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Finding Harmony in Academic Interactions: Toward Transformative Theological Learning in Christian Higher Education

Daniel Ginting¹⁾, Ratri Kusuma Wijaya²⁾

Universitas Ma Chung, daniel.machung@gmail.com

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For more information, please contact daniel.machung@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between lecturers' ego-state typologies and student satisfaction at a theological college in Malang, Indonesia. Employing a descriptive correlational design, the research involved nine lecturers and sixty students, using quantitative questionnaires to identify lecturers' ego states (parent, adult, child) and assess student satisfaction. Findings reveal a convergence of perceptions between lecturers and students, with the nurturing parent and adult ego states predominating. Lecturers who demonstrate empathy, support, and rationality enhance students' comfort and satisfaction, whereas overly authoritarian or excessively compliant behaviors prove less effective. The results underscore the importance of balancing empathy, rationality, and spiritual modeling to strengthen academic interactions, foster a positive learning environment, and support students' intellectual and spiritual development.

Keywords: Lecturers' Ego States, Student Satisfaction, Christian Theological Education

INTRODUCTION

Theological education in seminaries does not merely aim to transmit academic knowledge; it seeks to shape students' ways of thinking, character, and conduct in a holistic manner. As a transformative form of learning, theological education requires the integration of cognitive mastery, spiritual growth, character formation, and the ability to build healthy interpersonal relationships within both academic and ministry communities (Stott, 2019; Vanhoozer, 2005; Fosnot, 2013). In practice, academic interactions often involve complex psychological dynamics. Berne (1961, 1964) explains that individuals operate from three ego states: parent, adult, and child. The parent ego state—both nurturing and critical—reflects internalized patterns of care and control. The adult ego state emphasizes objective and rational information processing, whereas the child ego state—free or adapted—relates to emotional responses, spontaneity, and adjustment to external demands (Berne, 1961, 1964; Stewart & Joines, 2012). The activation of specific ego states influences the quality of communication, openness, and relational harmony between lecturers and students.

Beyond psychological factors, social and cultural dimensions also shape classroom interactions in theological education. The importance of balancing *positive face*—the need to be accepted and appreciated—and *negative face*—the right not to be pressured—within interpersonal communication. Politeness strategies, such as acknowledging students' contributions (positive politeness) or posing questions in non-threatening ways (negative politeness), help establish a safe and supportive learning environment. Such practices minimize potential conflict, encourage participation, and foster students' sense of value and belonging. Biblical teachings further reinforce the importance of gracious, constructive, and loving communication (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6; John 13:34–35), underscoring that wise and respectful interaction not only supports academic goals but also embodies ethical and spiritual values within theological learning.

Existing studies have examined ego states and politeness strategies in diverse educational contexts. For instance, research in music education found that the use of adult, nurturing parent, and free child ego states significantly enhances student motivation (Habibi,

2022). In nursing education, lecturers predominantly operate from the adult ego state, while the free child is used least frequently. Other studies demonstrate that politeness strategies are shaped by social status, interpersonal distance, and cultural norms (Jayanti et al., 2024). However, no research to date has specifically explored how lecturers' ego states and politeness strategies interact within theological education. This gap provides the rationale for the present study. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the harmony of academic interaction in Indonesian seminaries by addressing the following questions: a) how are the ego-state typologies of Christian theology lecturers formed and manifested in classroom interactions, as perceived by both lecturers and students? B) how do lecturers' ego-state typologies relate to students' satisfaction with theological learning? C) how can these findings be interpreted from biblical and Christian educational theological perspectives?

