

MODELLING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR AS BASIS OF PERSONALITY USING SAMKHYA PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Most of the studies on personality, done in the recent past, are mainly based on western ideological framework of attitude and behaviour. The Indian philosophy of *Samkhya* profoundly advocates a different framework for the trilogy of attitude, behavior and personality. But with this Indian framework very little published studies are available. One of the ways to study personality is through *Samkhya* philosophy which is the basis of *Triguna*. The concept of the *Triguna*, i.e., *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, as it was elucidated in classical Indian literature seems to have implication to our understanding of human behaviour. The blend of these three *gunas* determine the attitude and behavior of a person and there by respective personality. Theory of *Triguna* provides a very useful framework to understand behaviour of individuals. The type of *guna* dominant in the individual at a particular point of time is responsible for the way an individual responds to the challenges he faces at that time. In this paper an attempt has been made to model the correlation of attitude and behavior as the consequence of *Triguna* using *Samkhya* philosophy.

Keywords: *Samkhya, Triguna, Attitude, Behaviour, Personality*

1. Introduction

This wonderful and glorious world of plurality has been at all times a mystery from caveman to present scientific man. The source of universe and the reason for all happening around is a question that has been bothering the entire mankind all around the globe from times immemorial till today. We are investigating and inquiring for an answer. These exercises lead the mankind to mysticism of religion with or without objective facts. But the modern studies are nowhere near to a perfect explanation of the material world. The modern Science is all about investigation, observing the factors, codifying the observations systematically for a meaningful representation. So far the western social science and the behavioural studies have denounced the fundamental constituents of human personality, which the sages of ancient India had long back established by inquisition. They were rejected because the western society thought that modern science is better than ancient Indian philosophy. The modern science has undoubtedly established the fundamental truth that all human being are same, i.e., are one biological species called 'Homo-sapiens'. But at the same time the fundamental question bothering all the civilised societies is the distinctive nature of all the individual human beings. Post Second World War, the study of attitude started gaining importance due to its assumed influence over the social behaviour of individuals. Several studies were carried out to predict and explain human behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Recent studies in this field have concluded that the

attitude represent attributes of a person's behaviour. (Conner & Armitage, 1998)

The Modern Psychologies have been very active in linking Psychological factors of personality. But this approach always has been a challenge due to a theoretical and vague approaches. Hence the various theories based on Psychological approach have failed to gain popular acceptance or universal acceptance. Many of these theories were based on basic religious Psychological belief held at that time, in those societies of their origin. It is generally accepted that personality is not an empirically pure discipline, because it encompasses the elements of Arts, Science and Philosophy, to draw any conclusions about the general forms of personality.

1.0 Definitions and Models of Attitude based on Western Concepts

In social psychology attitude is considered as one of the main psychological experiences. There exist numerous definitions and models of attitude, evolved over several centuries. Some of them are as listed below;

- 1) Attitude is readiness of the psyche to act or react in certain way. Attitude very often come in pairs, one conscious and the other unconscious (Jung, 1971).
- 2) Attitude is the affect for or against a psychological object (Thuestone, 1931).
- 3) Attitude is a mental or neural state of readiness. Organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on the individual's response to

all objects and situations to which it is related. It is a tendency to respond to some object or situation (Allport, 1935)

- 4) Attitude is held with respect to some aspect of the individual's world, such as another person, a physical object, behaviour, or a policy. Therefore, the way a person reacts to his surroundings is called his attitude (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977).
- 5) Attitude is relatively lasting clusters of feelings, belief, and behaviour tendencies directed towards specific person, ideal, objects or groups (Baron & Byrne), 1984).
- 6) The object or phenomenon can be anything a person discriminates or holds in mind and many include people, products, and organisations (Bohner and Wanke, 2002)
- 7) Attitude is a summary evaluation of an object or thought (Malhotra, 2005).
- 8) Attitude may be positive, negative, or neutral (Walley et al., 2009)

Many models of attitude have been proposed by the different scholars. Some of the relevant and well-recognized models are given below;

