

Personality Types and Prānic Energy Perceptions: An Exploratory Study

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Personality, from the perspective of Vedic literature, appears to be a combination of *three gunas: sattva, rājas, and tamas*. In the traditions of yoga, the term *prānā* denotes the all-permeating ‘life force’, which can be detected empirically by the use of specifically designed procedures. The current study is aimed at describing the relationship between the *gunas* and prānic energy perception involving 299 students of the National Cadet Corps of India. The personality type was assessed via the *Vedic Personality Inventory*, and prānic energy perceptions were recorded using *Pranic Energy Perception Schedule*. *Chi-square Test of Independence* was used to examine the subgroup differences in prānic experiences. *Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient* and *Spearman’s Ranked Correlation* were used to find the correlation between personality types and energy experiences. Prānic experiences of magnetic ($X^2=144.8$, $p.000$), electric ($X^2=436.7$, $p.000$), and tingling ($X^2=278$, $p.000$) are independent on quantitative subgroups. *Sattva* ($-.165$, $p\leq 0.01$) and *tamas* ($.174$, $p\leq 0.01$) were significantly correlated with electrical experience. Other prānic energy experiences did not correlate significantly with the three *guna types*.

1.1 Vedic Theory of Personality

The concept *triguna* is mentioned in the *Atharva Veda*, but it is developed as a major explanatory construct in the *Sāmkhya*. *Sāmkhya* is a dualistic system, which postulates two fundamental interdependent realities that exist simultaneously in the universe – *Purusa* (consciousness), and *Prakṛti* (nature or matter). The three *gunas* are said to constitute *Prakṛti* and underlie all material and mental phenomena, and hence they are employed as a way of understanding the nature of material objects as well as mental traits (Murthy and Kumar 2007, 1). Hence, the three subtle basic components of personality, *sattva*, *rājas*, and *tamas* are the fabric of creation and may exist in varying degrees with every individual. Unknown to modern sciences, they permeate through all living and non-living, tangible and intangible things.

The ancient *rishis* are believed to directly perceived the fundamental forces of nature and the universe: they identified the centrifugal and centripetal undulation of the energy field in the atomic and molecular level that strands around a stable core. All vibration is the coiled balance of three *gunas* (Burger 2012, 8–9). As per Vedic literature, the vibrations emitted by anything depend on its predominant subtle basic component. This also influences the behaviour of all things. Any of the three tendencies like *sattvic*, *rājasic*, and *tamasic* are present in every living organism (Aurobindo 1942). *Manas* represents all the mental function and processes which are considered being manifestations of *triguna* (Kalpana 2012, 91). Classical *guna theory* in *Ayurveda* describes seven types of *sattva*, six types of *rājas*, and three types of *tamas*, so that people can be grouped based on these 16 personality types (Shilpa and Murthy 2011, 15–16; Mukherjee 2007, 435). The proportion of these components in human beings can only be changed by spiritual practice (Kumar 2016, 67–70).

Guna sattva is characterised by satisfaction, simplicity, self-control, truthfulness, pleasing, beneficial, and calm appearance (*Bhagavad Gītā* 17:15–16). It also represents peace, purity, knowledge, happiness, and brilliance (Rao 1979). *Guna rājas* is characterized by intense activity, desire for sense gratification, little interest in spiritual elevation, dissatisfaction with one's position, the envy of others, and a materialistic mentality constitute (*Bhagavad Gītā* 18:24). A person predominated by the *guna rājas* is described as “greedy, always envious, impure, and moved by joy and sorrow” (*Bhagavad Gītā* 18:27). *Guna tamas* manifests inertia, darkness in mind and heart, delusion and utter ignorance (*Bhagavad Gītā* 14:17).

1.2 Triguna and Their Influence on Prānic Energy Experience

Nelson express in their writing that emotions may be the driving force behind the flow of magnetic force in the body, which also is *prānā* (Nelson 1990, 37–39). Prānic energy experience is considered a subset of the wider transcendental experience that most transpersonal research has established, which was not initially classified as an experience relating to the etheric body but an experience that goes beyond the five senses.

Burger notes that in the universe, spiraling vortices of vibrating energy field are existing, and they are known as *gunas* (Burger 2012, 8–9). *Gunas*, as vibrating fields of energy, represent three universal principles of motion as neutral, positive, and negative forms. The unified living life and consciousness are connected with the *guna sattva* and it is in an equilibrium state, which sustains the existence. The main source of *sattva guna* is the reason for the emergence of the positive centrifugal field of force as *rājas*, it explains passionate, excited, vital and creative expressions. Negative centripetal field, *tamas* can change the beauty and wisdom into inertia and resistance (Burger 2012, 8–9).