This study is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological, interpersonal, and spiritual dimensions that shape constructive and transformative academic interactions in seminaries. Practically, the findings may help lecturers refine their pedagogical approaches, support students in developing social and spiritual competencies, and assist theological institutions in fostering learning environments that are conducive, collaborative, and reflective of Christlike character.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Transformative Learning in Theological Education

In the context of theological education, *transformative learning* refers to a pedagogical process in which instruction goes beyond merely transmitting theological facts and doctrine: it aims to reshape how students think, what they believe, and how they act in their spiritual lives. A truly transformative theological classroom integrates multiple elements—high-quality instruction, student motivation and readiness, carefully chosen pedagogical strategies, a supportive relational climate, and emotional encouragement—to foster holistic change. This process aligns with Mezirow's classical theory of transformation, but it is reinterpreted in a more explicitly *redemptive* theological framework.

Student motivation and readiness are crucial. When learners are emotionally invested and cognitively prepared, they become active participants rather than passive recipients of theology. They engage in critical reflection, dialogue, and experiential learning, building their own understanding of faith through real-world ministry or service. In Christian higher education, methods such as case studies of biblical texts, group discussion, and service practicum enable students to internalize theological concepts, to reexamine their assumptions, and to develop practical competencies relevant to their future ministry.

A relationally safe classroom environment also supports transformative processes. When instructors create a space that is open, collaborative, and emotionally supportive, students are more likely to share their doubts, ask honest questions, and explore new perspectives. Recent research from Indonesian theological contexts emphasizes that a hospitable, dialogical learning atmosphere helps students mature both spiritually and relationally. Such emotional and relational support is not just an add-on but a foundation for trust, vulnerability, and growth.

Moreover, transformative theological learning can embody social justice and intercultural concerns. For example, theological educators working in post-apartheid south africa have argued for intercultural, antiracist pedagogies that allow students to grapple with real-world issues like decolonization, inclusion, and equality within the theological curriculum. This kind of formation links theology to public life, teaching students to be agents of social change.

At its best, transformative theological education produces *holistic transformation*: intellectual, spiritual, relational, and ethical. Students grow not only in their academic grasp of theology but also in character, spiritual maturity, and capacity for community service. This integrative goal resonates with constructivist learning philosophies, which posit that learners build knowledge through reflection, dialogue, and lived experience, and with christian formation frameworks that emphasize growth in both faith and practice.

Personality Structure in Ego State Theory

Understanding psychological dynamics and interpersonal communication is essential for supporting transformative learning. Transactional analysis (ta) provides a useful framework for this purpose. Originally developed by Eric Berne (1961), ta conceptualizes human personality as comprising three interrelated ego states—parent, adult, and child—that shape how individuals think, feel, and behave in response to their environment. Although ta is a classical theory, contemporary research continues to show its relevance in educational, pastoral, and counselling contexts (O'reilly, 2022; Babcock, 2021).

The parent ego state encompasses internalized rules, values, and attitudes acquired from authority figures such as parents, teachers, or religious leaders. This ego state manifests in two principal forms: nurturing parent and critical/ controlling parent. The nurturing parent reflects empathy, care, and affirmation, whereas the critical parent conveys judgment, correction, and control. These patterns form through socialization processes in early life and continue to influence adult communication and decision-making (Stewart & Joines, 2012; Tudor, 2020).

The adult ego state functions as the rational, objective component of the personality. It evaluates information logically, considers evidence, and responds appropriately to contextual demands. The adult ego enables individuals to regulate impulses, negotiate meaning, and engage in effective interpersonal communication—capacities strongly linked to reflective learning and personal transformation (Barrow, Bradshaw & Newton, 2021).

Conversely, the child ego state represents emotional responses, desires, and behavioral patterns formed during childhood. Berne And Steiner (1972) classify the child ego into adapted child and free child. The adapted child emerges when individuals modify their behavior to gain approval or avoid conflict. For instance, a student in a discussion group may suppress their opinion out of fear of criticism, demonstrating compliance to social pressure. On the other hand, the free child reflects spontaneity, creativity, and authentic emotional expression—such as an office employee who unexpectedly shares a humorous meme in a formal workgroup chat, expressing joy and playfulness despite workplace norms (Harris, 1969).

