

Integrating the Coaching Approach into Transactional Analysis: Opportunities, Limitations, and Future Directions

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ABSTRACT

The article investigates the integration process between coaching methodology and the structure of Transactional Analysis (TA) as it seeks out beneficial connections and obstacles alongside strategies for long-term advancement. The union between these two paradigms enables new opportunities for better therapeutic results in all three domains through heightened self-awareness and purpose setting and holistic development for clients. Throughout the paper the authors demonstrate how coaching doctrine unites with Transactional Analysis doctrine while both focusing on practical case-based implementations with a discussion of limitations which include role confusion and methodological constraints and ethical concerns. The paper provides recommendations for future practice and research which include proposed models to train professionals while offering guidance through supervision and evidence-based assessment procedures. This article unites TA structured insights with the empowering coaching strategies to develop holistic client-centered approaches for helping professions.

Keywords: Coaching, Transactional Analysis, Integrative Approach, Personal Development, Psychotherapy, Counseling, Goal-Oriented Practice, Self-Awareness, Therapeutic Models, Professional Development

INTRODUCTION

The field of practical change facilitation together with psychological theory has recently gained more interest in coaching and psychotherapy application domains. Psychological model Transactional Analysis (TA) stands as one of the principal frameworks which Eric Berne established in the late 1950s as a theory related to communication and personality structure. The comprehensive structure of TA explains human interactions by using four fundamental components which consist of ego states (Parent, Adult, Child) and transactional patterns and life scripts and psychological games (Berne, 1961). The psychotherapy-based system underwent development to serve educational environments and organizational systems and coaching activities (Stewart & Joines, 2012).

The creation of TA during the 1960s motivated the rise of coaching as an active field dedicated to helping people enhance their capabilities and achieve maximum results (Whitmore, 2009). As a result of its foundation in positive psychology and solution-focused approaches and adult learning theory coaching functions through fostering independence and implementing self-potential and achieving goals. Coaching maintains a non-medical focus but achieves parallel goals with TA through essential values such as self-awareness together with responsibility and transformational change according to Cox, Bachkirova, and Clutterbuck (2014).

Implementation of coaching techniques with TA offers professionals the ability to unite established structures with flexible practices and therapeutic insight with performance-based methods. The combination of these two models through their integration would create a comprehensive developmental path between personal transformation and client outcomes.

The Adult ego state in TA matches perfectly with coaching client-centered dialogue since it focuses on rational choices while promoting awareness of the present moment (James & Jongeward, 1971). The coaching model stands firm about accountability measures and concrete performance targets which enhance the structured behavior evaluation approach of TA.

Adapting therapeutic models for non-clinical settings in combination with coaching practice requires examination of how deep psychological work gets affected during the transition. Which limits of ethics and methodology need to be maintained? What methods should the practitioners use to master working in this blended area?

A comparison of essential features between coaching and Transactional Analysis appears in Table 1 to provide better understanding for this discussion.

Table 1: Comparison of Coaching and Transactional Analysis (TA)

Dimension	Coaching	Transactional Analysis (TA)
Primary Focus	Goal achievement, performance, self-development	Personality structure, relational patterns, psychological healing
Client Role	Autonomous, solution-seeker	Co-investigator of internal and external dynamics
Practitioner Role	Facilitator, guide, non-directive	Therapist, analyst, educator
Core Techniques	Powerful questioning, goal setting, feedback loops	Ego-state analysis, script analysis, transactional patterns
Theoretical Foundation	Adult learning theory, positive psychology	Psychoanalysis, humanistic psychology
Typical Settings	Corporate, life coaching, leadership development	Clinical therapy, education, coaching
Time Orientation	Future-oriented	Past, present, and future integrated
Change Mechanism	Self-directed goals, reflection, action planning	Insight, awareness, redecision, behavioral shifts

The integration serves practical needs for change strategies among therapists and coaches alongside educators and organizational leaders who require an accessible framework. This paper explores the integrative potential of GPT in the following sections through current research, practical applications and relevant moral aspects.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative exploratory design of this study focuses on evaluating the process of integrating coaching methods into Transactional Analysis (TA). Qualitative research proved appropriate for studying practitioner and academic perspectives about conceptual frameworks because it allows researchers to capture the deep insights and knowledge of such participants according to Creswell (2014). This paper contains two central research parts: the first part includes a thematic literature review and the second part consists of expert interviews conducted through semi-structured approaches.

