world based on explicit or implicit messages received from parental figures and close surroundings, emotional experiences, and relational feedback. These cognitive and emotional assumptions gradually become a script that shapes the individual's expectations and life orientation toward the future (Solomon, 2003). According to this perspective, the script functions as a life story constructed from early experiences

and provides a continuous structure that determines how the person interprets themselves, others, and life (Heiller and Sills, 2018).

Current transactional analysis approaches view the life script not as a fixed, passive structure determined only in early childhood, but as a dynamic organization that is recreated and maintained within relational processes (Berne, 1964). The co-creative approach emphasizes that the client and therapist actively collaborate to recognize, interpret, and transform the script (Summers and Tudor, 2018).

Studies addressing the relational aspect of the life script show that it has significant effects, particularly on close relationships, marriage, and family life. In Rahmati and

Mosavi's (2018) study, it was revealed that women's problems in marital relationships are related to early-developing life scripts and the core beliefs associated with them.

Racket System

In transactional analysis theory, the racket system is a fundamental conceptual framework that explains how individuals respond with substitute emotions learned in childhood and reinforced by their environment, rather than directly expressing authentic feelings (Erskine and Zalcman, 1979). Racket feelings are often shaped through emotional responses that are rewarded, tolerated, or help avoid punishment in early life; over time, they become persistent patterns that limit the individual's core emotional repertoire (Johnsson, 2011).

In this context, the individual interprets situations encountered in adulthood through emotional codes learned in early experiences, and, instead of authentic emotional responses, activates reactive responses that were functional in the past but are disruptive in the current context. This situation lays the groundwork for limiting and repetitive cycles in the individual's relationships with themselves and others (Zalcman, 1983).

Contemporary theoretical approaches to the racket system suggest that it is insufficient to consider this structure as a one-dimensional substitution mechanism; it should be evaluated within a broader framework that includes emotional, behavioral, and relational dimensions (Christoph-Lemke, 1999). Racket responses can lead individuals to exhibit repetitive, predictable, and often restrictive behavioral patterns in relationships.

In Transactional Analysis, the racket system is considered a central area of intervention in the therapeutic change process (Christoph-Lemke, 1999).

Time Structuring

As emphasized in Berne's early work, individuals seek psychological balance not through random interactions but by developing largely predictable, repetitive patterns of time use (Berne, 1961).

In transactional analysis literature, the structuring of time is addressed through six fundamental forms: withdrawal, rituals, leisure, activities, psychological games, and intimacy. These structuring forms demonstrate the level at which an individual engages with the social world and how they regulate their need for recognition (Çatak, 2012). Withdrawal is a state in which the individual minimizes external communication and turns inward; rituals are predictable, symbolic interactions based on social norms. Leisure offers a level of interaction that is emotionally limited yet socially acceptable; activities are defined as structured forms in which the individual establishes functional relationships with their environment through productive behaviors (Stewart, 2011).

Karpman Drama Triangle

The Karpman Drama Triangle is an important model that explains dysfunctional interaction cycles often observed in interpersonal relationships. This model reveals that individuals tend to adopt specific relationship roles, especially in situations involving conflict, stress, or emotional tension, and that these roles create a repetitive communication cycle (Gültekin and Acar, 2004). The Drama Triangle typically describes a cyclical pattern in

relationships in which the roles of 'Victim,' 'Persecutor,' and 'Rescuer' come into play (Shmelev, 2015).

The rescuer role is characterized by a tendency to take on the responsibility of solving others' problems and often conceals a hidden need for control or approval under the guise of helping (Motyl, 2016). While this role may appear supportive in the short term, it can foster dependency relationships in the long run. The persecutor role reflects a critical, accusatory, and oppressive communication style; in this role, the individual may exhibit a tendency to hold power and devalue the other party. The victim role describes a relationship pattern in which the individual perceives themselves as powerless and helpless, attributes responsibility to external factors, and remains passive (Teeter, 2023).

