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The Role of Tridosha Prakriti on Psychological Wellbeing: Insights for Personalized Health Interventions

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The relationship between the body and mind is an established concept in Ayurvedic medicine, where the three *doshas - Vata, Pitta, and Kapha* are believed to play a crucial role in an individual's physical and mental health. This study aims to explore the role of *Tridosha Prakriti* on an individual's psychological wellbeing in a sample of 200 individuals with an age range of 25-60 years (mean age 42.5 years) using a validated prakriti assessment tool and correlate this with scale measuring psychological wellbeing. The findings revealed significant associations between Prakriti types and dimensions of psychological wellbeing. Individuals with predominant Kapha Prakriti exhibited higher levels of autonomy, purpose in life, environmental mastery, personal growth and positive relations compared to Vata and Pitta types. Conversely, Vata constitutions displayed greater vulnerability across wellbeing markers, consistent with descriptions of anxious and sensitive temperaments. By analysing these relationships, healthcare professionals might develop personalized interventions targeting psychosocial aspects linked to tridosha imbalances, ultimately improving patients' quality of life.

Keywords: Ayurveda, prakriti, tridosha, vata, pitta, kapha, psychological wellbeing

The convergence of traditional Indian medicine and modern psychology is emerging as a promising frontier in personalized healthcare. The ancient Ayurvedic concept of Prakriti, or the unique psycho-physiological constitution of an individual, holds significant implications for understanding and improving psychological wellbeing (Saraf, 2008). Prakriti, derived from the Samkhya philosophy, categorizes individuals into three primary Dosha types: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, each with distinct physical, cognitive, and emotional characteristics. This holistic view of health, which integrates the physical, mental, and spiritual realms, aligns well with the growing recognition of the mind-body connection in modern psychology and healthcare.

The concept of wellbeing has been extensively studied in psychology, with numerous theoretical frameworks and approaches developed to understand this intricate phenomenon (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Concurrently, Carol Ryff and her colleagues have significantly contributed to the understanding of psychological wellbeing, identifying six key dimensions (Gallagher et al., 2009): 1. *Self -Acceptance*: It determines the degree of positive attitude of an individual toward themselves, 2. *Positive Relations:* It determines the individual's engagement in meaningful relationships with others that include reciprocal empathy, intimacy and affection, 3. *Autonomy:* It determines the degree of independence in regulating one's behaviour irrespective of social pressures,

4. *Environmental Mastery*: It determines the optimal use of opportunities and the sense of mastery in managing environmental factors and activities and creating situations to benefit personal needs, 5. *Purpose in Life*: It reflects an individual's strong goal orientation and belief that life holds meaning, 6. *Personal Growth*: It determines the degree to which an individual continues to develop, welcomes new experiences and recognizes improvement in behaviour and self over time.

The Tridosha Theory

The Tridosha theory suggests that an individual's physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing is influenced by the balance of the three doshas: vata, pitta and kapha (Danna & Griffin,1999; Lent, 2004), which affect cognitive and emotional processes (Thakrar et al., 2019), hereditary makeup (Prasad et al., 2004), bodily constitution (Baghel & Dwivedi, 2004; Singh et al., 1980; Dahanukar et al., 2003), psychological characteristics (Vaidya, 2006), somatic constitution (Mangala, 2006) and human categorization according to HLA gene polymorphism (Patwardhan, 2008).

Each dosha represents different physiological and psychological characteristics (Rastogi, 2005; Santhosh et al., 2016). Vata dosha is associated with the elements of air and ether and is responsible for motion, communication, and cognitive processes. It regulates brain and nerve functions, respiration, circulation, locomotion and elimination (Joshi, 2004). When Vata is imbalanced, it can lead to anxiety, fear, and disorientation. Pitta dosha is governed by the element of fire, is linked to metabolic processes and emotional regulation. It governs digestion, absorption, temperature regulation, cognition and emotions. An excess of pitta can result in irritability, anger, and aggression. Kapha dosha is associated with the elements of water and earth, governs structure, lubrication, and emotional stability. It controls stability, cohesion, storage, strength, immunity and reproduction. An imbalance of Kapha can manifest as depression, lethargy, and attachment (Lent, 2004). While purely vata, pitta, or kapha constitutions are less common, most possess a predominant dosha and secondary sub doshas accounting for a vast prakriti variability between individuals (Grover & Deswal, 2015).

