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Development of Mysore *Triguna* Scale–*Short*

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ABSTRACT

The authors have developed the Mysore Triguna Psychological Personality Assessment Scale and published it in 2012. This scale assesses the Trigunas, namely Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and their combinations in people. This scale is being used to assess and understand personality in different areas. The authors are not from the domain of Ayurveda or Philosophy but are from the domain of Psychology. There are some constructs that are not amenable for psychological testing which have been ignored in the original scale. The original scale had 63 MCQ type of questions. Since it is long, and is online, there was a need to develop a shorter version of the scale for limited use and for application in research areas where online use may not be possible. Hence a shorter version of the original scale was developed with just 15 MCQ type of questions selected from the original 51 questions through rigorous empirical and statistical analysis. The present paper describes the methodology and the results of the same.

Keywords: *Tridoshas, Trigunas, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas,* Traits, Psychometric assessment

INTRODUCTION

Personality is basically understood by three major domains or methods in Indian Philosophy from which Indian Psychology has evolved. They are *Pancha Kosha*, *Tridoshas* and *Trigunas*. The *Tridoshas* and the *Trigunas* are both made up of the *Pancha Maha Bhutas* in varying combinations and degrees.

The **first** domain is that of understanding the person from the view point of the *Pancha Koshas*, which has been written about for the first time in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. This is the earliest reference to the study of human personality from the Indian psycho-philosophical point of view.

The **second** domain is that of understanding personality from the *Samkhyan* principles of *Pancha Mahabhutas*—which is common to all *Darshanas* of Indian Philosophy—wherein the personality is said to be a composition of the five "elements" (elements are just an approximation of the term *Mahabhutas* and not an exact meaning) of Ether, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. The Sanskrit equivalents of these names are *Akasa, Vayu, Agni, Ap* and *Prithvi* respectively. These five elements combine with each other to form the *Tridoshas*—the physiological traits of *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha* which give each and every one of us the unique characteristic that makes us what and who we are and the reasons for our behaviours.

The **third** domain is that of understanding personality from the view point of the *Trigunas*—the psychological attributes responsible for the exhibition and behaviour of traits and types of human personality—consisting of *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas. Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas* too are composed of the *Pancha Mahabhutas* of *Akasa, Vayu, Agni, Ap* and *Prithvi,* in varying combinations and degrees. These *Trigunas* are again common psychological representation of human behaviour across all the orthodox Indian traditional systems of Philosophy. In fact, each and every action, talk, food we eat, and behaviour can be classified as being a representation of one of the three *Gunas.* These three methodologies—*Pancha Koshas, Tridoshas* and *Trigunas*—form the most important and comprehensive methodology of understanding Human Personality from the Indian Traditional view point and perspective.

While the *Pancha Kosha* method of understanding personality has not been dealt with here, we deal with the *Pancha Mahabhuta* and consequently the *Tridosha* and *Triguna* perspective of understanding people in detail.

The *Tridoshas* form a bottom-up processing from the atomic and cellular level to give us an understanding of the person as a whole while the *Trigunas* form a top-down processing from the intellectual/ psychological level to give us an understanding of the person in totality. These two systems form the body-mind-spirit holistic unit of understanding personality that is very important and is a well-developed and tested methodology from *Ayurvedic* (principles)—(the medical aspect of Indian tradition) perspective, which has been handed down through the millennia, leading to a better understanding of human traits, types, behaviours, interests, attitudes, and natures. These two comprehensive methodologies of understanding people is pan-global and is applicable to people of all races, religions, ethnicities, genders, languages, cultures, geographical indicators and any and all divisions across the world and human civilization, without distinction. This respects that we are all a part of the same species while also allowing us unique personalities with different combinations of the same *Pancha Mahabhutas*. (Shilpa & Murthy, 2011a; Datar, 2016)

Introduction to *Trigunas*:

Information about the *Pancha Mahabhutas* and *Trigunas* was collected from various sources of Indian Philosophy, ancient texts and all other material related to Psychology from an Indian perspective. These texts and scriptures include the *Vedas, Upanishads, Mimamsa Sutras, Samkhya, Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Yoga Vasistha of Valmiki,* Seventeen *Maha Puranas* (the researcher was unable to find one *Maha Purana* which was out of print), Five *Upa-Puranas, Srimad Ramayana of Valmiki, Mahabharata, Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, Dharmashastras, Ayurveda*, Encyclopaedia of Indian Medicines, *Nighantu* and *Nirukta, Bhaktirasamrta Bindu of Rupa Goswamin, Natya Sastra of Bharata, Iswara Samhita, Manu Smriti, Brhad Devata*, Elements of Hindu Iconography, to name a few. (Shilpa & Murthy, 2012a)

"There have been various attempts by researchers to develop tools from these three methods of *Pancha Kosas, Tridoshas* and *Trigunas* to study and assess personality from the Indian perspective. But it was felt that they were outdated and were not amenable for online testing as is required in this day and age." (Shilpa & Murthy, 2012a).

"In the Indian Psychological literature, *Guna* theory is already empirically tested and accepted (Murthy & Kumar, 2007). Each *guna* gives certain characteristic qualities to the person, based on which an individual can be classified as belonging to that particular *guna* type. *Charaka* and *Susruta* recognize seven types or categories into which people can be classified, depending on the dominance of the *gunas* in their body. They are said to belong to a particular *guna* combination, as follows:

1.   People with dominant *Sattva Guna.*

2.   People with dominant *Rajas Guna.*

3.   People with dominant *Tamas Guna.*

4.   People with dominant *Sattva-Rajas Guna* combination.

5.   People with dominant *Sattva-Tamas Guna* combination.

6.   People with dominant *Rajas-Tamas Guna* combination.

7.   People with balanced *gunas* or with *Sattva-Rajas-Tamas Guna* combination.

The constructs to assess the *gunas* in a person were identified based on previous tools and from the vast amount of literature available in the Indian tradition, like the *Vedas, Upanishads,* the *Mahabharata* including the *Bhagavad Gita* which forms a part of it, *Samkhya, Yoga, Puranas,* and *Ayurveda* to name a few." (Shilpa & Murthy, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c).

Methodology for developing the short *Triguna* Scale

"The constructs to assess the *gunas* in a person were identified based on previous tools and from the vast amount of literature available in the Indian tradition, like the *Vedas, Upanishads,* the *Mahabharata* including the *Bhagavad Gita* which forms a part of it, *Samkhya, Yoga, Puranas,* and *Ayurveda* to name a few.

The scale underwent several revisions. Each one was corrected for grammatical errors, ambiguity, syntactic errors, etc. The scale was thus finalized for the final Pilot Study. This scale was later modified, by putting all constructs assessing similar traits into a cluster. The markings indicating the statements to be *Sattva, Rajas* or *Tamas* were removed. In each construct itself, the three statements were jumbled up so that there was no definite order of appearance of the three types of statements in all the construct wise questions. The scale comprised 63 statements each to identify *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.* The total number was thus 189." (Shilpa & Murthy, 2012a; 2012c; 2013a; 2013b).

Since it is long, and is online, there was a need to develop a shorter version of the scale for limited use and for application in research areas where online use may not be possible. Hence a shorter version of the original scale was developed with just 15 MCQ type of questions selected from the original 63 questions through rigorous empirical and statistical analysis. The present paper describes the methodology and the results of the same.

The shorter version of the *Triguna* Scale has 15 items each for *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.* The tool was developed based on the data collected from 641 adults belonging to different age groups. They were administered a scale of 189 items as well as the short scale of 15 items and statistical analyses for both were as follows.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis was done on 641 respondents. The Alpha indices are given below:

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha for *Triguna* scale

Construct	*Triguna* Scale (Original)	
	Cronbach's Alpha	Item N
Sattva	0.925	63
Rajas	0.933	63
Tamas	0.976	63
Respondent N =	641	

An analysis of the above table indicates that all the items were consistent with each other which indicated that there was good consistency among the items. All the 189 items were subjected to qualitative analysis and only those items which were non-overlapping and distinct were identified. In this process, 15 question-statements were identified for *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas* that were characteristically different from each other and which the authors felt would be a good indicator of assessing *Triguna* in people. The responses of 641 adults who has responded to the longer version were revisited and their responses for the identified 15 items each for *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas* were segregated and subjected to Cronbach's Alpha indices which yielded in Table 2.

Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha for SRT Scale—short

Construct	*Tridosha* Scale (Original)	
	Cronbach's Alpha	Item N
Sattva	0.91	15
Rajas	0.76	15
Tamas	0.75	15
Respondent N =	641	

An analysis of the above data indicates that the Cronbach Alpha is high indicating a high reliability of the shorter version.

In order to establish the validity of the tool, the correlation between the original long scale and the short scale were calculated which yielded in Table 3.

An analysis of the above table indicates that the correlation between the original long version and short version of *Triguna* scale on all the three *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas* are found to be significant indicating that the shorter version is valid. Since, the shorter version has satisfactory reliability and validity, the authors developed norms as follows.

Norms

As the ultimate purpose of standardization of a test is to establish norms, the authors have developed Stanine scores (Ferguson, 1981) to convert raw scores to standard scores. The SRT raw scores data obtained from the total number of 641 respondents is as follows, as represented in Table 4.

Table 3

Correlation between original and short *Triguna* scales

	Correlations		
		Original Q	**Short Q**
*Sattva*_Original and Short	Pearson Correlation	1	**0.966****
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	641	641
*Rajas*_Original and Short	Pearson Correlation	1	**0.882****
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	641	641
*Tamas*_Original and short	Pearson Correlation	1	**0.887****
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	641	641

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4

Transformation of SRT Raw Scores to Stanine scores—Short

Constructs	STANINES								
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Sattva	0-6	6-8	8-10	10-12	12-18	18-28	28-34	34-38	38-45
Rajas	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-6	6-10	10-15	15-20	20-45
Tamas	0	0	0	1	1-2	2-3	3-6	6-11	12-45

Stanine scores interpretation

Stanine scores 1–3 = Low degree of presence of the traits *(Guna).*

Stanine scores 4–6 = Moderate degree of presence of the traits *(Guna).*

Stanine scores 7–9 = High degree of presence of the traits *(Guna).*

The scores on *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas* range from 0-45. These score ranges can be converted into Stanine scores using the above table. Thus, an individual can be assessed on *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas* on the short scale.

The salient characteristics of *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas* were identified and the same as can be seen in the table 5.

Table 5

Salient characteristics of *Trigunas* (SRT)

Sl. No.	Constructs	Salient Characteristics of S, R and T
1.	*Sattva*	Intelligent, fortitude, gentle, truthful, benevolent, virtuous.
2.	*Rajas*	Energy, harsh, angry, excessive activity, strong emotions, inclining towards violence and aggression.
3.	*Tamas*	Mass, heavy, obstructing, ignorance or lack of knowledge (confused), inactivity, sleep (more), generally dejected always, indecent.

Implications of research for practice

This scale has been standardized for easy administration by practitioners working in the area of career and vocational guidance for students from high school grades onwards. This scale can also be used by HR recruiters looking to hire individuals who are most suited for certain job positions which could be fulfilled by persons with characteristic traits and who would out-perform others without those traits. Since this scale is based on the Indian dimensions of *Prakriti* (*Tridosha* and *Triguna*), it could also be used by Ayurvedic and Yoga practitioners in their practice to direct certain treatment methodologies based on the individual's *Guna* for better treatment outcomes. This scale and its reports therein are evidence-based reports, which are the need of the hour in alternative and integrative medical fields, which have global applicability and are not restricted to the uses mentioned above. (Shilpa & Murthy, In press; Datar, In press).

CONCLUSION

Triguna scale is a self-rating scale, which has 45 items of the SRT wherein there are 15 items each for assessing *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* in an individual. The authors have been able to develop a short version of the original Mysore *Triguna* Personality Assessment Scale which can be used to assess people. This assesses *Sattva* (**Illumination**), *Rajas* (**Passion**) and *Tamas* (**Inertia**)—the concepts taken from *Ayurveda* and other classical Indian philosophical (Indian psychological) literature validated in psychology using psychometric procedures.

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