

Growth, Mastery and Self-Acceptance: The Effectiveness of Transactional Analysis on Psychological Well-Being

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ABSTRACT: The present study investigated the effectiveness of TA101 (an internationally recognized course in Transactional Analysis) on six dimensions of psychological well-being among 101 participants who attended the course held across seven centers. The TA101 course provides accurate information about the concepts of Transactional Analysis to experience personal growth and development. The study was quasi-experimental and used a before-and-after without control design. Ryff's Psychological Well-Being scale (PWB) was used to measure the changes in the six dimensions of psychological well-being between pre- and post-intervention. The effectiveness of TA101 was also examined on the basis of gender, age and type of occupation. The data collected was analyzed using t-tests. The findings showed that the scores on the environmental mastery, personal growth and self-acceptance dimensions of psychological well-being were significantly higher at post-intervention. Among the demographic variables, age was found to influence the dimension of positive relations with others. Middle aged adults scored significantly higher on this dimension after TA101 compared to the late adolescent and young adult participants. Descriptive analysis of the mean scores of 34 participants across three time intervals: pre-intervention, post-intervention and one month follow-up showed that scores at follow-up were higher than scores at pre-intervention across the six dimensions of psychological well-being.

KEYWORDS: TA101, psychological well-being, intervention, gender, age, occupation

I. INTRODUCTION

Change for the purpose of experiencing greater well-being and psychological functioning has been one of the main goals of the counselling and therapy process. Among the therapeutic approaches that identify with this goal is the theory and associated therapy of Transactional Analysis (TA). TA, with its roots in psychoanalytic therapy, is an integrative approach to the study of human personality and social behaviour (Johnsson, 2011) and the application of this knowledge facilitates change. It addresses the change process based on the philosophy that all individuals are OK; everyone, except the severely brain damaged, have the capacity to think and therefore, hold the ability to make decisions about their own destiny. Transactional Analysis also explains how an individual's current functioning reflects past experiences and the unconscious decisions made in response to those experiences. As a decisional model, TA holds that those decisions which in adult functioning, are limiting and painful, can be changed by replacing them with new decisions or new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving that are conducive to the individual's abilities (Stewart, 2013).

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TA is conducted as an interactive method that harnesses an individual's ability of self-awareness and the capacity to make decisions for change (Alkasir, Dehkordi, Mohammadkhani, Sefat&Atadokht, 2017).

TA101 is an internationally recognized introductory course in TA, which introduces the concepts of TA that can be applied for personal and professional development. TA101 integrates the theoretical concepts of TA with experiential learning to enable individuals to apply them to their lives ("The Introductory Workshop in Transactional Analysis" (TA101), n.d.). The awareness of these concepts has the capacity to influence one's perception of their life experiences which in turn has the potential to influence their well-being. Hence, Transactional Analysis can be applied in various ways in fields of counselling, psychotherapy, organization and education (International Transactional Analysis Association [ITAA], n.d.) to empower individuals in promoting well-being in different areas of their lives.

With this in mind, it is important to highlight the concept of well-being. Well-being has been studied widely not just in the different branches of psychology but also in other disciplines like law, sociology, politics and economics (Griffin, 1986). As a result, well-being has been studied from various perspectives. This has produced an understanding of various types of the same. For example, spiritual well-being, subjective well-being, physical well-being, social well-being, emotional well-being and so on. In the present study, the authors choose to assess 'psychological well-being' as a multifaceted construct of six distinct components. Together these components exhibit wellness in the context of autonomous functioning, healthy intra- and interpersonal relationships and the experience of continued growth. Among the six components, personal growth is the experience of continued growth as opposed to the feeling of stagnation. Positive relations with others refers to the presence of positive, satisfying relationships that one enjoys with others. Purpose in life is the belief that one's life is meaningful and encompasses a sense of direction. Environmental mastery is the capacity to master environmental demands and to create contexts suitable for meeting personal needs. Autonomy is self-determined behaviour associated with internal evaluation through personal standards. Self-acceptance characterizes a positive attitude towards and acceptance of the self and of one's past life (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff, 1995).

II. RELATED WORK

Well-being has increasingly become the focus of mental healthcare interventions as the distinction between ill-health and well-being has become clearer in the past decades. Interventions are now distinguished among treatment focused, prevention focused, and focused on enhancing well-being (Huppert, 2009). Well-being is also a stable characteristic to assess the outcomes of various interventions (Weiss, Westerhof & Bohlmeijer, 2016).