Recent studies emphasize that these ego states influence not only therapeutic outcomes but also learning engagement, group dynamics, and leadership behaviors. Research

in organizational psychology, for example, shows that awareness of ego states improves communication clarity, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation (Babcock, 2021). Similarly, studies in education highlight that the integration of adult and nurturing parent modes fosters psychologically safe learning environments—an essential foundation for transformative educational experiences (O'reilly, 2022). In sum, the parent, adult, and child ego states shape how individuals communicate, interpret experiences, and engage with others. Integrating ta into the context of transformative theological learning can deepen self-awareness, strengthen interpersonal sensitivity, and enhance the relational dimension of ministry formation.

Determinants Of Ego State Activation

Ego state activation refers to the process through which one of an individual's ego states becomes dominant and expresses itself consistently in thoughts, emotions, and behavioral patterns. This activation is not random; rather, it emerges from the interplay of social, cultural, and psychological factors that shape how individuals respond to their environment. Contemporary research supports the idea that ego states tend to manifest with relative stability across similar contexts (Stewart & Joines, 2012; O'reilly, 2022).

Social environments strongly influence which ego state becomes activated. Individuals often adopt predictable ego states depending on the roles they occupy. For example, in school settings, a teacher may operate from the parent ego state while managing the classroom but shift toward the adult ego state when engaging in collegial discussions with peers. These patterned shifts have been documented since Berne's early work (1964, 1966) and continue to be affirmed by recent research on role-based communication (Barrow, Bradshaw & Newton, 2021).

Cultural values and norms also shape the habitual activation of certain ego states. Early ta literature—such as Dusay (1977) and James & Jongeward (1971)—argues that individuals raised in environments characterized by criticism tend to develop a dominant critical parent, whereas those nurtured in warm, supportive settings often activate the nurturing parent more frequently.

Contemporary intercultural studies reinforce this pattern: hierarchical and collectivist cultures often foster stronger parent-dominated ego states because children internalize directives from authority figures and place great value on obedience and respect (Kandathil & Sankaran, 2006; Tudor, 2020). Then, egalitarian and individualistic cultures, by contrast, tend to emphasize autonomy, inquiry, and evidence-based reasoning—conditions that help strengthen the adult ego state as the primary regulator of behavior (O'reilly, 2022).

According to Berne (1966), ego state activation patterns are fundamentally shaped by an individual's life script, a set of unconscious conclusions formed during childhood that structure future perceptions and decisions. These scripts continue to influence adult interactions, especially under emotionally charged conditions. Emotional activation, particularly under stress or psychological pressure, often triggers responses from the child ego state. Individuals with childhood trauma or unresolved emotional experiences are more likely to shift into the adapted child, characterized by compliance, fear, or withdrawal when facing uncertainty (Hargaden & Sills, 2002; Tudor, 2008). Recent studies

also show that trauma histories significantly influence ego state regulation, impacting interpersonal communication and emotional resilience (Babcock, 2021).

The following table summarizes the five widely recognized ego states in transactional analysis—nurturing parent, controlling parent, adult, adapted child, and free child. Each ego state includes characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving, and each has constructive and destructive potentials depending on context and balance within the personality.

