**International Journal
of
Research in Finance and Management**

**Dr. Sanjay Kumar Hooda**
Assistant Professor,
Department of commerce,
Indira Gandhi University,
Meerpur, Rewari, Haryana,
India

# An analysis of interpersonal behavior and human interactions

**Dr. Sanjay Kumar Hooda**

**Abstract**
Transactional analysis is a method of analyzing and understanding the human behavior. It focuses on analyzing the nature of individual's verbal transactions with each other. It is an intellect tool to understand the people on the basis of behavior and feelings. Eric Berne said the 'Id', 'Ego' and 'Super Ego' are only concepts for human personality. He concluded that each individual's personality has three aspects or ego states; Parent, Adult and Child. He defines ego as "a coherent convention of feelings and have related to a comparable coherently convention of behavior of the individual". The interpersonal behavior and interrelationship of an individual philosophy was originally developed by 'Eric Berne' in his famous book 'Games People Play' in 1964, where introduced the concepts of transactional analysis and games. Thereafter, Thomas A Harris also expressed his view on this philosophy and wrote a book I'm Ok – You're Ok. This concept has also been discussed in the writings of Muriel James and Dorothy Jongeward, Abe Wegner and Louis Savory. Sigmund Freud suggested that id, ego and super ego are three important states within the human personality that stimulate, monitors and controls the behavior. The purpose of such type of transactional analysis was basically meant for psychotherapy and diagnostic purpose.

**Keywords:** Transactional, Id, ego, super ego, parent, adult child and interpersonal behavior etc

## Introduction

The interpersonal behavior and interrelationship of an individual philosophy was originally developed by 'Eric Berne' in his famous book 'Games People Play' in 1964 and gave the concepts of transactional analysis and games. Thereafter, Thomas A Harris expressed his thoughts of this philosophy more strongly in his book I'm Ok – You're Ok. This concept has also been discussed in the writings of Muriel James and Dorothy Jongeward, Abe Wegner and Louis Savory. Sigmund Freud who primarily suggested that Id, ego and super ego are three important states within the human personality that stimulate, monitors and controls the behavior. The purpose of such type of transactional analysis was basically meant for psychotherapies and diagnostic purposes. Eric Berne started his psychiatric residency at the Psychiatric Clinic of Yale University School of Medicine after completing his Master in Surgery and one year internship in 1936. Eric Berne observed in his patients. He found that these various 'selves' denoted the different states of ego in man. Today, transactional analysis has acquired the better position because the concepts adopted from Freud have been put in understandable and everyday terminology.

Joe Kelly has written that transactional analysis is a system of individual and social psychiatry which is concerned with the psychology of human relationships. Eric Berne has defined this concept as "the unit of social intercourse is called a transaction. If two or more people encounter each other, sooner or later one of them will speak or give some more indication of acknowledging the presence of the others. This is called the transactional stimulus. Another person will then say or do something which is in some way related to the stimulus, and that is called the transactional response". He concludes that transactional analysis is the procedure of evaluating this transaction wherein "I do something to you and you do something back" and ascertaining which part of the multi nature individual is being activated. Further, he described transactional analysis as "a taxonomic and coherent theory of human personality and social and cultural parameters derived from clinical experience and a rational form of therapy which is suitable for naturally adapted to the majority of the psychiatric patients.

**Corresponding Author:**
**Dr. Sanjay Kumar Hooda**
Assistant Professor,
Department of commerce,
Indira Gandhi University,
Meerpur, Rewari, Haryana,
India

According to Hose, transactional analysis focuses on areas emphasizes such as the structural development of the human personality, the way in which individual interacts each one to another, or the way in which people structure their time and the roles that people learn to play in life. So, in transactional analysis, transactions are analyzed to unlock the mysteries of why people do as they do. It is also the method of systematizing the information derived from analyzing these transactions. According to Stewart & Joines, (1987), the ego states are the just common concepts which have provided a foundation to transactional analysis. McLeod, 2009 concluded that the transactional analysis through the charts and figures provides the strengths to interpersonal relationships and human relations. Woollams S. & Brown M. (1978) [30] described that a person's behavior and social interrelationships reflect an interchange between parental adult and child like expression of personality established in initial age of a person. Federn's, 1952 depicted that ego is a subjective experience of a person which is emphasizes the output of any given movement.

