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Validation of Psychological Terminologies of

Tridoshas and Trigunas

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ABSTRACT

The authors have developed a set of scales to assess personality from the Indian psychological perspective of *Tridoshas* and *Trigunas*. This paper deals with psychological names to the *Tridoshas* and *Trigunas* as well as to the 16 Classical Personality types dealt in Ayurveda. The salient features of the *Tridoshas*, *Trigunas* and each of the 16 Classical Personality Types have been identified and validated which are elaborated.

Keywords: Personality assessment, 189 traits, 16 CPT, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas, Doshas and Gunas

Personality is basically understood by three major domains or methods in Indian Philosophy from which Indian Psychology has evolved. They are *Pancha Kosha*, *Tridoshas* and *Trigunas*. The *Tridoshas* and the *Trigunas* are both made up of the *Pancha Mahabhutas* in varying combinations and degrees.

The *Pancha Mahabhutas* form the most elemental composition of the universe. This is accepted in all the *darsanas* or schools of Indian philosophy. The *Pancha Mahabhutas* are elementary, found all over the world—albeit in varying combinations and degrees—and can form the basis for the proposition of personality understanding that is applicable to people across countries and socio-demographic situations to give us an understanding of people that is neither culturally specific nor constrained by geographical demarcations, giving us a psychology that is truly panglobal in nature (Shilpa & Murthy, 2011a).

The authors have developed personality scales to assess *Tridoshas i.e. Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* (Shilpa & Murthy, 2011c) and *Trigunas*, *i.e.*, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* (Shilpa & Murthy, 2012a), from psychological perspective in human beings. The *Tridoshas* and *Trigunas* are composed of the *Pancha Mahabhutas*, but one or the other *Dosha /Guna* is dominant singularly or in combination. There can never be a state when one or the other *Pancha Mahabhutas* and consequently the *Tridoshas* and *Trigunas* are absent totally. All five are essential to sustain life. Though *Tridosha* and *Triguna* concepts are studied, understood and applied in Ayurveda, the present authors have validated the same from the domain of psychology.

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The psychometric properties of one Tridosha as well as two Triguna scales have been established.

The *Tridoshas* form a bottom-up processing from the atomic and cellular level to give us an understanding of the person as a whole while the *Trigunas* form a top-down processing from the intellectual/ psychological level to give us an understanding of the person in totality. These two systems form the body-mind-spirit holistic unit of understanding personality that is very important and is a well-developed and tested methodology from Ayurvedic (principles)--(the medical aspect of Indian tradition) perspective, which has been handed down through the millennia, leading to a better understanding of human traits, types, behaviours, interests, attitudes, and natures. These two comprehensive methodologies of understanding people is panglobal and is applicable to people of all races, religions, ethnicities, genders, languages, cultures, geographical indicators and any and all divisions across the world and human civilization, without distinction. This respects that we are all a part of the same species while also allowing us unique personalities with different combinations of the same Pancha Mahabhutas.

Ayurveda talks about seven different combinations of doshas and gunas from the original three doshas (Tridoshas) and three gunas (Trigunas). All people are supposed to belong to one of these seven combinations of doshas, with a concurring combination of gunas leading to an interaction between the doshas and gunas leading to a unique personality development based on the *dosha-guna* combination-domination-suppression in every person.

TRIDOSHAS AND THEIR BLENDS:

Tridoshas refer to three doshas. Doshas refer to the state of physical—physiological combination. "Each dosha gives certain characteristic qualities to the person, based on which an individual can be classified as belonging to that particular dosha type. Charaka and Susruta recognize seven types or categories into which people can be classified, depending on the dominance of the doshas in their body. They are said to belong to a particular Prakriti or Constitution, as follows:

- 1. People with dominant *Vata* (constitution or) *Prakriti*.
- 2. People with dominant *Pitta Prakriti*.
- People with dominant Kapha Prakriti. 3.
- 4. People with dominant Vata-Pitta Prakriti.
- 5. People with dominant Vata-Kapha Prakriti.
- 6. People with dominant Pitta-Kapha Prakriti.
- 7. People with balanced doshas or with Vata-Pitta-Kapha Prakriti.