Table 1. Ego States and Behavioural Indicators

Ego State	Brief Description	Displayed Behaviors	Positive (Constructive) Aspects	Negative (Destructive) Aspects
Nurturing Parent	Reflect warmth, care, and empathy toward others; rooted in early experiences with supportive caregivers.	Comforting, supporting, soothing, protecting, offering assistance.	• Show empathy and concern. • Provides emotional support. • Helps others grow in a safe environment. • Creates a sense of security and trust.	• Overprotective. • May foster dependence. • Can hinder others' independence. • May take over responsibilities that belong to others.
Controlling (Critical) Parent	Display authority, judgment of right/wrong, and boundary-setting; formed through childhood experiences with disciplined authority figures.	Criticizing, giving orders, reprimanding, demanding compliance.	• Establish clear boundaries. • Provides discipline and moral guidance. • Protect others through rules. • Encourage responsibility.	• Authoritarian or overly strict. • Judgmental and lacking empathy. • Induces fear or low self-esteem. • Discourages open communication.
Adult	Represent logic and rationality; processes information objectively based on present reality rather than past conditioning.	Analyzing, evaluating, making fact-based decisions, regulating emotions.	• Realistic and rational. • Capable of sound decision-making. • Mediates conflicts between parent and child. • Promotes effective communication.	• Can become overly rigid or analytical. • May lack warmth or empathy. • Overreliance on data may neglect emotional needs.
Adapted Child	Respond by conforming to expectations or demands of parents or authority figures.	Obedient, cautious, eager to please, avoiding conflict.	• Show respect for norms and rules. • Fulfill social responsibilities. • Adaptable to structure and authority.	• Overly compliant and afraid to make decisions. • Passive or lacking self-confidence. • Dependent on external validation. • Avoids confrontation in unhealthy ways.
Free Child	Represents spontaneity, creativity, and natural emotional expression unrestrained by parental control.	Cheerful, creative, enthusiastic, spontaneous, emotionally honest.	• Encourage creativity and spontaneity. • Enhance joy and self-expression. • Bring authenticity to relationships.	• Impulsive or inappropriate behavior. • Disregards rules and responsibilities. • May appear selfish or insensitive to others.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive correlational design to examine the relationship between lecturers' ego-state typologies and students' satisfaction with the learning process. The design was selected because it enables the researcher to describe variations in perceived ego states among lecturers and to analyse the extent to which these characteristics correlate with students' satisfaction within a theological education context. By focusing on naturally occurring variations without manipulating variables, the design offers an appropriate means of understanding communication dynamics in real instructional settings.

The research was conducted at a theological seminary in Malang, Indonesia, and involved nine lecturers and sixty students who were selected through purposive sampling. Students were chosen based on their active course participation and their direct interaction with the lecturers included in the study. This sampling strategy ensured that the data reflected authentic instructional encounters and interpersonal communication patterns, thereby increasing the relevance and contextual accuracy of the findings for understanding the teaching–learning relationship.

Data were gathered using two complementary questionnaires. The first instrument measured lecturers' ego-state typologies as perceived by students, drawing on established indicators from transactional analysis. The instrument captured five dimensions of ego-state behaviour—critical parent, nurturing parent, adult, adapted child, and free child—each rated on a five-point likert scale to assess the extent to which specific behaviours were observed in the lecturers' communication. The second instrument assessed student satisfaction with the learning process, focusing on relational aspects such as perceived support, clarity in communication, comfort, and overall interaction quality. All items were likewise rated using a five-point likert scale, enabling consistent comparison across variables.

The analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the distribution and mean scores of each ego-state dimension as well as students' satisfaction levels. Before conducting the inferential analysis, a normality test was performed to verify the assumptions required for Pearson's product-moment correlation. The correlation analysis examined the directional and statistical relationship between each lecturer ego-state dimension and student satisfaction, evaluating whether the associations were positive or negative, the strength of the correlations, and their level of significance. Interpretations of the findings followed established criteria for correlation coefficients commonly applied in educational and social science research.

Instrument validity was ensured through expert review by specialists in educational psychology and theology, who assessed the alignment between item constructs and theoretical definitions of ego states and student satisfaction. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha to confirm internal consistency across scale items. Ethical procedures were upheld throughout the study. Participants provided informed consent, confidentiality was maintained, and all responses were analysed anonymously. Students and lecturers were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and all data were used exclusively for academic purposes following accepted standards of research ethics in the social sciences.

