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Confluence of *Triguna* and PERMA Model: An Empirical Validation

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Abstract

Indigenous Vedic perspective of Triguna delineates the tri-dimensional classification of personality (sattvika, rajasika, and tamasika), whereas Seligman's PERMA model describes that flourishing emerges from five components of wellbeing: positive emotion (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M) and accomplishment (A). The present study aims to examine the relationship between Triguna (i.e. sattvika, rajasika, and tamasika) and five components of PERMA model. Vedic Personality Inventory and the PERMA Profiler were administrated on 60 participants (males=30, females=30) aged 18-45 years. The findings indicated that sattvika was positively correlated with all the five components of PERMA, whereas rajasika was negatively correlated with positive emotion, relationships, meaning and accomplishment components and tamasika was negatively correlated with all five PERMA components. The stepwise multiple regression analysis revealed that sattvika positively explained 45% variance in positive emotion, 20% in relationships, 11% in meaning and 26% in accomplishment. The tamasika negatively accounted for 6% variance in positive emotion and 31% in meaning.

Keywords: Triguna, Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment.

In the present time, individuals, organizations and policy makers are focusing those attributes that enhance human flourishing and reduce mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, stress, hopelessness etc. Evidences reveal that flourishing plays an innovative role to bring numerous advantageous outcomes such as better physical and mental health, longevity, good relationships and success (e.g., Diener & Chan, 2011; Hupport, 2009). Moreover, human flourishing improves kindness, compassion, optimism and other positive attributes. For the elevation of flourishing in human nature it is the essential to explore that how personality determines to the vital components of flourishing.

Psychologists have used different models and theories for the conceptualization of personality. These models and theories give an explanation of human nature. Ancient Indian Philosophical schools such as *Samkhya Yoga, Vedanta* and *Buddhism* and medical text *Ayurveda* conceptualized personality using the term *Triguna (*i.e. *sattva, rajas* and *tamas)*. Many Indian and western scholars have tried to convert this ancient knowledge of personality into the modern context of psychology (Jha, 2009). It is described in medical scripture *Ayurveda* that a living being is combination of *Panch Mahabhutes* (five elements) including *Akasa* (ether), *Vayu* (air), *Tejas* (fire), *Ap* (water), and *Prithvi* (earth) and this combination produces biological components *vat, pitt* and *cough* and psychological components *sattva, rajas* and *tamas* and these components influence body, mind, their ingredient and equivalent behavior pattern with spiritual facet (Shilpa & Murthy, 2011). In divine text *Gita,* lord *Krishna* explained that living being is the combination of three innate qualities namely *sattva, rajas* and *tamas,* in which *sattva* is the symbol of goodness, *rajas* is the indicator of passion and *tamas* is the indicator darkness (Krishna, 2002). On the other hand, *Samkhya* philosophy hypothesizes two phenomenon *Purusha* (awareness) and *Prakriti* (nature). *Purusha* creates inner personality, whereas all other things in the universe are created by *Prakriti.* All physical and psychological factors including mind is also created by *Prakriti. Prakriti* is constituted by three *gunas- sattva, rajas,* and *tamas.* These three *gunas* exist in everyone but their magnitude may differ

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from person to person. On the basis of above consideration, personalities are classified into three categories – *sattvika, rajasika* and *tamasika* (Rao, 1966).

Sattvika are disciplined and have mental equanimity (Wolf, 1998); show creativity, confidence, modesty and are free from egoism (Ganguli, 2005); focus on present (Kumar, 2007); have no desire for the fruits of their actions (Theodore, 2010); endeavor with eagerness and determination without thinking about success or failure, realize difference between expected and neglected, manifest calmness, satisfaction, compassion, and tranquility and have control over one's actions (Rao & Paranjpe, 2016, p. 156). *Rajasika* feel dissatisfaction, envy from others and have materialistic tendency (Wolf, 1998); show hesitancy and doubt (Ganguli, 2005); focus on future (Kumar, 2007); have restlessness and greed for the fruits of their actions (Theodore, 2010); work with great effort to satisfy their longing for worldly things, overwhelmed by joy and sorrow, do not understand the difference between prescribed and prohibited, enjoy bodily comfort and sensual pleasure, and involve in attaining worldly propensity such as wealth, career and prestige (Rao & Paranjpe, 2016, p. 156). *Tamasika* have mental imbalance, anger, frustration, and feeling of helplessness (Wolf, 1998); reveal heedlessness in their character (Ganguli, 2005); focus much on the past (Kumar, 2007); are lazy and undisciplined (Theodore, 2010); adopt immoral pathway to fulfill their desire, manifest laziness, fear, grief, depression, and arrogance, inclined toward sleep, intoxication, violence, and gambling that leads the soul toward gloom and ignorance (Rao & Paranjpe 2016, p. 156-157). As described above, these three *gunas* are always present in all beings and determines their temperament and emotions. These *gunas* generate different kind of predispositions and also shape one's wellbeing and flourishing level.