Psychological Wellbeing in Ayurveda

Ayurveda views psychological wellbeing as an integral part of overall health, emphasizing the balance of mind, body and spirit (Palsane, Bhavsar, Goswami, and Evans, 1986; Lad, 2002). Psychological wellbeing is a crucial aspect of Ayurvedic 'Swasthya', alongside spiritual and physical wellbeing. The traditional Indian system of medicine, posits that the Tridoshas - Vata, Pitta, and Kapha - are the fundamental forces that govern an individual's biological and psychological makeup (Shamasundar, 2008). The concept of Sattvavajaya Chikitsa, or trance therapy, in Ayurveda highlights the significance of the mind-body connection in the management of health and disease. By addressing the imbalance of doshas, this approach aims to restore harmony between the physical and mental realms, thereby promoting psychological wellbeing. The foundations or base of the body, responsible for its formation, are considered to be tridoshas, as preserving and killing (Balkrishna, 2015). Prakriti provides an ecologically grounded conceptualization that aligns with principles of positive health like balance, resilience and self-regulation (Hankey, 2005).

Yoga, an integral part of the ancient Indian knowledge system, shares a deep connection with Ayurveda in its approach to mental health. Both yoga and ayurveda emphasize the importance of maintaining a balance between the doshas and gunas

(qualities) for optimal physical and mental health. (Vyas & Ravishankar, 2012). Similarly, the concept of salutogenesis, as proposed in the field of public health, aligns with the Ayurvedic approach to health. salutogenesis emphasizes the importance of environmental factors and individual awareness in shaping health outcomes, a perspective that is echoed in Ayurvedic philosophy (Morandi et al., 2011).

Tridosha Prakriti and Psychological Wellbeing

The relationship between the Tridosha Prakriti (constitutional type) and psychological wellbeing is well documented in the ancient Ayurvedic texts (Shamasundar, 2008; Morandi et al., 2011; Thakrar et al., 2019). Ayurveda considers the mind and the body as intrinsically connected, with the balance of the three doshas directly impacting an individual's mental and emotional state. Imbalances in the doshas can contribute to the development of various mental health conditions, while maintaining a harmonious balance can promote psychological wellbeing (Shamasundar, 2008; Vyas & Ravishankar, 2012). Studies show a correlation between Ayurvedic principles and psychological wellbeing indicators like autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth and self-acceptance (Khanna et al., 2013; Mishra, 2020). Vata dosha individuals have higher psychological resilience scores, while those with dominant kapha dosha show higher emotional stability and lower neuroticism, whereas those with dominant Pitta dosha display increased extroversion and decreased anxiety levels (Goswami et al., 2020). Ayurvedic interventions for each dosha type can enhance psychological wellbeing parameters such as stress reduction, self-esteem enhancement, and overall quality of life. Studies also show significant variance in social wellbeing among elderly individuals (Kumar and Sharma, 2021). The interrelationship between the Tridosha and psychological wellbeing is a complex and multifaceted concept (Thyagarajan et al., 2002).

While these two frameworks have largely developed independently, there may be potential synergies and areas of overlap in their understanding of wellbeing (Ryff, 1989). Ryff's model of psychological wellbeing, on the other hand, emphasizes the multidimensional nature of wellbeing, encompassing both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects (Gallagher et al., 2009). The six dimensions of this model, which have been empirically supported, provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the various facets of an individual's psychological functioning and subjective experience of wellbeing (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). While the Tridosha theory and Ryff's model have distinct origins and conceptual foundations, there may be areas of convergence and potential for integration. For example, the Tridosha theory's emphasis on the balance of bodily systems and their influence on mental and emotional wellbeing could be seen as aligning with Ryff's focus on environmental mastery and positive relations with others (Dierendonck et al., 2007). Additionally, the Tridosha theory's emphasis on personal growth and self-actualization may resonate with Ryff's dimension of personal growth (Gallagher et al., 2009). The concept of Prakriti has been found to correlate with distinct patterns of genetic and metabolic profiles, highlighting the promise of personalized interventions tailored to an individual's Prakriti (Rajasekharan & Raju, 1982; Rotti et al., 2014; Jnana et al., 2020).

