Transactional Analysis and its Intrigue in Saudi Arabian Organizations

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Abstract

Transactional Analysis is a model of communication and it is gaining importance in Saudi organizations. This paper explores how TA helps to improve the personality and leadership of individuals and team in Saudi organization. Transactional analysis is a theory of personality with mutual contracting for growth and change in Saudi organizations. According to transactional analysis human personality is made up of three types of "ego states"; each of which is an entire system of thought, feeling, and behavior from which we interact with each other. Using transactional analysis to understand the dynamics of leadership style and its impact on leadership outcome will be a significant contribution to the knowledge of how personality of the leader impact leadership styles and in turn leadership outcome in Saudi organizations. This will have a major influence in human resource development in general and leadership assessment, selection and development through training and coaching in specific. This paper explores the implication of TA in Saudi organizations.

Keywords: Ego states, Leadership, Personality, Transactional analysis

1. Introduction: Transactional Analysis

Transactional Analysis is a theory of social psychology founded by Dr. Eric Berne in the 1950s. He developed the theory to be simple to learn, easy to comprehend, and quick to bring about change and cure in those who use it. Transactional analysis is both a theory of human personality and a system of improvement of human relationship. It gives systematic approach to understanding the link between human needs and behaviors and the way that individuals, groups and organizations are effective or ineffective in solving the problems and enhancing their relationships. The International Transactional Analysis Association (2004) defines transactional analysis as "a theory of human personality, a theory of social behavior, and a comprehensive system of psychotherapy". Transactional analysis provides to organizations a comprehensive model of personality, communication, motivation, conflict resolution, group dynamics, organization structure, leadership, goal-setting, and problem solving. Transactional Analysis helps the managers or leaders to understand behavioral patterns, communication, interpersonal relationship, motivation, time management etc.
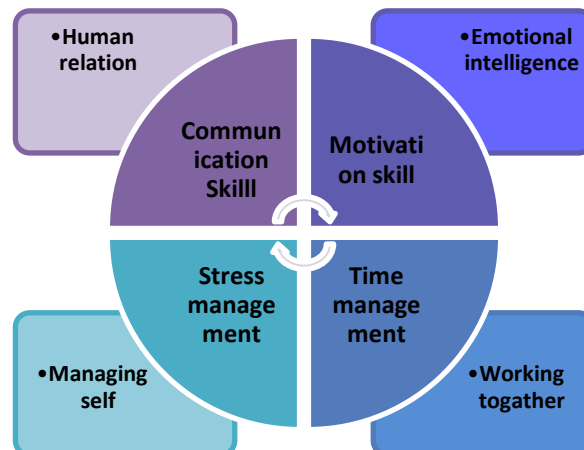
The researcher could be able to find very little review about TA in Saudi Arabia. This conceptual paper is applicable for both private and public companies in Saudi Arabia.

1.1 Ego States and Leadership in Saudi Organizations

For a healthy personality in Saudi organizations all three ego states are very important.

Parent ego state: Incorporated from our parents, coaches etc. This part of ego holds our beliefs, protects and nurtures, directs and controls us. The language of Parent ego state is imperative statements.

Adult ego state: It is rational part of us, Stores information. The language of Adult ego is primarily questions and rational.

Child ego state: It is our intuitive side. Inner child is creative. The language of child ego state is emotional.
Transactional Analysis can be widely used in coaching and learning situations. Transactional Analysis in group dynamics and human development make important one for organizational leaders in Saudi companies. Transactional analysis is a model of people and relationship.

1.2 Analyzing Transactions in Saudi Organizations

Transactional analysis involves identifying which ego state directed the stimulus and which ego state is the other person executed the response. Not all transactions are healthy and normal. These are classified as crossed transaction. This cross transaction happens in Saudi organizations because of language barrier. In crossed transaction an ego state which recurred the stimuli is the one that responds. It is very important to note that when analyzing the transactions one must look beyond what is said. Dr.Berne look at how words are being delivered (words, tones, volume etc). The importance of nonverbal cues was analyzed by Dr.Albert Mehrabian. He focuses on three types of communication.

