

Understanding the Role of Tri-guna Personality in Predicting Life Satisfaction among Young Adults: Mediating Role of Perceived Social Support

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Indian perspective on personality is predominantly derived from the Samkhya philosophy. It is a dualistic school of Indian philosophy that views Purusha and Prakriti as the two independent elements that form reality. Prakriti is formed by three components of 'Gunas' namely Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, that are interdependent (Chakraborty, 1987). In psychological research understanding the factors influencing subjective well-being of an individual is a central question. In previous researches different personality traits have been examined as a predictor of life satisfaction but Indic personality structure has rarely been used. Subjective well-being has been conceptualized as consisting of affective and cognitive components (Diener, 1984). The cognitive component has also been conceptualized as life satisfaction (Andrews & Withey, 1976). The term "life satisfaction" relates to how much a person likes their life (Diener et al., 1998). Life satisfaction is a cognitive and global assessment of one's overall quality of life. Although personality traits predict life satisfaction the mechanism through it occurs could include social support systems. Present study explored the mediating role of perceived social support in the relationship between tri-guna personality and life satisfaction. Perceived social support can be defined as individual's perception of availability and adequacy of emotional and instrumental support from family, friends, and significant others. (Zimet et al., 1988). Results revealed that sattva is positively associated with life satisfaction whereas, rajas, and tamas were found to be negatively associated with life satisfaction. Mediation analysis revealed that perceived social support partially mediates the relationship between tri-guna personality and life satisfaction.

Keywords: Tri-guna personality, life satisfaction, perceived social support

In recent times the science of subjective well-being is growing exponentially. According to Diener et al. (2017), subjective well-being can be divided into two components namely affective which is related to pleasant and unpleasant emotions and other is a cognitive component which refers to subjective judgement of one's own life satisfaction. Life satisfaction can be defined as the cognitive assessment of overall quality of life (Lopez-Gomez et al., 2020; Jalloh, 2014). It can also

be understood in terms of the difference of current situation and ideal state (Skripachenko, 2020). Two theories in the literature of life satisfaction have been discussed intensely (1) Bottom-up theories and (2) Top-down theories. Bottom-up theories look at overall life satisfaction involving several aspects of life (Erdogan et al., 2012). According to these theories averaging the satisfaction in many domains of life does not constitute life satisfaction

rather they interact in a complex manner as people evaluate the different domain differently. On the other hand, top-down theories of life satisfaction views life satisfaction as a function of personality dispositions or other relatively stable characteristics (Diener, 1984; Loewe et al., 2014).

Indian perspective on personality is predominantly derived from the Samkhya philosophy. It is a dualistic school of Indian philosophy that views Purusha and Prakriti as the two independent elements that form reality. Prakriti is formed by three components of 'Gunas' namely Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, that are interdependent (Chakraborty, 1987).

Previous researches established the strong association of personality and life satisfaction. The Big Five traits particularly, extraversion and conscientiousness demonstrated moderate to strong association with life satisfaction (Mottus et al., 2024; Tauber et al., 2016), whereas neuroticism and specific nuances like feeling unexcited or misunderstood were found to be negatively associated with life satisfaction (Mottus et al., 2024). The association between tri-guna personality and life satisfaction revealed consistent patterns across multiple studies. Sattva characterized by social connectedness and selfless behaviour shows positive association with life satisfaction, positive affect, and psychological well-being (Sharma et al., 2021; Khanna et al., 2013; Pandey & Dubey, 2020). On the other hand, rajas (passion and activity), and tamas (inertia and lethargy) were negatively associated with life satisfaction (Sharma et al., 2021; Khanna et al., 2013). Individuals with higher sattvic tendencies have more likelihood of achieving higher life satisfaction and lower perceived stress (Sharma et al., 2021; Khanna et al., 2013). Moreover, Sattva was positively correlated with all the components of PERMA

model of well-being (Pandey & Dubey, 2020). On the other hand, individuals with alcohol dependence scoring higher on tamas were associated with lower levels of life satisfaction compared to healthy control (Nedungottil et al., 2022). These findings demonstrate strong association between tri-guna personality and different aspects of well-being and life satisfaction.