FINDINGS

Lecturers' Ego-State Typologies in Classroom Interaction

Table 1 illustrates that lecturers and students share relatively similar perceptions regarding the dominant ego states reflected in lecturers' behavior. Lecturers perceive themselves as most frequently operating from the nurturing parent ego state (44.4%) and the adult ego state (43.8%). Students' perceptions align with this pattern, indicating that they observe their lecturers predominantly exhibiting adult (58%) and nurturing parent (25%) behaviors. This convergence suggests that both groups view lecturers as rational, objective, and problem-solving oriented, while also demonstrating warmth, empathy, and supportive attitudes toward students.

Furthermore, both lecturers and students identify the adapted child as the least frequently observed ego state. This indicates that overly cautious, submissive, or defensive behaviors rarely emerge in learning interactions. Taken together, these findings suggest that lecturers generally view themselves as caring and rational facilitators of learning, and students' perceptions largely reinforce this depiction.

Table 1. Comparison of Lecturers' and Students' Perceptions of Lecturers' Ego States

Ego State	Brief Description	Lecturers' Perception	Students' Perception
Nurturing Parent	Shows care, empathy, and support toward students; emphasizes positive guidance.	44.4%	25%
Critical Parent	Displays corrective and normative behavior; reinforces rules or obligations firmly.	8.3%	1%
Adult	Rational, objective, and analytical; focuses on problem-solving with an egalitarian approach.	43.8%	58%
Adapted Child	Demonstrates emotional responses shaped by situational adjustment; cautious toward authority.	3.5%	5%
Free Child	Spontaneous, expressive, and creative; reflects freedom of expression.	0%	11%

The alignment of perceptions between lecturers and students—where lecturers view themselves as caring and rational mentors and students hold similar perceptions—carries several important implications for the learning process. This congruence strengthens the quality of academic interactions, as students feel more comfortable and confident in communicating, engaging in discussions, and expressing their views in class. Lecturers who demonstrate empathy and rationality also help cultivate a positive and inclusive learning environment in which students feel valued and supported in developing their potential. These findings are consistent with Brackins' (2024) study in a christian school in alabama, which shows that teacher empathy—expressed through personal, non-judgmental, and transparent relationships—significantly fosters students' academic and personal growth.

This shared perception also contributes to higher levels of student satisfaction and engagement, as students view lecturers not only as instructors but also as mentors who understand their emotional and academic needs. These results align with the study by Tulung et al. (2024) in a christian higher education institution in indonesia, which found that the

quality of academic services oriented toward lecturer support and care positively influences student satisfaction. Moreover, lecturers who are able to balance empathy with rationality serve as inspiring role models for students in developing intellectual and emotional maturity. In the context of theological education, this balance also supports transformative learning—one that not only builds cognitive abilities but also nurtures students' spiritual and moral maturity. Effective learning in christian higher education cannot be separated from the relational quality and exemplary character of lecturers as both spiritual and intellectual mentors

Correlation Between Lecturers' Ego-State Typologies and Student Satisfaction

This study demonstrates that warm, supportive, and rational lecturer behaviors positively influence student satisfaction, whereas authoritative or overly compliant communication styles are less effective in fostering a satisfying learning experience. The pearson correlation analysis indicates varying degrees of association between the dimensions of lecturers' ego states and students' satisfaction levels. The nurturing parent dimension shows a strong and significant positive correlation with student satisfaction ($r = .620$, $p < .01$), suggesting that greater empathy, care, and support from lecturers are associated with higher levels of student satisfaction. The adult dimension also exhibits a significant positive correlation ($r = .580$, $p < .01$), indicating that rational and objective communication contributes meaningfully to improving student satisfaction.

In contrast, the critical parent dimension displays a weak but significant negative correlation ($r = -.210$, $p < .05$), implying that authoritarian attitudes may reduce students' sense of satisfaction. The adapted child dimension yields a very weak and non-significant negative correlation ($r = -.150$, $p > .05$), showing no meaningful effect on student satisfaction. Additionally, nurturing parent is strongly correlated with adult ($r = .714$, $p < .01$), indicating that lecturers who display empathy also tend to communicate rationally, whereas the critical parent dimension is negatively correlated with both.

