

Classification of Personality of Japanese and Indian students

Based on *Guna* Theory

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ABSTRACT

This study classifies the personality/*guna - sattva, rajas, tamas* of the Japanese and Indian college students based on *guna* theory of Indian Psycho-philosophy, using the values survey questionnaire developed and validated Dhanalakshmi (2006). The scale had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.870. A total of 200 sample (51% males 49% females) from Saitama Province and from Bangalore city. This study examines the personal values and values applied in practice by the respondents. The results indicates that there is significant difference between the core values, intended values, adopted values and weak values of the respondents. However, it is observed that the sources of acquiring values are same, they have imbibed the values from home, community and college. Based on value systems of the respondents they were classified into three *guna* types -*sattva, rajas, tamas*. The results indicates that the majority of the Japanese students are falling under *sattva* type and Indian students are falling under *tamas* type.

KEYWORDS: *Guna, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas*, Values systems, Japanese students and Indian students.

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Introduction

Indian psycho-philosophy thought is based on ancient wisdom and it has been a source of inspiration for the people around the world for the past 5000 years. One basic contribution of Indian psychology is the identification of character structure of personality structure of human beings. This is known as *Guna* theory of personality. Bhagavad Gita has classified human beings into three types of personalities *Sattva, Rajasa* and *Tamasa*. The study is influenced by the translated version of Bhagavad Gita and its commentary of Swamy Prabhavananda (1981), Bhaktivedanda Swamy Prabhupada (1997) and Radhakrishnan (1976) in the process of conceptualisation of the study objectives. It has been felt necessary to construct an instrument for measuring the three personality structures of Japanese and Indian students. Understanding cultural moorings of a group requires fathoming various aspects of culture. This study is an attempt to classify *gunas* of Indian and Japanese students based on the values inventory of three *gunas sattva, rajas* and *tamas*.

Theoretical background

Chakraborty (1998) describes in his book on 'Values and Ethics for Organizations: Theory and Practice', *Guna* theory- is a theory of psychological energies or forces that determines individual properties and dispositions. These forces are also the constituents of everything in creation, in *Prakrti*, in nature. There are such energies- *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. *Sattva* energy is essentially enlightening and harmonizing, *Rajas* is dynamic but blind and fragmental and *Tamas* is indecisive and inert. Yet, as a flame requires a wick, wax and a lighted match stick, so also in a human being all these *Gunas* are necessarily present but in different proportions. These are the key to differences in tendencies and proclivities, including ethical ones, amongst individuals.

The higher the proportion of *Sattva* in an individual, the stronger are his/her ethical propensities. Transcendence, oneness, understanding of the involved self, all come naturally and easily when greater *Sattva* prevails. A preponderance of *Rajas*, while imparting strong action orientation, inevitably carries with it greed, anger, jealousy, vanity, cunning, vindictiveness. These constituent psychological forces of *Rajas* are the prime- movers of unethicality. *Tamas* lacks action- orientation, yet includes many of the negative psychological forces (dis-values) of *Rajas*, breeding a sort of passive, unproductive, unethicality.

Individual self should rise from *Tamas* to *Rajas* and *Rajas* to *Sattva* (higher-self). The minds stilling exercises proved to be useful in attaining the higher-self.

According to Vedas, all material elements are infused with the modes of nature, or *gunas* - *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Dasgupta (1961) describes the *gunas* as "the universal characteristics of all kinds of mental tendencies" (p.468). Broad based confirmation of the Vedic psychological model would reasonably be grounded on a study of the *gunas*, as this idea underlies the Vedic conception of nature. From the perspective of the Vedas, our psycho-physical disposition consists of mixtures of the *gunas* (Prabhupada, 1976). Dhira Govinda (1999) study on A Psychometric Analysis of the Three *gunas*, conducted at South eastern United States those who subscribed a magazine focusing on Eastern-style spirituality. The results of study provides evidence for the construct validity of the VPI (Vedic Personality Inventory). Multiple groups factor analysis support the categorisation scheme of the three *gunas*, and they also support the assertion of Vedic theory that *Sattva*, *tamas* are inversely correlated, with *rajas* as an intermediary mode. The similar studies have been done in the past and developed the VPI instrument and assessed the validity of the three *gunas* constructs such as Uma, Lakshmi and Prameswaran (1971), and Pathak, Bhatt and Sharma (1992), have devised and utilized similar inventories, with inter-*guna* correlations that indicate differentiation of the three modes. Ghalib Hussain (1991) Personal Values, Personality and Management Behaviour Elankumaran, S (1994) worked on Personality, Organisation Climate and Job Involvement., Bhooma (2000) examined the Executive Personality and Work Ethics in the context of Indian Ethos. Dhanalakshmi (2006) classified the *gunas* of the business professions in Vellore district Tamil Nadu.