Previous researches also suggest that personality is strongly associated with perceived social support. Perceived social support can be defined as individual's perception of availability and adequacy of emotional and instrumental support from family, friends, and significant others. (Zimet et al., 1988). Longitudinal studies suggest strong correlated changes between personality traits and perceived social support over time, particularly extraversion and neuroticism (Allemand et al., 2015; Russell et al., 1997). Emotional stability predicted strong future perceived social support, whereas perceived social support predicted strong future levels of all Big Five traits (Udayar et al., 2019). Personality traits, particularly neuroticism and extraversion influence social relationships and perceived social support (Russell et al., 1997). Moreover, individuals who perceive themselves as socially connected and involved in pro-social behaviour demonstrated higher perceived social support (Connell & D'augelli, 1990). These findings highlight the complex interdependence of personality traits and perceived social support over time.

Researches consistently demonstrated positive association between perceived social support and life satisfaction across different populations. Studies involving adult individuals (Han et al., 2021), reported significantly positive association between these variables. The association is influenced by personality traits like extraversion and neuroticism (Han et al.,

2021). Quality of life has been identified as a mediating factor between perceived social support and life satisfaction, particularly among elderly people (Tarkar, 2021). These findings highlight the importance of perceived social support in increasing life satisfaction across various age groups.

Exploring the factors which helps us understand life satisfaction is an important question in psychological research, as it directly affects well-being, mental health, and quality of life. In previous researches different personality traits have been examined as a predictor of life satisfaction, but there are a very few studies which have explored Indic personality structure in predicting life satisfaction of individuals. While the personality traits affect life satisfaction the mechanism through which this occur remain a critical area of exploration. The extent to which individuals believe they are cared for and have supportive social systems i.e. perceived social support, has been identified as an important predictor in numerous psychological outcomes. Previous researches suggest that sattvic tendencies are associated to social connectedness, whereas, rajasic and tamasic individuals may perceive social support differently influencing their life satisfaction. However, the mediating role of perceived social support in the relationship of tri-guna personality structure (sattva, rajas, tamas) remains scarce. Hence, the following objectives have been formulated to address these research gaps.

(1) To study the association among tri-guna personality (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas) structure, perceived social support, and life satisfaction among young adults. (2) To understand the role of tri-guna personality (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas) structure in predicting life satisfaction among young adults. (3) To determine whether perceived social support partially or fully mediates the relationship between tri-guna personality (Sattva, Rajas,

Tamas) structure and life satisfaction among young adults.

Method

Participants

For the intent of the present study, a sample of 103 (Male-56, Female-47) students, age ranging from 18-27 years ($M=23.22$, $SD=2.88$), from Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh, India was selected using purposive sampling technique. Participants who had any neurological disease or psychological disorder were excluded from the study. Participants who had incomplete responses in the questionnaire were also excluded from the analysis.

Procedure

Participants were briefed about nature and purpose of the study. Informed consent of the participant was taken in verbal and written form. They were asked to fill biographical questionnaire followed by Vedic personality inventory, satisfaction with life scale, and multidimensional scale of perceived social support. Participants were given adequate instructions before filling their responses in the questionnaires. Participants were thanked for their voluntary participation in the study.

Research Design

Correlational research design was used to examine the association among tri-guna personality, life satisfaction, and perceived social support among young adults.

Research Tools

Vedic Personality Inventory: It was developed by David Wolf in 1998 to assess the personality type of an individual based on tri-gunans namely sattva, rajas, and tamas. This inventory consists total of 56 items. The Cronbach alpha values of each sub-scales range from 0.93-0.94. Sattva subscale consists of 15 items, rajas consist of 19 items, and tamas consists of total 22 items. It is a

7-point Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree.

Multidimensional scale of perceived social support (MSPSS): MSPSS was developed by Zimet et al., in 1988. It is a self-report measure of subjectively assessed social support. It consists of 12 items on three different dimensions based on source of the support namely friends, family, and significant other. Each of these groups consisted of four items each. It is a 7-point rating scale ranging from 1-very strongly disagree to 7-very strongly agree. Cronbach alpha values for the subscales significant other, family, and friends are 0.91, 0.87, 0.85 respectively. For the whole scale the value is 0.88, indicating good internal consistency as a whole and for the three subscales. The test-retest reliability of significant other, family, and friends are 0.72, 0.85, 0.75 respectively and for the whole scale it is 0.85, indicating good temporal stability.

Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS): SWLS was developed by Diener et al., in 1985. It measures the global judgement of an individual's life satisfaction. It consisted of total 5 items. The Cronbach alpha value of the scale is 0.87 and 2-month test-retest reliability of the scale is 0.82. It is a 7-point Likert scale ranging 1- strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree.

Results

The data were analysed using Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables

Variable	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Sattva	103	73.46	10.36	1				
Rajas	103	51.25	10.34	-.355**	1			
Tamas	103	48.79	11.46	-.511**	.477**	1		
MSPSS	103	62.50	12.34	.421**	-.306**	-.443**	1	
SWLS	103	22.15	6.44	.468**	-.321**	-.476**	.446**	1

Note. **p<0.01 (1-tailed)

analysis to estimate the relative contribution of each predictor variable (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) in the prediction of the criterion variable (Life Satisfaction). Mediation analysis (PROCESS v 4.2 by Andrew Hayes) was used to check if perceived social support mediates the relationship between tri-guna personality and life satisfaction among young adults.

Correlation analysis shows that Sattva was found to be positively associated with perceived social support, $r(101) = 0.421$, $p = .000$ and with life satisfaction, $r(101) = 0.468$, $p = .000$, indicating that higher levels of sattva was associated to higher perceived social support and life satisfaction among young adults (See Table 1) (see figure 1,7).

Moreover, Rajas was found to be negatively associated with perceived social support, $r(101) = -0.306$, $p = .001$, and with life satisfaction, $r(101) = -0.321$, $p = .000$, indicating that higher levels of rajas was associated to lower perceived social support and life satisfaction among young adults (See Table 1) (see figure 2,8).

Tamas was also found to be negatively associated with perceived social support, $r(101) = -0.443$, $p = .000$ and with life satisfaction, $r(101) = -0.476$, $p = .000$, indicating that higher levels of tamas was associated to lower perceived social support and life satisfaction among young adults (See Table 1) (see figure 3,9).

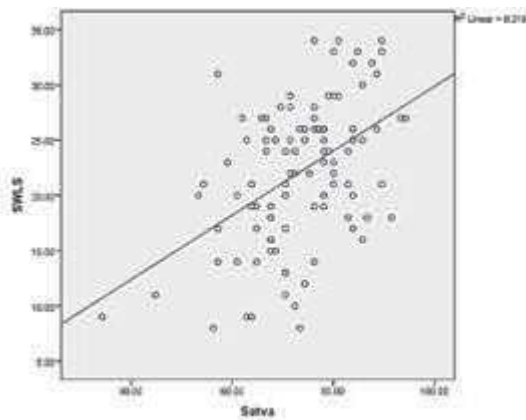


Figure 1: Scatterplot depicting the correlation between life satisfaction (SWLS) and satva

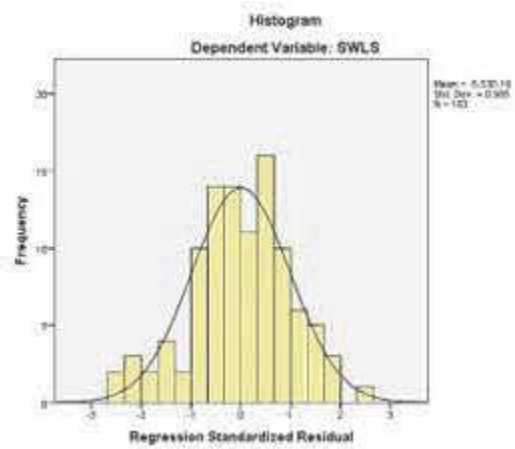


Figure 4: Histogram depicting the normality of residuals

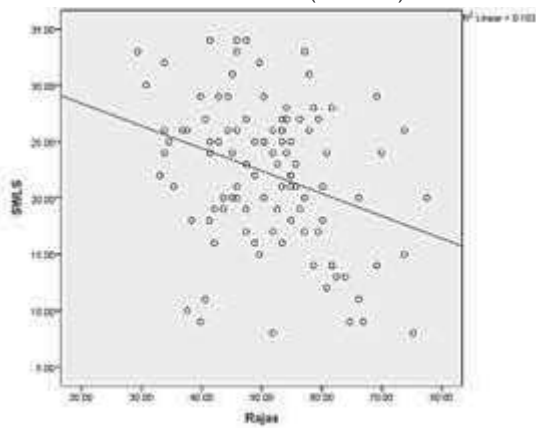


Figure 2: Scatterplot depicting the correlation between life satisfaction (SWLS) and rajas