One of the fundamental features of the Drama Triangle is that individuals are not fixed in just one role; they can switch between roles based on relationship dynamics and emotional triggers (Stewart, 2011). These transitions can lead to an unstable, repetitive, and often exhausting cycle in relationships.

Method

Research Model

This study employed qualitative document analysis to comprehensively examine the literature on Transactional Analysis (TA) theory. The main aim of the research is to reveal the historical development of TA, its theoretical components, and its intersections with modern psychotherapy approaches.

Data Sources and Scope

In the study, a total of 45 scientific sources published in Turkish, English, and Russian between 1950 and 2025 were evaluated. Only scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals, academic books, master's and doctoral theses, and scientific reports were included in the study. Popular magazine articles, blog texts, and forum posts were excluded. Among the main theorists in the reviewed literature are Eric Berne, Claude Steiner, Ian Stewart, Vann Joines, and Julie Hay; in the Russian literature, researchers such as Talano, Malinina, and Silkina are included.

Keywords and Scanning Process

A comprehensive set of keywords prepared in three languages was used during the literature review. In English searches, terms such as "Transactional Analysis," "Ego States," "Life Script," "Racket System," "Karpman Drama Triangle," "Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy," and "Modern Applications of TA" were preferred. In Turkish literature, keywords like "Transaksiyonel Analiz," "Ego Durumları," "Hayat Senaryosu," "Raket Sistemi," "Drama Üçgeni," "Psikoterapide TA Uygulamaları," and "Modern TA Yaklaşımları" were used. In Russian searches, concepts such as «Транзакционный анализ», «Эго-состояния», «Жизненный сценарий», «Игры, в которые играют люди», «Сценарный анализ», and «Современные применения транзакционного анализа» were the basis.

The screening process was conducted through international databases such as Google Scholar, APA PsycINFO, ResearchGate, eLIBRARY.ru, CyberLeninka, PubMed, and Yandex Akademiya; in addition, classic

printed TA books and Russian online thesis archives were examined.

Data Analysis

The texts obtained within the scope of the research were systematically analyzed using content analysis. The documents were first coded for recurring concepts, theoretical structures, and therapeutic applications; then the codes were grouped into thematic categories based on similarities and conceptual proximity.

Findings

As a result of a content analysis of the TA literature, five main themes explaining the theory's therapeutic functioning have been identified. These themes are awareness of ego states, the quality of communication patterns, life script and emotional maturity, transformation of reactive emotions, and therapeutic change processes. The findings indicate that TA provides a strong model for understanding both individual psychological functioning and interpersonal relationships.

Awareness of Ego States

The identification of ego states enhances an individual's capacity for emotional regulation and expands their behavioral repertoire in a contextually appropriate manner (Stuart and Joines, 2012; Hay, 2017). Recognizing the transitions between ego states helps clients manage both their internal processes and their responses in interpersonal relationships more consciously.

Increase in Communication Quality

Findings on transaction types indicate that complementary transactions increase clarity in relationships, enhance mutual respect and empathy, and strengthen the quality of communication (Berne, 1964; Stewart and Joines, 2022). Recognizing crossed transactions can help clients understand the roots of their communication conflicts, identify dysfunctional communication cycles, and develop alternative response strategies. Uncovering ulterior transactions is an important aspect of therapy because it reveals implicit motivations and secondary gains within relationships.

Life Scenario and Emotional Maturity

The literature on life scripts indicates that the cognitive and emotional decisions an individual makes during childhood create a framework that shapes behavioral patterns in adulthood. The unconscious repetition of these scripts can limit a person's emotional flexibility and weaken their capacity for self-actualization (Stuart and Joines, 2012; Steiner, 1974). This approach offers an intervention model in the therapeutic process that involves recognizing the script, activating the Adult ego state, and making new, more functional life decisions to increase emotional maturity and restructure past-based behavioral patterns.

