

Effect of Yoga on Trigunas - An Empirical Study

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Abstract

The *Trigunas*' concept of the Indian tradition has attracted the attention of psychologists in India which has been involved in the development of indigenous theories and models of human behavior, particularly personality. Here, attempts are made to relate effect of yoga on gunas. A sample of 91 management educators, 53 yoga practitioners and 43 senior citizens was selected on the basis of random sample technique. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The t-test was applied. The results indicate a significant difference in summative scores of *Trigunas* between management educators, yoga practitioners, and also between senior citizens and yoga practitioners. Findings of this study indicate that practice of yoga reduces Rajoguna significantly.

Key Words: *Trigunas, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas, and Personality*

1.0 Introduction

Since the beginning of 19th century, many scholars have shown great interest in Indian scriptures with psychology. The Science of Emotions authored by Bhagavan Das (1905) was probably the first of such efforts to integrate the philosophical insights with psychology thereby creating significant interest in comprehending Indian psychology (Cornelissen, Misra, & Varma, 2011a & b; Rao, Paranjpe & Dalal, 2008; Rao & Paranje, 2016).

Researchers have made in-depth study into the Indian scriptures to explore and expose its possible empirical applicability as well. This has further resulted in people undertaking research works that are thought provoking but overall progress is slow and steady in this domain.

1.1 Indian Psychology

The term Indian Psychology has been incorrectly understood for more than a century. *Swami Vivekananda* used it explicitly in his lectures in the United States of America and distinguished it from Western Psychology. Later, *Sri Aurobindo* also used the same in his essays on education. Subsequently, *Mrs. Rhys Davids*, a Buddhist Scholar, used the term Psychology. An Indian philosopher adept in modern psychology got inspired by their works and published three volumes under the title „Indian Psychology“ (*Sinha J, 1958*), which created an intellectual arena for other scholars and psychologists to undertake research on this theme. All this happened

in the first half of the 20th century. Since then, the pace at which the Indian Psychology research has proceeded is slow but steady in nature.

Indian psychology is more focused on the consciousness, as its central idea, which actually acts as a distinctive factor from all the other branches of psychology. To substantiate, K. Ramakrishna Rao says that “Indian psychology is a distinct psychological tradition rooted in the native Indian ethos. It manifests in the multitude of practices prevailing in the Indian subcontinent for centuries. Unlike the mainstream psychology, Indian psychology is not overwhelmingly materialist-reductionist in character. It goes beyond the conventional third-person forms of observation to include the study of first-person phenomena such as subjective experience in its various manifestations and associated cognitive phenomena. It does not exclude the investigation of extraordinary states of consciousness and exceptional human abilities. The quintessence of Indian nature is its synthetic stance that results in a magical bridging of dichotomies such as natural and supernatural, secular and sacred, transactional and transcendental. The result is a psychology that is practical, positive, holistic and inclusive” (K. Ramakrishna Rao K, et. al 2008).

It is also evident from the work of Matthijs, who claimed that concepts and theories go beyond merely tracing the history of Indian thought. It demonstrates how ideas and practices from Vedic, and Yogic traditions can be used to tackle issues in contemporary psychology. With its contribution to theory building and application, it gives a new direction to psychology as it is studied today (Matthijs *et. al.*, 2011).

Psychology’s roots have been traced to the folk and classical Western traditions of different cultures. Many modern psychologists and personologists from the West have appreciated the importance of psychological insights available in other cultures (Kim & Berry, 1993).

Referring to Asian culture, Hall and Lindsey (1989) observe that, “Asian psychology has proved remarkably durable, surviving longer than two thousand years; western personality theories are quite young by comparison. Virtually every eastern meditation system transplanted to the West-Transcendental Meditation, Zen and the like- stems from this psychology or another much like it”. Further, they note that, “While eastern psychologies are concerned with states of consciousness and the laws that govern their alteration, they also contain articulate theories of personality. The goal of eastern psychologies is to alter a person’s consciousness so as to transcend the limits imposed by the habits that form the person’s personality. Each personality type needs to overcome different obstacles to attain the liberation from these limits”. In light of the teachings and behavior of the eastern masters, the methods and aims of western psychotherapy were inadequate. Compared with the degree of self-purification, eastern discipline demands, even the best western training analysis is not much more than an introductory course. A more frequently investigated Indian psychological concept in relation to the understanding of human motivation and personality is *Trigunas* (Murthy & Kumar, 2007).

1.2 *Trigunas* according to the Samkhya Philosophy:

The Samkhya system advocates the ontological dualism of *Prakriti* and *Purushas* (individual souls). It believes in the evolution of the cosmos including matter, life and mind out of the eternal *Prakriti* to serve the ends of an infinite number of individual souls. The dualism of *Prakriti* and souls is the fundamental doctrine of Samkhya system.