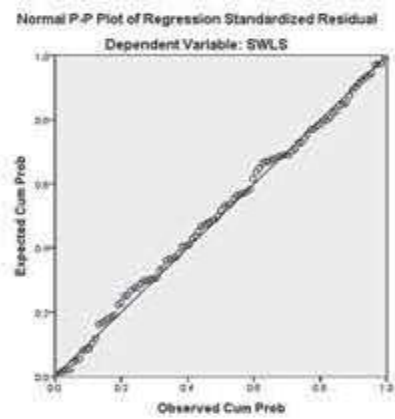


Figure 5: Normal P-P Plot of regression standardized residual

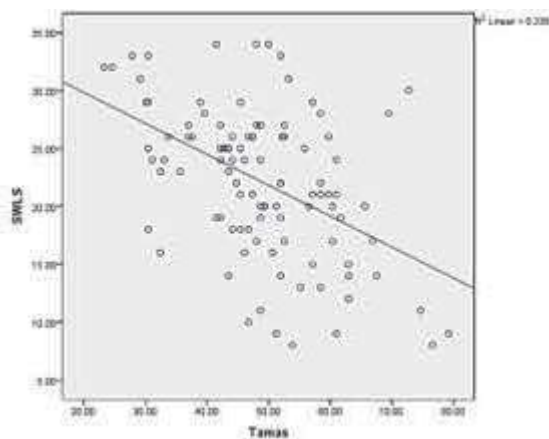


Figure 3: Scatterplot depicting the correlation between life satisfaction (SWLS) and tamas

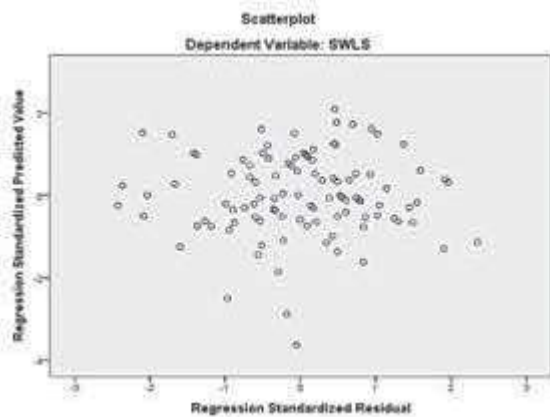


Figure 6: Scatterplot of standardized predicted value and standardized residual

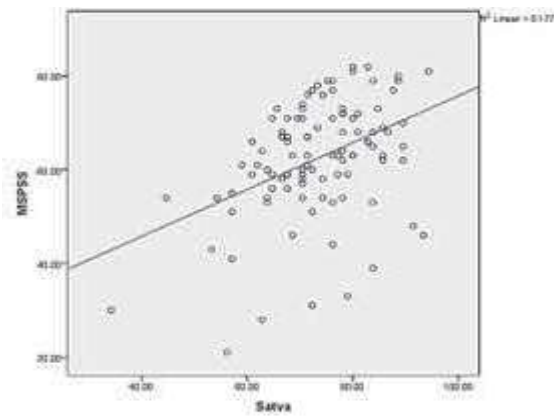


Figure 7: Scatterplot depicting the correlation between perceived social support (MSPSS) and sattva

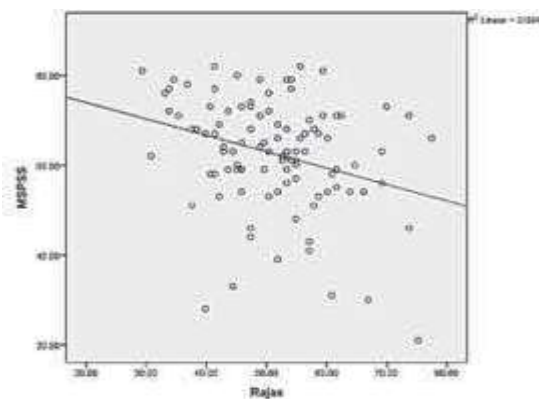


Figure 8: Scatterplot depicting the correlation between perceived social support (MSPSS) and rajas