Thematic Literature Review

A systematic review accompanied by thematic analysis was conducted on peer-reviewed articles as well as books and professional publications related to coaching and Transactional Analysis during the initial phase of the study. Research was conducted through PsycINFO and JSTOR and ScienceDirect and Google Scholar databases to collect literature from 2000 to 2024. My academic research employed the search terms “Transactional

Analysis” and “Coaching Psychology” combined with “Integrative Therapy” both singularly and along with “TA in Coaching” as well as “Personal Development Models” and “Therapeutic Coaching.”

For the research 72 academic sources were found at first. The application of English language, relevancy to TA-coaching integration and peer-reviewed or professional publication criteria produced 41 sources for extensive evaluation. The research team used the NVivo platform to analyze texts thematically to extract the regular appearance of “client agency” along with “ego state alignment” and “goal-orientation” and “ethical boundaries.

Semi-Structured Expert Interviews

The second phase included conducting semi-structured interviews with professionals with experience in Transactional Analysis along with coaching or TA practice by itself. The research approach granted researchers direct access to collect field experiences and practices from multiple types of practitioners. Researchers employed purposive sampling technique (Palinkas et al., 2015) to pick participants who conducted integrative practice together with scholarly contributions at this disciplinary intersection.

Table 2: Methodological Framework

Component	Details
Research Design	Qualitative, exploratory
Data Sources	Literature review and expert interviews
Sampling Strategy	Purposive sampling
Number of Participants	12 experts
Data Collection Tools	Interview guide (open-ended), NVivo software for thematic coding
Data Analysis Method	Thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
Ethical Considerations	Informed consent, anonymity, right to withdraw, ethics approval obtained

A total of 12 participants were interviewed, consisting of certified transactional analysts, ICF-accredited coaches, and hybrid practitioners with experience in both domains. Interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes and were conducted either in person or via Zoom. They were recorded, transcribed, and anonymized to preserve confidentiality.

Table 3: Expert Participant Profile

Participant ID	Qualification	Field of Practice	Years of Experience	Geographical Location
P01	CTA (Certified TA Analyst)	Psychotherapy	18 years	UK
P02	ICF-Certified Coach	Executive Coaching	12 years	Canada
P03	MA in Counseling Psychology	Integrative Practice (TA+Coaching)	10 years	USA
P04	PhD in Coaching Psychology	Academic/Research	15 years	Australia
P05	CTA and Life Coach	Life Coaching & TA Therapy	14 years	South Africa
P06	Organizational TA Practitioner	HR & Corporate Development	11 years	Germany
P07–P12	Various (mixed credentials)	Clinical, Educational, and Coaching Practice	8–20 years	Multiple countries

Data Analysis

A thematic content analysis according to the Braun & Clarke (2006) six-phase model was applied to both interview and literature data. The analyst started the process with data familiarization followed by initial code generation and theme searching. The researcher then checked themes followed by theme definition which was essential for naming purposes before report production. The researchers verified their analysis by comparing the detected themes from literature to interview data which deepened their analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Every experiment in the research study adhered to ethical requirements. All participants authorized the informed consent while being notified about their complete freedom to join or decline the study's requirements. Participants had the opportunity to stop the study at any time while the researchers protected the confidentiality of reported data. Before initiating data collection the organization received institutional approval for ethical standards.

RESULTS

This study uncovered different findings about how the coaching practice should be implemented into Transactional Analysis (TA) structures. The research evaluation together with expert interview data generated four fundamental themes concerning (1) Philosophical Alignment with Mutual Core Values and (2) Self-Awareness Advancement alongside Goal Direction and (3) Professional Roles along Ethics Tensions and (4) Knowledge Development and Integration Framework Requirements.

Philosophical Compatibility and Shared Core Values

The interview responses and research literature demonstrate an essential philosophical connection between the fields of coaching and TA. Interviewees confirmed that both models originate from humanistic psychology and promote autonomous choice as well as self-awareness together with change and development possibilities (James & Jongeward, 1971; Stewart & Joines, 2012). All interviewees affirmed the fundamental TA principle that people inherently possess thinking and decision-making abilities which corresponds exactly to the client-focused nature of coaching according to Berne (1961).