Table 2. Correlation Between Ego States and Student Satisfaction

	Nurturing Parent	Adult	Critical Parent	Adapted Child	Student Satisfaction
Nurturing Parent	1	.714**	-.305	.142	.620**
Sig. (2-Tailed)		.003	.320	.658	.000
N	30	30	30	30	30
Adult	.714**	1	-.255	.110	.580**
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.003		.398	.732	.001
N	30	30	30	30	30
Critical Parent	-.305	-.255	1	.095	-.210*
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.320	.398		.762	.045
N	30	30	30	30	30

Adapted Child	.142	.110	.095	1	-.150
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.658	.732	.762		.102
N	30	30	30	30	30
Student Satisfaction	.620**	.580**	-.210*	-.150	1
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	.001	.045	.102	
N	30	30	30	30	30

Notes:

P < .01, Two-Tailed (**)

P < .05, Two-Tailed (*)

These findings are consistent with a study conducted at a christian school in alabama, which revealed that students view teachers' empathy as a relational process that strengthens trust, comfort, and engagement in learning. Similarly, research by Hulu and Simorangkir (2022) in indonesia demonstrates that the personality competencies of christian religious education teachers—particularly empathy and self-control—are significantly associated with the development of students' ethical values. These results indicate that caring instructional behavior, grounded in a balanced combination of empathy and rationality, fosters meaningful learning relationships. In line with this, Hutabarat and Widiastuti (2023) found that christian religious education teachers with strong social competencies—characterized by love, patience, and positive communication skills—are able to cultivate students' character and spirituality through dialogic, exemplary, and relational forms of engagement.

Biblical Interpretation of Lecturers' Ego-State Typologies in The Context of Christian Theological Education

The findings on lecturers' ego-state typologies and their relationship with student satisfaction not only provide psychological insight into academic interactions but also invite theological reflection on the meaning of the christian educator's vocation. In theological education, a lecturer's behavior and relational approach extend beyond pedagogical practice; they also express faith and emulate christ's example in service.

First, the dominance of the nurturing parent and adult ego states in lecturers' behavior reflects the values of love and wisdom that underpin christian teaching. Empathetic, caring, and rational behavior aligns with paul's description in 1 thessalonians 2:7–8, where he portrays a servant of god “like a mother caring for her children,” willing to “share not only the gospel of god but also their own lives.” In this context, lecturers who demonstrate empathy and support toward students are not merely fulfilling academic functions but are also modeling relational love rooted in personal sacrifice.

Second, the strong positive correlations between nurturing parent and adult and student satisfaction indicate that the integration of love (agape) and wisdom (sophia) is central to effective christian education. James 3:17 describes god's wisdom as “pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.” Lecturers who act both rationally and empathetically exemplify this type of wisdom—able to think logically without losing a compassionate heart. This balance of love and truth

([Ephesians 4:15](#)) forms the foundation of transformative theological learning. Conversely, the negative association of the critical parent dimension with student satisfaction highlights the risks of excessive authoritarian teaching. In [Colossians 3:21](#), Paul advises parents not to “provoke their children, lest they become discouraged,” a principle applicable to educators as well. Lecturers who overemphasize control and rules without love may diminish student motivation and hinder their growth in wisdom and Christlike character.

Meanwhile, the minimal influence of the adapted child suggests that defensive or overly cautious behavior is not an ideal relational pattern in theological education. Jesus exemplified a balance of humility and courage in his ministry. In [Philippians 2:5–8](#), Christ “humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death,” yet remained steadfast in truth. Lecturers who follow Christ’s example interact openly and sincerely with students without compromising moral firmness or spiritual submission.