Transactional analysis is a method of analyzing and understanding the human behavior. It focuses on analyzing the nature of verbal transactions of people with each other. It is an intellect tool to understand the people on the basis of their behavior and feelings. It is a useful form of psychotherapy but has increasingly been used as a management technique and organizational development technique. Transactional analysis has provided a new solution to those people who want to change instead of conformation.

According to transactional analysis, every individual is personality has been defined on three aspects, or ego states; Parent, Adult and Child type. Eric Berne depicted that ego is a coherent convention of feeling that related to a comparable convention of behavior of individual. When, a person interacts with other person, as a result, one of the ego states dominates that may lead to either complementary or crossed communications. All people behave differently due to these ego states at different time.

## What Personality is
The Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory of personality of is very important theory of assessment of human personality among it all the theories of human personality and interpersonal interactions. Freud has been contributor of the concepts of 'Id', 'Ego' and 'Super Ego'. Some other developers and psychologists such as Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, Carl Jung and Eric Fromm etc. have also contributed to it. According to Freud, the human personalities are made up of three interrelated dimensions and along with the concepts of the 'Id', 'Ego' and 'Super Ego'. The 'Id' is relatively close to unconsciousness. It is unleashed, raw, primitive and instinctual drive. It constantly struggles for gratification and pleasure and is manifested through the aggression. The 'Id' is a purely selfish, pleasure seeking structure and immoral. The 'ego' is conscious and is related to the reality. It keeps check an Id in through intellect and reason. It may be considered as 'rationality'. There is always a conflict between the ego and Id because of the Id needs immediate pleasure and the ego dictates denial. The third stage of the human personality is the 'super ego'. It is the conscience. It provides the norms and rules of

conduct that to help it the ego to ascertain what is right or wrong. It is developed by cultural values and moral of a society. The relationship between these three positions can be described as "the Id is starving for satisfaction, the ego is trying to delay it and the super ego urges morality above all". Carl Jung moved one step ahead of the Freud's theory and described three basic propositions in his theory; (a) Human personalities are regulated by former experiences and hopes for the future. (b) All individuals have the acceptations for future growth and developmental improvements and (c) Human Personality is the core of a person's interacting sub systems.

Eric Berne said the 'Id', 'Ego' and 'Super Ego' are only concepts for human personality. He concluded that each individual's personality has three aspects, or ego states; Parent, Adult and Child. He defines ego as "a coherent convention of feeling and have related to a comparable coherently convention of behavior of the individual". All the individuals undergo these three ego states at varying times. A balanced human personality maintains a equilibrium among all three. Ego states have nothing to do with the human aging factors; they are related with psychological age. Each ego state has both positive and negative features. We can detect the ego states that are in control by carefully observing not only the word used but also a person's tone, posture, gestures and facial expression. Ego states are psychic attitudes.

## Description of Ego States
**Parent Ego State:** Eric Berne said that "Everyone carries his parents around inside him". The parent ego is characterized by authoritarianism, self-righteousness and dominating state of mind. This state is a result of the 'message' (experimental conditions) which an individual receives from his parents. It is assessing part of the human personality and they arouse the value oriented behavior. The parent ego may appear as protective, controlling, nurturing and critical or instructive. There are two types of ego states: 'Nurturing Parent' type and 'Critical Parent' type. Nurturing Parent' types have to understand while the 'Critical Parent' types are to be evaluative and judgmental. Eric Berne has pointed out that the parental ego state is revealed in two forms; direct and indirect. In the direct ego state, a person responds as his/her like the father or mother and they have actually replied ('Do as I do'). In the indirect parental ego state, he responds the way they desired him to reply ('don't do as I do, do as I say'). In the first case he gets one of them, in the second, he accommodates himself to their needs.