- 1) Expectancy-value Model - Among the early expectancy-value models is, one offered by Rosenberg in 1956 in which he suggests that the 'value importance' and 'perceived instrumentality' are separate and possibly manipulable dimensions of attitude-related cognitive structures.
- 2) Multi attribute Measurable Model - This model of attribute is proposed by Fishbein in 1963. According to him, attitude is an independent measure of affect for or against the attitude object, which is a function of belief strength and an evaluative aspect associated with each attribute.
- 3) Vector Model - Calder and Litz in 1972 represented attitude structure in their research work, as a two-dimensional metric space, which recognized as Vector Model. According to them one dimension represents an affective component (liking or favourableness) and the other represents a cognitive component (likely or probable).
- 4) The Tripartite Model - This model consists of three components of attitude: feelings, Beliefs and Behavior Spooner (1992).
- 5) ABC Model - ABC model is one of the most cited (Eagly and Chaiken 1998) model of attitude. ABC model suggests that has three elements in Affect, Behaviour and Cognition. Affects denotes the

individual's feeling about an attitude object. Behaviour denotes the individual's intention towards an attitude object. Cognitive denotes the belief an individual has about an attitude object.

2.0 Critical Review of Western Concept of Attitude and Behaviour

An elaborate review of various definitions and the models of attitude confirm that all the models are based on one or the other conceptual definition. Since each of the models is based on a definition which partially characterises the concept of attitude and behaviour, the corresponding models show some contradictions. For example, many early definitions describe attitude as a response towards an object in the real world (Jung 1921; Thurstone 1931; Allport, 1935; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). The later definitions hold attitude as a complex cluster of cognition and evaluation process resulting in an intended action (Baron & Byrne, 1984; Bohner & Wanke, 2002; Malhotra, 2005; Walley et al., 2009)

Thus the earlier description of attitude was as a reactive phenomenon and the latest description is as a proactive phenomena. This paradigm shift in the perception of attitude has resulted in weakening of the various models based on these definitions. Hence it is argued here that these models have resulted in limited understanding of attitude, behaviour and their relationship with the personality of an individual. Therefore there is a need to develop a comprehensive model which unambiguously explains the rationality for distinctive attitude and behaviour of a personality.

The various shortcomings of the western theories are the discernment or contradictions in the concept of Freedom versus determination, Heredity versus environment, Uniqueness versus Universality, Active versus reactive, optimistic versus pessimistic etc.

3.0 Ancient Indian Concept of Personality based on Attitude and Behaviour

Ancient Indian Philosophies have proposed a scientific analysis in order to develop a rational explanation for existence of mankind in the materialist world.

Among these philosophies, the 'Sankhya' philosophy is considered one of the oldest Hindu systems of philosophy of Maharushi Kapila, is considered to be the fundamental for other philosophy. Sankhya Philosophy is a dualistic system by accepting real and unreal entities. According to this philosophy what is un-manifested is called 'Prakruthi' and what is manifested is called 'Purusha'. Here an attempt is made establish a model connecting the changing factors to a constant profession, by incorporating the published interpretations of *sankhya* Philosophy. This paper aims to develop a rational ontological formation by of personality by linking the *triguna* as a medium of change.

Our aim in this article is not to give a detailed account of the concept of *samkhya* which is well narrated in published literatures from times immemorial till date by various philosophers and researchers. However, from a personality perspective, *samkhya* is considered as a set of three basic types of tendency; 'Satva', 'Rajas' and 'Tamas' are the three components. Each of these *gunas* is characterized by its own properties. *Samkhya* is basically a tendency of expression of behaviour. Depending upon the observed behavioural characteristic we can assess the *guna*, which propelled that action. The element of freedom also decreases from *satva* to *rajas* to *tamas*. The *tamas* is the state of maximum inertia, *rajas* drives the activity with attachment and associated excitement and misery. *Satva* is a state of equilibrium and least agitation of mind. Even in *satva* state the bondage is present though the freedom is also available to a greater extent.