A recent meta-analysis of interventions aimed to enhance well-being showed that the interventions had a moderate positive effect on psychological well-being and these effects were maintained over a longer time interval (Weiss et al., 2016). The interventions included in this meta-analysis were targeted at clinical populations having affective disorders, anxiety disorders, eating disorders and general psychological dysfunctions. Physical disabilities and non-clinical populations of students, nurses, and the elderly were also assessed in a few studies. The results clearly showed that psychological interventions for mental health have a positive influence on psychological well-being across age groups, various occupations, and conditions.

TA101 has been found to increase student teachers' awareness and skills in their personal and professional growth (Lerkkanen & Temple, 2004) and has also been found to increase participants' self-acceptance (Friday, 1977). Similarly, many TA therapy and training groups have recorded positive influences in aspects of psychological functioning. Training groups have been found to result in: greater awareness of self and increased ability for contact in psychotherapy trainees (van Rijn et al., 2011), sense of coherence and experience of well-being (Nowak, 2012), increase in psychological well-being in married women (as opposed to no changes in the control group) (Javid, et al., 2014), increased family functioning such as communication and emotional responsiveness (Soltani, et al., 2012), reduced control-oriented behavior among married couples (Alkasir, et al., 2017), and emotional stability and social boldness among managers in organisations (Ciucur & Pîrvuț, 2012).

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For example, a redecision marathon was found to increase participants' autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth and self-acceptance (Widdowson, Theuns, Rosseau & Rosseau, 2016). A TA group psychotherapy programme was instrumental in increasing the self-acceptance of students, as one of the qualities and abilities for the profession of a psychologist (Ciucur, 2013). Education of TA theory has been found to reduce college students' external locus of control (Mei, 2010), increase in their self-awareness and understanding of others (Stuart & Agar, 2011), and teachers' self-awareness and their relationships with students (Rajan & Chacko, 2012).

Hence, it can be concluded that TA produces beneficial results in most populations irrespective of gender, age and occupation. Transactional Analysis is effective in bringing personal change through different means of therapy, training and education. More attention is given to its impact via therapy and long term training and less on the effectiveness of short-term courses like the TA101. This understanding and gap in research is explored in the present study. An examination of the influence of TA101 on psychological functioning can be effective in communicating the applicability of TA for individuals seeking personal and professional growth as individuals across different age groups and occupations participate in the course.

III. MATERIALS AND METHOD

Objectives of the study:

- To examine the effectiveness of TA101 on six dimensions of psychological well-being (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance) among the participants.
- To examine the effectiveness of TA101 on the six dimensions of psychological well-being on the basis of the demographic variables of age, gender, and type of occupation.

Operational definitions:

Psychological well-being: It refers to the composition of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others and self-acceptance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Gender: In the present study, gender refers to male and female participants.

Age: It refers to the categorization of age into two groups- late adolescence and young adulthood (18 to 40 years) and middle adulthood (41 years and above).

Occupation: Occupation has been categorized in two groups as education and service (teacher, service, student, lecturer, research scholar, and academician) and practitioners (engineer, trainer, counsellor, manager, HR, consultant, advocate and banker).

Hypotheses:

- There will be a significant increase in the six dimensions of psychological well-being among participants of TA101.
- There will be no significant gender difference in the impact of TA101 on the six dimensions of psychological well-being.
- There will be no significant difference based on age of participants (late adolescence and young adulthood versus middle adulthood) in the impact of TA101 on the six dimensions of psychological well-being.
- There will be no significant difference based on occupation (education and service occupations versus practitioners) in the impact of TA101 on the six dimensions of psychological well-being.

Research design: The study was quasi-experimental and used a before-and-after without control research design.

Sample: 101 participants who attended TA101 programmes held at Mussoorie, Kerala, Chennai, Doha (for individuals of Indian origin), Bangalore, Mumbai and Coimbatore constituted the sample. 34 participants in the sample provided completed responses to the psychological well-being questionnaire during the pre-test, post-test and one month follow-

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up time periods. Their mean scores were computed for the six subscales of the psychological well-being questionnaire to provide descriptive data of the change in psychological well-being scores across the three time intervals.