This is accepted by all the different schools of Ayurveda—Charaka, Susruta, Vagbhata, etc., to name a few (Sharma, 1981; Sharma, 2004; Murthy, 2007; Krishnan, 2002; Johari, 2003; and Svoboda, 2005)" (Shilpa & Murthy, 2011a).

"Proper balance between these three doshas is essential for good health. In a balanced state the doshas sustain the body by endowing good mental and physical strength to the individual. When they are in imbalance it leads to a dominance of one or more doshas (in combination), which is the cause of many ailments and illnesses" (Shilpa & Murthy, 2011a, 2011b, 2012d, 2013a). "This also does not mean that a person who is either of the dosha dominated is not in good health. That particular dominant dosha is his natural state of being or Prakriti. It is not ill health" (Shilpa & Murthy, 2011a, 2013a).

The Mysore Tridosha Scale has been standardized by the authors and the same has been published (Shilpa & Murthy, 2011c). The traditional Ayurvedic names of Vata, Pitta and Kapha were imported into psychology and they were suitably described and named accordingly. The concordances of Ayurvedic experts were sought through their ratings on each of the names. The names were finalized accordingly. Their ratings and the finalized psychological names for *Vata*, Pitta and Kapha are given below.

Table 1: Psychological names and salient characteristics of Tridoshas

Sl.	Constructs	Psychological	Descriptions
No		Names	
1.	Vata	Impulsive	Unpredictable, erratic in all behaviour, fast, restless
2.	Pitta	Sharp	Short tempered, precise, sharp and decisive
3.	Kapha	Steadfast	Stable, predictable, slow, dedicated and thorough in
			all activities

The traditional Ayurvedic names of Vata, Pitta and Kapha were given psychological names and shown to experts. Their suggestions were incorporated and the psychological names were finalized accordingly. The finalized names are thus **Impulsive** for *Vata*, **Sharp** for *Pitta* and **Steadfast** for *Kapha*.

The salient characteristics for each of the three *Doshas* were also developed and shown to Ayurvedic experts. Consensus from them was obtained and the characteristics were finalized as mentioned in the table above.

Table 2: Ratings of eight Ayurvedic experts for psychological names to Tridoshas in percentages

Construct	Psychological Names	Highly Agree	Agree	Un- decided	Dis- agree	Highly Disagree
Vata	Impulsive	37.5	62.5	0	0	0
Pitta	Sharp	50	50	0	0	0
Kapha	Steadfast	50	50	0	0	0

An analysis of the above table indicates that the *Ayurvedic* experts have agreed to the psychological names given to traditional *Ayurvedic* names of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* as above. Thus, the above names are finalised by the authors based on the validation process.

TRIGUNAS AND THEIR BLENDS:

Trigunas refer to three gunas. Gunas refer to the quality and psychological states of the mind. "Each guna gives certain characteristic qualities to the person, based on which an individual can be classified as belonging to that particular guna type. Charaka and Susruta recognize seven types or categories into which people can be classified, depending on the dominance of the gunas in their body. They are said to belong to a particular guna combination, as follows:

- 1. People with dominant *Sattva Guna*.
- 2. People with dominant *Rajas Guna*.
- 3. People with dominant *Tamas Guna*.
- 4. People with dominant *Sattva-Rajas Guna* combination.
- 5. People with dominant *Sattva-Tamas Guna* combination.
- 6. People with dominant *Rajas-Tamas Guna* combination.
- 7. People with balanced *gunas* or with *Sattva-Rajas-Tamas Guna* combination."

Shilpa & Murthy (2011a) hold that there are many books and classical texts which have emulated references to these seven types of *doshas* and *gunas* (*Charaka* (Sharma 1981) and *Susruta Samhitas* (Murthy, 2001; Sharma 2004), *Vagbhata's Ashtanga Hrdaya* (Murthy, 1996) and Johari (2003), Svoboda (2005), Gupta (2000).