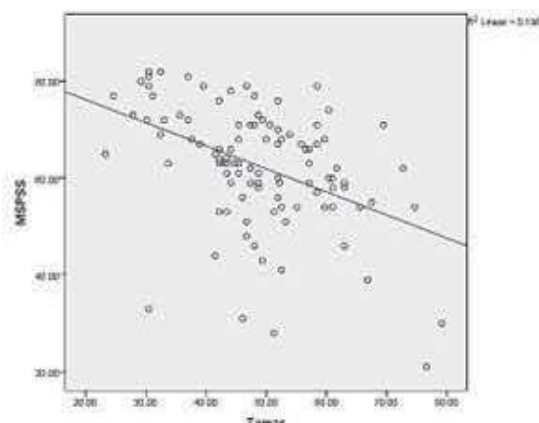


Figure 9: Scatterplot depicting the correlation between perceived social support (MSPSS) and tamas

Multiple regression analysis was also done taking sattva, rajas, and tamas as predictor variables and life satisfaction as criterion variable. All the assumptions of linear regression were checked. Visual inspections of histograms and scatter-plots suggested no severe violations of assumptions. Scatterplot revealed that the relation between all the dimensions namely sattva, rajas, and tamas and life satisfaction was found to be linear (see figure 1,2,3). The values of the residuals are independent. Durbin-Watson value was close to 2 (1.84), indicating there was no auto-correlation. The values of the residuals are normally distributed (see figure 4). The data points in the Normal P-P plot were close to the line of best fit (see figure 5). Homoscedasticity assumption is not violated as no obvious pattern in scatter-plot between standardized observed residuals and standardized predicted values was observed (as illustrated in figure 6). Collinearity diagnostics revealed that VIF values were close to 1, indicating no multicollinearity. Further, no influential cases (outliers) biasing the regression model.

Table 2: Summary of multiple regression analysis of study variables

Variables	B	β	SE	t	Sig. (p)
Constant	19.220		6.856	2.804	.006
Sattva	.182	.293	.062	2.960	.004
Rajas	-.050	-.080	.060	-.838	.410
Tamas	-.162	-.288	.059	-2.733	.007

Note. N= 103, R= .547, R²= .300, F= 14.122, p= .000

Multiple regression model revealed that 30% (R² = .300) variance in life satisfaction was explained by tri-guna personality structure (sattva, rajas and tamas). The regression model was found to be significant with F (3, 99) = 14.122, p = .000 (refer table 2).

The standardized coefficients for sattva obtained a value of 0.293, whose $t(99)$ value was 2.960, $p = .004$ which is < 0.05 , indicating that sattva was found to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction. The unstandardized regression coefficient ($B = 0.182$) indicates that an increase of one unit in sattva is associated with an increase of 0.182 units in life satisfaction, controlling for other variables in the model.

For the rajas, the beta value was -0.080 with a $t(99)$ value of -0.828, $p = .410$, which is > 0.05 indicating that rajas were not found to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction. The unstandardized regression coefficient ($B = -0.050$) indicates that a one-unit increase in the rajas is associated with a 0.050 unit decrease in life satisfaction, after controlling for other variables in the model.

Similarly, the beta value for tamas was found to be -0.288 with a $t(99)$ value of -2.733, $p = .007$, which is < 0.05 , indicating tamas was found to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction. The unstandardized regression coefficient ($B = -0.162$) suggests that a one-unit increase in the tamas is associated with a 0.162-unit decrease in life satisfaction, controlling for other variables in the model. (refer table 2).

Mediation Analysis

The standardized regression coefficient between sattva and perceived social support was found to be statistically significant ($\beta = .4211$, $p = .0000$) and the standardized regression coefficient between perceived social support and life satisfaction was also found to be statistically significant ($\beta = .3030$, $p = .0015$). Total effect was found to be significant ($c = .4683$, $SE = .0547$) and the 95% confidence interval ranged from .1828 to .3998 ($p = .0000$) (see figure 10).