Methodology

Using the value inventory of the previous research value survey the data was collected from 100 Japanese students, Daito Bunka University, Japan and 100 students of Acharya Bangalore B School, India. The questionnaire with two Five point Likert type scales placed against each values - the first scale is to measure the perceived importance of values and the second is to measure the extent of application of those values in their daily life. The questionnaire with a list of 30 values and demographic details was provided both Japanese and English.

Construction of Value Frame

Rokeach (1968) argues that some beliefs are central to one's belief system while others there have peripheral importance in the system. The more central a belief is the more its influence on behaviour, the more its resistance to change. England et al (1968) drawing on Rokeach's formulations and findings, developed classification of values in terms of behaviour relevancy. Jayanthi (1986), adopted the classification developed by England, classified values into five categories; operative, intended, adopted, weak and non-operative values. Ghalib Hussain (1991) and Dhanalakshmi (2006) used it in their researches. A value has been classified specific type, if the higher number of frequencies occurs under that type, i.e. if for the majority of the professionals a value is operative; the value has been taken as an operative value for the purpose of this study.

Operative values are those concepts which fit into personal as well as practical life of the respondents. These values are very close to one's behaviour and therefore, are significant from individual behaviour angle. Operative values are obtained by combining the following frequencies: Most important and Very frequently, Important and frequently, moderately important and sometimes frequencies.

Intended values combining the frequencies: Most important, important, moderately important and rarely frequencies and also Most important, important, moderately important with never frequencies.

Adopted values are those concepts which are organisationally induced. Though these concepts do not find importance in personal experiences but fit into professional life. Adopted values have been obtained by combing marking to the following: Least important and very frequently, not important and very frequently, least important and frequently, not important and frequently, least important and sometimes, not important and sometimes.

Weak values are those concepts which fit neither in personal experiences not in professional experiences. They have low behavioural relevancy. They have been determined by combining the following responses. Least important and rarely, not important and rarely, least important and never, not important and never.

Non-operative values do not find expression in practical life whether these are experienced in individual life or not. Non-operative values are irrelevant in the practical context. The following responses were combined to determine these values concepts: Most important and never, important and never, moderately important and never, least important and never, not important and never.

Reliability of Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed that intended to determine "Value profile of the Indian and Japanese students ". The questionnaire consisted of 30 questions (i.e., 30 "items") for each personal values and applied values. A total of 200 participants completed the questionnaire. Each question was measured using a 5-point Likert item from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" and very frequently to rarely. In order to understand whether the questions in this questionnaire were internally consistent, a Cronbach's alpha was run. The scale had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.870. A total of 200 sample (51% males 49% females) from Saitama Province and from Bangalore city. This study examines the personal values and values applied in practice by the respondents.

Results

TABLE- 1 Demographic data

	Japanese	Indian	Total
Sample size	100	100	200
Male	50	52	102 (51%)
Female	50	48	98 (49%)
Mean Age	20	22	

Table - 1 shows demographic information about the sample size, gender distribution, and mean age of the two groups studied. Of the 200 students who participated in this study, 100 Indian students and 100 Japanese students. 51% are male and 49% are female. The mean age of the Japanese students was 20 years and Indian students 22 years.

Pattern of Values of the Respondents

The Perceived Importance of values and application of Values in profession are compared and value profile of students have been presented. Japanese considered 19 values as their core/operative values such as, *Gratitude, Self-restraint, Reverence, Contentment, Forgiveness, Truthfulness, Non-violence, Righteousness, Lust, Lavishness, Suspicion, Headlessness, Industry, Fear, Impetuosity, Sacrifice, Greed, Obstinacy and Absence of Envy*. Whereas, the Indian students considered following six values as their Core/operative values: *Industry, Truthfulness, Power, Gratitude, Self-restraint and Absence of Envy* (Table - 2). The respondents considered these values are important in their personal life as well apply it practice. The following five values are common to the Japanese and Indian students: *Industry, Truthfulness, Gratitude, Self-restraint and Absence of Envy*.