The Adult ego state from TA displays comparable characteristics to coaching's ideal client state because it is rational and decision-oriented along with being present-focused. One participant (P03) explained:

A client who functions under the Adult ego state establishes a condition that enables maximum effectiveness of coaching interventions. The bonding zone between TA and coaching emerges when insight develops into tangible action.

According to existing literature coaching can establish beneficial operations within the TA framework by keeping interventions focused on non-clinical and future-based methods (Cox et al., 2014).

How should coaching be integrated into Transactional Analysis?

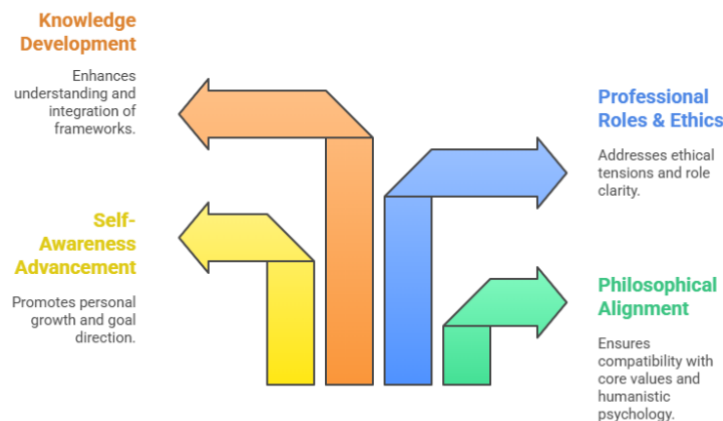


Figure 1: Coaching Integration into Transactional Analysis

Enhancing Self-Awareness and Goal Orientation

Coaching effectively improves action-planning capabilities of TA practitioners across personal development settings as well as professional development contexts. This approach to TA centers on diagnosing scripts as well as unconscious patterns and dysfunctional transactions but coaching gives its clients direct paths to set and achieve their goals. Organizational coaches who rely on TA emphasize this theme because they first use awareness-based TA to establish self-understanding then follow with coaching methodology for creating specific measurement-based targets (Whitmore, 2009).

Coaching adds a “results-driven” value to TA when clients transition past crisis management into pursuit of life changes through practical action. According to P06 who practices HR-related TA this is what they noted.

“TA gives clients the map. Through coaching practitioners obtain both a guidance system and navigation services.

The participants explained how coaching methods incorporating SMART goals and future visioning and accountability systems make it possible to integrate these tools effectively into TA-informed interventions which generate more impactful transformations between insights and actual behavioral change.

3. Role Boundaries and Ethical Tensions

Almost a majority of those interviewed raised concerns about maintaining appropriate professional limits while combining coaching practices with TA. The participants highlighted that untrained coaches may unintentionally encroach upon therapeutic regions without enough psychological skills. Literature shows widespread acknowledgement regarding this tension because clients who seek treatment for unresolved trauma along with pathological script beliefs (Kauffman & Bachkirova, 2008).

The professionals stressed that practitioners should establish clear service limits and keep their clients fully informed regarding their support function. As one participant (P01) put it:

Running deep script redecision treatments cannot qualify as coaching work because this type of intervention belongs to therapeutic practice. Therapy functions as its proper definition which needs to remain separate from other professional disciplines. This situation creates a risk of lowering the quality of both therapeutic practice domains.

Another concern was informed consent and client safeguarding, particularly when coaching clients begin to explore deeper psychological material that may exceed the coach's competence. Literature sources recommend using referral protocols, supervision, and continuous professional development to navigate these complexities responsibly (Bachkirova & Lawton-Smith, 2015).

Training, Competency, and the Need for an Integrated Framework

A major emergent theme is the lack of an established, formalized training pathway that equips professionals with dual competencies in both TA and coaching. Interviewees who had transitioned from psychotherapy to coaching or vice versa shared that they had to create their own blended approach, often navigating conflicting models and ethical frameworks without systemic guidance.

Several participants advocated for the development of interdisciplinary certification programs or curricula that would provide a cohesive model, grounded in the strengths of both approaches. There was a consensus that such a framework should prioritize ethical practice, theoretical integration, and applied techniques that respect the boundaries of both modalities.