Flourishing is an emotional state of wellbeing that emerges inside the mind. It is not merely the absenteeism of melancholy but also it is an established gratification for life and being in love for living. Words "flourishing", "happiness" and "wellbeing" are usually used reciprocally in the literature and we also used these words reciprocally in the present study. Ancient Indian writings such as *Vedas* and *Upanishad* have conceptualized flourishing as *ananda.* The *Vedic* and *Upnishadic* seer and sages explained that everlasting *(nitya)* and eternal *(satya)* is the ultimate truth of universe. The personal aspect of ultimate truth of universe is called *Atman.* They recognized *Atman* as *satya* and *nitya* and recommended human being to perceive it as a way to get liberation from all kinds of difficulties and sufferings and to attain eternal gladness *(ananda)* which is characterized by the state of realization (Kiran Kumar, 2003). It is explained in *Taittiriya Upnishad* that happiness and wellbeing emerge from the spontaneous expression of *ananda* (Kiran Kumar, 2003). In this way concept of flourishing and wellbeing has been considerably defined in ancient Indian scriptures. Western psychologist delineated that flourishing is vigorous state of mind that emerges from functioning well in various psychosocial domains. So, they realized that multidimensional models are necessary to properly understand the concept of flourishing and wellbeing. Ryan & Deci (2001) outlined wellbeing in terms of hedonic and eudaimonic domains. Hedonic domain describes emotion, whereas eudaimonic domain focuses on thriving and related well being constructs. Keyes (2002) explained that eminent emotional, psychological and social wellbeing is crucial for flourishing. Hupport & So (2013) described that 10 components may helpful in the elevation of flourishing namely competence, emotional stability, engagement, meaning, optimism, positive emotion, positive relationships, resilience, self esteem and vitality. These are the contradictory characteristics of the symptoms of depression and anxiety. Seligman (2011) focuses on the five components of flourishing in PERMA model: positive emotion (predisposition to feel contentment and perception of life in positive paradigm), engagement (a state of flow or psychological connection with an specific activity), relationships (feeling of love to others and supported by others), meaning (sense of living a purposeful life and involvement in relevant activities) and accomplishment (feeling of achievement). Each PERMA element is helpful in the enhancement of flourishing.

Researchers have been attempted to examine that how these three *gunas* influence the level of wellbeing and flourishing. Bandhyopadhyay (2020) reported that performance of *sattvic-rajsic* group was better in their examination and sufferings of this group were minor

in the context of divine entitlement, divine struggle and psychological distress. Dominance of *sattva guna* results in self-compassion and human flourishing (Verma & Tiwari, 2017). Sharma et al. (2016) reported that *sattva guna* was found as a strong predictor for wisdom and psychological well-being. Khanna et al. (2013) found positive correlation between *sattva guna* and well being indicators, whereas *rajas* and *tamas* were negatively correlated with wellbeing indicators. Sharma et al. (2012) compared clinical sample and community sample and reported that dominance of *sattva guna* was found in community sample and *rajas* and *tamas gunas* were dominant in clinical sample. *Rajsic* tendency promotes psychological and behavioral problems, whereas *sattvic* tendency has protective influence on personality (Das & Gopal, 2009). Kapur et al. (1997) reported that dominance of *sattvic* temperament was found in normal children in comparison to psychologically disturbed children.

On the basis of above description, it is clear that considerable studies has been done to explore the influence of *Triguna* on mental health, wellbeing, life satisfaction, wisdom, academic achievement etc. but there occur a requirement to examine that how personality orientations as illustrated in ancient Indigenous literature determine those components of human nature that are helpful in the enhancement of flourishing as outlined in Seligman's (2011) PERMA model. The present study attempts to examine that how *sattvika, rajasika,* and *tamasika* personality orientations correlate and influence the all five PERMA components of flourishing.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between three indigenous personality orientations (i.e., *sattvika, rajasika* and *tamasika*) and five flourishing components of PERMA model.

2. To explore the influence of three personality orientations on five PERMA components.

Method

Sample: The sample consisted 60 participants (males = 30, females = 30) aged 18 to 45 years. All the participants were residents of two districts of Uttar Pradesh. Their level of the education was intermediate, graduation and post graduation.

