

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# *Triguna (three qualities) personality model and two-factor conceptualization of self-compassion: a new insight to understand achievement goal orientations*

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## BACKGROUND

Although the three-dimensional Vedic personality model (*Triguna*) and self-compassion have been linked with a variety of life outcomes, little is known about their interplay in shaping goal orientations. We explored the interrelationships and interplay of the *Triguna* (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*) with positive and negative self-compassion in shaping the goal orientations of Indian students.

## PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Using convenience sampling, 190 males ( $M = 20.13$ ,  $SD = 2.21$ ) and 187 females ( $M = 19.88$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ) were assessed on self-report measures. Data were analysed using correlational statistics, factor analysis and path analysis.

## RESULTS

Factor analyses supported our speculation that the Self-Compassion Scale is best represented by a two-factor model (positive and negative). Positive self-compassion and *Sattva Guna* showed positive correlations with mastery and performance goals while negative self-compassion showed an opposite pattern. *Rajas* and *Tamas Gunas* were negative-

ly correlated with mastery and positively with performance goals. Gender, *Sattva Guna* and positive self-compassion accounted for significant variance in mastery while gender, *Sattva* and *Rajas Gunas* and negative self-compassion contributed to performance-approach. *Sattva Guna* and self-compassion (positive and negative) contributed significantly to performance-avoidance. Path analysis revealed direct as well as indirect effects of the three *Gunas* on the goal orientations through positive and negative self-compassion.

## CONCLUSIONS

The *Triguna* personality and two-factor conceptualization of self-compassion evinced their relevance in understanding the goal orientations of Indian students. Re-conceptualization of the Self-Compassion Scale and its interplay with *Triguna* personality dimensions in shaping the goal orientations of students need further verification in diverse and cross-cultural populations.

## KEY WORDS

*Triguna* personality; positive and negative self-compassion; mastery; performance-approach; performance-avoidance

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## BACKGROUND

Self-concept plays a vital role in shaping a multitude of life outcomes for people of all age groups. A variety of self-constructs have been proposed by researchers to understand and explain the performance and well-being of individuals. One such construct is self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965, 2016), which is assumed to be efficacious in understanding individual differences in performance. The scientific study of self-esteem has its origin in the work of William James, who conceptualized it as a set of positive feelings about oneself and the amount of actual work (Hewitt, 2005; Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1996). Self-esteem has also been conceptualized as a set of favourable or unfavourable self-attitude (Rosenberg, 1965) and a sense of worth (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). Self-esteem is rooted in trust, unconditional love and security of childhood that progress with the positive and negative evaluations (Coopersmith, 1967; Seligman et al., 1996). According to self-determination theory, all individuals possess an inborn capacity of intrinsic motivation that directs people to explore, absorb and master their environment which is represented through higher self-esteem (Ryan & Deci, 2004). A high level of self-esteem upholds positive affect and personal growth, life satisfaction and well-being as well as helps in coping by acting as a buffer against anxiety (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, & Schimel, 2004). Self-esteem also carries survival value for individuals by promoting a securely attached style that, in turn, promotes happiness and well-being (Pyszczynski et al., 2004).

In the recent past, some weaknesses of self-esteem have been identified. For instance, the exogenic nature of self-esteem makes it fragile, fluctuating and relative, which makes it unstable and unpredictable (Ryan & Deci, 2004). Self-esteem has been suggested to be based on the comparison, performance evaluations and social ideal that make it more affected by external conditions (Neff, Hsieh, & Dejjitterat, 2005). Additionally, overemphasis on self-esteem may lead individuals to distortion and narcissistic tendencies (Damon, 1995; McMillan, Singh, & Simonetta, 1994; Neff et al., 2005). As an alternative to self-esteem, self-compassion, a construct derived from Buddhist philosophy, has been identified; it denotes a set of healthy and positive self-attitudes with better life outcomes and lesser chance to be linked with psychopathological tendencies (Neff, 2003a, b). Self-compassion refers to the manner through which an individual relates himself with his self without considering self-worth. It comprises three bipolar dimensions that function in close connection and interdependence with one another (Dreisoerner, Junker, & van Dick, 2020). Self-kindness denotes being kind to oneself in place of being self-judgmental in the face of hardships whereas common humanity reflects the extent to which