These findings affirm that effectiveness in Christian theological education depends not only on intellectual competence but also on the integration of love, wisdom, and spiritual modeling. Lecturers who embody both the nurturing parent (love and empathy) and adult (wisdom and rationality) dimensions exemplify a Christ-centered pedagogical vocation—teaching not merely to impart knowledge but to form whole persons in accordance with the example of Christ ([Colossians 1:28](#)).

The findings of this study indicate that lecturers predominantly operate from the nurturing parent and adult ego states, a perception shared by both lecturers and students. Lecturers perceive themselves as empathetic, supportive, and rational facilitators, while students similarly observe behaviors that reflect problem-solving orientation combined with warmth and care. The convergence of perceptions suggests a high degree of relational alignment, which has important implications for the quality of classroom interactions. Students who recognize their lecturers as both empathetic and rational feel more confident and comfortable in participating in discussions, sharing opinions, and engaging in collaborative learning. This alignment supports previous findings by Brackins ([2024](#)), who observed that teacher empathy, expressed through transparent, non-judgmental relationships, significantly enhances students’ academic engagement and personal development in Christian school contexts.

The correlation analysis further emphasizes the significance of empathetic and rational behaviors in promoting student satisfaction. The nurturing parent dimension shows a strong, positive association with student satisfaction, while the adult dimension also exhibits a significant positive correlation. These results highlight the dual importance of relational care and objective reasoning in shaping students’ learning experiences. By contrast, the critical parent dimension demonstrates a weak but significant negative correlation with satisfaction, suggesting that overly authoritarian or rigid behaviors may hinder students’ comfort, engagement, and overall sense of fulfillment in the learning process. The adapted child dimension, showing minimal influence, reinforces that overly cautious or defensive lecturer behaviors are unlikely to contribute meaningfully to student satisfaction. These findings align with the study of Hulu and Simorangkir ([2022](#)), which demonstrated that teacher competencies in empathy and self-regulation significantly impact students’ ethical and personal development in Indonesian Christian higher education settings. Similarly,

Hutabarat and Widiastuti (2023) emphasized that teachers with strong social and relational competencies—including patience, love, and positive communication—play a crucial role in nurturing students’ character and spirituality through dialogical and exemplary interactions.

From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforces the relevance of transactional analysis in understanding classroom dynamics (Berne, 1964; Stewart & Joines, 2012). Lecturers’ integration of nurturing parent and adult behaviors reflects an optimal balance of relational and cognitive dimensions, consistent with the premise that effective communication and leadership emerge from flexible ego-state activation. The strong correlation between nurturing parent and adult dimensions ($r = 0.714$, $p < 0.01$) indicates that empathetic lecturers often also exhibit rational and analytical behaviors, creating an environment that fosters trust, clarity, and mutual respect. Conversely, negative correlations with critical parent behaviors highlight the potential for conflict and disengagement when relational warmth is subordinated to authoritarian control (Dusay, 1977; James & Jongeward, 1971).

Beyond psychological insights, the findings hold theological significance for christian higher education. In the context of theological instruction, lecturers’ behaviors are not only pedagogical tools but also expressions of faith and christlike service (Berne, 1966; Harris, 1969). The dominance of nurturing parent and adult ego states embodies the integration of agape love and sophia wisdom, central to christian educational philosophy. As exemplified in 1 thessalonians 2:7–8 and james 3:17, effective christian educators model both care and discernment, creating transformative learning experiences that develop students’ cognitive, moral, and spiritual dimensions. In contrast, excessive critical parent behaviors, reminiscent of authoritarian approaches, risk discouraging students and undermining the cultivation of wisdom and character, in line with the biblical caution in colossians 3:21. Similarly, minimal adapted child tendencies suggest that defensive or overly compliant behavior is not conducive to nurturing authentic, open, and spiritually grounded student engagement, paralleling christ’s example of humility and steadfast truth (Philippians 2:5–8).