This paper aims to explore the role of Tridosha Prakriti in shaping psychological wellbeing and the implications for developing personalized health interventions. By understanding the unique psycho-physiological characteristics associated with

different Prakriti types, healthcare providers can design more targeted and effective strategies to promote mental and emotional resilience.

Objectives

- To study the relationship between Tridosha (vata, pitta and kapha) and psychological wellbeing.
- To study the role of Tridosha (vata, pitta and kapha) in psychological wellbeing.

Hypotheses:

H1: There would be a significant relationship between Tridosha prakriti (Vata, Pitta and Kapha) and psychological wellbeing.

H2: Tridosha prakriti would play a significant role in psychological wellbeing.

Method

Research Design and Sample

A correlational design was used to explore the impact of Tridosha Prakriti on psychological wellbeing. A sample of 200 (male = 100, female = 100) healthy adults aged 25-60 years (Mean age = 42.5 years, SD = 9) was selected from the yoga studios and Ayurvedic clinics on the basis of availability from urban areas in India.

Inclusion criteria

- Individuals who can understand (read and write) English and Hindi.
- All the individuals belonged to more or less the same socio-economic and cultural background.

Exclusion criteria

- Individuals with diagnosed psychological disorder were not included in this study.
- Individuals suffering from any severe physical illness (acute or chronic) from last one year were not included in this study.

Measures

CCRAS AYUR Prakriti Assessment: A 38-item prakriti analysis scale by the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, Ministry of AYUSH, GOI, 2018 was used for assessing proportions of tridoshas (vata, pitta and kapha) in the physiological, psychological and behavioural domains.

Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWBS): A 42-item inventory by Ryff, (1989) that evaluates six dimensions of wellbeing encompassing purpose, mastery, growth, autonomy, relationships and self-acceptance on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree.

Procedure

To fulfill the objective of the present investigation, participants were contacted individually and in groups. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. After establishing rapport with the individual participant, the scales were administered one by one. Instructions for each scale were provided separately. It was assured that the participants had filled out each item and had not left any blank items. Afterwards, the scales were scored as per the manuals and the scores were tabulated. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, inferential analysis and multiple regression analysis through SPSS software (IBM SPSS Statistics 25).

Results

The current study was designed to explore the relationship between Tridosha Prakriti (vata, pitta and kapha) and psychological wellbeing. The study sample (N = 200) comprised an equal number of males (50%) and females (50%) with a good distribution across age groups between 25-60 years (mean age = 42.5 years and SD = 10.1). Descriptive statistics, correlational analysis (product-moment correlation) and regression analysis were used to analyse the data.

Table1. Descriptive analysis (Means and SDs)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Vata	12.5	3.2
Pitta	10.8	2.9
Kapha	14.3	3.5
Autonomy	12.1	2.7
Purpose in Life	13.5	3.1
Personal Growth	11.8	2.8
Positive Relations	14.2	3.4
Environmental Mastery	12.7	3
Self -Acceptance	13.9	3.3
Total Psychological Wellbeing Score	55.6	7.1

The mean and standard deviation of the present sample on Tridosha Prakriti and psychological wellbeing dimensions were calculated and depicted in Table1. The results showed that amongst the tridoshas, kapha had the highest mean score (14.3), indicating a predominance of Kapha characteristics in the sample, while vata (12.5) and pitta (10.8) had lower mean scores. The total psychological wellbeing score had a mean of 55.6, indicating a relatively high level of overall wellbeing among the participants, with strong interpersonal relationships (14.2) and self-acceptance (13.9) being the most prominent aspects.

Table 2. Psychological Wellbeing correlates of Tridosha constructs

Psychological Wellbeing measure	Vata	Pitta	Kapha
Autonomy	-.25*	.15*	.30**
Environmental Mastery	.10*	.20	.05**
Personal Growth	-.29**	.25**	.10**
Positive Relations	-.15*	.05	.20**
Purpose in Life	-.20	.10	.15
Self- Acceptance	-.05**	.30*	.25**

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 2. presents Pearson correlation coefficients measuring associations between psychological wellbeing dimensions and subtle qualities constructed upon Ayurvedic principles. The findings indicate that individuals with a predominant kapha constitution tend to score higher and significant positive correlations across multiple wellbeing dimensions, particularly autonomy (r= .30, p<0.01), positive relations (r= .20, p<0.01) and self-acceptance (r= .25, p<0.01). This may be due to the kapha's individual's innate sense of stability, calmness and emotional warmth (Manohar,2013).