Measures

Vedic Personality Inventory was developed by wolf (1998) for the assessment of personality in Indian context. It contains 56 items in which 15 items are of *sattva,* 19 items are of *rajas* and 22 items are of *tamas.* Participants responded their responses on a seven point rating scale as Very Strongly Agree (6), Strongly Agree (5), Somewhat Agree (4), Neutral (3), Somewhat Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1), and Very Strongly Disagree (0). Reliability value ranging from á=0.70 to 0.90 has been obtained for three *gunas* of Vedic Personality Inventory.

PERMA-Profiler was developed by Butler & Kern (2016) to assess five components of flourishing of Seligman's (2011) PERMA model. The scale consists 15 items in which three items are for per PERMA component. Each item is completed by choosing a number on an 11 point scale ranging from zero to ten in which zero indicates immensely low level and ten indicates immensely high level. Reliability value ranging from á=0.72 to 0.90 has been obtained for five components of PERMA Profiler.

Procedure: The researchers met all participants personally. A brief introduction regarding the study was given. After their consent for the participation in the study, Vedic Personality Inventory and the PERMA Profiler were administrated on them. After the completion of the data collection process, each data was scored. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Stepwise Multiple Regression analysis used for the statistical analysis of data. SPSS version 20 was used in the data analysis.

Results

The results of the study have been illustrated in two portions. The first portion describes coefficient of correlation and second portion reveals the findings of stepwise multiple regression analysis.

To find out the relationship between *Triguna* (i.e. *sattvika, rajasika, tamasika)* and all five components of PERMA, coefficient of correlation was computed and presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Coefficient of Correlation between Triguna and PERMA

	Triguna		
PERMA	***Sattvika***	***Rajasika***	***Tamasika***
Positive Emotion	0.67**	-0.27*	-0.52**
Engagement	0.18	0.06	-0.17
Relationships	0.45**	-0.09	-0.39**
Meaning	0.55**	-0.08	-0.55**
Accomplishment	0.51**	-0.09	-0.34**

Note: **P<0.01, *P<0.05

Result demonstrated that *sattvika* was positively and significantly correlated with four components of PERMA i.e. positive emotion (r=0.67, p<0.01), relationships (r=0.45, p<0.01), meaning (r=0.55, p<0.01) and accomplishment (r=0.51, p<0.01). However, *sattvika* was not found to be significantly related with engagement component. *Rajasika* was negatively and significantly correlated with only positive emotion (r=-0.27, p<0.05) component. But it was not found to be significantly related with four components of PERMA i.e. engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. *Tamasika* was negatively and significantly correlated with four PERMA components i.e. positive emotion (r=-0.52, p<0.01), relationships (r=-0.39, p<0.01), meaning (r=-0.55, p<0.01) and accomplishment (r=-0.34, p<0.01), whereas no significant correlation was found between *tamasika* and engagement component.

After correlation, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was calculated to examine the effect of *Triguna* (i.e. *sattvika, rajasika,* and *tamasika)* on five PERMA components and presented in

Table 2: Personality as Predictors of Five PERMA Components

Predictors	***R***	***R2***	***R2 Change***	**Beta B**	***T***	***F***
Criterion = Positive Emotion						
Sattvika	0.67	0.45	0.45	0.55	5.32**	47.93**
Tamasika	0.72	0.51	0.06	-0.27	-2.63**	29.84**
Criterion = Relationships						
Sattvika	0.45	0.20	0.20	0.45	3.80**	14.47**
Criterion = Meaning						
Tamasika	0.55	0.31	0.31	-0.38	-3.41**	25.55**
Sattvika	0.65	0.42	0.11	0.38	3.33**	20.55**
Criterion = Accomplishment						
Sattvika	0.51	0.26	0.26	0.51	4.56**	20.77**

Note: **p<0.01, *p<0.05

Table 2. Result showed that among the three types of personality two, i.e. *sattvika* and *tamasika* had been emerged as the significant predictor of positive emotion. *Sattvika* positively explained 45% variance in positive emotion and *tamasika* negatively explained 6% variance in positive emotion. Relationships component was significantly predicted by *sattvika* personality. *Sattvika* positively accounted for 20% variance in relationships. Result also demonstrated that out of three personality types two, i.e. t*amasika* and *sattvika* had been emerged as the significant predictor of Meaning. *Tamasika* negatively accounted for 31% variance in meaning and *sattvika* positively accounted for 11% variance in meaning. Accomplishment component was significantly predicted by *sattvika* personality. *Sattvika* positively explained 26% variance in accomplishment.