TABLE 2 Operative/Core Values of the Respondents

Core Values of Japanese Students				Core Values of Indian students			
Sl.No	Values	Personal values	Applied values	Sl.No	Values	Personal values	Applied values
1	Gratitude	100	97	1	Industry	100	100
2	Self-restraint	95	91	2	Truthfulness	98	97
3	Reverence	97	90	3	Power	94	92
4	Contentment	98	89	4	Gratitude	93	92
5	Forgiveness	97	86	5	Self-restraint	90	92
6	Truthfulness	94	85	6	Absence of Envy	91	94
7	Non-violence	93	85				
8	Righteousness	93	85				
9	Lust	86	85				
10	Lavishness	84	79				
11	Suspicion	73	77				
12	Heedlessness	64	73				
13	Industry	91	72				
14	Fear	69	72				
15	Impetuosity	66	72				
16	Sacrifice	85	71				
17	Greed	72	69				
18	Obstinacy	70	69				
19	Absence of Envy	77	68				

The following Table - 3 shows values of the respondents which have been considered as Adopted Values since they do not attach importance in their personal lives but do adopt those values in their profession. *Impetuosity, Jealousy* and *Arrogance* are few common values considered as adopted by both Japanese and Indian students. In total six values have been adopted by the Japanese students such as, *Impetuosity, Jealousy, Hypocrisy, Vanity, Arrogance* and *Pride* in their practice and the Indian students adopted the following ten values for their survival: *Jealousy, Impetuosity, procrastination, Treachery, Heedlessness, Fear, Anger, Deceit, Arrogance* and *Suspicion*.

TABLE - 3 Adopted Values of the Respondents

Adopted Values of Japanese Students				Adopted Values of Indian students			
Sl.No	Values	Personal values	Applied values	Sl.No	Values	Personal values	Applied values
1	Impetuosity	66	72	1	Jealousy	50	87
2	Jealousy	56	71	2	Impetuosity	53	81
3	Hypocrisy	59	65	3	Procrastination	57	81
4	Vanity	45	64	4	Treachery	45	83
5	Arrogance	41	53	5	Heedlessness	34	76
6	Pride	47	52	6	Fear	43	80
				7	Anger	56	84
				8	Deceit	25	80
				9	Arrogance	31	83
				10	Suspicion	29	76

Table - 4 below presents the Intended Values of the Japanese and Indian students. Values like *Anger, Power* and *Aggressiveness* are considered as the intended values for Japanese students on the other hand, Indian students considered *Vanity, Forgiveness, Sacrifice, Obstinacy, Non Violence, Pride, Reverence, Righteousness* and *Contentment* as their intended values. These values have been imbibed by the respondents but could practice in their profession. Therefore, it is termed as their intended.

TABLE - 4 Intended Values of the respondents

Intended Values of Japanese students				Intended Values of Indian students			
Sl.no	Values	Personal values	Applied values	Sl.No	Values	Personal values	Applied values
1	Anger	67	59	1	Vanity	88	61
2	Power	69	54	2	Forgiveness	82	75
3	Aggressiveness	56	51	3	Sacrifice	82	61
				4	Obstinacy	81	71
				5	Non violence	81	71
				6	Pride	80	69
				7	Reverence	79	65
				8	Righteousness	79	67
				9	Contentment	78	65

The following values given in the Table - 5 are considered as weak values of the respondents since these values do not find any expression either in their personal lives or in their profession. Japanese students' weak values are *Deceit* and *Treachery* and the Indian students' weak values are: *Lust*, *Aggressiveness*, *Lavishness*, *Greed* and *Hypocrisy*.