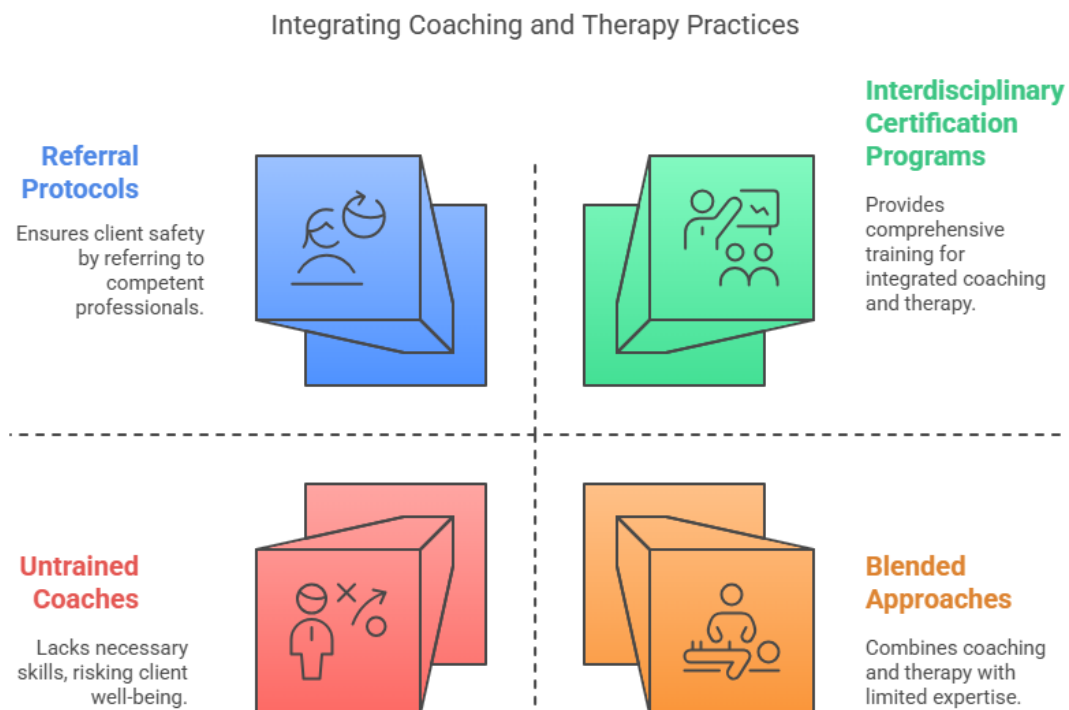


Figure 2: Integrative Coaching and Therapy Practices

The literature supports this notion, calling for “integrative practitioners” who are trained in both theoretical depth and performance-focused application (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). Additionally, some experts proposed that supervisory structures must evolve to support this hybrid practice, enabling reflection on both coaching goals and psychodynamic patterns.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that integrating coaching into TA is not only feasible but potentially transformative, provided that practitioners maintain ethical clarity, receive appropriate training, and stay grounded in both the relational and goal-directed aspects of client work. This integration offers a powerful avenue for client empowerment—merging the insight of TA with the activation of coaching.

DISCUSSION

Combining TA with coaching methods generates promising chances while raising important restrictions. The findings merge with theoretical and practical knowledge demonstrating that the combination supports individual and occupational development yet requires attention to ethical and research methods.

Philosophical Alignment and the Humanistic Connection

The investigation discovered that coaching demonstrates philosophical concurrence with Transactional Analysis as its fundamental principles. The two practices draw their foundations from humanistic psychology which emphasizes client mastery of self-determination and self-actualization according to Berne (1961) and Whitmore (2009). According to Berne (1961) the Adult ego state stands vital for rational choice and behavior transformation which corresponds to the goal-oriented method and self-empowerment strategies of coaching practice.

This framework advances when coaching adds future-focused solutions together with client autonomy as its core elements (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014). The TA model becomes a strong foundation for coaching when forward-thinking practices are combined to help clients create clear steps toward progress based on their self-reflection. The experts in the study indicate that this combination gives clients both the required knowledge about their relational patterns and practical methods enabling them to achieve change in their personal lives.

The merger of understanding and action methodology supports a complex development model according to Kauffman & Bachkirova (2008). Practitioners find an ideal development framework through blending coach-assisted goal setting with psychoanalytic script analysis methodologies to treat both intellectual and emotional client dimensions. Although a combined approach presents itself in research findings it must be executed deliberately thus preventing improper conflicts or overlaps between frameworks.