Discussion

As described above, ancient Indian philosophical schools depicted personality in context of *Triguna* paradigm- *sattva, rajas* and *tamas* that are liable for the human temperament and behavior. These *gunas* work together and can never be isolate from one another. They also cannot give rise to any behavior without the support of other two. They compete and co-operate with one another. The dominant *guna* determines one's nature and personality while other two *gunas* are in the auxiliary position. The present study had two objectives, which have been discussed.

The first objective of the study was to examine the correlation between *Triguna* (i.e. *sattvika, rajasika* and *tamasika*) and all five components of PERMA. The findings of the present study unequivocally indicated that dominance of the *sattva guna* in personality facilitates the attainment of all five PERMA components in comparison to *rajas* and *tamas gunas.* The coefficient of correlations revealed that there were significant positive correlations among the scores of *sattvika* and four PERMA components which enhance flourishing level namely positive emotion, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. Conversely, negative correlation existed among the scores of *rajasika* and four components of PERMA i.e. positive emotion, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. *Tamasika* exhibited significant negative correlations with the score of four PERMA components namely positive emotion, relationships, meaning and accomplishment.

The second objective of the study was to examine effect of *Triguna* personality orientations on five PERMA components. Result of the regression analysis demonstrated that out of all five components of PERMA four, i.e. positive emotion, relationships, meaning and accomplishment were significantly and positively predicted by *sattvika,* whereas two components of PERMA, i.e. positive emotion and meaning were significantly and negatively predicted by *tamasika. Rajasika* had not been emerged as a significant predictor for any PERMA component.

In essence, it can be contend that the role of the *sattvika* personality is more conducive in achievement and continuance of PERMA components which are helpful in the intensification of flourishing whereas, *tamasika* plays a discouraging and adverse role in the acquisition and maintenance of flourishing components. These differences occur due to the differences between nature and characteristics of *sattva guna* and *tamas guna*. It is explained in *Gita* (Chapter-XIV, Shlok-6), that *sattva guna* cultivates joy and purity, binds the mortal being with affection to knowledge and happiness, makes soul free from anger, frustration, agony, arrogance, longing, selfishness and envy and enhances generousness and nobility (Rastogi & Kewalramani, 2010). *Sattva guna* exhibits positive correlation with seven components of wellbeing namely self acceptance, positive relation with others, self development, satisfaction with life, purpose in life, autonomy and environmental mastery (Rastogi, 2004). Self compassion and human flourishing determine by *sattva guna* and *tamas guna*. People who have dominance of *sattva guna* reveal higher mean score on self-compassion and human flourishing and their components in comparison to people who have dominance of *tamas guna* (Verma & Tiwari, 2017). *Tamasika* have fear, sorrow, low spirits (Kejriwal & Krishnan, 2004). *Sattvika* are self-controlled and inclined towards humanity (Kapadia, 2004). Hence, findings of the present study encourage the findings of the previous investigations in this area and *Vedic knowledge* that *gunas* play relevant role in shaping and maintenance of human flourishing. *Sattva guna* cultivates the components of flourishing in human nature, whereas *rajas* and *tamas* influence negatively to the components of flourishing.

Conclusion

On the basis of above discussion it can conclude that *sattva guna* and *tamas guna* play important role in determining the components of PERMA which influence the flourishing level of participants. The scores on *sattvika* demonstrated significant positive correlation with the four PERMA components i.e. positive emotion, relationships, meaning and accomplishment, whereas

rajasika scores revealed significant negative correlation with only one PERMA component i.e. positive emotion, whereas no significant correlation exhibited between *rajasika* four PERMA components namely engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. Conversely, the scores on *tamasika* demonstrated significant negative correlations with four PERMA components namely positive emotion, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. The scores on the *sattvika* significantly accounted for variance in the scores of positive emotion, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. The scores on the *tamasika* significantly accounted for the variance in the scores of positive emotion and meaning.

Limitations and Implications: There are some limitations of the present study. The study was conducted on a small sample. Moreover, sample was selected from a small area. So, the findings of the study may not be generalized to the people of other areas. Except these limitations there are some implications of the present study. It is a specific attempt to examine the confluence of Indian approach of personality i.e. *Triguna* with popular western approach of flourishing-PERMA. The study also attempted to investigate the influence of three personality orientations on five PERMA components. The study has some practical implications also. Study provides an insight that how *sattvika* personality promotes those components that are helpful in the enhancement of human flourishing. Human flourishing has protective influence on health and longevity. It develops better understanding for the use of one's intellectual capacities. Moreover, flourishing promotes compassion, cooperation, kindness and other positive attributes. Thus, study provides an understanding that dominance of *sattva guna* in personality results in many excellent outcomes.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to disclose.

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