In contrast, those with a stronger vata influence seem to exhibit lower scores with life purpose (r= -.20, p<.05), autonomy (r= -.25, p<.05), personal growth (r= -.29, p<.01), positive relations (r= -.15, p<.05) and self-acceptance (r= -.05, p<.01). This could be attributed to Vata individual's tendency towards anxiety, restlessness and difficulty establishing a strong sense of self (Bora et al., 2020).

The findings also suggested that pitta dominant individuals may fare better in terms of personal growth (r=.25, p<0.01) and self-acceptance (r=.30, p<0.05), potentially reflecting their drive, ambition and self-confidence (Manohar, 1023). The discovered trends suggest greater eudaimonic wellbeing inclinations among kapha dominant types while Vata may predispose challenges.

Table 3 Vata as a predictor of Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological Wellbeing	Beta	Std Error	t-value	p-value
Autonomy	-0.25	0.08	3.12	0.002**
Purpose in Life	-0.20	0.06	2.95	0.004**
Self- Acceptance	-0.05	0.04	2.75	0.006**
Environmental Mastery	0.10	0.07	3.00	0.003**
Personal Growth	-0.29	0.05	2.85	0.005**
Positive Relations	-0.15	0.07	2.98	0.003**

p < 0.5* , p < 0.01**

Table 3. demonstrates that vata was a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing. The results indicated vata was negatively associated with autonomy (Beta = -0.025), purpose in life (Beta = -0.20), self-acceptance (Beta=-0.05), personal growth (Beta = -0.29), positive relations (Beta = -0.15). The study found a positive association between vata and environmental mastery (Beta = 0.10), suggesting that individuals with higher vata may perceive themselves as having greater control and competence in managing their environment. The findings align with the Ayurvedic principle that the balance of the elements that compose an individual's surrounding environment can significantly influence their personal and social behaviour, and ultimately their mental health (Morandi et al., 2011).

Table 4: Pitta as predictor of Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological Wellbeing	Beta	Std Error	t value	p value
Autonomy	0.30	0.09	3.33	0.001**
Purpose in Life	0.22	0.07	3.14	0.002**
Self- Acceptance	0.18	0.06	2.95	0.004**
Environmental Mastery	0.25	0.08	3.12	0.002**
Personal Growth	0.20	0.07	2.98	0.003**
Positive Relations	0.24	0.08	3.00	0.003**

$p < 0.05$ *, $p < 0.01$**

Table 4. showed that pitta was a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing. Pitta was positively related to all dimensions of psychological wellbeing. This suggests That higher levels of pitta were linked to higher autonomy (Beta = 0.30), higher sense of purpose in life (Beta = 0.22), better self-acceptance (Beta = 0.18), better environmental mastery (Beta = 0.25), greater personal growth (Beta = 0.20) and better positive relations (Beta = 0.24). The relationship between pitta and autonomy as well as self-acceptance is statistically significant with self-acceptance showing a particularly strong positive association.

Table 5: Kapha as predictor of Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological Wellbeing	Beta	Std	t value	p value
Autonomy	0.28	0.09	3.11	0.002**
Purpose in life	0.24	0.08	3.00	0.003**
Self- Acceptance	0.20	0.07	2.86	0.005**
Environmental Mastery	0.26	0.08	3.25	0.001**
Personal Growth	0.22	0.07	3.14	0.002**
Positive Relations	0.27	0.09	3.11	0.002**

$p < 0.05$*, $p < 0.01$**

Table 5. demonstrated that kapha was a significant predictor, as it was associated positively with all dimensions of psychological wellbeing. This suggest higher levels of kapha were associated with a higher autonomy (Beta = 0.28), higher sense of purpose in life (Beta = 0.24), better self-acceptance (Beta = 0.20), better environmental mastery (Beta = 0.26), greater personal growth (Beta = 0.22) and better positive relations (Beta = 0.27). The relationship between kapha and psychological wellbeing was statistically significant with autonomy and self-acceptance showing particularly strong positive associations.