Enhancing Client Self-Awareness and Personal Growth

Self-awareness proved itself to be a dominant concept which researchers found in their studies along with expert interviews. The primary value of combining coaching approaches with TA exists in its capacity to boost self-knowledge through the process of personal development toward target objectives. Ego-state analysis within Transformational Analysis helps patients recognize their fundamental structural behavioral patterns which emerge from early life programming that hinders their present-day effectiveness (Stewart & Joines, 2012).

The solution-focused methods of coaching enable clients to turn their newly gained insights into real-life methods through the guidance of Whitmore (2009). The power of self-awareness gained from TA together with goal-setting offered by coaching enables clients to bring transformative change to their lives. A client who discovers problems in their Parent-Child transactional patterns can adopt coaching methodologies to build goal-based targets that force the client to shift from a reactive to a proactive manner.

The study yields promising insights about personal transformation from combined approaches but it reveals the barriers to achieving alignment as a main weakness. It becomes complex to distinguish between therapeutic script redecisions which require specific kinds of intervention from coaching which focuses on establishing actionable goals. The expert source (P01) explains that coaches receiving training in TA techniques occasionally revert to practices that align more with therapy rather than coaching. A more detailed separation of roles along with methodological distinctions needs to be defined between counseling and coaching based on our further examination below.

Ethical Boundaries and Role Confusion

Both interview respondents and existing literature focused on ethical boundaries as the primary limitation among all discussed issues. The implementation of TA methods in coaching requires alertness regarding performance-based practices and therapeutic techniques. According to Kauffman and Bachkirova (2008) clients' psychodynamic patterns can result in professional boundaries being crossed by coaches when examined in depth potentially leading to therapeutic scenarios that need clinical supervision and specialized expertise.

Various experts acknowledged role confusion as the primary current issue in this field. A coach who detects profound psychological issues with their client through ego-state analysis will likely consider conducting therapeutic work using rededication work or transference interpretation (Stewart & Joines, 2012). The implementation of coaching and therapy roles by practitioners creates relationship difficulties because clients struggle to understand when specific lines separate coaching and therapeutic work.

ICF together with EATA provide ethical guidelines which stress the significance of drawing distinct boundaries when working with clients. Although trained in motivating behavior change the coach lacks expertise in treating severe psychological disorders. As one interviewee (P06) suggested:

The moment a client starts processing neglected childhood events or past traumatic events the coach should determine if they should guide the client toward therapy. Determining the extent of your abilities while properly referring clients requires professional competence.

Interdisciplinary training becomes crucial because it helps practitioners manage the treatment boundaries without neglecting either the comprehensive nature of TA or the goal-driven aspect of coaching.

Benefits and Limitations of Combining Transactional Analysis (TA) with Coaching
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■ Benefits
■ Limitations

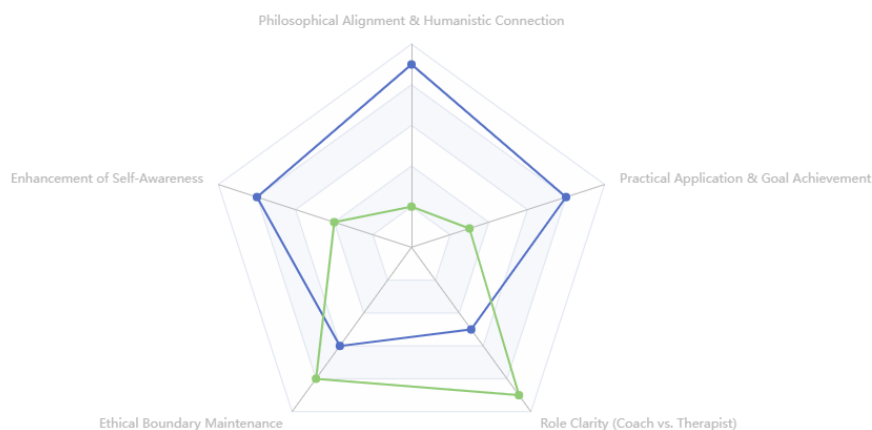


Figure 3: Benefits and Limitations of Combining Transactional Analysis with Coaching

Training and Professional Development

The research reveals that practitioners lack proper specialized education about operating in the integrating sector between coaching and TA approaches. Most available trainings in both coaching and TA domains fail to meet sufficient standards for teaching

practitioners necessary interdisciplinary techniques for successful practice according to participants.