Actual words-7%
Tone, accent-38%
Facial expression-55%

1.2.1 Strokes

Berne defined stroke as a fundamental unit of social activities. It is recognition. Person recognizes another person either verbally or non verbally. He says any stroke be it positive or negative than no stroke at all. In Transactional analysis today he summarized that "any stroke is better than no stroke at all"

Claude Steiner suggests 5 rules about stroking:
- ➢ Don't give stroke when we have them to give
- ➢ Don't ask for strokes when we need them
- ➢ Don't accept strokes of we want them
- ➢ Don't reject strokes when we don't want them
- ➢ Don't give ourselves strokes

Sometimes we need to change the restriction rules to unrestrictive ones
- ➢ Give strokes when we have them to give
- ➢ Ask for strokes if we want them
- ➢ Accept strokes if we want them
- ➢ Reject manipulation strokes
- ➢ Give ourselves position strokes

The strokes can be conditional or unconditional. An unconditional stroke is for being whereas a conditional stroke is a stroke for doing. People have stroke filter. They let in strokes which they think they are allowed to let in.

1.2.3 Blame Model in TA

In TA "okay corral" can be linked to "Blame". Jim Davis developed this model. When the emotions are triggered people adopt one of three attitudes relating to blame. They are

I am to blame (You are OK., I am not OK-Helpless)
You are to blame (I am OK and you are not OK- Angry)

We both are to blame (I am not OK and you are not OK-Hopeless)

1.2.4 Script plan in TA

Script is a life plan when we are growing up. Script is developed from early decisions based upon our life experiences. *For example, it may be to think about what we believe will happen when we are in old age, be healthy and contented??*

2. Structural Analysis and Functional analysis of Ego States

Parent ego state is a set of feelings, attitudes, and behavior patterns which resemble those of a parental figure (Berne, 1961). It is this part of the individual which deals with the morals, values, and prejudices that are derived from one's actual parental figures (Dusay, 1972). Adult ego state is characterized by an autonomous set of feelings, attitudes, and behavior patterns which are adapted to the current reality (Berne, 1961). The Adult is based upon a logical, rational, and computer-like use of data (Dusay, 1972). The Child ego state is a set of feelings, attitudes and behavior patterns, which are relics of the individual's own childhood (Berne, 1961). The Child ego-state consists of our own childhood experiences which we relive even as grownups. The Child ego-state is full of needs, wants, and the urge to satisfy them. In any organization in Saudi Arabia all these three ego states are used while communicating with individuals, groups or teams.

Each ego state manifests itself in many ways. Analysis of this behavioral manifestation of ego states is called functional analysis. Functionally the Parent ego state manifests itself in two different ways, the Critical Parent and Nurturing Parent. While the Critical Parent behavior is marked by being critical and judgmental, putting others down, Nurturing Parent behavior is characterized by loving, caring, directing, instructing etc. The Adult ego-state manifests itself as appropriate to the situation. Behaviorally it is involved with understanding the problem, collecting data, analyzing data, providing information, reasoning out, developing alternate courses of action, deciding upon the best option, implementing the action plan etc. The Adult takes the resources from the Child as per the needs of the self and incorporates values and experiences of the Parent and functions appropriate for the situation. The Child ego-state manifests itself as either Free Child or Adapted Child or Rebellious Child. When one expresses one's own feelings and thoughts uninhibitedly (not adapting to the external stimuli), then he is said to be in the Free Child. When in Adapted Child, we tend to adapt to the seemingly parental message of the other person. When one rebels against a perceived parental message, then it is Rebellious Child.

3. Transactional Analysis for Leadership

Leadership is vital for the survival of the organization. Leaders establish the environment for deciding and achieving the organizational goals and objectives. There are many leadership styles in the organization and there is one best leadership style that suit to all situations. The leadership style may emerge from one or more ego states.

Autocratic leadership---------------------------Parent ego state
Consultative leadership----------------------- Adult ego state
Free rein/ Permissive leadership-------------Child ego state

Transactional leaders always use Management by exception. It is based on contingency. Berne (1963) first wrote about his view of organizational theory in his book "Structure and dynamics of groups and organizations". Even though he was a psychotherapist and he developed transactional analysis as a system of psychotherapy, he was very much aware of and well-versed with the organizational theories of his times. His writings about groups and organizations were well referenced with ideas of greats like Freud, Bion, Bateson and Moreno. Berne simply extrapolated the use of clinical theories to organizational applications. For a long time even after Berne, many transactional analysis theorists and practitioners followed the same route of force-fitting the pathology based psychotherapy theory of transactional analysis into organizational field. Transactional analysis was adapted to apply for varied organizational functions like three-cornered contracting (Proctor, 2005), consumer behaviour (Bennett, 1996), client relationship (Mushkat, 1984), organizational communication (Morris & Watson, 2004; Kahler, 1988/2000), organizational games (Davies & Oswick, 1994), supply chain relationship management (Dani, Burns & Backhouse, 2006), training (Hannabuss, 1988; Hay 2009), conflict management (Blake & Mouton, 1978; Kowalski, 2005), and emotional intelligence (Burgess, 2005).

