



## STUDY ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STIMULATION BY POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE STROKES PERCEIVED BY MEDICAL STUDENTS FROM THE TEACHERS OF A MEDICAL SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Healthy social recognition (strokes) can be regarded as central to teacher – student relationship. Transactional Analysis (TA) is a theory of psychology which has wide application in field of education. The study was planned to measure strokes (social recognition) from teachers, stroke economy and effects as perceived by medical students. **Methodology:** This was a cross sectional study among 63 consenting medical students. Equal numbers of participants were selected from each batch by systematic random sampling. A validated structured self administered questionnaire on five point Likert scale was used for the study. The frequency and proportion for first two points in Likert scale were combined and used as reference to summarize the pattern. **Results:** Students perceived positive strokes most frequently for extracurricular Involvement (38%) and negative strokes most frequently for Curricular Involvement (30.2%). Positive strokes for curricular involvement were the most accepted (73.3%). Unconditional negative strokes (25%) and conditional positive for extra-curricular non involvement were the most rejected strokes (21.7%). Negative strokes for Extra-curricular involvement were the least accepted (11.6%). Unconditional positive strokes were highly accepted (53.4%) than unconditional negative strokes (16.1%). Among the negative strokes, the ones for curricular non involvement are more likely to have perceived positive effects (44%) on students academics. Positive strokes for extra-curricular involvement predominantly had perceived positive effect on the students self esteem (77%). Unconditional positive strokes & Positive strokes for curricular involvement had no perceived negative effect on student's academics as well as self esteem. **Conclusion:** The overall teacher-student relationship in the institution is positive. The students are more likely to accept positive strokes than negative strokes. Negative strokes for curricular non-involvement had positive effect on academics. Unconditional positive strokes and positive strokes for academic involvement can be given liberally as they did not show negative effects.

### KEYWORDS :

#### INTRODUCTION

A good teacher-student relationship is of utmost importance in determining a medical student's academic performance. A good positive encouragement is an important factor in education. This is also referred to as 'positive stroke'. The stroking patterns, recognition or attention that one person gives another can promote a good relationship. This is what Eric Berne explains using transactional analysis.

According to Eric Berne, the founder of transactional analysis, "a stroke is a unit of recognition". A stroke is a unit of attention which provides stimulation to an individual. Every person needs physical and psychological stimulation. Berne states that "a stroke may be used as the fundamental unit of social action". There are two categories of strokes-positive strokes and negation strokes. Positive-one which the receiver experiences as pleasant. Negative-one is experienced as painful. Strokes can be classified into verbal and non-verbal strokes, physical or psychological strokes or internal and external ones.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

A good teacher-student relationship is of utmost importance in determining a medical student's academic performance. A good positive encouragement is an important factor in education. This is also referred to as 'positive stroke'. The stroking patterns, recognition or attention that one person gives another can promote a good relationship. This is what Eric Berne explains using transactional analysis. It is basically a study on the different transactions between two people and in effect analyse interpersonal relationships [1]. According to Eric Berne, the founder of transactional analysis, "a stroke is a unit of recognition" [1]. A stroke is a unit of attention which provides stimulation to an individual. Every person needs physical and psychological stimulation. Berne states that "a stroke may be used as the fundamental unit of social action". There are two categories of strokes-positive strokes and negation strokes. Positive-one which the receiver experiences as pleasant. Negative-one is experienced as painful.

Strokes can be classified into verbal and non-verbal strokes, physical or psychological strokes or internal and external ones. Verbal strokes include what we say or what we hear where as nonverbal strokes are what we do or what we see [2]. Conditional strokes relate to what we do while unconditional ones relate to what we are [2]. Hence, unconditional stroke must be avoided as much as possible in the classroom. The only thing worse that a negative stroke is no stroke at all [3].

Motivating students can be achieved by two ways – providing positive strokes to reinforce positive behaviour or by giving negative strokes to decrease error or bad behaviour [4].