This seven-fold classification of people with respect to the *gunas* is similar to the seven-fold classification of people with respect to the *dosha Prakriti*. In fact it is identical in as much as one is concerned with the body constitution (*Doshas* = *physical* = *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Prakriti*) while the other is concerned with the mental or psychological characteristics exhibited by people (*Gunas* = psychological= *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas gunas*). Taking these two striking classifications one-step further, it would not be wrong to say that the physical constitution leads to the corresponding psychological attributes in a person or vice versa as both are inter dependant. Indian tradition does not share the Cartesian dichotomy of the body and the mind as is common in Western psychological thinking. In fact the interplay between the mind (*Sattva*), soul (*Atman*) and body (*Sarira*) in a tripod allusion is the corner stone of *Ayruvedic* Philosophy (*Charaka Samhita*, 46-47; Rao, 1990).

The Mysore Triguna Scale has been standardized by the authors and the same has been published (Shilpa & Murthy, 2012a). The traditional names found in Ayurvedic as well as other classical Indian literature like the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Yoga, Samkhya, etc., to name a few, for the Trigunas of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas were imported into psychology and they were suitably described and named accordingly. The concordances of Ayurvedic experts were sought through

their ratings on each of the names. The names were finalized accordingly. Their ratings and the finalized psychological names for Sattva, Rajasand Tamas are given below.

Table 3: Psychological names and salient characteristics of Trigunas

Sl.	Constructs	Psychological	Descriptions
No.		Names	
1.	Sattva	Virtuous	Intelligent, fortitude, gentle, truthful, benevolent, virtuous
2.	Rajas	Alert	Energy, harsh, angry, excessive activity, strong emotions, inclining towards violence and aggression
3.	Tamas	Dormant	Mass, heavy, obstructing, ignorance or lack of knowledge (confused), inactivity, sleep (more), generally dejected always, indecent

The traditional Indian names of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas were given psychological names and shown to eight experts. Their suggestions were incorporated and the psychological names were finalized accordingly. The finalized names are thus Virtuous for Sattva, Alert for Rajas and **Dormant** for *Tamas*. The salient characteristics of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* were identified and the same can be seen in the following table:

Table 4: Ratings of eight Ayurvedic experts for psychological names to Trigunas in percentages

Sl No	Construct	Psychologica l Names	Highly Agree	Agree	Un- decided	Dis- agree	Highly Disagree
1	Sattva	Virtuous	100	0	0	0	0
2	Rajas	Alert	50	37.5	0	12.5	0
3	Tamas	Dormant	50	37.5	0	12.5	0

The above table indicates that the Ayurvedic experts have agreed to the psychological name Sattva fully, while for the other two constructs, Rajas and Tamas, a small percentage to the tune of 12.5% (one expert) has disagreed. Thus, a large majority of experts have agreed to the Psychological names given to Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Thus, it is expected that these psychological names will help psychologists to study further and enhance the canvas.

INTERRELATEDNESS OF TRIDOSHAS AND TRIGUNAS:

Tridoshas are the physical components of the personality and the Trigunas are the psychological components of the personality. Both need to be studied and understood in tandem for a holistic understanding of personality. Negating the effect of either on the other is detrimental to the health and well-being of an individual. The present authors have studied the interrelationships of *Tridoshas* and the *Trigunas* in human personality empirically and established that the *Tridoshas*

and the Trigunas interact with each other, which determine different aspects of an individual which are unique to that person (Shilpa & Murthy, 2012b).

"Vata Dosha is a combination of Sattva and Rajas gunas, but is predominantly Rajasic. Pitta Dosha is a combination of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas gunas, but is predominantly Sattvic. Kapha Dosha is a combination of Sattva and Tamas gunas, but is predominantly Tamasic" (Shilpa & Murthy, 2012d).

The different types of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* personalities:

Besides the basic three types of *Dosha* and three types of *Guna* leading to seven types of Tridosha characters and seven types of Triguna characters, "Ayurveda recognizes 16 types of personalities based on the classical guna theory. Both Charaka and Susruta Samhitas have a description of these types. According to them there are seven types of Sattva, six of Rajas and three of *Tamas*, totalling sixteen types of personalities under which all people can be grouped (Sharma, 1981; Sharma, 2004; and Murthy, 2007)" (Shilpa & Murthy, 2012c). These are referred to as the 16 Classical Personality Types (16 CPT).