4. Transformational Leaders and Transactional Leaders in TA

Transformational leaders elevate the desires of followers, for achievement and self-development, while also promoting the development of groups and organizations. Instead of responding to the immediate self-interest of followers with either a carrot or a stick, transformational leaders arouse in the individual a heightened awareness to key issues, to the group and organization, while increasing the confidence of followers, and gradually moving them from concerns for existence to concerns for achievement, growth and development. Rather than merely focusing on ways to manage the status quo and day-to-day operations, transformational leaders try to maintain and communicate a vision of where their group, department, or organization should be heading (Avolio, Waldman, and Yammarino, 1991). As such, transformational leaders display four distinct characteristics that are labeled the Four I's:

Individualized consideration
Intellectual stimulation
Inspirational motivation
Idealized influence (Idealized Attributes and Idealized Behaviour)

Transactional leadership is an effective means of maintaining and/or achieving acceptable standards of performance. Transactional leadership is essential to maintain an acceptable degree of performance at all organizational levels. Employees must know their responsibilities and the potential rewards for attaining and maintaining sufficient standards of performance. To the extent that transactional leadership can provide greater goal clarity and acceptance of responsibility from followers, the more effective such leadership is over time.

5. Personality and Leadership in TA

Personality is relatively enduring characteristic that makes an individual unique and different from every other individual. It relates to people characteristic tendencies to behave, think and feel in certain ways. Hogan and Benson (2009) assert that leadership is a function of personality and that leadership is a determinant of organizational effectiveness. Berne (1963) referred to three types of leaders: first, the psychological leader "who, in the minds of the members, is most highly endowed with superior-usually un human-characteristics… such as wisdom, the working of miracles, prophecy and the discerning of spirits" which is reminiscent of the characteristics of a charismatic leader (Burns, 1978). Second, the effective leader "whose questions are most likely to be answered or whose suggestions are most likely to be followed in situations of stress" which corresponds to the characteristics of a transactional leader. Third, the responsible leader with who rests the accountability where "dominance, popularity and helpfulness find their usefulness." A transformational leader is one who possesses all these three qualities. The personality of these leaders demonstrate a wide range of childlike, adolescent, adult and parental behaviors and most successful leaders tend to flow from one mode of behavior to the other, effortlessly, focusing on their relationship with their members.

Transactional analysis presents a simple yet profound model of personality through the concept of ego states. Ego state development takes into account the person's life experiences and the whole person. It also takes into account the interplay between people as ego states are not static traits but dynamic characteristics of feeling, thinking and behaving when people relate with each other. Therefore, studying the relationship between transformational leadership and leadership outcomes with ego states will facilitate effective assessment, prediction and selection and training of effective leaders for the future business realities. This study will thus contribute something original to the leadership and transactional analysis literature that does not exist till now.

6. Implications of TA in Leadership of Saudi Organizations

Transactional analysis training was claimed to improve organizational effectiveness. However, there is very little empirical evidence for the same. Future research in Saudi organizations can study the impact of transactional analysis training coupled with full range of leadership development in developing transformational leadership qualities in leaders of different levels and gender. Another area of interest could be to study the effect of contextual factors that contribute to the effectiveness or appropriateness of transformational leadership.

Some conditions that are conducive to transformational leadership are organizations that are: undergoing change and hence the need to be adaptive, facing high level of environmental uncertainty warranting units with wide span of boundaries, characterized by simple or flexible organization structures that are facilitative to development of vision or a family or clan culture where there is high premium for members' interests being aligned with organizational mission.

These characteristics would facilitate the emergence of transformational leadership. Contextual factors that do not encourage transformational leadership are those organizations that: focus on efficiency, prefer predictability opposed to uncertainty, have a beaurocratic or mechanical structures, or with a market or beaurocratic or clan mode of organizational culture.

6.1 Implications of Ta in Saudi Organizations

Transformational leadership and OK ego states can contribute to improvement in strategic planning, corporate image, recruitment, selection and transfer of employees in Saudi organizations. They also have implications for job and organizational design as well as for decision making and organizational development.