**Adult Ego State:** The Adult Ego State evokes and reflects the logical, responsible, rational and unemotional behavior. This ego state is described by the diagnostic behavior, logical choices, seeking facts, processing information's and so on. An adult examines alternatives, estimates, probabilities and hold factual discussions, prior to engaging in behavior. It seeks reasoning and objectivity in decisions and interaction processes.

**Child Ego State:** In the child ego state shacks intuition, imagination of creative thinking, self-generated aim and the thrill for enjoyment. This ego state reflects the human tendencies of a child; such as dependent, impulsive, rebellious, conforming, submissive and insubordinate. According to the Eric Berne, the child's ego states have two

components: the adapted child and the natural child.

**Transactions between Ego States**
The individuals show that their ego states in transactions with other individuals. All the pioneers, theorists and psychologists assume that all the three ego states are essential for a sound human personality. But important is how one ego state correlates or encounters with another person is ego state in interpersonal dialogs. James and Jongeward have written that "anything that happens between individuals will involve a transaction between their ego states".

A transaction is an exchange of ideas, verbal or non verbal, which takes place between two people. The unit of social intercourse is called a transaction. The transaction comprises of a stimulus by one individual and a response by another, which further becomes a new stimulus for the other individual to respond to. All these transactions have been divided into three types; Complementary Transaction, Crossed Transaction and Ulterior transaction.

**Complementary transaction:** A transaction is complementary when a message from one ego states receives an anticipated response from the appropriate ego state in the recipient. This is the result of understanding and acceptance and follows the real orders of well kinship. As far as, the transactions are complementary, the communication will proceed smoothly. Most commonly, such transactions include Adult-to-Adult or between Parent and Child. Usually in such transactions both parties feel satisfaction and communication may be effective.
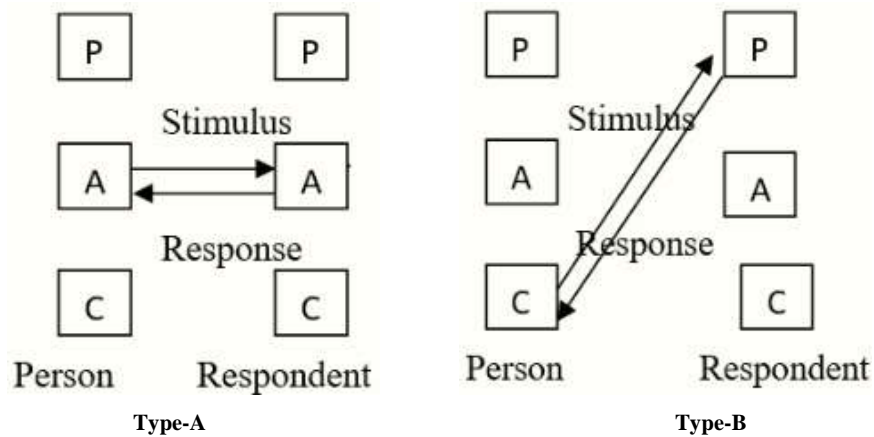