one's experience is common to all human beings and a lesser degree of isolation from other people. Lastly, mindfulness represents remaining in awareness of one's own experiences of pain and failures in place of rejecting or denying them or over-identifying with them (Neff, 2003a, b). Many positive life outcomes of practising self-compassion have been identified. For example, self-compassion has been reported to be associated closely with well-being and many health outcomes and has efficacious applications in clinical and health settings (Muris, van den Broek, Otgaar, Oudenhoven, & Lennartz, 2018; Sirois, 2020; Verma & Tiwari, 2017). Self-compassion has evinced its protective strengths for psychological well-being and negative links with psychopathological symptoms such as anxiety, depression, stress, and other mental health issues (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012).

Self-compassion has been suggested to be closely related to personality traits because various personality attributes have close links with individual differences at the affective level and environmental responsivity (Corr, 2008; Revelle, 1995). Studies examining the link of self-compassion with positive psychological health and the Five-Factor Model of personality document a positive link between self-compassion and a set of qualities and personality traits indicating healthy functioning such as happiness, optimism, positive affect, wisdom, personal initiative, curiosity and exploration, agreeableness, extroversion and conscientiousness (Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007a; Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007b). Self-compassion shows a significant negative association with negative affect and neuroticism but a positive correlation with agreeableness as it is associated with kind, connected and emotionally balanced attributes which enhance the ability to get along with others (Neff et al., 2007a, b). Given self-compassionate individuals' disposition to refrain from worrying about their impression and remain emotionally stable (which promotes more responsible behaviours), self-compassion was found to be linked with both extraversion and conscientiousness (Neff et al., 2007a, b). On the other hand, self-compassion did not show relationships with openness to experiences which involve active imagination, a higher inclination to aesthetics, a strong liking of diversity and non-judgmental attitudes (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Similar patterns of relationship between the five facets of the Big-five personality model and self-compassion have also been reported among Indians (Thurackal, Corveleyn, & Dezutter, 2016).

Although the foregoing studies provide ample evidence that self-compassion is linked with personality traits using a very comprehensive and widely studied model of personality, i.e., the Big-Five model, little is known about how self-compassion and its various domains relate with the Vedic model of personality. Given the origin of the construct of self-compassion

in the classical Indian tradition (Buddhism), it would be interesting to explore its relationship with the personality traits rooted in the Indian tradition, viz., the Vedic model of personality. The Vedic personality theory represents a comprehensive paradigm for the understanding of the human personality in terms of an interdependent set of three (*Tri*) qualities (*Gunas*) representing the material, social and psychological dimensions of human functioning with equal relevance to understanding material things (Agrawal, 2020; Das, 1999). Thus, the Vedic model of personality is also referred to as the *Triguna* theory of personality. According to this model, the three *Gunas* (qualities) represent the three major domains of personality each having a set of several traits (Wolf, 1998). The three qualities or domains of personality in this model are *Sattva* (characterized by purity and goodness), *Rajas* (characterized by passion or action tendency) and *Tamas* (with core features of dullness, darkness or destructiveness).

The core traits defining *Sattva Guna* include purity, honesty, seriousness, dutifulness, detachment, restraint, mental equilibrium, respect for superiors, satisfaction, intelligence, sense of control and strong determination (Bhaktivedanta, 1994; Dasgupta, 1961). The *Sattva Guna* has been conceptualized as a set of attributes that make people more positively attached to the worldly life with restraint and remain unaffected in the face of success and failures of life (Dasgupta, 1961). Thus, individuals with a higher *Sattvic* quality reflect a higher life satisfaction, generosity, ordinariness, self-restraint and goodness (Dasgupta, 1961). On the other hand, the *Rajas Guna* represents passionate activity, strong gratification desire, lower spiritual interest, a higher dissatisfaction with life achievements, an envious tendency towards others and faith in the materialistic mindset (Agrawal, 2020; Das, 1999). According to *Bhagavad Gita*, *Rajasic* people are guided by their false ego and are greedy, envious, impure and pleasure-seeking by nature (Agrawal, 2020; Das, 1999). Lastly, people dominated by the *Tamas Guna* show psychological imbalance, resentment, lack of knowledge, egotism, sadness, idleness, procrastination and a feeling of helplessness (Das, 1999; Shilpa & Venkatesha Murthy, 2011). The relative higher presence of *Tamas Guna* is visible in lower insight, erroneous orientation, carelessness, idleness and excess sleep (Dasgupta, 1961; Shilpa & Venkatesha Murthy, 2011).