The force which pulsates through nerves is not different from the force which vibrates through the universe (Sivananda 2017, 5). In humans, the function of *nādī* is to transport vital energy throughout the subtle energy system (Sui 2009, 6). While sensitizing the hands, the vital energy can be experienced and it can also be transferred using hand or finger (Sui 2015, 52–54). To enhance the *guna rājas*, in *pranic healing* red *prānā* is projected to have stimulating and activating effect on subject's energy field (Sui 2000, 4).

Earlier prānic energy studies concentrated on providing the experience of *prānā* and finding out the various physiological and psychological sensations resulting from such experience. A study of the effect of prānic energy in between the hands verified the feeling of energy existence. The physical sensation of prānic energy between the hands during sensitizing was documented with the presence of feelings of magnetic, tingling, balloon, electric and rotation sensation (Jois *et al.* 2020, 504–506). In addition to that, working women employees felt different energy experiences like tingling, warm feeling during their *pranic healing* sessions prānic energy sensation by breathing, concentration and opening to experience made research participants aware of the existence of subtle energy (Jois *et al.* 2018, 152–153).

2.2 Procedure

After obtaining the informed consent, participants were oriented about *prānā*, the vital force involved in the *pranic healing*. Participants were also guided to feel the *prānā* between hands as mentioned by Sui (Sui 2015, 37–38). While sensing the *prānic* experiences in between hands, the intensity and quality of different *prānic* experiences felt by the participants (purely based on their own decision) were recorded using the *Pranic Energy Perception Schedule*. Thereafter, the *Vedic Personality Inventory* was administered to assess *triguna* personality traits.

2.3 Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

Those interested and consented to participate in the procedure of hand sensitization were included. Those with previous experience of hand sensitization and experience of *prānā* were excluded.

2.4 Measures

2.4.1 Vedic Personality Inventory

Several tests were developed employing the Indian construct of *triguna* to assess various aspects of human personality (Murthy and Kumar 2007). In this study, the *Vedic Personality Inventory* was applied due to two reasons: it was internationally validated (Wolff 1998), and found valid in the Indian setting (Hiremath 2016, 34).

It has 56 items to assess three personality constructs based on their description in the *Vedas* as a psychological categorization system. The original version of the *Vedic Personality Inventory* consisted of 90 items, however, it had been shortened to 56 items based on reliability and validity analysis (ranged from .93 to .94) (Dasa 1999, 2–19). It has 15 items for *guna sattva*, 19 for *guna rājas*, and 22 for *guna tamas*.

There are seven options provided for each question. Respondents could choose from the seven options: 1. Very strongly disagree; 2. Strongly disagree; 3. Somewhat disagree; 4. Neutral; 5. Somewhat agree; 6. Strongly agree; 7. Very strongly agree. The response of the participants was scored with proper procedure – sum all the responses for a *guna*, then divide this sum by the total score for the *guna*. This will give the *guna score* in the form of a percentage. Then, to obtain a *standardised score for a guna*, sum the three *guna* percentage scores and divide it into the *guna* percentage scores. The three standardised scores form the *guna* profile for a person. Chronbach alpha for the *sattva* subscale was calculated as .866; alpha for the *rājas* subscale was calculated as .928; alpha for the *tamas* subscale was calculated as .910. Thus, the scale has high reliability. The validity of the questionnaire was estimated using Chronbach's formula, and the obtained value for the three subscales ranged from .93 to .94 (Wolf 1999, 1379–1390).

2.4.2 Pranic Energy Perception Schedule

The *Pranic Energy Perception Schedule* was designed on the bases of quantity and quality of *prānic* experiences by the research center of the World Pranic Healing Foundation. It consists of two parts: *prānic* energy experienced based on quantitative perception, and *prānic* energy experience based on qualitative perception.

Experiences in quantitative perception include:

- *Magnetic sensation*, i.e. perception of *prānā* in the form of a magnetic field;
- *Electric current*, i.e. perception of *prānā* in the form of an electric field;
- *The sensation of the balloon*, i.e. *prānic* perception in the form of pressure sensation varied as the size of a balloon in between hands during hand sensitization;
- *Feeling rotation in the palm*, i.e. *prānic* perception in the form of pressure that rotate in between hands during hand sensitization;
- *Tingling sensation*, i.e. altered, skin sensation like stinging, prickling, or thrilling sensation.