Racket feelings transformation

Research on the racket system shows that racket feelings, which replace authentic feelings and are usually learned in childhood, lead individuals to develop repetitive, dysfunctional patterns in interpersonal relationships (Zümbül, 2021). Identifying and resolving these feelings helps clients become aware of their true emotional needs and develop healthier ways of expressing themselves.

Therapeutic Change and Holistic Approach

Findings on the therapeutic aspects of TA indicate that the theory presents a holistic model of change focused on individuals' needs for awareness, autonomy, and intimacy (Berne, 1961, 1964; Stewart & Joines, 1987; Widdowson, 2010). It is observed that TA shares structural similarities with cognitive-behavioral, humanistic, and holistic therapy approaches and offers versatile intervention possibilities. The applicability of the theory in various fields such as individual psychotherapy, education, leadership, counseling, and organizational development confirms that TA is a comprehensive psychosocial model (Hay, 2017; Popovych et al., 2021; Stewart & Joines, 1987).

Discussion

Within the scope of the study, it has been observed that recognizing ego states enables the client to develop the skill of internal repositioning. The findings indicate that when the client becomes aware of communicating from the critical parent ego state and transitions to the adult ego state, this contributes to developing a more balanced, responsibility-based relationship pattern. Therefore, according to these results, ego state awareness can be considered a functional variable in the therapeutic process. Berne (1961) stated that psychological health is related to the capacity to transition flexibly between ego states. Similarly, clinical studies conducted by Hay (2017) emphasized that ego state awareness plays a regulatory role, especially in couples therapy and conflict resolution. In this regard, the findings of this study are consistent with the existing literature.

The study found that the communication-centered structure of Transactional Analysis enhances clients' metacommunication skills. Focusing not only on the emotions clients experience but also on how they express them in relationships allows for a clearer examination of relationship patterns during the session. Conversely, Stewart and Joines (2022) stated that the structure of Transactional Analysis, which makes communication visible, strengthens the therapeutic alliance and enables clients to participate more actively in the process. The study's findings also align with this research, as awareness of metacommunication supports the therapeutic process.

When examining findings related to life scripts, it is observed that Transactional Analysis makes this structure more understandable and reconfigurable for the client. Berne (1964) defined a life script as a structure shaped by fundamental decisions made in early childhood that persist throughout a person's life. Steiner (1990), on the other hand, emphasized that these decisions are automatically repeated in adulthood. The current study offers a unique contribution to the literature by demonstrating that, unlike the traditional TA literature, the life script can be approached within a more flexible, reconfigurable framework.

The findings from the attachment system revealed that emotional regulation processes can be addressed from a TA perspective. A study conducted by Johnsson (2011) also indicated that the attachment system structures emotions in ways that repeatedly influence an individual's relational patterns. In Zümbül's (2021) review, the importance of the attachment system in the expression of unexpressed emotions within a cultural context was emphasized. The results, consistent with these studies,

demonstrate that the attachment system is a functional tool in the therapeutic process.

When evaluating findings on Karpman's Drama Triangle, the model provides an effective framework for explaining cycles of relational trauma. Recognizing the victim, rescuer, and persecutor roles helps clients address their relational responsibilities more balancedly. Stewart and Joines (2022) state that clients who gain role awareness can develop healthier boundaries within relationships. The findings support this view.

Finally, the results of the study reveal that Transactional Analysis is not limited to individual psychotherapy alone. Analyzing ego states, transaction types, and psychological games in educational, parental counseling, and organizational contexts can significantly influence the nature of interpersonal communication. The findings suggest that Transactional Analysis is a versatile model applicable at both individual and institutional levels.

Application Areas of Modern Transactional Analysis

Modern Transactional Analysis (TA) has evolved beyond traditional ego state analyses to become a comprehensive theoretical framework that centers on subjective experiences, emotional contact patterns, and reciprocity within the client-therapist relationship. The structural and functional aspects of ego states are closely related to an individual's capacity for decision-making, taking responsibility, and developing autonomy. Indeed, the study by Popovych and colleagues (2021) demonstrates that the functional use of ego states among future professionals is significantly associated with indicators of independence, self-regulation, and professional competence.

