



Enhancing Self-Esteem through Transactional Analysis Group Training among College Students in Kerala

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Abstract

Background: The manner in which individuals perceive and evaluate their own worth constitutes a fundamental determinant of mental wellness and scholastic achievement among university learners. Within Kerala's educational landscape, characterized by heightened academic rivalry, numerous students grapple with diminished self-regard. The Transactional Analysis (TA) theoretical model presents a viable approach for bolstering self-worth by fostering enhanced personal insight and relational effectiveness.

Objective: The present investigation sought to examine the influence of a TA-grounded group intervention program on self-regard among undergraduate learners in Kerala, India.

Method: A quasi-experimental methodology incorporating baseline and post-intervention assessments with a comparison group was implemented. Eighty undergraduate learners from liberal arts and science institutions in Kerala were allocated to either a treatment condition (n = 40) or a comparison condition (n = 40). Treatment recipients engaged in eight TA-based group sessions lasting 90 minutes each, convened biweekly across a four-week duration. Self-regard was quantified utilizing the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES).

Results: ANCOVA findings revealed statistically meaningful between-group disparities at the post-intervention assessment, $F(1, 77) = 45.67, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .37$. The treatment group exhibited marked enhancement in self-regard indices (baseline $M = 18.45, SD = 4.32$; post-intervention $M = 26.78, SD = 3.89$), whereas the comparison group manifested negligible variation (baseline $M = 18.12, SD = 4.56$; post-intervention $M = 18.89, SD = 4.23$).

Conclusion: These outcomes furnish robust substantiation for the efficacy of TA group programming in augmenting self-worth among Kerala's collegiate population. Such findings carry significant ramifications for psychological counseling provisions and wellness initiatives within academic establishments throughout the region.

Keywords: - Transactional Analysis, Self-Esteem, College Students, Group Intervention, Kerala.

I. INTRODUCTION

Self-regard, characterized as a person's holistic subjective appraisal of their intrinsic value (Rosenberg, 1965), stands among the most thoroughly examined psychological phenomena. Empirical evidence consistently indicates that robust self-worth correlates with diverse favorable outcomes encompassing scholastic success, mental wellness, and effective social bonds (Orth & Robins, 2014). In contrast, deficient self-regard has demonstrated associations with depressive symptomatology, anxious states, problematic substance use, and numerous additional psychological challenges (Sowislo & Orth, 2013).

The undergraduate phase constitutes a pivotal developmental juncture wherein self-worth may prove especially susceptible. Learners encounter myriad obstacles including scholarly demands, self-exploration, interpersonal connections, and vocational choices (Arnett, 2015). Within Kerala's context, these difficulties are frequently intensified by the intensely competitive scholastic milieu, familial anticipations, and cultural pressures endemic to the state's academic infrastructure.

Kerala's prioritization of educational excellence, while yielding elevated literacy statistics and academic accomplishments, simultaneously generates considerable psychological strain on learners (Soman, 2018).

Investigations undertaken in Kerala have chronicled troubling degrees of psychological anguish among university learners. Findings from (Nair et al., 2020) indicated that a substantial segment of collegiate students within the state exhibited anxiety and depressive manifestations, with compromised self-regard recognized as a contributory element. Kerala's distinctive sociocultural milieu, encompassing its matrilineal customs in particular communities, accelerated modernization processes, and extensive migratory patterns, engenders an intricate setting that may influence student self-perception (Kurien, 2021).

Transactional Analysis (TA), formulated by psychiatrist Eric Berne during the late 1950s, furnishes an encompassing theoretical scaffold for comprehending personality architecture, interpersonal exchanges, and psychological transformation (Berne, 1961). Foundational to TA doctrine is the notion of ego states, representing discrete configurations of cognition, affect, and conduct. Berne delineated three cardinal ego states: Parent, Adult, and Child. The Parent ego state encompasses orientations, principles, and comportments assimilated from parental figures. The Adult ego state embodies logical, reality-grounded processing. The Child ego state incorporates affective responses and developmentally acquired behavioral patterns.

TA doctrine posits that self-regard maintains intimate connections with life position constructs, which represent foundational convictions regarding oneself and others established during early development (Harris, 1969). The four life orientations comprise: I'm OK, You're OK (adaptive stance); I'm OK, You're Not OK (externalized stance); I'm Not OK, You're OK (internalized stance, correlated with diminished self-worth); and I'm Not OK, You're Not OK (hopelessness stance). Via TA-based interventions, persons can attain consciousness of their life orientation and progress toward embracing the healthful I'm OK, You're OK position.