The study highlights that effective theological education relies not only on intellectual proficiency but also on relational competence and spiritual modeling. Lecturers who embody the nurturing parent and adult ego states exemplify a christ-centered pedagogical vocation, facilitating learning that forms the whole person—intellectually, emotionally, morally, and spiritually—in alignment with the example of christ (Colossians 1:28). These findings underscore the critical interplay between psychological understanding, pedagogical practice, and theological reflection in shaping effective, transformative education in christian higher education contexts.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that lecturers’ ego-state typologies in the context of christian theological education are predominantly characterized by two primary dimensions: nurturing parent and adult. These ego states reflect lecturers’ empathetic, caring, rational, and objective behaviors in their interactions with students. The alignment of perceptions between lecturers and students regarding these two dimensions demonstrates the presence of a healthy and balanced academic relationship, in which students feel supported, valued, and empowered to participate actively in the learning process. These findings underscore that

lecturers serve not merely as instructors but also as mentors who are concerned with students' intellectual and emotional development. Correlation analysis further reinforces this conclusion, showing that the nurturing parent and adult dimensions have significant positive relationships with student satisfaction, whereas the critical parent has a negative effect and the adapted child has no meaningful impact. Thus, warm, supportive, and rational lecturer behavior plays a critical role in fostering a constructive learning environment, while overly authoritarian approaches may diminish student satisfaction.

From a theological perspective, lecturers who predominantly operate from the nurturing parent and adult ego states embody values of love and wisdom central to the christian educator's calling. Their empathetic, caring, and rational behaviors mirror christ's example of teaching grounded in genuine love and relational care (1 thessalonians 2:7–8). Effective theological education thus requires the integration of agape and sophia, balancing compassion and truth (ephesians 4:15; james 3:17). In contrast, dominance of the critical parent risks authoritarianism that can constrain students' learning (colossians 3:21), while minimal adapted child tendencies indicate that overly cautious or defensive behaviors are inconsistent with christlike humility balanced with firmness (philippians 2:5–8). Overall, effective christian pedagogy relies on harmonizing love, wisdom, and spiritual modeling to form whole persons in christ (colossians 1:28).

These findings have significant implications for the development of christian theological education. For lecturers, the results highlight the importance of developing emotional and spiritual competencies that balance empathy and rationality, ensuring that teaching serves as a vehicle for faith formation and character development, rather than mere knowledge transfer. For theological institutions, the study provides a basis for designing professional development programs that emphasize empathetic communication, spiritual reflection, and humanistic teaching approaches. For students, the findings cultivate awareness of the importance of dialogical and mutually respectful academic relationships as part of spiritual growth. Theoretically, this research contributes to the discourse on theological pedagogy by emphasizing the balance between love and wisdom as a foundation for transformative christian education.

However, this study has certain limitations. The small sample size and the focus on a single institution limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the reliance on perception-based instruments introduces the possibility of subjective bias. The study also does not examine the long-term impact of lecturers' ego-state typologies on students' spiritual development. Therefore, further research using longitudinal or qualitative approaches is recommended to deepen understanding in this area.

BIODATA



Daniel Ginting obtained a doctoral degree in English Language Teaching from a State University in Malang in 2015. He is a member of the IMOOC (Indonesian Massive Open Online Course) Module development team, initiated by the Regional Language Official (RELO) of the U.S. Embassy in 2016-2017. In 2018, he was a specialist responsible for facilitating IMOOC instructors. Currently, Daniel is a faculty member in the English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Language and Arts, Ma Chung University, Indonesia.

Prof. Dr. Daniel Ginting

Surel: daniel.ginting@machung.ac.id



Ratri Kusuma Wijaya is a tenured faculty member at Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Yestoya Malang. She earned her Master of Theology degree in 2011 from Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Baptis Kalvari Jakarta. Her research focuses on New Testament guidance.

Ratri Kusuma Wijaya

Sure: ratripk2sttyestoya@gmail.com

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