**Fig 1.1:** Complementary Transactions

**Crossed Transactions:** Crossed Transactions are occurs when a message from one person ego state is responded to, by a message coming from an incompatible ego state in the other person. Figure 1.2 shows some cross transactions. They may occur when the stimulus and response lines are not parallel. For example, such transaction occurs when the boss treats the subordinates like a child, but the subordinate attempts on responding to an adult basis. Eric Berne's has also emphasized on cross transaction by the simple example of husband and wife, where husband asked; "dear, where is my cuff links"? (An adult stimulus, inquiring approximately). A complementary response by wife may be, "in your top left dresser drawer" or "I haven't seen them but I will help you look". But she replies, "where you left them" it will cause trouble. It becomes a crossed transaction because the husband's question (stimulus) was adult, but the wife's behavior changed from adult to parent. Cross transactions cause interpersonal hostility and conflict in an organization. They hurt feelings, generate frustration and stop communication. In such transactions, the response is either inappropriate or unexpected. They can either be helpful or dysfunctional to the development of people.
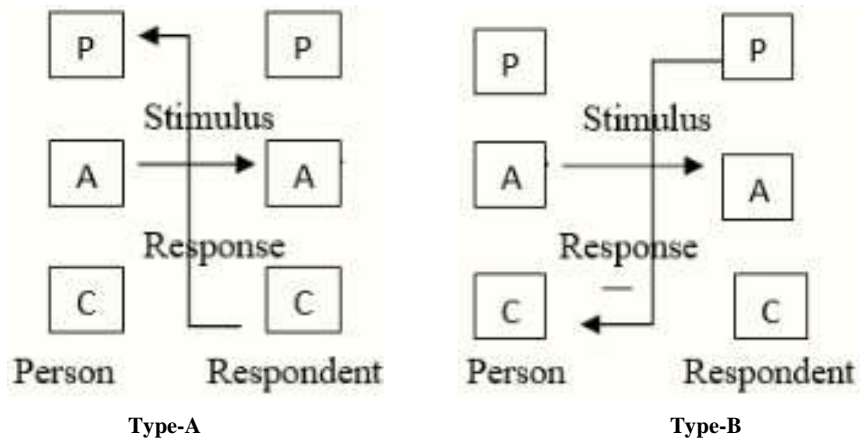


**Fig 1.2:** Cross Transactions

**Ulterior transaction:** Such transactions involve at least two ego states simultaneously. They caused damage to interpersonal relations and become the basis of games. They can be very complex and subtle. For example, the individual in such transactions may say one thing (projecting an adult state). There are many other possibilities of such transactions, thus they are difficult to identify and deal with. In fact, they have double meaning. The message may be different to the surface and psychological level.
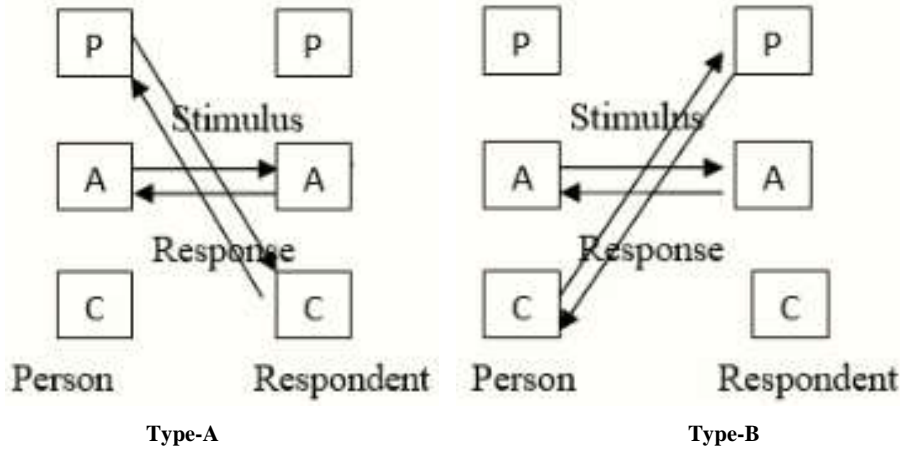