Scholarly inquiry has yielded substantiation for the utility of TA interventions in augmenting psychological wellness. (Torkaman et al., 2020) executed a controlled investigation revealing that TA group treatment substantially elevated self-regard among individuals diagnosed with major depressive disorder. (Vos & van Rijn, 2022) disseminated a comprehensive synthesis and quantitative integration discovering support for TA treatment efficacy spanning diverse clinical manifestations. Research within academic contexts has yielded encouraging outcomes for TA-grounded approaches with learner populations (Sundah, 2018).

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The central aims guiding this investigation were:

- To gauge self-worth levels among Kerala's collegiate learners preceding and succeeding Transactional Analysis group programming.
- To appraise the efficacy of Transactional Analysis group programming in bolstering self-regard among Kerala's university students.

1.2. Hypotheses

- H1: Statistically meaningful disparities in self-regard indices will emerge between collegiate learners receiving TA group programming and those comprising the comparison condition.
- H2: University students engaging in TA group programming will exhibit meaningfully elevated self-worth scores at post-intervention relative to baseline.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Self-Esteem in College Students

Self-regard has been theorized through diverse perspectives across psychology's evolution. (Rosenberg, 1965) characterized self-esteem as a favorable or unfavorable orientation toward oneself, integrating both evaluative and emotional dimensions. This theoretical formulation has steered considerable ensuing scholarly work within the domain. Present-day investigators broadly concur that self-worth mirrors an individual's comprehensive perception of personal merit and intrinsic value (Orth & Robins, 2014).

Scholarly inquiry has persistently affirmed self-regard's significance for psychological adjustment. Quantitative synthesis investigations have established that compromised self-worth correlates with depressive states (Sowislo & Orth, 2013), anxious symptomatology, and diminished life fulfillment. Prospective research intimates that deficient self-regard may function as a susceptibility element for psychological difficulties' emergence (Orth et al., 2016). Alternatively, robust self-esteem demonstrates links to heightened resilience, superior adaptive capacities, and enhanced scholastic outcomes.

Investigations within India's milieu have illuminated distinctive elements shaping self-worth among collegiate learners. (Deb et al., 2015) ascertained that scholastic demands, parental anticipations, and peer dynamics substantially influenced Indian students' self-regard. Specifically within Kerala, studies have chronicled the psychological ramifications of the state's intensely competitive academic atmosphere. The focus on scholarly attainment, while generating commendable educational outcomes, has shown associations with heightened stress and anxiety levels among students (Thomas & Raj, 2019).

2.2. Transactional Analysis: Theoretical Framework

Transactional Analysis materialized during the 1950s via Eric Berne's endeavors, who aspired to construct an approachable methodology for grasping human conduct and enabling psychological transformation (Berne, 1961). TA synthesizes psychodynamic notions with humanistic tenets, providing both a personality framework and a modality for

therapeutic engagement. The ego state paradigm constitutes TA theory's cornerstone, with each ego state-Parent, Adult, and Child-embodiment an integrated configuration of cognitions, emotions, and actions.

The stroke notion occupies centrality in comprehending self-regard through a TA lens. Strokes represent acknowledgment units, and (Berne, 1972) advanced that humans harbor an essential requirement for strokes comparable to biological necessities for nourishment and protection. Life scripts, an additional pivotal TA construct, represent subconscious life blueprints formulated during childhood that shape an individual's self-perception and life course (Berne, 1972).

2.3. Effectiveness of TA Interventions

Scholarship probing TA intervention efficacy has accrued across multiple decades. (Vos & van Rijn, 2022) undertook a comprehensive synthesis scrutinizing TA treatment effectiveness spanning diverse clinical presentations. (Torkaman et al., 2020) disseminated a controlled investigation in BMC Psychology scrutinizing TA group treatment's influence on self-regard among patients with major depressive disorder. (Sundah, 2018) explored TA group counseling's influence on self-regard among secondary learners, discovering meaningful improvements within the treatment cohort.

III. METHOD

3.1. Research Design

The present investigation utilized a quasi-experimental methodology incorporating baseline and post-intervention measurements with a comparison cohort. The predictor variable comprised group classification (treatment versus comparison), while the criterion variable was self-regard as quantified by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

3.2. Participants

Study participants comprised 80 undergraduate learners enlisted from two liberal arts and science institutions affiliated with the University of Kerala in Thiruvananthapuram district. Eligibility requirements encompassed:

- Registration as a full-time undergraduate learner
- Chronological age spanning 18 to 25 years
- Low to moderate self-worth as denoted by a rosenberg self-esteem scale value beneath 25
- Provision of informed assent.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 80)

Variable	Experimental (n=40)	Control (n=40)
Male	16 (40.0%)	15 (37.5%)
Female	24 (60.0%)	25 (62.5%)
Age M (SD)	20.35 (1.42)	20.18 (1.56)

3.3. Instruments

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The RSES (Rosenberg, 1965) constitutes a broadly employed 10-item self-assessment instrument gauging global self-regard. Responses utilize a 4-point Likert format spanning 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), yielding aggregate scores between 10 and 40. Within the current investigation, Cronbach's alpha reached .85 at baseline and .88 at post-intervention.