Based on quantitative perception and the magnitude of energy experiences in between the palm of the participants was measured using an assumed ruler of scoring (ratio scale), starting from no experience (0 cm) to 30 cm or more than 30 cm with 1 cm interval. The identification and measurements are recorded purely based on the participant's decision.

Based on the type, property, and position of hand where participant felt the energy, the quality of particular experience perceived can be selected from the choice of categories given in the schedule. The experiences are classified as follows:

- *Change in temperature*, i.e. prānic perception in the form of variation in temperature;
- *Perception of lightness and heaviness*, i.e. prānic experience in the form of variation in weight in between hands;
- *Experience in fingers and palm*, i.e. prānic energy experiences at a specified area of hands;
- *The feeling of pulsation*, i.e. energy perception in the form of pulse sensation between hands.

The quality of experience in the change in temperature includes choice categories as follows: *No change*, *Cool*, *Warm*, and *Feeling both*. The quality of experience in perception of lightness and heaviness includes choice categories as follows: *No change*, and *Light and heavy*. The quality of experience in feeling in fingers and palm includes choice categories as follows: *No Change*, and *Light and heavy*. The quality of experience in perception of lightness and heaviness includes choice categories as follows: *No pulsation*, *Mild*, *Moderate*, and *Strong*.

2.5 Statistical Analysis

The *Chi-square Test of Independence* was used to examine the subgroup differences in prānic experiences. Correlation of *triguna* and *prānic energy experiences* based on the assumed ruler (quantitative perception) was assessed using *Pearson Product-Moment Correlation*, and *Spearman's Ranked Correlation* was assessed between *triguna* and *prānic energy experience* based on the qualitative perception.

2.6 Results

Prānic energy perception of magnetic experience in between hands showed that 42 (14%) of them did not feel the magnetic experience, 117 (39.1%) felt it at a distance of 0.1–10 cm, 100 (33.4%) felt in 10.1–20 cm, 32 (10.7%) felt in 20.1–30 distance, and 8 (2.7%) felt at a distance more than 30 cm.

Prānic energy perception of electric experience in between hands showed that 201 (67.2%) of them did not feel it, 52 (17.4%) felt it at a distance of 0.1–10 cm, 24 (8%) felt in 10.1–20 cm, 17 (5.7%) felt in 20.1–30 distance, and 5 (1.7%) felt at a distance more than 30 cm.

Prānic energy perception of tingling experience in between hands showed that 160 (53.5%) of them did not feel it, 83 (27.8%) felt it at a distance of 0.1–10 cm, 44 (14.7%) felt in 10.1–20 cm, 8 (2.7%) felt in 20.1–30 distance, and 4 (1.3%) felt at a distance more than 30 cm.

Prānic energy perception of ball sensation in between hands showed that 149 (49.8%) of them did not feel it, 63 (21.1%) felt it at a distance of 0.1–10 cm, 57 (19%) felt in 10.1–20 cm, 25 (8.4%) felt in 20.1–30 distance, and 5 (1.7%) felt at a distance more than 30 cm.

Prānic energy perception of rotation experience in between hands showed that 183 (61.2%) of them did not feel it, 58 (19.4%) felt it at a distance of 0.1–10 cm, 37 (12.4%) felt in 10.1–20 cm, 10 (3.3%) felt in 20.1–30 distance, and 11 (3.7%) felt at a distance more than 30 cm. Intensity of energy experience of magnetic ($X^2=144.8$, p.000), electric ($X^2=436.7$, p.000), ball ($X^2=203.8$, p.000), rotation ($X^2=343.9$, p.000), and tingling ($X^2=278$, p.000) from no experience to 30 cm or more is different from one another (see Table 2).