Direct effect ($c' = .3407$, $SE = .0576$) and the 95% confidence interval ranged from .0977 to .3262 ($p = .0004$). Thus, direct effect

was found to be statistically significant. Completely standardized indirect effect was computed for 5000 bootstrapped samples ($a*b = .1276$, $BootSE = .0549$) and 95% confidence interval ranged from .0335 to .2452. Thus, it was found to be statistically significant, suggesting that perceived social support is partially mediating the relationship between sattva and life satisfaction among young adults (see figure 10).

The standardized regression coefficient between rajas and perceived social support was found to be statistically significant ($\beta = -.3060$, $p = .0017$) and the standardized regression coefficient between perceived social support and life satisfaction was also found to be statistically significant ($\beta = .3842$, $p = .0001$). Total effect ($c = -.3212$, $SE = .0587$) and 95% confidence interval ranged from -.3168 to -.0837, thus, the total effect was statistically significant ($p = .0009$) (see figure 11).

Direct effect ($c' = -.2037$, $SE = .0572$) and the 95% confidence interval ranged from -.2404 to -.0135, thus, the direct effect was statistically significant. ($p = .0287$). Completely standardized indirect effect was computed for 5000 bootstrapped samples ($a*b = -.1176$, $BootSE = .0503$) and 95% confidence interval ranged from -.2244 to -.0288. Thus, it was found to be statistically significant, suggesting that perceived social support is partially mediating the relationship between rajas and life satisfaction among young adults (see figure 11).

The standardized regression coefficient between tamas and perceived social support was found to be statistically significant ($\beta = -.4429$, $p = .0000$) and the standardized regression coefficient between perceived social support and life satisfaction was also found to be statistically significant ($\beta = .2934$, $p = .0023$). Total effect ($c = -.4756$, $SE = .0492$) and 95% confidence interval ranged from -.3652 to -.1699, thus, the total effect was

statistically significant ($p = .0000$) (see figure 12).

Direct effect ($c' = -.3457$, $SE = .0527$) and the 95% confidence interval ranged from $-.2989$ to $-.0900$, thus, the direct effect was statistically significant. ($p = .0004$). Completely standardized indirect effect was computed for 5000 bootstrapped samples ($a*b = -.1299$, $BootSE = .0597$) and 95% confidence interval ranged from $-.2635$ to $-.0328$. Thus, it was found to be statistically significant, suggesting that perceived social support is partially mediating the relationship between *tamas* and life satisfaction among young adults (see figure 12).

Discussion

The present study was an attempt to understand the complex interrelations among tri-guna personality structure (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*), and life satisfaction of young adults with a particular focus on the mediating role of social support mechanisms.

Tri-guna personality as a predictor of life satisfaction

The results revealed that the three dimensions of the tri-guna personality structure (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) differentially predicted the life satisfaction among young adults. Individuals with higher *sattva* or dominant *sattva* guna reported higher levels of life satisfaction, suggesting that qualities such as illuminated intellect, harmony with the surrounding are associated positively with well-being of an individual. This finding of the present study aligns with the findings of the previous researches (Sharma et al., 2021; Khanna et al., 2013; Pandey & Dubey, 2020) emphasizing that dominant *sattvic* traits have greater likelihood of engaging in constructive and clearer patterns of thought, prosocial behaviors collectively enhancing the life satisfaction of an individual. On the other hand, results revealed that higher levels of *rajas* guna is associated with lower levels of life satisfaction among young adults. *Rajas* guna is characterized by intense passion, restlessness, and a very strong desire for the worldly achievements. Although these qualities can be advantageous in some contexts but they may also lead to lower levels of life satisfaction due to constant dissatisfaction with themselves as they are highly goal-driven and sometimes they associate their happiness with materialistic achievements which can cause stress and frustration. Their ego-driven behavior may trigger anxiety when they involve themselves in an upward social comparison leading to lower levels of life satisfaction. Their constant