The theoretical development of the ego state concept has progressed along an interdisciplinary path. Emerson's (2011) ego state personality theory provides a comprehensive explanation aimed at understanding the multilayered self-structure of the individual; meanwhile, Leutner and Piedfort-Marin (2021) outline a framework that spans from the historical origins of the concept to current applications, emphasizing that ego states will engage more intensively with trauma studies, attachment theory, and contemporary psychotherapy models in the future. Fraser's (1991) dissociative ego state technique, in particular, opens an important area of application regarding how ego states can be therapeutically structured, especially in trauma-based clinical work. These studies demonstrate that the clinical depth of TA (Transactional Analysis) has significantly increased over time.

In organizational and applied fields, TA has become a functional analysis tool that makes communication patterns visible and clarifies role expectations. Leadership styles, employee-manager interactions, and team relationships become more understandable when evaluated through the lens of ego states. Studies conducted in the context of healthcare reveal the effects of leadership styles on employee motivation and organizational harmony, and suggest that functional ego states are decisive in the background of these processes (Keklik, 2012).

The fact that TA has now expanded beyond clinical fields to include advertising, marketing, and persuasion research demonstrates that the scope of the theory's application has broadened (Bozkurt, 2025). The findings reveal that TA offers a flexible analytical tool capable of bridging individual psychology and mass communication.

Conclusion

The findings in this study indicate that individuals who can establish a functional balance among ego states achieve a higher level of emotional and cognitive awareness; however, the unique contribution of the study lies in conceptualizing this balance not merely as a personality trait but as a multi-stage therapeutic process that involves awareness of life scenarios, the nature of communication patterns, and the transformation of reactive emotions. Thus, therapeutic change is explained within a framework that focuses not only on the outcome but also on the internal logic of the process.

The research examined the capacity of TA to enhance communication quality, deepen relational awareness, and transform dysfunctional emotional patterns; by demonstrating that these elements are not independent but are interconnected and mutually reinforcing structures, this holistic perspective also provides a theoretical foundation for understanding why TA can serve as an effective intervention model not only in psychotherapy but also in pedagogical and organizational contexts.

In conclusion, TA literature provides a thematic, integration-based reading; it highlights the importance of addressing the theory's therapeutic power within a relational, developmental, and transformative framework rather than through fragmented applications. In this context, the research clarifies the theoretical harmony between TA and modern holistic therapies and offers a unique reference framework to guide future theoretical and empirical studies.

Recommendations

In future research, the applicability of TA across different cultural and socio-demographic contexts should be supported by quantitative methods, and cross-cultural comparisons should be conducted. Studies addressing the neuropsychological foundations of TA and its relationship with nervous system processes should be expanded, and its connection with emotion regulation systems should be investigated in-depth. Experimental studies examining its integration with holistic therapy models can more clearly demonstrate how TA interacts with current psychotherapy approaches. The development of TA-based psychoeducation programs in education, organizational behavior, and leadership will expand the theory's application areas and increase its impact.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Participation Approval

Not applicable.

Publication Permission

Not applicable.

Availability of Data and Materials

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

TCK and HŞ prepared the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations sections of the article, while TCK and

EL introduction and contributed to the identification of studies to be included in the research.