TABLE - 5 Weak Values of the respondents

Weak Values of Japanese students				Weak Values of Indian students			
Sl.no	Values	Personal values	Applied values	Sl.No	Values	Personal values	Applied values
1	Deceit	41	45	1	Lust	11	14
2	Treachery	29	28	2	Aggressiveness	16	18
				3	Lavishness	23	18
				4	Greed	27	20
				5	Hypocrisy	22	21

TABLE - 6

Rank order of three important values of the respondents

Ranking	Values of Japanese students	Values of Indian students
1	Gratitude	Self – restraints
2	Forgiveness	Power
3	Scarifies	Non-violence

Table - 6 reports the three values with ranks 1 to 3 for Japanese and Indian students. The Japanese students ranked *Gratitude* is first, *Forgiveness* is ranked second and *Sacrifice* is ranked third. Whereas Indian students ranked *Self-restraint* as first, *Power* is ranked second and *Non-violence* is ranked third. There is significant difference in the values preference among Japanese and Indian students.

Sources of acquiring and developing Values of Respondents

The main sources for acquiring and developing the values for Japanese and Indian students are Home, Community and College. (Table- 7)

Table-7 Sources of Acquiring & Developing Values

Sources of Acquiring & Developing Values Of Japanese Students			Sources of Acquiring & Developing Values Indian Students		
	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percentage
Home	3	3%	Home	1	1%
community	6	6%	El. School	5	5%
College	4	4%	Home, Religion, Community	8	8%
Elementary school	6	6%	Home, Religion, College	12	12%
Home & College	1	1%	Home, Religion, El.School	5	5%
Community & College	1	1%	Home, Community, College	35	35%
Home, Religion& College	1	1%	Home, Community, El.School	14	14%
Home, Community, College	55	55%	Home, College, El. School	11	11%
Home, Community & El. School	6	6%	Religion, Community, College	7	7%
Home & College & El. School	11	11%	Community, College, El.School	2	2%
Community, college& El. School	6	6%	Total	100	100%
Total	100	100%			

Table 8 presents the personality type of the Japanese and Indian students. 99% of the Japanese students are categorised as *sattva* type and 1% is *tamas* type. Whereas, 90% of the Indian students are categorised under *tamas* type, 6% *sattva* type and 4% *rajas* type of *guna*.

Table-8: Classification of personality of the respondents

Personality of the Japanese students			Personality of the Indian students		
Personality	Respondents	Percentage	Personality	Respondents	Percentage
Sattva	99	99%	Sattva	6	6%
Rajas	0	0%	Rajas	4	4%
Tamas	1	1%	Tamas	90	90%
Total	100	100%	Total	100	100%

Discussion

The main purpose of the study is to identify whether there are differences between Indian and Japanese students' individual values using a comparative method. In the study, thirty values pertaining to *sattva*, *Rajas* and *tamas* used to identify values of Indian and Japanese students. The primary finding achieved as a result of the analysis in this study is that there is difference between Indian and Japanese students' in terms of personal values. The value systems of Japanese and Indian students differ significantly. As we look at the findings gained from the t test, the analysis clarifies mainly two aspects. Firstly, it is possible to address values found different from each other as values affected by national values, and secondly the values where a difference is not found can be regarded as equal and can be predominantly addressed as values with a

“universal” content. Second finding is personality classification of the Indian and Japanese students based on *gunas*. In results shows that most of the Japanese students belongs to *sattva* category on the other hand Indian students belongs to *tamas* Category.

Limitations of the study

A major problem in public opinion survey research and notably in ethical research is the ambiguity that often arises when respondents are asked to make decision and judgements an abstract concept. The validity of self-report measures which have been used in this type of research will always be subject to question. Identification of personality that has guided an important part of this study is based on certain ontological assumptions which do not lend themselves to scientific verification. Due to time constraints this study is limited to 200 sample in Saitama, Japan and Bangalore, India.

Conclusion

This study is an attempt to identify personal values and classify personality/guna of Japanese and Indian students based on Indian psycho-philosophy. There are other approaches to classify personality traits such as, neurotic tendency, self-sufficiency, introversion-extraversion, dominance-submission, self confidence, sociability and so on. From mid 80's some scholars have been popularizing concepts developed from Hindu psycho-philosophy for human resources management and some others are trying Japanese style of management. These approaches apart, there are studies regarding model Indian personality and value systems in personal character and business practices. A review of various studies on values, personality and business practices has been shown that there is scope for many new studies of this kind. Understanding of culture specific values and personality structures helps in understanding the nature of human in the right sense.

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