4.0 The Human Mind is a Mixture of Trigunas

In any human being, though all these three qualities will be present in varying proportions, generally one of these qualities will be more predominant than the other two. For example, a contended person like saint or sage is predominantly *satvic*, an ambitious person is predominantly *rajasic* and a sensitive person is predominantly *tamasic*. A well-balanced human being should have 70% *Satva*, 20% *Rajas* and 10% *Tamas*. While a true *Guru* has 100% *Satva*. When there is a perfect equilibrium of the three *Gunas*, there is no manifestation of the universe. It is only when there are fluctuations or modifications (*Vikaras or Vikritis*) among them that begin to manifest (Rastogi, 2005). Nevertheless, *Shastras* state that the function of three qualities in their proper place is needed for normal existence. Without *Rajas* one cannot perform various actions that require to rest. Individuals under the influence of an excess of *Rajas*, find it difficult to rest or to sleep. It is maintained that *Gunas* act together and that they are found in every object in the universe. They never exist in isolation. They interact and compete with one another resulting in the domination of one over the others. No personality is exclusively *Satvic*, *Rajasic* or *Tamasic* (Singh, 1972). The predominance of one *Guna* and the degree of predominance are the determinants of the individual's behaviour (Rastogi, 2005). When *Satva* is dominant over the other two, purity, wisdom, love of knowledge, spiritual excellence and other such noble qualities are present. *Rajas* indicate activity and when dominant would indicate the rise of passions, emotions and desires (Rastogi, 2005).

6.0 Proposed Model of Personality

The following figure shows the proposed model of personality based on *samkhya* and *triguna* concepts. In this model an attempt is made to establish a rational association of various western and Indian concepts pertaining to attitude, behaviour and personality. The personality of an individual is developed based on two aspects, namely; *Prakriti* (analogous

to Traits) and *Purusha* (analogous to Identity). The amalgamation of these two will give rise to the *Guna* (analogous to Intellect). Intrinsically the *Guna* exists in three phases, namely; *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The blend of *trigunas* is a unique admixture for a specific time and space resulting in extrinsic behaviour. Thus personality is a dynamic phenomenon manifested by *trigunas* as behaviour at a particular instance depending on the attitude of each individual. Hence it may be said that personality development is in fact the moderation of *trigunas* through various physical and mental efforts.

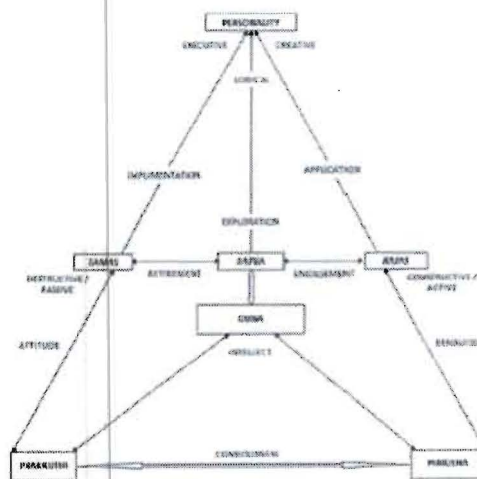


Figure 1: Personality Model based on Samkhya Philosophy

7.0 Model Validation:

To validate the model, a psychometric tool to measure *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (SRT) was used. This instrument is a self assessment questionnaire, originally developed to measure the attitude of industrial workers by behaviourally anchored responses for normal life situations (Nagendra, 2013). The instrument was administered to two pilot groups of apparently distinctive personality. The first group was faculty of management in various B-schools with minimum qualification of masters degree in management and the second group was 10th class passed out students in the age group of 16 to 18 years. 2-tailed t-test assuming unequal variance at 5% significance level was applied to compare the scores from instrument. Summative percentage scores were used in the pilot study. The results are as shown below in table -1;

Table 1. Two-Sample t-Test (Assuming Unequal Variances)

	Faculty	Student
Mean	62.76	50.67
Variance	35.30	39.69
Observations	91	61
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	124	
t Stat	11.867	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.00	
t Critical two-tail	1.98	

* Significant at 5%

Model, The IUP Journal of Management Research, Vol. XII, No. 3, July 2013, pp. 45-54.

Conclusion

The test results indicate that there is a significant difference in the SRT score of two sample groups as a result of their intellect or trigumas. Thus it can be concluded the instrument was effective in measuring the different constituents of personality in an effective way and hence the validates the model on which this instrument was developed.

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