"The 16 Classical Personality types (16 CPT) are the manifestation of the amalgamation of VPK and SRT together. Hence the 16 CPT is expressed in terms of 16 independent personality types which are also expressed as different types of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas personalities in the classical literature. Therefore the subsequent analysis deals with SRT types which are essentially 16 CPT in nature. A list of all the traits which are characteristic of the 16 CPT (seven types of Sattva personalities, six types of Rajas personalities and three types of Tamas personalities) was drawn up" (Shilpa & Murthy, 2014).

"There are 189 traits (common for both the physical and psychological aspects, hence there are 189 physical or VPK traits and 189 psychological or SRT traits) that have been identified which comprises the gamut of human behaviour. They are 100 Sattva traits, 60 Rajas traits and 29 Tamas traits..... Then these 189 traits are combined in a set logic, wherein each trait is a characteristic behaviour exhibited by one (or more) of the 16 CPT as delineated in the classical texts.... So these 189 traits are all characteristics of these principal 16 CPT (these personalities too can be combined to give various combinations, to understand and classify people)" (Shilpa & Murthy, 2013b).

Table 5: Different types of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas

Sl. No.	Types of Sattva	Types of Rajas	Types of Tamas
1.	Brahma Sattva	Asura Sattva,	Pasava Sattva
2.	Mahendra Sattva	Rakshasa Sattva	Matsya Sattva
3.	Varuna Sattva	Paisaca Sattva	Vanaspatya Sattva.
4.	Kubera Sattva	Sarpa Sattva	
5.	Gandharva Sattva	Praita Sattva	
6.	Yama Sattva	Sakuna Sattva.	
7.	Rishi Sattva.		

The traditional names found in Ayurvedic as well as other classical Indian literature like the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Yoga, Samkhya, etc., to name a few, for the 16 Classical Personality Typeswere imported into psychology and they were suitably described and named accordingly. The concordances of Ayurvedic experts were sought through their ratings on each of the names. The names were finalized accordingly. Their ratings and the finalized psychological names for the 16 Classical Personality Types are given below.

The salient characteristics of the 16 Classical Personality Types were identified and the same can be seen in the following table: (Shilpa & Murthy, 2014)

Table 6: Psychological names and salient characteristics of 16 Classical Personality Types

Sl. No.	Constructs	Salient Characteristics of 16 CPT	Psychological Names
1.	Brahma	Purity (in body, mind and speech); truthfulness; self-	Self-realized
	Sattva (S)	control; discrimination; knowledge and wisdom; ability	Ascetic
		to properly communicate; power of repartee; memory;	(Virtuous)
		freedom from lust, anger, greed, arrogance, delusions,	
		envy, depression and intolerance; the tendency to be the	
		same with all beings; austerity; compassion; generosity	
		and virtue; piety; hospitality; reverence for teachers; and	
		inclination to the study of sacred texts.	
2.	Arsha Sattva	Devoted to sacrificial ritual, study of the spiritual lore,	Mentor
	(S)	fulfilment of vows undertaken, chastity, and hospitality;	(Virtuous)
	, ,	are free from pride, ego, attachment, aversion, confusion,	,
		greed and anger; and are brilliant, eloquent, wise and	
		endowed with retentive memory; pure in body, speech	
		and mind; compassionate; given to repetition of sacred	
		formulae and study; celibacy; self-knowledge; and	
		wisdom.	
3.	Aindra Sattva	Possessed of great power and their words are promptly	Ambitious
	(S)	obeyed; they are often 'engaged in religious activities;	Leader
		they are brave and strong, full of splendor; they refrain	(Virtuous)
		from mean conduct; they are far-sighted and are devoted	•

