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**AN APPROACH OF PARENTING STYLES FROM THE  
PERSPECTIVE OF TRANSACTIONAL ANALYZE**

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**Abstract**

This study presents an approach of parenting styles from the perspective of transactional analyze. Based on the theoretical system developed by psychologist Eric Berne (1961), transactional analyze (TA) as experiential approach modern counseling and psychotherapy, was conceived as a means of development and personal evolution to improve communication, of interrelation. Transactional analyze identifies how the social environment, especially family, school, and, more recently, media, influences the formation of particular patterns of communication and interrelation, with positive/negative effects, personal and social. The theoretical study reveals the correlations between the different parenting styles and states of ego expressed by parents in their relationships with the children and their effects in terms of developing condition of Ego responsible for certain emotions, beliefs and behaviors of children and adolescents (Normative Parent, Benevolent Parent, Adult, Free Child, Adapted Child, Rebel Child). We believe that for parents and counselors/psychotherapists this analysis is useful. The adoption a correct parenting style is essential for the harmonious development of children's personality.

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**Keywords:** Transactional Analyze (TA); parenting style; Ego states; Parent Ego; Adult Ego; Child Ego.

## **1. Introduction**

The family is one of the oldest social constructions in ensuring continuity and affirmation of the human species. It is the most relevant socio-affective background for the formation and evolution of the man. The evolution of family is conditioned by the values the society reflects at a certain historical stage: axiomatic, scientific, political, economic, technological etc. The level of adaptation and social integration

of a person is directly dependent on acquisitions within the family group affiliation as the primary source of learning, emotional support and security.

The modalities of expression and manifestation of feelings, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of parents in relationships with their children determine certain styles and create a certain emotional climate. Synthesizing the papers which approach the parenting styles, we find that they are established according to two criteria:

- a. *authority/liberalism or constraint/tolerance;*
- b. *love/hostility or attachment/rejection* (Reuchlin, 1972; Kellerhals & Montandon, 1997, cf. Stănciulescu, 1997).

In this regard, the typology formulated by Diana Baumrind in 1973 is representative: *authoritarian style* (control the child's behavior in a punitive mode; high anxiety), *democratic style* (collaborates with the child in a protective mode; low anxiety) *the permissive style* (the child resolves the tasks independently, the parents do not cooperate with the child, but offer positive feedback).

Another tipologie elaborated by Clautier in 1996 it is based on two criteria (as cited in Stănciulescu, 1997): *sensitivity* (to the child's needs) and *control* (active/passive). Combining them, it results: *autocratic style* (insensitive parents to the needs of child, active control); *disengaged style* (low control, low interest for child and his needs); *permissive style* (sensitive parents to the needs of child, low control); *democratic style* (active control, sensitivity to the child's needs).

The study of parental typologies helps parents or prospective parents to adopt a correct parental style for harmonious evolution of their children (emotional, cognitive and behavioral). On that aspect reflects different orientations modern psychological and pedagogical, with theoretical and methodological impact on counseling and psychotherapy, but also on educational practice. That is *transactional analysis* (TA) which identifies the role of social environment (family, school, and, more recently, media) in the formation of patterns of communication and interrelation, with positive /negative consequences in personal and social existence.

Based on the theoretical system developed by psychologist Eric Berne (*Transactional Analysis and Psychotherapy*, 1961), transactional analysis, as experiential modern approach in counseling and psychotherapy, was conceived as a means of development and personal evolution for to improve communication and interpersonal relationships. Berne suggests structuring of personality in *three Ego states: Parent Ego, Adult Ego, Child Ego*. Each person develops *three Ego states*. These including: rules and behaviors, thoughts, judgments, emotions and feelings. The harmony and their proper updating of situation is the sine qua non condition for our state well, child or adult (De Lassus, 2000).

In the transactional counseling, an important role is given to the development of *Child state*, of creative, original and unique component of person. The person is encouraged to trust in *intuition*, to express emotions and feelings, freely and spontaneously, to learn new permissions (ex: to find a large number of additions to the phrase: *I decide to allow me to ...!*).

„Depending on the type of education in family and school, the three Ego states develops harmoniously or disproportionate” (Băban, 2001, p. 63). By inadequate educational models and strategies is hypertrophy one or another state. For example, the rigid, constraining education exacerbates the *Parent Ego*. Contrary, a very permissive education leads to oversize of *Child Ego*.

## 2. Purpose of the study

This study presents an approach of parenting styles from the perspective of transactional analyze (theoretical system developed by psychologist Eric Berne in 1961). The study proposes an analysis of correlations between parenting styles and *Ego states* that parents express them in their relations with their children. Also, the study highlights the consequences of parenting styles on *Ego states* of the child: *Normativ Parent (NP)*, *Benevolent Parent (BP)*, *Adult (A)*, *Adapted Child (AC)*, *Free Child (FC)*, *Rebel Child (RC)*.

Their purpose this study is essentially understanding of human reality, the relationship between educational style of parents and children's attitudes and behaviors in relationships with self and with others. The adoption a correct parenting style is essential for the harmonious development of children's personality.

## 3. Research methods

Our study is based on the method of descriptiv case study (Yin, 1994, as cited in Tellis, 1997). This method allowed the identification of correlations between parenting styles and *Ego states* expressed in parent-child communication. Also, we identified correlations between parenting styles and *Ego states* that each generates to the child's personality.