The inclusion criteria involved participants of age 18 years and above, of Indian origin, who had fluency in English and were not differently abled. In the exclusion criterion was participants less than 18 years.

Sample description: There were 36 males and 63 females in the sample. The age range was 18 to 68 years ($M=38.90$, $SD=9.68$) 21% of the participants were single, 61% married, 1% separated, 1% divorced and this information was not provided by 16% of the sample. 71% lived in nuclear families and 23% were from joint families. This information was not provided by 6% of the sample. The sample comprised of individuals who belonged to different educational and occupational fields. Educational qualifications across different disciplines included doctoral, Master's and Bachelor's degrees. Occupations involved engineers, trainers, counsellors, teachers, students, and academicians among others.

Intervention: The TA101 course is a two day, internationally recognized course in the core concepts of Transactional Analysis. The course aims towards developing an understanding of the basic TA concepts and to apply that awareness for intra- and interpersonal behaviours and for problem solving. The communication of these concepts include the use of techniques such as role play, reflective and experiential exercises, interactive discussions, lecture, paper and pencil games and exercises, and group shared activities. The two day programmes held across the centers followed the standard requirements of the International Transactional Analysis Association (ITAA) (The South Asian Association of Transactional Analysts [SAATA], n.d.). The facilitators of the course were certified TA trainers.

The course content involved TA concepts such as time structuring, rackets, life position, the ego states model, strokes, transactional analysis, script and psychological games (ITAA Training and Examinations Handbook, 2013). To begin with, along with the concept of 'ego states' (the Parents, Adult and Child ego states), participants also learn about the 'contamination' of these ego states. Knowledge of contamination and contents of ego states helps an individual to break out of patterns, as differentiating between thoughts and emotions of childhood, internalised parents, and adult here-and-now experiences becomes possible.

TA101 helps reflect on not just the content of ego states (Parent, Adult and Child) but also the patterns of communication in an individual's personal and social interactions. Other key concepts that help individuals to touch the surface of their unconscious are games (Berne, 1964), script (Steiner, 1990), and racket analysis (Erskine & Zalcman, 1979). Script analysis also helps to understand the unconscious life stories people build for themselves and how paths different from it are possible, now. In this workshop, various other topics like 'injunctions', 'decisions', 'program', 'counter-injunctions' are talked about that give further details into how one's childhood circumstances and imaginations give rise to the formation of the script (Stewart & Joines, 1987). TA101 invites people into introspect their thoughts, feelings and behavior and the two days help people to give attention to how aspects within themselves have been restricting or promoting their growth.

Procedure: The pre-intervention scores were obtained from participants who were administered the psychological well-being questionnaire before the TA101 course commenced. After the course was completed, the questionnaire was administered again to obtain post-intervention scores. The questionnaire was administered by the course facilitators in respective centres through standardized instructions that they had received from the investigators of the study. Participants were provided with information about the confidentiality of their responses and its use for research purposes.

Tools used: The Ryff's Psychological Well-Being scale (PWB) (Ryff, 1989) was used to measure psychological well-being of the participants across six dimensions of personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy and self-acceptance. The 18 item version of the scale was used to obtain scores on each of the six dimensions. The psychometric properties of the PWB scale across the original and short versions have been examined. Construct validation has provided evidence of the 6 factor model for the 18 item version. Each scale consists of three items and includes negatively and positively worded items. Responses are made on a 7 point Likert

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scale ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. Some items are reverse scored. Higher scores reflect greater psychological well-being. The scales have been found to have convergent validity with happiness and life satisfaction constructs. Reliability of the scales vary according to the number of items in the scale and range from 0.86 to 0.93 for the original version of the 120 item scale and for the shorter version the alpha coefficients are low to modest (Ryff& Keyes, 1995; Abbott, et al., 2006; Clarke, Marshall, Ryff& Wheaton, 2001).

IV. RESULTS

Table 1: Significance of mean difference in the six dimensions of Psychological Well-Being between pre and post TA101.