The *Triguna* or Vedic model of personality thus may be called the Indian Big-Three Model of personality consisting of the three major domains of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. The Vedic model posits that all the three *Gunas* (qualities or super-ordinate traits) are present in all human beings in a lesser or greater degree and individual differences in the nature and character (personality) of an individual result from the relative dominance and the interplay of these

traits (Agrawal, 2020; Bernard, 1996; Das, 1999; Potter, 1970; Shilpa & Venkatesha Murthy, 2011).

The relevance of the *Triguna* theory of personality for understanding the health and well-being of individuals across cultures has been well documented (Singh, Jain, Kaur, Junnarkar, & Slezackova, 2016). Researchers have noted that the *Sattva* domain of personality showed a link with such positive life outcomes as mental health, well-being, and positive experiences whereas the *Tamas* dimension showed negative associations with these measures and the *Rajas* showed mixed relationships (Khanna, Singh, Singla, & Verma, 2013; Singh et al., 2016; Singh & Slezáčková, 2013). The observed pattern of association between *Triguna* (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*) and life outcomes is quite congruent with the basic attributes of the three domains of the Vedic personality model. For instance, *Sattva* is characterized by spiritual orientation, positive cognitions and affect, relationship and an inclination to self-growth (Agrawal, 2020; Sharma, Salvi, & Sharma, 2012; Sitamma, Sridevi, & Krishna Rao, 1995), and thus its association with such positive outcomes as mental health, well-being, and positive emotional experiences (Khanna et al., 2013; Singh et al., 2016; Singh & Slezáčková, 2013) seems theoretically congruent. Similarly, the *Rajas* represents sharp perceptions, aggressiveness and decreased life satisfaction (Datar & Murthy, 2019; Wolf, 1998) whereas the *Tamas* comprises poor cognition, dysfunctional memory, a delusional tendency and passivity (Sitamma et al., 1995).

Personality is an important predictor of the goal orientation of an individual, and an upsurge in studies linking personality and goal orientation has been noted in recent years. In their meta-analysis of the Big Five personality and goal-setting, expectancy and self-efficacy theories of motivation, Judge and Ilies (2002) reported strong correlations among the basic attributes of the Big Five personality traits and accepted criteria of motivated behaviours. However, the findings of this meta-analysis are limited because it did not include in the analysis goal orientation theory, which is considered important to understand the mental framework relevant for the way people interpret and respond to goal attainment situations during training and task performance (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). However, subsequent studies reported inter-relatedness of various personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism with goal orientation (Harrackiewicz, Barron, Pintrich, Elliot, & Thrash, 2002).

Self-compassion has also been shown to be closely related to goal orientations, motivational frameworks and achievements of people of all age groups. For example, mastery goals lead individuals towards curiosity, standardize performance and acceptance of their mistakes and intrinsic motivation which entails increased perseverance in tasks, readiness to seek help and enjoyment (Neff et al., 2005). People with per-

formance goals tend to exhibit apprehension of being outperformed and fear mistakes on one hand and show motivation to enhance their self-worth on the other. Neff et al. (2005) conducted a study on 110 undergraduate students and reported that self-compassion was positively correlated with mastery goals and intrinsic motivation, and negatively with performance goals. Contrarily, another study of 91 students could not replicate these findings (Williams, Stark, & Foster, 2008). Thus, there is a strong need to conduct further studies to develop an insight into the relationship between personality, self-compassion and achievement goal orientations. Self-compassion is linked with the ways people approach their work (Barnard & Curry, 2011) and may help enhance academic performance by increasing perceived competence (Neff et al., 2005) and resilient self-appraisals (Barnard & Curry, 2011; Leary, Tate, Adams, Allen, & Hancock, 2007).