3.4. Intervention

The TA group programming intervention encompassed eight 90-minute gatherings convened biweekly across four weeks. Sessions were directed by a credentialed Transactional Analyst possessing expertise in academic contexts and familiarity with Kerala's milieu.

3.5. Procedure

Institutional ethics authorization was secured from the review committee preceding data gathering. Learners satisfying eligibility specifications were allocated to treatment or comparison conditions predicated on institutional enrollment to curtail cross-contamination between cohorts.

3.6. Data Analysis

Quantitative analyses were executed utilizing SPSS version 26.0. The principal hypothesis underwent examination employing analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with post-intervention self-regard scores as the criterion variable, cohort as the predictor variable, and baseline scores as the covariate.

III. RESULTS

3.1. Preliminary Analyses

Initial analyses scrutinized baseline comparability between cohorts. Independent samples t-tests disclosed no meaningful disparities between treatment and comparison cohorts on baseline RSES values, $t(78) = 0.34$, $p = .735$. ANCOVA prerequisites were evaluated and satisfied.

3.2. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 displays summary statistics for self-regard indices organized by cohort and assessment occasion. The treatment cohort manifested considerable enhancement in average self-worth values from baseline to post-intervention, while the comparison cohort exhibited negligible variation.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Self-Esteem Scores by Group and Time

Time Point	Exp M	Exp SD	Ctrl M	Ctrl SD
Pretest	18.45	4.32	18.12	4.56
Posttest	26.78	3.89	18.89	4.23
Change	8.33	2.87	0.77	1.98

Fig 1: Self-Esteem Scores: Pretest vs Posttest Comparison

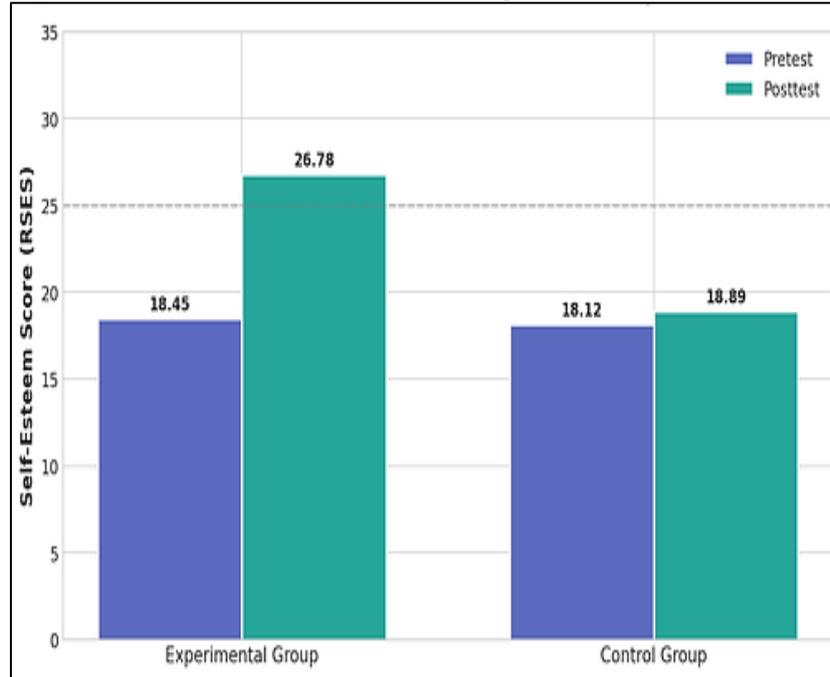
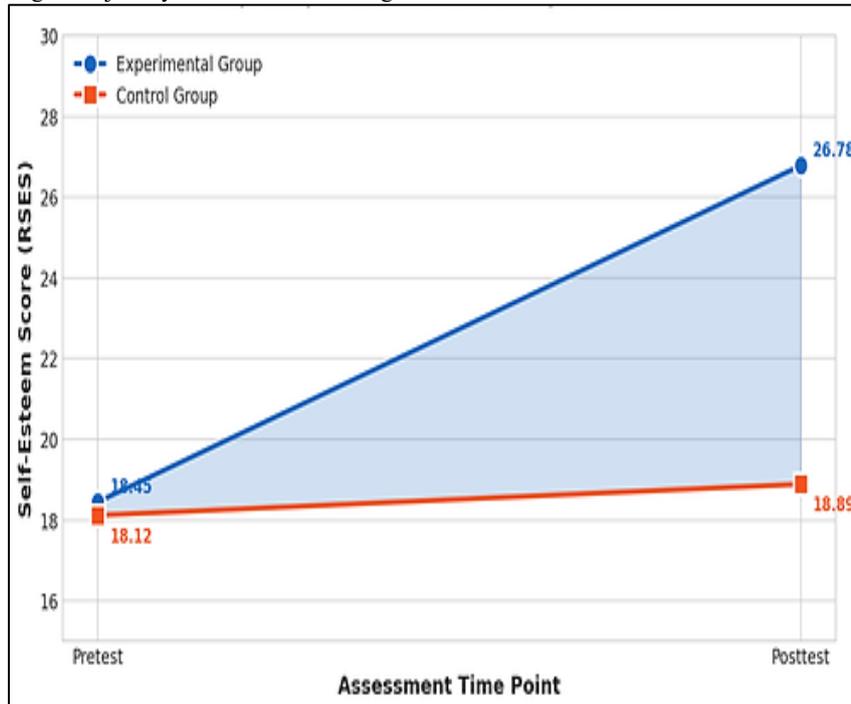