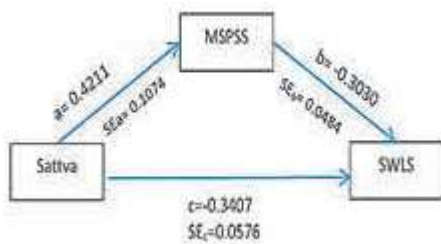


Figure 10: Mediation analysis of study variable

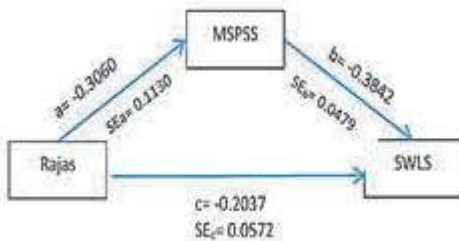


Figure 11: Mediation analysis of study variable

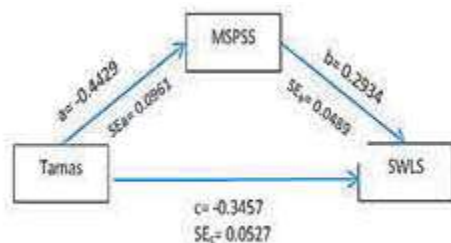


Figure 12: Mediation analysis of study variable

pursuit of hedonic pleasures may also lead to emotional exhaustion reducing overall life satisfaction.

Results also revealed that higher *tamas* is associated to lower levels of life satisfaction aligns with the findings of previous literature (Sharma et al., 2021; Khanna et al., 2013). *Tamas* guna is characterized by inertia (both physical and psychological), ignorance, distorted cognition linking tamasic tendencies to maladaptive coping strategies, emotional instability, and diminished motivation, affecting overall life satisfaction.

Perceived social support as a mediator

The present study also examined the mediating role of perceived social support in the relationship between different dimensions of tri-guna personality structure (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) and life satisfaction among young adults. It was hypothesized that perceived social support will partially mediate the relationship between tri-guna and life satisfaction. Individuals with higher *sattva* was associated to higher levels of perceived social support which in turn increased their overall life satisfaction. This implies that *sattvic* individuals due to their compassionate and selfless tendencies are more likely to engage themselves in building strong supportive social connections with other individuals which acts as a buffer against stress and anxiety. Perceived social support also mediated the relationship between *rajas* and life satisfaction partially. *Rajasic* individuals seek social connections but their competitive and impatient nature might hinder the quality and depth in their social interrelations. The extent to which perceived social support increase their life satisfaction may depend upon their ability to balance their competitiveness, self-centered tendencies, and emotional connections.

Result also revealed that higher *tamas* was associated with lower levels of perceived

social support explaining lower levels of life satisfaction. Tamasic characteristics such as inertia, lethargy, distorted cognition reduces their likelihood of maintaining deep meaningful social connections which is the most important protective factor for life satisfaction.

Future Suggestions

Future studies may explore other factors which contributes to life satisfaction of individuals. Future studies can also explore other mediating and moderating factors which influence the relationship between personality and life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is a very complex construct so future studies may explore the various dimensions of life satisfaction using qualitative research designs. Due to paucity of time, the sample was limited to Varanasi, therefore the results cannot be generalized. Participants belonging to other cultures and geographic areas can also be included to provide more rich information related to trends across region so that the findings can be more generalizable. Additionally, comparative research employing participants of different age groups can be done in future studies.

Conclusion

In summary, the present study confirms the crucial role of tri-guna personality structure (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) in predicting the life satisfaction among young adults with a key mediating role of perceived social support. *Sattva* guna emerged as a most beneficial factor enhancing both perceived social support and life satisfaction whereas, *rajasic* guna can contribute to well-being, but their effect is contingent on the presence of supportive social relationships. Tamasic individuals, however hinders the life satisfaction by reducing perceived social support. These findings highlight the importance of fostering positive personality dispositions and social support environment

in order to enhance life satisfaction among young adults.

These findings, from a theoretical standpoint extends our understanding of how tri-guna personality structure (sattva, rajas, and tamas) which has its roots in ancient Indian philosophy influences the modern psychological constructs like perceived social support and life satisfaction. The findings also highlight how social support resources translates tri-gunas into life satisfaction. From a practical standpoint this study highlights the role of interventions which can enhance the life satisfaction by enhancing sattvic guna and higher life satisfaction can also be achieved by developing programs to create supportive social environment. Training programs can be designed in order to enhance the emotional intelligence and cultivate patience among rajasic individuals so that they can build a stronger social support. Similarly, interventions can be designed in order to mitigate the tamasic tendencies in individuals by mindfulness training, promoting activity, and community development which can enhance perceived social support and thus life satisfaction among young adults.

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