Although the earlier studies provide some evidence that self-compassion is linked with an individual's goal orientation, most studies used the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) developed by Neff (2003b), which has recently been questioned for its conceptual framework and operationalization. Inclusion of such domains as self-judgement, isolation and over-identification in a measure of self-compassion has been questioned by researchers as they represent the opposite of the construct of self-compassion, viz., self-contempt or self-rejection (e.g., Muris, Otgaar, & Petrocchi, 2016; Muris et al., 2018). The differential pattern of relationship of the positive and negative domains of self-compassion with measures of mental health further cast doubt that self-judgement, isolation and over-identification dimensions of the SCS measure self-compassion. For instance, in a meta-analytic review, Muris and Petrocchi (2017) observed that positive components of self-compassion (self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness) were negatively associated with mental health problems whereas the negative components (self-judgement, isolation and over-identification) exhibited a positive association with psychopathological symptoms. Similar findings have also been reported by other researchers (Lopez, Sanderman, Ranchor, & Schroevers, 2018; Pandey, Tiwari, Parihar, & Rai, 2019; Pandey et al., 2020; Pfattheicher, Geiger, Hartung, Weiss, & Schindler, 2017). These observations suggest that the six domains of the SCS seem to measure two related yet different domains, viz., self-compassion and self-rejection or self-contempt. The present study prefers to use the labels positive self-compassion and negative self-compassion for the said two broader domains of the SCS in order to maintain continuity with the original measure.

The picture is further complicated by the factor analytic studies which extend the hypothesis that self-compassion is best represented by three bipolar dimensions (Cleare, Gumley, Cleare, & O'Connor,

2018; Neff, Whittaker, & Karl, 2017). Although these observations point towards the possibility that the SCS consists of both positive and negative aspects of self-compassion, it does not provide support for the two-factor model of self-compassion i.e., positive and negative self-compassion. Researchers have argued that self-judgment, isolation and over-identification exhibit clear similarities with ruthless self-criticism (Zuroff, Igreja, & Mongrain, 1990), social withdrawal and loneliness (Rubin & Coplan, 2004), and self-absorption and self-focused rumination (Lyubomirsky & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1995). Thus, the domains of self-judgement, isolation and over-identification can be better summarized by the latent factor of negative self-compassion. Recently, Muris et al. (2018) presented some evidence for the validity of the two factor (or bi-factor) model of positive and negative self-compassion. These researchers observed that positive self-compassion was linked with adaptive coping, planning, positive reframing, self-forgiveness and flourishing and healthy functioning while negative self-compassion was related to maladaptive coping, anxiety and depression (Muris et al., 2018; Muris & Otgaar, 2020; Pandey et al., 2019, 2020; Sirois, Molnar, & Hirsch, 2015). Similar findings were also reported by some other researchers who have found a positive correlation between positive self-compassion and various adaptive coping styles such as active tackling, social support seeking, and reassuring thoughts but a negative association with negative self-compassion (Allen & Leary, 2010; Rai & Tiwari, 2019; Tiwari et al., 2020).

## CURRENT STUDY

It is evident from the preceding review that the construct of self-compassion as assessed by the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) may be measuring two linked yet polar opposite constructs, viz. positive and negative self-compassion puts a caveat on the earlier findings linking self-compassion with goal orientations. This raises a need to further examine the link of the two factors of self-compassion with goal orientations. Further, it is also evident that the existence of the constructs of positive and negative self-compassion is based on indirect empirical evidence and not a direct empirical test of the said two-factor structure solution. The present study aims to address such gaps by assessing the validity of the mentioned two-factor solution of the SCS (using both exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic approaches) and the role of positive and negative self-compassion in understanding the goal orientations of Indian students.