Prakriti is constituted by *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, which are called the *Gunas*. These are not qualities but substances, which are the ultimate elements of *Prakriti*. They are called *Gunas* because they are subordinate to the souls, realizing their ends, or because they are the three strands in the constitution of *Prakriti* even as three strands in a string, or because they fetter the souls to empirical life. They are substances because they are capable of conjunction and disjunction, and because they have qualities. They are not perceived, but inferred from their effects. They are of the nature of pleasure, pain and delusion, and are feeling substances. *Sattva*

manifests an object to consciousness. *Rajas* is the principle of activity, and makes an object to move and act. *Tamas* is inertia, resistance, or restraint. *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* have the function of manifestation, activities and restraint respectively. They produce pleasure, pain and delusion or indifference respectively.

Bhagavan Das (1955), formulated an interaction theory of *Guna* to ascertain the effectiveness and the influence of the *Trigunas* on personality such an examination of *Trigunas* in relation to varied components of personality which is of utmost importance. Considering the fact that *Triguna* predominantly functions in combinations of two or more dispositions, the conclusions drawn and the characteristics derived appear to be ambiguous and unfinished.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- 1) To study the effect of yoga on the summative percentage scores of Management Educators, Management Educators and Yoga Professionals.
- 2) To study the effect of yoga on the summative percentage scores of senior citizens and Yoga Professionals.

1.4 Hypothesis of study

H1: There is significant difference between the summative percentage scores of Management Educators, Management Educators and Yoga Professionals.

H2: There is significant difference between the summative percentage scores of *Trigunas* in senior citizens and Yoga Professionals.

1.5 Research Methodology

A reliable and valid research instrument which was developed earlier is used to collect primary data for the purpose of investigating. Psychometric measurement tool (Questionnaire) which can answer the questions related to the objectives and hypotheses of the study were

administered to the target population (management educators and senior citizens). This instrument had 36 questions to measure *Triguna*.

1.6 Sample

A sample of 91 management educators, 53 yoga practitioners, 43 senior citizens and 53 yoga practitioners was selected on the basis of random sample technique. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The t-test was applied. The results indicate a significant difference in summative scores of *Triguna* between management educators and yoga practitioners and also between senior citizens and yoga practitioners.

1.7 Analysis, Result and Discussion:

Table 1: Mean Scores - Management Educators & Yoga Professionals

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>M.E</i>	<i>Y.P</i>
Mean	62.76	57.87
Variance	35.30	56.42
Observations	91	53
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	90	
t Stat	4.06	
P(T<=t) one-tail	5E-05	
t Critical one-tail	1.66	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0001	
t Critical two-tail	1.98	

The above Table-1, shows, at 5% level of significance the t-calculated value is 4.06. The critical value for one tail test is 1.66 and two tails is 1.98. The calculated value falls in the rejection region. Hence Null hypothesis is rejected. *There is significant difference between the summative percentage scores of Trigunas in Management Educators and Yoga practitioners.*

Table 2: Mean Scores – Senior Citizens Professionals & Yoga Professionals

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	S.C	Y.P
Mean	61.93	58.47
Variance	39.92	57.66
Observations	43	58
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	98	
t Stat	2.50	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.0070	
t Critical one-tail	1.66	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0141	
t Critical two-tail	1.98	

From the Table 2, at 5% level of significance the t- calculated value is 2.5. The critical value for one tail test is 1.66 and two tails is 1.98. The calculated value falls in the rejection region. Hence Null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant difference between the summative percentages cores of *Trigunas* in Senior Citizens and Yoga Professionals.

1.8 Conclusion

Usually, one of the Gunas is more predominant than the other two Gunas, to lead a happy, healthy, calm and contended life for balancing all three Gunas. The specific amount of each of the three *Gunas* a person needs, is based on environment, type of work performed, physical constitution and spiritual goals. A *Rajas* is one of the Gunas - the three basic energetic constituents of the cosmos. The Gunas are in a constant flux and they affect everything around us - energy, matter, and consciousness. *Rajas* is a state of energy, action, change, and movement. The nature of *Rajas* is of attraction, longing, and attachment. When in excess, *Rajas* can create anxiety, excessive thinking, and hyperactivity. This study clearly shows that, *Rajas* Guna can be reduced and balanced through some simple yoga practices.

1.9 Limitations of Study

The present study is not free of limitations. There could be errors due to conduction of the questionnaires, participation of the subjects in the study, and any other external factors on the performance of the sample. While working professionals have very less leisure time to devote to academic work, their motivation, mood, fatigue, and stress in participating in such a study might have impacted the results.

1.10 Future Scope of Study

Applying Eastern philosophies for development of personality is an upcoming area with vibrant research potentials. Whether in leadership or performance, eastern theories have much

scope to look into the changing pattern of job in the modern work scenario. As the workforce is going to be global and diverse in the present industrial world, more and more research is required to address the practice of job performance, and suitable style of leading a happy life. Considering the study as one among the many initiatives in finding the effect of yoga on *Trigunas*, the research has a lot of scope in the future that can be conducted with qualitative methodology and extensive analysis.

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