Variables	TA101 course						t
	Pre-intervention		Post-intervention				
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	
Autonomy	14.66	3.86	101	14.81	3.64	101	0.40 ^{NS}
Environmental mastery	15.53	3.88	101	16.77	3.55	101	3.26 ^{**}
Personal growth	18.64	2.78	101	19.36	2.33	101	3.08 ^{**}
Positive relations with others	16.68	3.69	101	17.30	3.23	101	1.68 ^{NS}
Purpose in life	15.59	3.49	101	15.41	3.83	101	0.49 ^{NS}
Self-acceptance	17.11	3.30	101	18.42	2.66	101	4.34 ^{**}

**Significant at the 0.01 level, NS-Not significant at the 0.05level

Table 1 shows that the post-intervention scores on environmental mastery, personal growth and self-acceptance are significantly higher than pre-intervention scores. On the dimensions of autonomy, positive relations with others and purpose in life, no significant differences were found. Therefore, the hypothesis that there will be a significant increase in the six dimensions of psychological well-being after TA101 is partially accepted.

Table 2: Significance of mean differences of post-intervention scores on Psychological Well-Being based on gender of participants.

Variables	Gender						t
	Males			Females			
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	
Autonomy	14.33	3.88	36	15.08	3.55	63	0.97 ^{NS}
Environmental mastery	17.19	3.69	36	16.56	3.53	63	0.85 ^{NS}
Personal growth	19.69	2.18	36	19.25	2.38	63	0.91 ^{NS}
Positive relations with others	17.31	3.42	36	17.32	3.19	63	0.02 ^{NS}
Purpose in life	15.53	3.31	36	15.27	4.15	63	0.32 ^{NS}
Self-acceptance	18.33	2.88	36	18.44	2.56	63	0.20 ^{NS}

NS-Not significant at the 0.05 level

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Table 2 shows that there were no significant gender differences on the six dimensions of psychological well-being after TA101. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there will be no significant gender difference in the impact of TA101 on the six dimensions of psychological well-being is accepted.

Table 3: Significance of mean differences in post-intervention scores of Psychological Well-Being based on age of participants.

Variables	Age						t
	Late adolescence and young adulthood			Middle adulthood			
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	
Autonomy	14.57	3.89	58	15.27	3.26	41	0.94 ^{NS}
Environmental mastery	16.33	3.66	58	17.44	3.40	41	1.53 ^{NS}
Personal growth	19.45	2.05	58	19.37	2.64	41	0.17 ^{NS}
Positive relations with others	16.48	3.64	58	18.39	2.24	41	3.22 ^{**}
Purpose in life	15.47	4.41	58	15.29	2.89	41	0.24 ^{NS}
Self-acceptance	18.09	2.82	58	18.88	2.42	41	1.46 ^{NS}

**Significant at the 0.01 level, NS-Not significant at the 0.05 level

Table 3 shows that on the dimension of positive relations with others, middle aged adults scored significantly higher after TA101 compared to late adolescent and young adults participants. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there will be no significant age difference in the impact of TA101 on the six dimensions of psychological well-being is partially rejected.

Table 4: Significance of mean differences in post-intervention scores of Psychological Well-Being based on occupation of participants.

Variables	Occupation						t
	Education and service			Practitioners			
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	
Autonomy	14.46	4.00	54	15.25	3.27	44	1.05 ^{NS}
Environmental mastery	17.44	3.51	54	16.09	3.54	44	1.89 ^{NS}
Personal growth	19.74	1.72	54	18.91	2.92	44	1.67 ^{NS}
Positive relations with others	17.76	3.43	54	16.75	3.01	44	1.53 ^{NS}
Purpose in life	15.50	3.72	54	15.18	4.07	44	0.40 ^{NS}
Self-acceptance	18.76	2.51	54	18.09	2.87	44	1.23 ^{NS}

NS-Not significant at the 0.05 level

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Table 4 shows that there were no significant differences on the six dimensions of psychological well-being after TA101 between the occupational groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference based on occupation in the impact of TA101 on the six dimensions of psychological well-being is accepted.

Descriptive analysis:

Figure 1: Line graph representing the mean scores on the six dimensions of Psychological Well-Being across the three time periods: pre-intervention, post-intervention and one month follow-up.