Tab. 2.
Frequency (F), Percentage and Independence
of Experiences in Different Prānic Energy
Based on Quantitative Perception

Type of Prānic Energy Experiences	Count	Prānic Energy Perception Based on Assumed Ruler Measurement					Statistics
		No experience	0.1–10 cm	10.1–20 cm	20.1–30 cm	30 more	
Magnetic	F	42	117	100	32	8	$\chi^2=144.8$ p=.000
	%	14	39.1	33.4	10.7	2.7	
Electric	F	201	52	24	17	5	$\chi^2=436.7$ p=.000
	%	67.2	17.4	8	5.7	1.7	
Ball	F	149	63	57	25	5	$\chi^2=203.8$ p=.000
	%	49.8	21.1	19	8.4	1.7	
Rotation	F	183	58	37	10	11	$\chi^2=343.9$ p=.000
	%	61.2	19.4	12.4	3.3	3.7	
Tingling	F	160	83	44	8	4	$\chi^2=278$ p=.000
	%	53.5	27.8	14.7	2.7	1.3	

In Table 4, the *Product-Moment Correlation* of *triguna* and quantitative perception of prānic experiences were computed. A significant negative correlation of *sattva* and electric sensation (-0.165, $p \leq 0.01$), a significant positive correlation between *tamas* and electric sensation (0.174, $p \leq 0.01$) were found. There is no correlation between *triguna* and magnetic, tingling, ball-like experience and rotation. The association of ball experience and electric experience (0.167, $p \leq 0.01$), ball experience and rotation experience (0.208, $p \leq 0.01$), and rotation experience and electric experience (0.246, $p \leq 0.01$) showed a significant positive correlation. A significant positive correlation of tingling experience with ball experience (0.311, $p \leq 0.01$), and tingling experience with rotation (0.132, $p \leq 0.05$) was found. Apart from experience, *sattva* and *rājas* (-0.664, $p \leq 0.01$), *sattva* and *tamas* (-0.859, $p \leq 0.01$), and *rājas* with *tamas* (0.188, $p \leq 0.01$) also showed a significant correlation.

Table 5 shows the *Spearman's Rank Correlation* of *triguna* and qualitative perception of prānic experiences. There is no significant correlation between *triguna* and qualitative perception of prānic experiences. There is a positive correlation between temperature experience and light (0.125 $p \leq 0.05$), finger palm, and pulse experience (0.126, $p \leq 0.05$).

Tab. 4.
Pearson Product-Moment Correlation of Triguna and Prānic Experience Based on Quantitative Perception

	Sattva	Rājas	Tamas	Magnetic	Tingling	Ball	Electric	Rotation
Sattva	1	-.664	-.859	-.015	-.012	-.024	-.165**	-.099
Rājas		1	-.188**	.040	-.077	-.042	.062	.060
Tamas			1	-.008	.068	.060	.174**	.089
Magnetic				1	-.027	.075	.099	.222**
Tingling					1	.311**	.111	.132*
Ball						1	.167**	.208**
Electric							1	.246**
Rotation								1

**Correlation is significant at .01 level

* Correlation is significant at .05 level

4 Conclusion

energy (Ramaswami 1989, 316). *Prānā* can also radiate from the body in the form of an electromagnetic radiance and connective tissues in the body may act as a semiconductor and transform minute DC currents (Rosch 2009, 297–310). Furthermore, the current flow between the environment (earth) and a grounded human body is apparent (Kent *et al.* 2014, 239–240). Electric fields have the potential to disrupt a wider range of behaviours in living organisms like marine animals (Daniel *et al.* 2020, 2). Laboratory study also verified the emission of energy contiguity to Chi (Qi)/ESP activities in the form of electromagnetic radiation from healers and meditators with their intention to project the energy (Joines *et al.* 2012, 275).

Information from the environment is not only received by the organisms through receptors but also beyond the sphere of sensory experiences (Adamski 2013, 466). The higher mental processes activate bodily representations in central somatosensory areas and generate conscious bodily sensations with no sensual circumstances (Beissner *et al.* 2015, 1–18).

Results of this study suggest that *guna sattva* and *guna tamas* are associated with the electric experience. Electric experience refers to the participants reporting of a sensation similar to the experiencing of electric current or shock when they felt prānic energy. This study documented that when *sattva guna* increases than electric experience will decrease, vice versa when *tamas guna* increases than electric experience also increases.

The study findings demonstrate the fact that prānic experiences can be ascertained quantitatively by measuring the distance between the two palms and assess the quality of experience based on the intensity of felt energy, type of feeling, and position of hand where they felt the energy. The relation of *sattva*, *rājas*, and *tamas* to prānic perception in general is insignificant, except in the experience of electrical sensations. *Guna sattva* is negatively correlated, while *guna tamas* is correlated positively with electrical sensation. However, further studies are required to understand the underlying relationship between the two.

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