References

- Bal, P. N., & Murat, M. (2020). Reklam, kültür ve iletişim. *IBAD Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 7, 167–182. <https://doi.org/10.31566/ibad.649319>
- Barrow, G., & Newton, T. (2015). *Empowering teachers, empowering learners: A transactional analysis approach to education*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0415814444
- Barrow, G., & Newton, T. (2015). *Empowering teachers, empowering learners: A transactional analysis approach to education*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0415-81445-1
- Berne, E. (1961). *Transactional analysis in psychotherapy: A systematic individual and social psychiatry*. Grove Press. ISBN: 978-0-345-41403-0
- Berne, E. (1964). *Games people play: The psychology of human relationships*. Grove Press. ISBN: 978-0-345-41003-2
- Bozkurt, Y. (2025). Reklamlarda ego durumu–yaratıcı strateji uyumunun ikna üzerindeki etkisi: Transaksiyonel analiz yaklaşımı. *Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 15(3), 1827–1847. <https://doi.org/10.30783/nevsosbilen.1724661>
- Bugental, D. B., Shennum, W. A., & Shaver, P. R. (1984). “Difficult” children as elicitors and targets of adult communication patterns: An attributional–behavioral transactional analysis. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 49(205), 79–160. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1166016>
- Christoph-Lemke, C. (1999). The contributions of transactional analysis to integrative psychotherapy. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 29(3), 198–214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/036215379902900302>
- Comendant, C. (2025). Outcome measures in transactional analysis clinical practice. *International Journal of Transactional Analysis Research & Practice*, 16(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.29044/ijosart.v16i1.972>
- Çatak, B. (2012). Karar verme sürecinde içsel psikolojik süreçler ve transaksiyonel analiz. *Klinik Psikiyatri Dergisi*, 15(3), 181–189. <https://doi.org/10.5505/kpd.2012.16480>
- Çelikel, M., & Pesen, A. (2023). Does the transactional analysis theory-based psycho-educational group program reduce loneliness and increase psychological well-being? *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 23(101), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.30931/USCA.2023.2842>
- Emmerson, G. (2011). *Advanced ego state therapy*. Crown House Publishing. ISBN: 978-1845906884
- Fraser, G. A. (1991). Ego state therapy: A brief overview. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 21(2), 92–98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/036215379102100208>
- Gültekin, A., & Acar, N. V. (2004). Ego Durumları ölçeğinin geliştirilmesi: Geçerlik ve güvenilirlik çalışması. *Türk Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Dergisi*, 3(22), 7–18. <https://doi.org/10.17066/pdreh.2016.v3n22.001>
- Hall, J. (2019). Transactional analysis in contemporary psychotherapy: A relational and integrative perspective. *International Journal of Transactional Analysis Research & Practice*, 10(1), 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.29044/ijostar.v10i1.35>
- Hay, J. (2017). An introduction to transactional analysis psychotherapy. *Journal of Experiential Psychotherapy / Revista de Psihoterapie Experientiala*, 20(3), 13–24. Retrieved December 12, 2025, from https://jep.ro/images/pdf/cuprins_reviste/79_art_2.pdf
- Heiller, B., & Sills, C. (2018). Co-creative transactional analysis in group psychotherapy. In G. Summers & K. Tudor (Eds.), *Co-creative transactional analysis: Papers, dialogues and debates* (pp. 145–162). Karnac. ISBN: 978-1782201196
- Leutner, S., & Piedfort-Marin, C. (2021). The ego state concept: Historical background and contemporary developments. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 51(1), 21–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0362153720987397>
- Meşe, S. Ş., & Özerk, H. (2019). Üniversite sınavına hazırlanan ve özel dersanelere devam eden lise son sınıf öğrencilerinin kendilerinde algıladıkları ego durumları ile sınav kaygı düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi. *OPUS International Journal of Society Researches*, 11(18), 727–756. <https://doi.org/10.29228/opus.46517>
- Motyl, D. (2016). The drama triangle revisited: From victim to creator. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 46(3), 214–226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0362153716654884>
- Netrawati, I. G. A. A., Dantes, N., & Candiasa, I. M. (2018). The effect of transactional analysis counseling group services on the self-confidence of class XI students of SMK Negeri 1 Sukasada. *International Journal of Research in Counseling and Education*, 2(2), 68–76. <https://doi.org/10.21070/irjce.v2i2.1587>
- Ömür, S. (2021). Transaksiyonel analiz temelli psikoeğitim programının evlilik uyumu, evlilik doyumu ve evlilik çatışması üzerindeki etkisi. *Aile Psikolojik Danışmanlığı Dergisi*, 4(1), 35–58. <https://doi.org/10.55740/aipsid.900762>
- Popovych, I. S., et al. (2021). Transactional analysis in the structure of professional training of psychologists: Ego states and coping behavior. *Journal of Intellectual Disability – Diagnosis and Treatment*, 9(2), 97–105. <https://doi.org/10.17721/2308-8835.2021.2.97-105>
- Preda, A. (2013). Tags, transaction types, and communication in online anonymous markets. *Socio-Economic Review*, 11(1), 31–56. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mws024>
- Purwanto, A., Wijayanti, L. M., Hyun, C. C., & Asbari, M. (2019). The effect of transformational, transactional, authentic and authoritarian leadership style toward lecture performance of private university in Tangerang. *Dinasti International Journal of Digital Business Management*, 1(1), 29–42. <https://doi.org/10.33005/dinasti.v1i1.35>
- Rahmati, A., & Mosavi, M. (2018). The effectiveness of transactional analysis group therapy on marital intimacy and communication patterns. *Family Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 8(2), 45–64. <https://doi.org/10.29252/jhts.8.2.45>
- Rosenblatt, P. C. (2018). Meaningful communication and relational scripts. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 48(2), 95–104. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10879-017-9372-x>
- Shmelev, E. (2015). Beyond the drama triangle: new perspectives on victim, persecutor and rescuer roles. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 45(3), 215–226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0362153715587784>
- Solomon, C. (2003). Transactional analysis theory: The basics. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 33(1), 15–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/036215370303300104>
- Steiner, C. (1990). *Scripts people live: Transactional analysis of life scripts*. Grove Press. ISBN: 978-0-8021-3260-7
- Stewart, I., & Joines, V. (1987). *TA today: A new introduction to transactional analysis*. Lifespace Publishing. ISBN: 978-1870244029