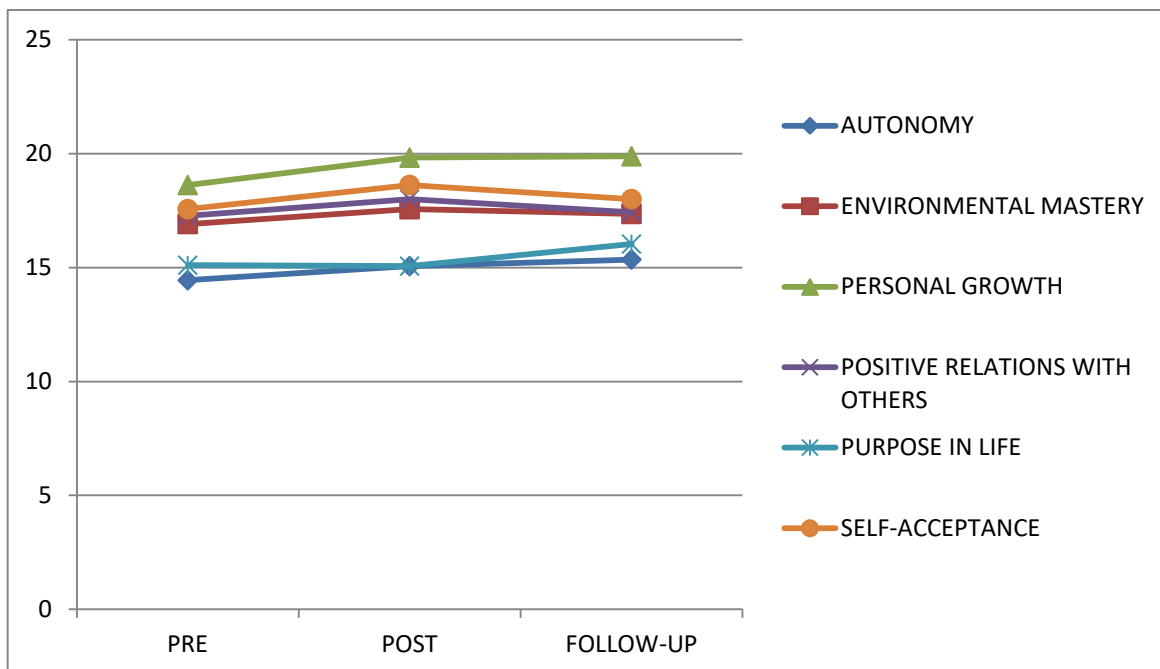


Figure 1 shows that for the 34 participants, the scores at one month follow-up were higher than those at pre-intervention for the six dimensions of psychological well-being. For the autonomy dimension, score at pre-intervention was 14.44, at post-intervention, 15.06 and at follow-up, 15.35. For environmental mastery, the score at pre-intervention was 16.91, at post-intervention, 17.56 and at follow-up, 17.35. For personal growth, the score at pre-intervention was 18.62, at post-intervention, 19.82 and at follow-up, 19.88. For positive relations with others, the score at pre-intervention was 17.27, at post-intervention, 18.00 and at follow-up, 17.42. For purpose in life, the score at pre-intervention was 15.10, at post-intervention, 15.06 and at follow-up, 16.03. For self-acceptance, the score at pre-intervention was 17.56, at post-intervention, 18.62 and at follow-up, 18.00.

V. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to find out the effectiveness of TA101 on psychological well-being. Changes in Ryff's Psychological Well-Being scale (PWB) (Ryff, 1989) were used to assess change. The findings showed that TA101 was effective in enhancing participants' sense of environmental mastery, personal growth and self-acceptance after the intervention. This can be corroborated with the course's aims of increasing self-awareness, of personal growth and of the application of TA concepts to solving problems. The study is a valuable contribution in the study of TA101, especially in the Indian context.

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During the course of the programme the participant explores and identifies various aspects of self, and self in relation to others through the key concepts as discussed in the procedure (e.g., the ego state model, transactions, strokes). The authors believe that the awareness of the structure of one's personality may act as a motivator to regulate the same during their environmental transactions to experience productive outcomes, hence bringing a positive change in the sense of environmental mastery. An increased internal locus of control may also contribute to that result (Mei, 2010). The positive change in personal growth may be a result of knowledge of one's personality structure and manner of functioning through TA concepts of ego states, transactions and life script; which further gets validated by observations of Lerkkanen and Temple (2004). The self-knowledge produced in the course of the two days coupled with awareness of the foundational influence of one's early experiences in developing one's current personality structure may be instrumental in bringing a positive change in the degree of self-acceptance (Stewart, 2013). This change in self-acceptance observed in the present study is associated with the findings of Friday (1977), van Rijn, et al. (2011) and Ciucur (2013).