Fig 2: Trajectory of Self-Esteem Change Over Time



3.3. Hypothesis Testing

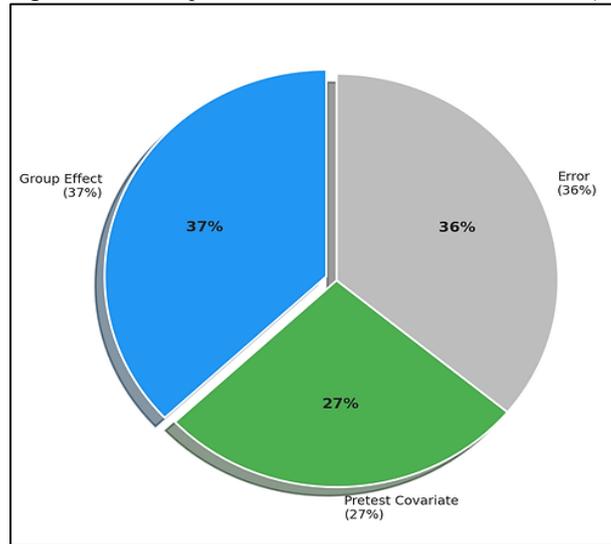
ANCOVA was implemented to evaluate the principal hypothesis. Findings disclosed a statistically meaningful cohort effect on post-intervention self-regard indices following adjustment for baseline values, $F(1, 77) = 45.67, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .37$. Per (Cohen, 1988) benchmarks, this denotes a substantial effect magnitude.

Table 3. ANCOVA Summary Table for Self-Esteem Scores

Source	SS	df	MS	F	η^2
Pretest	312.45	1	312.45	28.34***	.27
Group	503.23	1	503.23	45.67***	.37
Error	848.67	77	11.02		

Note. *** $p < .001$

Fig 3: Variance Explained in Post-Intervention Self-Esteem (ANCOVA Results)



Paired samples t-tests were executed to scrutinize within-cohort alterations. The treatment cohort exhibited a statistically meaningful elevation in self-regard indices, $t(39) = 18.35, p < .001, d = 2.03$ (substantial effect). The comparison cohort manifested no meaningful alteration, $t(39) = 1.56, p = .127, d = 0.18$ (trivial effect).

Table 4. Paired Samples t-test Results

Group	Mean Diff (SD)	T	P	d
Experimental	8.33 (2.87)	18.35	< .001	2.03
Control	0.77 (1.98)	1.56	.127	0.18

Fig 4: Mean Change in Self-Esteem Scores by Group (Posttest- Pretest)