Summers, G., & Tudor, K. (Eds.). (2018). *Co-creative transactional analysis: Papers, dialogues and debates*. Karnac. ISBN: 978-1782201196

Teeter, J. R. (2023). The Karpman drama triangle, the Choy winner's triangle, and the OK Corral as they pertain to academic achievement. *Learning Assistance Review*, 28(1), 88–112. <https://doi.org/10.55555/LEARNING.28.1.88-112>

Topbaş, Z. S., & Şimşek, N. (2023). Transaksiyonel analiz kuramı kapsamında bir film incelemesi: Kış uykusu. *Humanistic Perspective*, 5(3), 1026–1048. <https://doi.org/10.51860/hp.1348123>

Turhal, H., Kalyoncu, N., & Keçeci, A. (2018). Hemşirelik eğitiminde transaksiyonel analiz temelli bir grup çalışmasının iletişim becerileri üzerindeki etkisi. *Psikiyatri Hemşireliği Dergisi*, 9(3), 193–201. <https://doi.org/10.5222/jispn.2018.89547>

Ünsal Gülseven, G., & Türer, A. (2025). Examination of conflict resolution styles in romantic relationships according to the positive psychotherapy Four-Way Model. *European Archives of Social Sciences*, 2(2), 83–89. <https://doi.org/10.35365/eass.25.02.03>

Widdowson, M. (2010). *Transactional analysis: 100 key points and techniques*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0415489062

Zalcman, M. J. (1983). Acceptance speech for the Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award for the Racket System and Racket Analysis. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 13(1), 5–7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/036215378301300101>

Zengin, H. (2019). Edebî metinlerde benlik durumları ve yaşam senaryoları: Transaksiyonel analiz bağlamında bir çözümleme. *Turkish Studies*, 14(3), 1235–1256. <https://doi.org/10.29228/TurkishStudies.22915>

Zümbül, S. (2021). Transaksiyonel analiz terapisine kapsamlı bakış: Bir derleme çalışması. *OPUS Uluslararası Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 18(40), 4923–4958. <https://doi.org/10.29228/opus.87157>