Type-A                                    Type-B

**Fig 1.3:** Ulterior Transactions

Figure 1.4 shows that there many transactions occur within a person's who is sending a message and respondent (second person) is reacting in same manner or in different way. Therefore, the stimulus of a person exhibits through a message in one type out of the three positions like; parent (P) or adult (A) or child (C) type and response connection may be in same manners by the receiver. The total connections except ulterior connection are explained in figure 1.4 of type-A and type-B.
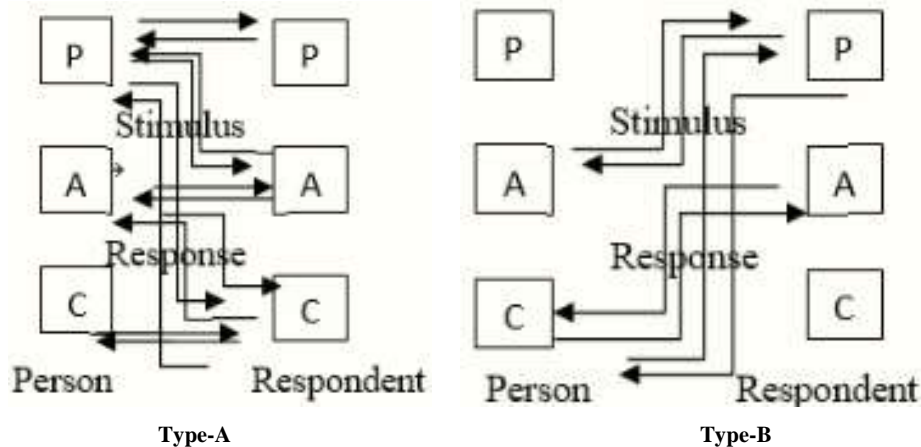


Type-A                                    Type-B

**Fig 1.4:** All Type Transactions

**Life Positions**

In the process of "growing up", the individuals make assumptions about the identity, sense of worth and perceptions of the other people. These assumptions are called life positions. According to Harry, the combination of all these assumptions of a person who is sending a message about one self and develops thinking about other person is called 'Life Positions'. Life positions are learned by way of reinforcements. These incline to be more long lasting than ego state. It is pertinent to mentioned here that although one life position dominates an individual's transactions but may be exposed from time to time to the particular transactions. Therefore, all life positions have been divided into four types:

**I am not Ok – you are Ok:** This is the state of initial stage of age, job or any execution where a person feels insecure as compare to others. In such a situation, a person's degree of confidence is found lowest at his work place and he feels that he is at the mercy of others. This is the position of early childhood. He feels a great need for recognition, cuddling, affection and praise from his contemporary or superior employees. He feels that the closest persons are more intelligent and problem solvers and they are being supported to overcome the problems than he himself has. Such a situation is found by those people who feel unsecure and powerless. As a result, they maintain a certain distance from their authority.

**I am not Ok – You are not Ok:** In this situation a person feels neglected by others like relative colleagues as well as family members like parents, wife and children. This position results when a person fails to receive recognition and affection and child is ignored. He is no longer given love, affection and strokes and as a result, he feels mistreated and misfit for all. If this experience persists, the person usually has a highly negative attitude towards life. He may give up; he does not trust other people and has no confidence in himself. It creates despairing outlook and negative perspective.

**I am Ok – You are not Ok:** In this situation a person who is suffering from rigid attitude of others towards him in the past time. This occurs when a person reaches a conclusion as a result of being hurt by family members or others including his superiors. The 'I am ok' feeling evokes when the person is healing. It is life saving decision by him. They desire to separate from those individuals who are responsible for such type of adverse situations. This is the hard fact the persons in this position suffer from stroking deprivation. Hence, they may develop a retinue of 'yes men'.

**I am Ok – You are Ok:** This life position is more rational as compared to first three positions. As a result, a person expresses confidence and trust in himself and others. These feelings tend to come from Fostering Parent type ego, Adult type ego and Well-chosen Child ego states. It results from the healthy, loving and positive experiences in our early years. This is the fact that the individuals receive many clues as a result of love, conformation and self actualization that we are 'Ok' and others also 'Ok'. It is essential to understand that the first three life positions are based on feelings and are unconscious, having been made early in life. But the said life position is a rational thought and with conscious decision making process on the basis of thoughts, truth and faith. The first three have to do with 'why' and later has to do with 'why not'. This life position denotes a psychological maturity. It is desirable for good interpersonal relationship. Keith Davis has suggested that irrespective of the person's life positions the 'I am Ok – You are Ok' can be conditioned. As a result the society may improve on the understanding of interpersonal behavior and human relations.