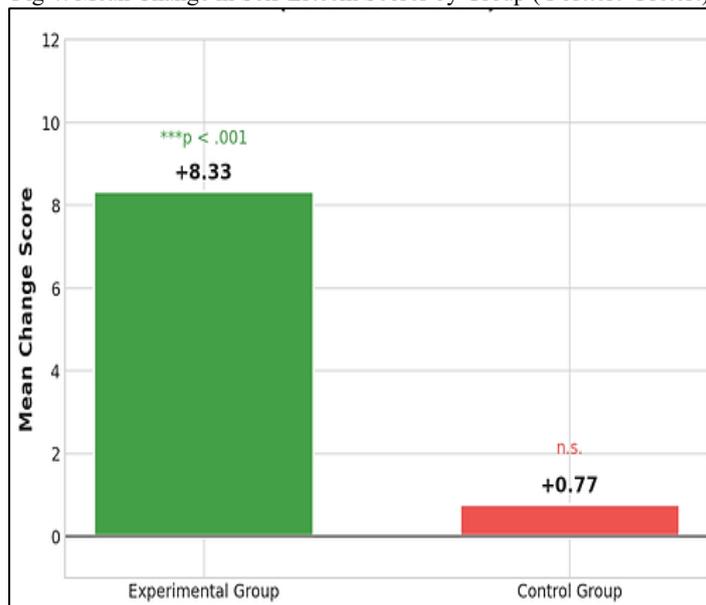
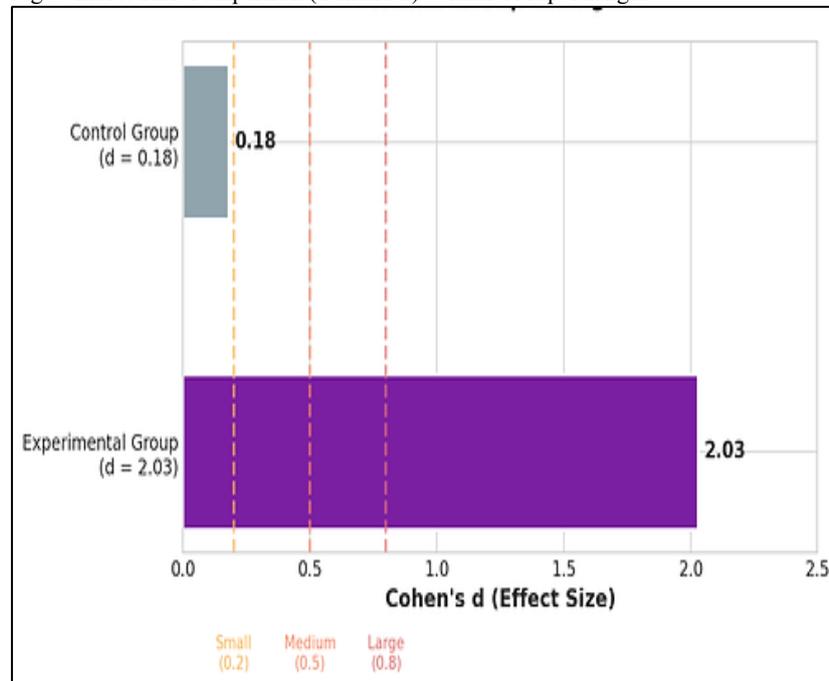


Fig 5: Effect Size Comparison (Cohen's d) Within Group Changes



IV. DISCUSSION

The present inquiry probed the efficacy of Transactional Analysis group programming for augmenting self-regard among Kerala's collegiate learners. Outcomes furnish compelling substantiation for the research predictions, revealing that individuals receiving the TA intervention manifested meaningfully superior improvements in self-worth relative to comparison cohort members. The substantial effect magnitude (partial $\eta^2 = .37$) signifies the intervention wielded a consequential and pragmatically meaningful influence on self-esteem.

These outcomes accord with antecedent scholarship substantiating TA intervention utility for bolstering self-worth and psychological wellness. (Torkaman et al., 2020) comparably discovered meaningful self-regard improvements subsequent to TA group treatment within a clinical cohort. Multiple conceptual mechanisms within TA theory may elucidate the documented self-regard enhancements, including work with life positions and ego states.

4.1. Limitations

Multiple constraints warrant acknowledgment when construing these outcomes. The quasi-experimental methodology precludes equivalent causal inference levels as genuine randomized controlled experimentation. The investigation omitted follow-up evaluations, and the sample derived from a single Kerala district, potentially constraining transferability.

4.2. Implications and Recommendations

The outcomes bear consequential ramifications for psychological wellness provisions within academic establishments throughout Kerala. Prospective scholarship should employ randomized experimental configurations and incorporate follow-up evaluations to fortify causal determinations and appraise outcome durability.

V. CONCLUSION

The present investigation furnishes substantiation endorsing Transactional Analysis group programming's efficacy for bolstering self-regard among Kerala's collegiate learners. The meaningful enhancements manifested within the treatment cohort, coupled with the substantial effect magnitude, intimate that TA constitutes a valuable intervention methodology for addressing self-worth concerns within this demographic.

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