On the contrary, no significant changes were found in the dimensions of autonomy, purpose of life and positive relations with others. Autonomy in TA is described as the capacity for awareness, spontaneity and intimacy and it is stated as the goal of TA. It defines an individual's ability to make new decisions through awareness of how their current functioning is in accordance with a script developed out of childhood experiences and which may not be adaptive to one's current situations (Corey, 2009). While in the present study, TA101 did not significantly influence autonomy, the study by Widdowson, et al. (2016) obtained a significant finding. It is possible to contemplate then that application of methods such as redecision (making new decisions that are adaptive to one's grown-up state) (Stewart, 2013) are more facilitative of increasing autonomy compared to education of TA concepts as redecision is action oriented and is applied after self-awareness has been obtained.

Widdowson, et al. (2016) found an increase in purpose in life, which was not obtained in the present study. A concept related to purpose in life is sense of coherence (Nygren, et al., 2005), which was found to increase after TA educational training assessed through a qualitative methodology (Nowak, 2012). The authors believe that a difference in methodology may explain the differences in the findings, as the present study uses a quantitative methodology. It was expected that following TA101, participants would experience greater positive relations with others through the knowledge of transactions and one's pattern of ego states functioning. However, the course did not induce significant changes in this aspect, where TA101 was reported to have no influence on participants' acceptance of others. However, significant changes were observed in studies conducted by Soltani, et al. (2012) and Alkasir, et al. (2017), where they observed changes in participants' interpersonal functioning characteristics. This difference in findings could be attributed to the content of the interventions which were designed to address communication based issues experienced in relationships with others in the latter two studies.

Another objective of the present study was to explore the differences across age, gender and occupations in the dimensions of psychological well-being. The findings of the study show that there were no significant gender and occupation differences across the six dimensions of psychological well-being after TA101. The participants (males and females) belonging to different occupational groups experienced the influence of TA101 on their psychological well-being similarly. Stuart and Agar (2011), Rajan and Chacko (2012) and Ciucur and Pirvu (2012) provide additional evidence for the same. With respect to age, middle-aged participants were found to score higher on positive relations with others compared to late adolescent and young adults after TA101. The authors associate this with the socio-emotional selectivity theory which posits that the goals of individuals change across age, from seeking novel experiences of meeting new people to seeking maintenance of close relationships that provide meaning (Cartensen, Fung & Charles, 2003). Hence, it is possible that TA101 had a greater effect on the middle aged participants' positive relations with others as they may have been more motivated to apply the TA concepts to their relationships with others.

The descriptive analysis of the scores across the three time intervals for 34 participants show that at the one month follow-up interval, the highest score was observed in personal growth. Consistent increases (to differing degrees) were observed for personal growth and autonomy. There was a considerable increase in scores between post-intervention and

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one month follow-up in the dimension of purpose in life. Environmental mastery, self-acceptance and positive relations with others showed similar patterns where the highest scores were during post-intervention followed by the one month follow-up. The increases in scores from pre-intervention were found to be maintained at follow-up. It is evident that, possibly the greatest contribution of TA101 was the experience of personal growth for the participants and they may have benefitted from the knowledge of TA concepts to experience an inner change possibly associated with emotional understanding of their self.

VI. CONCLUSION

1. TA101 was found to be effective in increasing participants' scores on environmental mastery, personal growth and self-acceptance dimensions of psychological well-being.
2. Gender and occupation were not found to influence the dimensions of psychological well-being after TA101.
3. Age was found to influence the positive relations with others dimension of psychological well-being. Higher scores were observed for middle aged adults compared to the late adolescent and young adults group.
4. The scores at one month follow-up for the six dimensions were higher than those at pre-intervention. The highest score at one month follow-up was found for personal growth.

*Limitations:*The study did not have a control group.

*Implications of the study:*As TA101 was similarly experienced by participants across gender and occupational groups, the course can be incorporated across higher education and occupational settings. Individuals from different age groups can also benefit from the course. The maintenance of higher scores on psychological well-being at one month follow-up compared to pre-intervention can have an influence on the participants' levels of functioning.

*Future research:*Future studies can incorporate research designs that use control groups and examine the effectiveness of TA101 over longer intervals. Studies can also examine the effectiveness of TA101 on well-being through qualitative methodologies and mixed methods that can account for subjective experiences of participants.

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