6.1.1 Implications to Recruiting

Usually recruiters and job applicants look for transactional factors like salary, perks, and benefits when looking for a job and company to work. Greater attention needs to be paid to the organization's quality of leadership too. Organizations with high level of transformational leadership should attract better recruits. Prospects will favorably view the organization if the recruiters display individualized consideration and OK Nurturing Parent in their communication.

6.1.2 Implications to Selection and Promotion

The leadership components of idealized attributes/behaviour, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation can be incorporated into assessment, selection and promotion programmes. Through 360 degree feedback systems by Saudi organizations, followers, peers and superiors can give feedback to prospective candidates for promotion using the MLQ. These feedbacks can also be used for mentoring, counselling, coaching and training. Since transformational leaders display more OK ego states, TSI-M can be used as a valid screening instrument.

6.1.3 Implications to Employee Development

Transformational leaders can model effective leadership behaviours and thus act as strong source of Parental inputs to new recruits who learn a lot through observation and social learning. People go through all the stages of development whenever they join an organization and those who are in their first job look up to their first boss for acceptable behaviours and practices. A transformational leader with high levels of OK ego states will have a major positive impact in the development of such employees. Through modeling and shaping they can help groom a future generation of transformational leadership. Perception of transformational leadership by members results in reduced stress and burnout in them (Gill, Flaschner and Shachar, 2006).

6.1.4 Implications to Team Leadership

Team leaders need to pay individualized consideration. Every team will have different members with varied personality profiles and patterns of behaviour. The leader need to be able to reconcile with these differences and inspire and motivate members to rise above their individual differences and work for the vision of the team and the organization. At the relational level, team members should be able to adapt their stimuli and responses to the idiosyncratic ego states of the members. Transformational leaders will be able to adopt OK Critical Parent and be directive when necessary, clarifying, summarizing and testing for consensus.

6.1.5 Implications to Decision Making

Organizational or team decision making needs intellectual stimulation of members in order to innovatively develop alternatives and options from which to choose. Basic assumptions are to be tested and alternative viewpoints, positions and perspectives need to be developed and evaluated. Transformational leaders will bring in the desired OK Free Child in such scenarios to emerge with creative decisions.

6.1.6 Implications to Training and Development

Most leadership development programmes focus on only the leadership behaviours. But if these programmes can be integrated with personality related behavioural components, the overall effectiveness of such programmes would be enhanced.

7. *Future Scope of Ta in Saudi Arabia*

Recent studies on transformational leadership have focused on its spiritual aspects (Parameshwar, 2006). Trust in the leadership is required for willingness to identify with the organization and to internalize its values and the emergence in the workforce of transcendental organizational citizenship behaviour (altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtues) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). Stretching the boundaries to the spiritual domain may pave way to a higher level of leadership – transcendental leadership. For this, to start with, transformational leadership is needed along with corresponding changes in selection, training, development, and organizational policies. Bass (1999) mentions about "Full Range of Leadership Development" programme to train managers and executives in transformational leadership. But there is not many research conducted on the effectiveness of any such training programmes to prove that transformational leadership can be learnt by systematic training. This could be an area of experimental research with pre and post tests to ascertain the claim that transformational leadership can be learnt.

8. *Conclusion*

Transactional analysis training was claimed to improve organizational effectiveness. However, there is very little empirical evidence for the same. Future research can study the impact of transactional analysis training coupled with full range of leadership development in developing transformational leadership qualities in leaders of different levels and gender. Another area of interest could be to study the effect of contextual factors that contribute to the effectiveness or appropriateness of transformational leadership. Some conditions that are conducive to transformational leadership are organizations that are: undergoing change and hence the need to be adaptive, facing high level of environmental uncertainty warranting units with wide span of boundaries, characterized by simple or flexible organization structures that are facilitative to development of vision or a family or clan culture where there is high premium for members' interests being aligned with organizational mission. These characteristics would facilitate the emergence of transformational leadership. Contextual factors that do not encourage transformational leadership are those organizations that: focus on efficiency, prefer predictability opposed to uncertainty, have a beaurocratic or mechanical structures, or with a market or beaurocratic or clan mode of organizational culture. Empirical research is needed to validate these claims. A culture specific model of transformational leadership (Singh and Krishnan 2005) can be used in future studies

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