There are very few studies showing improvement in student learning following teacher praise. In a study conducted by Marina Rajan et al in Kolenchery, improvement in student-teacher relationship was found after teaching medical college teachers about TA [5]. In a study conducted in 2014 by Pishghadam et al, it was concluded that students who receive more strokes are more motivated than those who receive less or no strokes [6]. They also found that valuing was the better motivator out of verbal, nonverbal, valuing and classroom activities, all of which were parameters in their questionnaire. A study conducted by Rathel M et al observed improved task engagement among students after advising teachers to give behaviour specific praise in the classroom [7]. In a study conducted in Iran, it was statistically shown that there is a strong correlation between instructor praise and learner progress [8].

Transactional analysis is a theory proposed by Eric Berne to study the different transactions between 2 people. It is to study and analyse interpersonal relationships [1]. Its applications stretch widely from psychotherapy to business management. But its application in education is a very important path rarely travelled by researchers. It can be used in educational settings to help teachers and learners have a clear communication and avoid setting up underproductive confrontations [2]. Transactional Analysis (TA) is a theory of personality development with educational applications.

A good positive encouragement is an important factor in education. This is also referred to as 'positive stroke'. There are two categories of strokes-positive strokes and negation strokes. Positive-one which the receiver experiences as pleasant. Negative-one is experienced as painful. Strokes may be verbal or nonverbal, positive or negative, conditional or unconditional [1]. Verbal strokes include what we say or what we hear where as nonverbal strokes are what we do or what we see [2]. Conditional strokes relate to what we do while unconditional ones relate to what we are [2]. Hence, unconditional stroke must be avoided as much as possible in the classroom. The only thing worse that a negative stroke is no stroke at all [3]. Motivating students can be achieved by two ways – providing positive strokes to reinforce positive behaviour or by giving negative strokes to decrease error or bad behaviour [4]. It has also been suggested that stroking reinforces the behaviour that is stroked [2].

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conducted in Iran, it was statistically shown that there is a strong correlation between instructor praise and learner progress [8]. However, praise when used wrongly such as for intelligence only, failure can become more personal and more demeaning<sup>9</sup>. Also, praising the process rather than the person, increased student motivation. The latter was actually shown to decrease motivation for students [10,11].

**OBJECTIVES**

To find the pattern of stroke, stroke economy, intensity and effects perceived by the medical students from the teachers of a Medical School using a structured questionnaire.

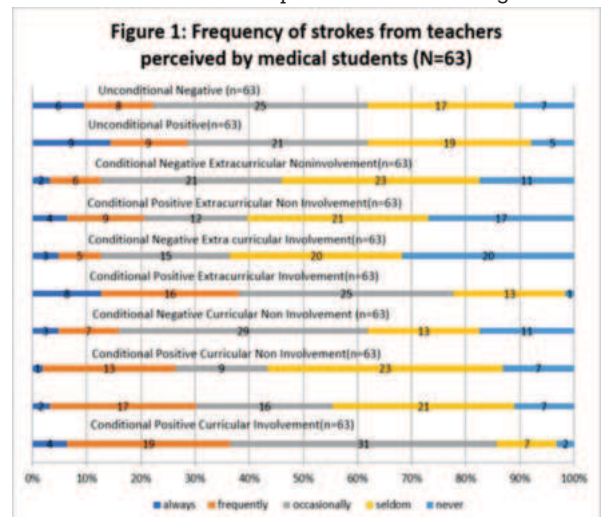
**METHODOLOGY**

It was a quantitative cross-sectional study, done among the undergraduate medical students of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Medical School, India. The sample size calculated was 63 medical students. Multistage sampling was used to pick up the study participants. Equal number of study participants were selected from each of the different batches (stratified sampling). Systematic random sampling using random number table was done to pick students from each batch. The study was conducted over a period of two months in 2021 may to June.

A self- administered questionnaire on five point Likert scale was developed for the study. The questionnaire was constructed by four Community Medicine experts. The questionnaire developed underwent pilot testing and respondent review and was further modified to the current form. The questionnaire had a good internal consistency as Chronbach's alpha was 0.931. Intra Class Correlation of coefficient for test retest reliability was 0.950. The frequency and proportion for the first two points in the Likert scale were combined and used as reference to summarize the pattern. The questionnaire was repeated after two weeks. Consent was taken from the participants. The results were kept confidential.