4.	Yamya Sattva (S)	to virtuous living, wealth and pleasures of life; they are learned and great; and they support good persons and worthy causes; they are always engaged in studying the scriptures and acting in accordance with them; they are valorous and commanding; and they protect their dependents. Preside over virtuous living and destiny. They have a sense of propriety in their actions and a tendency to do things in proper time; they are invincible and energetic; they have strong memory, lust, envy, and anger; they are prone to confusion; they are free from arrogance, fear and anger; they are disposed favourably alike towards friends and enemies; they are firm, active and pure in	Objective Decisive (Virtuous)
5.	Varuna Sattva (S)	Fond of water, love to sport in water-stretches, and feel better in cold weather. They are generally clean and tidy; and they love purity, and dislike dirt; they are distinguished by valour, fortitude, love of rituals, and hatred of mean conduct; they become indignant or delighted as occasion demands; they think and act big, engage themselves in virtuous conduct, and are quickto get angry and also to relent; they are patient, love cold things, have eyes with yellowish tinge and hair which is reddish brown; they are soft-spoken and endear themselves.	Mature Nourisher (Virtuous)
6.	Kaubera Sattva (S)	Pleasure-loving artistes, for they generally love wealth, are fond of pleasures, inclined to live in comfort and luxury, and prefer to have a large progeny. They are usually surrounded by attendants, dependents, and associates; they love prestigious positions and honour; they engage themselves in virtuous conduct in amassing wealth and satisfying their desires, but they prefer purity of life; they are ready to reveal their pleasure and displeasure; they crave possession of lands, houses, engage servants, and are determined to be prosperous; their indignation or their benevolence will not be in vain; they are generally neutral in their attitude; they can endure hardship while amassing wealth or while protecting it; and are virile in progeny.	Acquisitive (Virtuous)
7.	Gandharva Sattva (S)	Celebrated for their skill in singing, playing musical instruments, and dancing. Persons belonging to this variety have a lot of fondness for music and dance. They delight in singing, dancing, and playing on instruments, and they are proficient in musical discourses, recitation of poems, narration of episodes and anecdotes recounted in mythical legends and epics; they love anointing themselves with fragrant unguents, wearing fine dress;	Romantic (Virtuous)

		and consorting with people from the opposite sex; they	
		are not jealous by temperament; they are comely to look	
		at, and are witty; they are fond of sporting.	
8.	Asura Sattva	Prevalence of evil inclinations, wicked thoughts, and	Dictatorial
	(\mathbf{R})	fierce temper, all of which characterize the evil spirits.	(Alert)
	(21)	They delight in sensual pleasures. Persons answering to	(111010)
		this description are brave, fierce, and envious; they tend to	
		order people about and may assume terrifying aspects;	
		they are ruthless and conceited; they think ill even of good	
		people, and are fond of deceit; they alternate between	
		mercy and fear; they are quick to lose their temper, and	
		hate to find good qualities in others; they prefer to eat by	
		themselves, and love to move about under cover. Always	
		engaged in disturbing the sacrifices of noble people, are	
		gluttonous, destructive and impish.	
9.	Raksasa	Intolerant, cruel, and constantly angry; they wait for	Vengeful—
<i>)</i> .		unguarded moments, or look for weak points, and strike;	0
	Sattva (R)		Warrior (Alert)
		they are gluttonous and relish meat for food; they are	
		also indolent and they sleep much; they are full of envy;	
		they are quarrelsome and revengeful; they are alien to	
		virtuous living, dogmatic in their views and full of self-	
		praise.	
10.	Paisaca	Malignant, terrible and impish, they are ogres, and are	Ogre (Alert)
	Sattva (R)	fond of eating flesh. Persons belonging to this variety are	
	, ,	not only unclean but delight in dirt; they are terrifying in	
		aspect but are timid and perplexed by nature; they love	
		perverted pleasures and obnoxious food; they love women	
		and seek to enjoy them in secret; they are extremely	
		indolent; they are cruel when not scared; they are	
		suspicious; they are gluttonous and especially fond of	
		meat and wine; they also relish left-overs; they are intense	
		in their anger, and at times become adventurous; they are	
		shameless.	
11.	Sarpa Sattva	Quick temper, unforgiving and spiteful nature. Persons	Revengeful
	(\mathbf{R})	belonging to this variety are constantly, quickly and	(Alert)
		intensely roused (to wrath), but are timid when not	
		roused; they are quick to react and they strike hard; they	
		love food and sport, but are terrifying while they eat food	
		or while walking about; they spend much time in sleep,	
		but are very active while awake; they are vengeful and	
		their hatred is long-standing; they are full of deceit and	
		trickery.	
12.	Praita Sattva	Denote generally a disembodied spirit, seizing and	Bully
12.	(R)	tormenting living beings. Their personality characteristics	(Alert)
	(AL)		(Alci t)
		are gluttonous, tortuous in their disposition and conduct,	
		envious, indiscriminate and impulsive, excessively	
		indulgent and inactive; they frequently experience	