**Limitations of the study**
Personality is a very vast area of research. Numerous researchers have contributed to different theories and views according to their specialization. Because of time constraints, I have studied only three aspects of interpersonal behavior and human interactions. In this study, I have considered three aspects; Sigmund Freud's human personality dimensions, Eric Berne's Ego States of Transactions and life Positions. The remaining aspects stay untouched for the future research.

**Conclusion and suggestions**
The human personality comprises of three interrelated dimensions along with some different concepts of the 'Id', 'Ego' and 'Super Ego'. The 'Id' is relatively close to unconsciousness. It is unleashed, raw, primitive and instinctual drive. It constantly struggles for gratification and pleasure and is manifested through the aggression. The 'Id' is purely selfish, pleasure seeking structure and immoral. The 'Ego' is conscious and is related to the reality. It keeps the Id in check through intellect and reasoning. It may be considered as 'rationality'. There is always a conflict between the ego and Id because the Id needs immediate pleasure and the ego dictates denial. The third stage of the human personality is the 'super ego' and it reflects the conscience. It provides the norms and rules of conduct to make ego to ascertain what is right or wrong. It is developed by cultural values and morals of a society. The 'Id', 'Ego' and 'Super Ego' are only concepts for human personality. It is concluded that each individual's personality has three aspects or ego states: Parent, Adult and Child. The parent ego is characterized by authoritarianism, self-righteousness and dominating state of mind. This state is a result of the - 'message' (experimental conditions) an individual receives from his parents. The parent ego may appear as protective, controlling, nurturing and critical or instructive. The Adult Ego state evokes and reflects the logical, responsible, rational and unemotional behavior. This ego state is described by the diagnostic behavior, logical choices, seeking facts, processing information's and so on. In the Child Ego state shacks intuition, imagination of creative thinking, self-generated aim and the thrill for enjoyment. This ego state reflects the human tendencies as a child like dependent, impulsive, rebellious, conforming, submissive and insubordinate. I have analyzed the different transactions with the help of different figures and it is concluded that a transaction is complementary when a message from one ego states receives an anticipated response from the appropriate ego state in the recipient. This is a result of understanding and acceptance and follows the real orders of well kinship. In this conversation, both individuals are satisfied and communication is complete. Crossed Transactions or Non-Complementary may go on when the stimulus and response processes are not equal because both persons are acting differently. Such types of transactions cause interpersonal hostility and conflict in an organization. They hurt feelings, generate frustration and stop communication. In such transactions, the response is either inappropriate or unexpected. They can either be helpful or dysfunctional for the development of people. Ulterior Transactions are more difficult become the communication has double meaning. Such transactions involve at least two ego states simultaneously. They cause damage to interpersonal relations and become the basis of games. They can be very complex and subtle. The researcher has also analyzed the 'Life Positions' of a person and concluded that the situation *'I am not Ok- You are Ok'* is common to individuals which feel less confident in comparison to others. In such a position, a person is said to have passive behavior of high concern for others with compromising style. The situation of *'I am not Ok - You are not Ok'* a person feels neglected by others like relatives and office colleagues as well as family members like parents, wife and children. This position results when a person doesn't receive recognition and affection and the child is ignored. He is no longer given love, affection and as a result he feels mistreated and misfit for all. In the situation *'I am Ok- You are not Ok'* a person who is being suffering from rigid attitude of others towards him during of past time. This occurs when a person reaches a conclusion as a result of having received injuries by

family members or others including by office superiors. In the position *'I am Ok- You are Ok'*, a person possesses collaborating style and assertive behavior for others. These feelings tend to come from Fostering Parent type ego, Adult type ego and Well-chosen Child ego states. It results from the healthy, loving and positive experiences in our early years. It is suggested that the individuals receive many clues as a result of love, conformation and self actualization that we are 'Ok' and others also 'Ok'. It is also suggested that each and every person has the mental ability to decide what they wish for their lives and transactional analysis is helps to recognize the value and the way of systematic growth of a person.

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