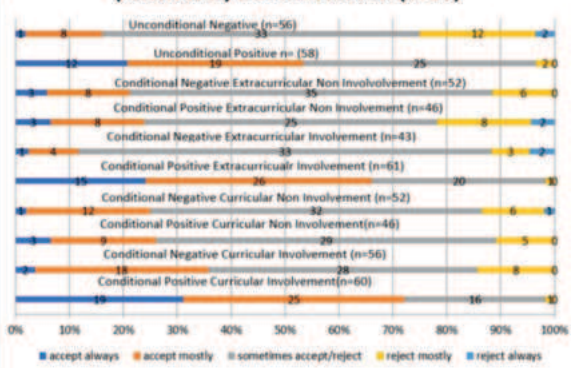
**RESULTS**

In this study we have assessed 63 MBBS students, out of which 44 were female and 19 were male. The data was later analysed based on the frequency, acceptance and effects of stroke on academics and on person as is shown in figure 1.



From figure 1, it is seen that students perceived Positive strokes more frequently. Students perceived Positive strokes most frequently for extracurricular involvement (38%). Students perceived positive strokes least frequently for extracurricular non involvement (20%). Students perceived negative strokes most frequently for curricular non involvement (54%). Students perceived negative strokes least frequently due to extracurricular involvement (63%).

**Figure 2: Acceptance of strokes from teachers perceived by medical students (N=63)**



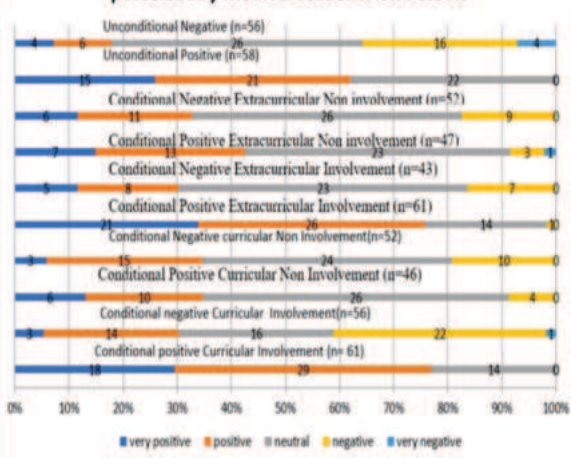
From figure 2, It is observed that positives are more accepted than negatives. Positive strokes for curricular involvement are the most accepted (73.3%). Unconditional negative strokes are the most rejected (25%). Negative strokes for extracurricular involvement are the least accepted (11.6%). Unconditional positive strokes are the least rejected (3.4%).

**Figure 3: Effect of strokes from teachers perceived by medical students on Academics**



From the figure 3, it is seen that positive strokes are more likely to have positive effect on academics than negative strokes. However, negative strokes for curricular non involvement are more likely to have positive effects (44%). Positive strokes for curricular involvement had no negative effect. Unconditional positive strokes also did not have any negative effect.

**Figure 4: Effects of strokes from teachers perceived by medical students on Person**



From figure 4 it is inferred that positive strokes have more positive effect on person than negative strokes. Giving positive strokes for extracurricular involvement have a highly positive effect on the students (77%). Positive strokes for curricular involvement and unconditional positive strokes did not have any negative effect on students.

**DISCUSSION**

In this study, we have assessed the pattern of strokes, the intensity and effects as perceived by the medical students from teachers. It was found that positive strokes such as an acknowledgement, eye-contact, compliment, encouragement, feedback etc. were perceived more than negative strokes such as ignoring them, scolding, punishments or discouragement. Students perceived more positive strokes for participation in sports, arts, research, quizzes, debates etc. and least for the non-participation of the same. However, they sensed negative strokes more frequently for decreased scholastic performance and least for extracurricular involvement.

It was observed that a compliment from a teacher was more accepted than criticism. It was noticed that praise for academic excellence was appreciated the most. On the other hand, criticism for no reason was rejected the most while compliment for no reason was rejected the least. Discouraging them from participating in arts and sports was accepted the least.

**CONCLUSION**

In this study we have found that positive strokes are more frequently perceived, accepted and are more likely to have positive effects on academics. On the other hand negative strokes on curricular non-involvement have positive effects on academics.

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