		dejection; they are miserly; they are conceited, hateful; they are deformed in limbs and face; and they love darkness (viz. night).	
13.	Sakuna Sattva (R)	Have the traits peculiar to a predatory bird. Persons belonging to this variety are passionately attached, are excessively fond of food and roaming about, unsettled (in place and, in thought), unforgiving and averse to gather and store (non-acquisitive); they are intolerant, fond of obnoxious food and vulgar speech; they are suspicious, timid, and full of wicked thoughts; they incline excessively to satisfy their own lust; and are constantly eating.	Emotionally Unstable (Alert)
14.	Pasava Sattva (T)	These people are like dumb animals or beasts of burden, which are guided solely by bodily urges and instincts. Persons belonging to this variety are forbidding in their disposition, despicable in their conduct, disgusting in their food habits, sexy and given to excessive sleep; they have little wit, and have no sense of cleanliness or refinement; they are slow in their thoughts as well as their actions; their preoccupation alternates between food and sex; and they are generally negative in their attitude.	Bestial (Dormant)
15.	Matsya Sattva (T)	This group of people who are regarded as lower in the level of life than the beasts of burden, for its physical and psychological traits are extremely limited. Persons belonging to this variety are timid, lacking in intelligence, interested always in food, altogether unsettled (in place or interest), passionately attached to desires and aversions, fond of water, and given to constant mobility; they are dull, gluttonous, uncontrollable in craving or in anger, cruel, self-centred, and deceitful; they are virile and they usually have a large progeny; they are foolish, and tend to quarrel among themselves.	Boorish (Dormant)
16.	Vanaspatya Sattva (T)	These people signify a plant or tree, lower in the order of life than even the fish. Persons belonging to this variety are the least intelligent or active among all the varieties. They are indolent, interested only in food, bereft of all intelligence and discrimination; they are simpletons, indifferent to cold, heat, wind, suffering and so on; and are content to remain where they are placed.	Apathetic (Dormant)

Table 7: Ratings of eight Ayurvedic experts for psychological names to 16 Classical Personality Types

Construct	Highly Agree	Agree	Un- decided	Disagree	Highly Disagre e	Psychologic al Names
Brahma Sattva (S)	100	0	0	0	0	Self-realized Ascetic
Arsha Sattva (S)	50	37.5	0	12.5	0	Mentor
Aindra Sattva (S)	50	50	0	0	0	Ambitious Leader
Yamya Sattva (S)	37.5	50	0	0	12.5	Objective Decisive
Varuna Sattva (S)	50	25	0	25	0	Mature Nourisher
Kaubera Sattva (S)	37.5	62.5	0	0	0	Acquisitive
Gandharva Sattva (S)	50	50	0	0	0	Romantic
Asura Sattva (R)	50	50	0	0	0	Dictatorial
Raksasa Sattva (R)	50	50	0	0	0	Vengeful— Warrior
PaisacaSattva (R)	50	37.5	12.5	0	0	Ogre
Sarpa Sattva (R)	50	37.5	0	12.5	0	Revengeful
Praita Sattva (R)	37.5	62.5	0	0	0	Bully
Sakuna Sattva (R)	37.5	62.5	0	0	0	Emotionally Unstable
Pasava Sattva (T)	37.5	62.5	0	0	0	Bestial
Matsya Sattva (T)	37.5	50	0	12.5	0	Boorish
Vanaspatya Sattva (T)	37.5	62.5	0	0	0	Apathetic

The above table indicates that a large majority of Ayurvedic experts have agreed to the psychological names given to 16 Classical Personality Types. Thus, it is possible to give psychological names to the classical Ayurvedic names of the Tridoshas, Trigunas and the 16 CPT, the concepts of which have been taken from Ayurveda and validated in psychology. Thus these psychological names can be used in psychological studies.

CONCLUSION:

The traditional Ayurvedic/ Sanskrit names of Tridoshas and Trigunas as well as for the 16 Classical Personality Types are given psychological names and validated. This work is expected to take the studies in psychology forward in understanding and studying personality from Ayurvedic perspective.

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