The experts indicated that training approaches must adapt to solve this deficiency. An expert researcher outlined this opinion during the study (P04).

Coaching programs need to provide education on the implementation of TA methods in addition to instructing coaches about the theoretical and practical subjects and ethical principles. Through this approach practitioners could intervene on psychological and performance-related levels to benefit their clients.

A model integrating coaching with TA demands practitioners to possess both theoretical knowledge and capability for practical implementation. Professional development and peer collaboration together with supervision will prove critical in building the integrative model according to participant recommendations.

The clinical combination of coaching with Transactional Analysis shows great potential for fostering better understanding of self while helping clients reach their predefined targets. The two frameworks with humanistic psychological foundations and client change potential create a robust partnership which advances personal development practice. The integration process faces various challenges which emerge during its implementation. The combination of these practices demands practitioners to confirm ethical practices while preserving role differences and gaining essential additional education for proper fusion.

Further research needs to establish integrated training systems and supervisory methods to provide practitioners with the right skills needed to combine TA and coaching in both ethical and effective ways. The integration of coaching and TA methods shows potential to become an effective instrument that enables transformative change within different environments because of the rising market demand for comprehensive personal development solutions.

CONCLUSION

The coaching approach interacting with Transactional Analysis constitutes an innovative and evolving approach within human development methodologies. Humanistic principles and goal-oriented behavior form the foundation of both practices which create substantial potential by incorporating thoughtful ethical methods. The theoretical match between these academic areas combined with practical integration possibilities and their defining operational challenges defines this new interdisciplinary field although both success and difficulties were examined in this research.

The implementation of coaching together with TA enhances patient involvement and drives motivational change and personal development. The psychological depth of TA equips clients with identification and decomposing capabilities for their behavioral dynamics through its ego state and transactional pattern and life script understanding. Through coaching clients gain empowerment to venture into the future with assurance alongside structured methods for objective setting and planning and accountability systems. This combined usage delivers a comprehensive plan for supporting complete development between individuals and professionals.

The integration provides a strong contribution because it links understanding new behaviors with taking meaningful steps forward. TA stands out at determining behavioral origins however coaching focuses on teaching clients to achieve meaningful life change. The supportive combination creates a system which provides awareness with practical tools so clients can achieve concrete changes in their life. Combined use of this unified approach delivers maximum benefit to organization leaders and their teams because it provides behavioral change methods alongside essential insights which lead to lasting achievements.

The combination of these management approaches presents certain barriers on the way to full implementation. The study's most vital discovery pertains to sustaining proper ethical and professional limits that appear when coaching blends with TA. The boundaries of training require careful observation from practitioners since they should avoid extending their authority beyond training limits especially with clients showing therapeutic or clinical needs. The distinction between a coaching intervention and a therapeutic one—especially in the context of script redecision or trauma processing—is not always clear-cut. To safeguard client health and preserve practitioner moral standards professionals should maintain continuous ethical thinking and seek professional oversight while following established practice guidelines.

Lack of formal establishment between TA and coaching competency training produces obstacles hindering responsible widespread implementation. The present professional development options only focus on coaching skills or TA skills individually which forces professionals to figure out integration methods through independent exploration. The research confirms that professional education should combine interdisciplinary instruction methods which teach conceptual foundations beside training ethical capacities while developing practical competencies and self-evaluation abilities. These programs would empower professionals to articulate with certainty through both systems thus producing professional advancement as a result.

Future research and practice can benefit from coaching-TA integration which creates new promising opportunities. The effectiveness of such integrated frameworks requires additional research in different settings especially executive coaching programs and educational settings and therapy practices. Research through quantitative methods should examine how clients adapt their behavior and build emotional resilience and accomplish their targets while qualitative investigation should reveal counselor interactions and therapist experiences.

Studies about how this integrated framework performs across different cultural environments together with its adaptation strategies should be strongly supported through research. The globalization of coaching and TA makes it essential to study their interaction across different cultural operating environments for creating inclusive practice models.

Transactional Analysis receives significant growth potential through adding the coaching approach because this integration promotes innovation and transformative client results. The combination between psychological comprehension depth and forward-moving conduct operates as one holistic practice that matches the complexity found in human development. Success for this integrated approach requires ethical practice along with trained professionals to administer it while researchers and discussion groups refine it continuously. Through this practice method practitioners present their clients with a profound and enduring route to meaningful transformative change.

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