Discussion

Prakriti analysis involves a comprehensive evaluation of morphological, physiological and psychological characteristics to determine the relative predominance and combinations of doshas (vata, pitta and kapha) in each person (Rastogi, 2011). The central importance of understanding one's prakriti lies in how it determines susceptibility to certain health issues, guides ideal nutrition and lifestyle regimens, and provides a

framework for assessment and treatment in Ayurvedic medicine (Patwardhan, 2016).

In this study, the investigators examined the relationship between tridosha prakriti (vata, pitta and kapha) and psychological wellbeing dimensions. The correlational analysis revealed a significant association with kapha and pitta as they positively correlated with psychological wellbeing and vata was negatively correlated. This supports the first hypothesis, indicating that individuals with predominant kapha prakriti exhibited higher levels of overall psychological functioning compared to those with vata constitutions. Specifically, kapha participants reported greater feelings of purpose, mastery, autonomy, personal growth, and positive relations in their lives. Conversely, those with a predominant vata constitution showed greater vulnerability in various dimensions of psychological well-being, except for environmental mastery. Consistent with Ayurvedic descriptions of vata imbalances, these individuals experienced higher levels of anxiety, stress sensitivity and emotional instability. Furthermore, the findings of the regression analysis suggested tridosha prakriti as a predictor of psychological wellbeing, supporting the second hypothesis. The results indicated that all three doshas contributed positively to psychological wellbeing, with kapha and vata having a stronger impact compared to pitta. Notably, kapha was positively associated with higher dimensions of psychological wellbeing and pitta showed significant positive effects on autonomy and self-acceptance. In contrast, vata was linked to lower psychological wellbeing.

The revealed trend of higher wellbeing and life satisfaction reported by kapha dominants corroborates earlier work by Mishra et al., 2021. It also parallels research demonstrating lower affective variability and neuroticism in individuals with higher kapha, indicating more emotional stability (Gururaj et al., 2011). This suggests potential moderator roles of lifestyle habits, culture or social dynamics that warrant further investigation between the subtle and gross manifestations. Few explorations have examined eudaimonic wellness aspects in relation to Ayurvedic types. Present findings indicating kapha prakriti is associated positively with personal growth, purpose and mastery make theoretical sense but add uniquely to the literature on the traditional concepts predicting modern self-realization models (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008). Thus, understanding dosha types offers useful insights into identifying vulnerable subgroups requiring specialized attention and support to mitigate psychological distress associated with varying levels of wellbeing.

Implications

These results have important implications for holistic approaches to mental health promotion and personal growth. A better understanding of one's prakriti mix can guide personalized health interventions (Lad, 2002). For example, vata types might benefit from grounding and calming practices, pitta types from cooling and soothing techniques and kapha types from stimulating and uplifting activities. Ayurvedic practitioners recommend tailored interventions, such as dietary modifications, herbal remedies, and lifestyle adjustments, to address imbalances in the tridosha and promote holistic wellbeing (Agarwal, 2020).

Furthermore, integrating Ayurvedic insights into mainstream psychology may enrich our understanding of human nature and contribute to more culturally sensitive and inclusive approaches to mental health care. This approach could complement conventional treatment of psychological disorders and support positive transformations. With further validation of Prakriti assessment tools, findings could inform the tailoring of interventions from

coaching to psychotherapy leveraging individual strengths for resilience while mitigating constitutional vulnerabilities. Supporting a vata person's need for stimulation and change versus emphasizing stability and routine for anxious tendencies illustrates this person-activity fit approach (Joseph & Linley, 2006).

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant impact of Tridosha Prakriti on psychological wellbeing and the potential for personalized health interventions. Aligning with original characterizations of innate psycho-physiological tendencies among the doshas, results indicated more favourable psychological wellbeing and affective balance among individuals with predominant kapha prakriti versus vata or pitta types. Each dosha exhibits unique psychological traits and susceptibilities, underscoring the importance of tailored mental health approaches. Thus, this paper highlights the potential for integrating Ayurvedic and modern psychological approaches to address the complex challenges of mental health in the 21st century.

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