## 4. Findings

The correlations between parenting styles and *Ego states* expressed in parent-child communication - *Normativ Parent (NP)*, *Benevolent Parent (BP)*, *Adult (A)*, *Adapted Child (AC)*, *Free Child (FC)*, *Rebel Child (RC)* - are described in the table below (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Parenting styles and *Ego states* expressed by parents

Parenting styles	Characteristics	Messages parents	Ego states expressed by parents					
			NP	BP	A	AC	FC	RC
<b>authoritarian</b>	- parents establish limits, strict principles and rules of moral conduct; - high level of parental control; - values: order and discipline, respect for parental authority, perfectionism.	<i>You need to respect me!</i>	X		X			
		<i>How many times must I tell you you're not supposed to do that?</i>	X					
		<i>You're guilty! You should be ashamed!</i>	X					
<b>democratic</b>	- involves high levels of heat/affection and control (Baumrind, 1978); - the parents encourage, explain, communicate, collaborate with the child in a loving, empathetic mode; - values: dignity and valorisation, responsibility and decision making.	<i>Very good! Bravo!</i> <i>You get a good result!</i>					X	X
		<i>Do not be afraid ! You will succeed!</i>					X	
		<i>We support your decision!</i>					X	
<b>permissive</b>	- sensibility, affection and interest for the child's needs; - difficulties in establishing	<i>Do not be worried! You're doing you ...!</i>						X
		<i>How you want!</i>					X	

	clear, farm rules; - values: freedom, independence.	<i>You can! Are you able to do that!</i>							<b>X</b>
<b>autocratic/ abusive</b>	- the parents do not respond to emotional needs of children;  - abusive attitudes and behaviors: labeling, irony, humiliation, emotional and physical abuse etc.;  - the parents do not encourage their children to solve problems;  - values: obedience, discipline, respect etc.	<i>You're not able to do anything!</i>							<b>X</b>
		<i>Please shut up, you have no right to say anything, you were wrong!</i>							<b>X</b>
		<i>If you do not come home with good grades, you're screwed!</i>							<b>X</b>
		<i>If you do not learn, you are a loser!</i>							<b>X</b>
<b>disengaged/ negligent</b>	- the parents show low love;  - indifference to the needs of the child;  - absence of communication, control and emotional involvement in the child's life;  - in extreme situations, the child does not receive food, shelter, clothing, medical care.	<i>I do not care!</i>							<b>X</b>
		<i>Leave me alone!</i>							<b>X</b>
		<i>Do what you want!</i>							<b>X</b>

In the table below are described the parenting styles and Ego states of the child (Table 2):

**Table 2.** Parenting styles and Ego states (children)

Parenting styles	Consequences	Messages children	Ego states (children)						
			NP	BP	A	AC	FC	RC	
<b>authoritarian</b>	Negative consequences: lower self-esteem, fear, anxiety, low communication skills, lack of initiative, discouragement, low school performance, stress, revolt, guilt, indifference, motivation etc.	<i>I was wrong!</i>					<b>X</b>		
		<i>I am not best!</i>					<b>X</b>		
		<i>It's never good! I do not want to learn math!</i>							<b>X</b>
<b>democratic</b>	Positive consequences (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991): social responsibility, emotional balance, communication skills, creativity, decision capacity, autonomy etc.	<i>My parents understand me!</i>				<b>X</b>			
		<i>I know I can always rely on my parents!</i>				<b>X</b>			
		<i>I want to share my impressions of my mother!</i>						<b>X</b>	
<b>permissive</b>	Negative consequences: indiscipline, superficiality.  Positive consequences: independence, creativity, communication, sociability, courage, perseverance, high aspirations etc.	<i>I am free!</i>						<b>X</b>	
		<i>Leave me alone! I do what I want!</i>						<b>X</b>	
		<i>I do not want advice!</i>							<b>X</b>

<b>autocratic/ abusive</b>	Negative consequences: fear, lies, intolerance, inferiority complex, depreciation of the parents etc.	<i>My parents are very bad!</i>	<b>X</b>
		<i>Whatever I do, everything is bad!</i>	<b>X</b>
		<i>I not tell them the truth, because I'll be punished!</i>	<b>X</b>
<b>disengaged / negligent</b>	Negative consequences: low self-esteem, insensitivity, apathy, aggression, anxiety, uncertainty, sadness, despair, autonomy excessive etc.	<i>I do what I want! My parents are not interested me!</i>	<b>X</b>
		<i>If you still do not matter to them, what's the point to come home?</i>	<b>X</b>
		<i>My parents not love me!</i>	<b>X</b>

Our study shows the relationship between parenting styles and *Ego states* expressed by attitudes and parental behaviors. Also, the study shows the relationship between parenting styles and *Ego states* generated at the child's personality: *Normative Parent, Benevolent Parent, Adult, Adapted Child, Free Child, Rebel Child*. Thus, we can identify the following relational schemes:

1. Authoritarian parenting style (*Normative Parent*)  $\Rightarrow$  *Adapted Child, Rebel Child, Normative Parent*.
2. Democratic parenting style (*Adult, Benevolent Parent, Free Child*)  $\Rightarrow$  *Adult, Free Child, Benevolent Parent*.
3. Permissive parenting style (*Benevolent Parent, Free Child, Adapted Child*)  $\Rightarrow$  *Adult, Free Child, Rebel Child*.
4. Abusive parenting style (*Normative Parent, Rebel Child*)  $\Rightarrow$  *Adapted Child, Rebel Child*.
5. Negligent parenting style (*Rebel Child, Normative Parent*)  $\Rightarrow$  *Rebel Child, Adapted Child, Free Child*.

## 5. Conclusions

However, this dates expresses a relative reality. Each family is unique, by its relations, by the functions they performs, by communication, attitudes and behaviors. For this reason, the issuing of general assertions is risky. We believe that for parents and counselors/psychotherapists this analysis is useful. In sessions of psycho-pedagogical transactional counseling, the parents or future parents should learn that the adoption a correct parenting style is essential for the harmonious development of children's personality: cognitive, emotional and behavioral. Moreover, the whole dynamic of transactional counseling is centered on learning, development and optimization.

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