The preceding empirical evidence also documents self-compassion as a relevant psychological construct that may help to better understand the performance and functioning of individuals (including goal orien-

tations) in association with personality. Researchers have argued that future studies should focus on the way self-compassion is related to goal orientations in terms of relevant personality traits (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020; Babenko, Mosewich, Abraham, & Lai, 2018). Although a few studies have examined the linkages between self-compassion, personality traits and goal orientations, to the best of our knowledge the interplay of the Indian personality construct of *Triguna* (characterized by three qualities/dimensions, viz. *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*), self-compassion and academic goal orientations has not been studied yet. This is considered important since both the constructs of *Triguna* and self-compassion have their roots in the Indian tradition; thus, exploring their link and interplay in explaining the goal orientations of the Indian students would bring new insights into the underlying psychological mechanisms.

To sum up, in view of the gaps inherent in the current literature mentioned above, the present study aims to examine the validity of the new conceptualization of the two-factor model of the existing Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b), and to understand the role of the *Triguna* theory of personality and the two-factor model of self-compassion in shaping the goal orientations of the Indian students. Towards this end, we first examined the intercorrelations among the three domains of personality, two factors of self-compassion and three aspects of academic goal orientations followed by explicating the relative importance of personality and self-compassion in shaping the academic goal orientations of the Indian students. We also explored the interplay of the three domains of the Vedic personality model (*Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*) and two factors of self-compassion, using a structural equation modelling approach, to develop better insight into the mechanisms underlying the academic goal orientations (mastery, performance-approach and performance-avoidance) of the Indian students. It is speculated that the Vedic personality traits will shape an individual's tendency to be self-compassionate (disposition for positive self-compassion) or self-rejecting (disposition for negative self-compassion), which in turn will shape his/her goal orientations. However, the three *Gunas* are also likely to have a direct effect on the academic goal orientations.

## PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

### PARTICIPANTS

A correlational research design was employed which used a convenience sampling method to choose the participants for the study. Data were collected from 500 students enrolled in different undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of Doctor Harisingh Gour University, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, India. After

screening for outliers, 377 participants aged 17 years to 25 years ( $M = 20.01$ ,  $SD = 2.02$ ) were left. Out of these 377 participants, 190 were males with the age ranging from 17 years to 25 years ( $M = 20.13$ ,  $SD = 2.21$ ) and the other 187 were females with age spanning from 18 years to 25 years ( $M = 19.88$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ). The outliers were screened as per the guidelines suggested by Donald (2016). The two groups did not differ significantly in their mean age scores ( $t(375) = 1.17$ ,  $p = .242$ ). The majority of the participants belonged to the Hindu religion (82.40%) and the rest were Jains (13.80%) and Muslims (3.80%). Also, the majority of them were from rural or suburban areas (64.40%) and the rest (35.60%) reported their domicile from urban areas. The participants who were pursuing their graduate or postgraduate programmes, were aged between 17 years and 25 years and exhibited apparently normal physical and mental health (as reported by them) were included in the study. Those who were attending lower or higher academic programmes, were younger or older and facing some sort of reported health problems were excluded.

### PSYCHOMETRIC TOOLS

The scales employed in the present study were first translated from English to Hindi followed by a back-translation from Hindi to English by three experts according to the suggestions of the leading researchers (Behr, 2017; Brislin, 1970). Additionally, their face validity was established by these researchers keeping in mind the basic constructs before the final decision to use these tools. These researchers also went through the various constructs and validated each item of the scales. The following psychometric tools were employed to collect the data:

*The Vedic Personality Inventory.* The *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas Gunas* (qualities) of personality were measured with the help of the Vedic Personality Inventory developed by Wolf (1998). This personality scale represents a reliable measure of *Triguna* personality traits and has also been well validated along with the relevant criterion (Wolf, 1998). The measure of personality comprises 56 items with a seven-point scale that ranges from *very strongly disagree*, *strongly disagree*, *somewhat disagree*, *neutral*, *somewhat agree*, *strongly agree* to *very strongly agree*. Out of 56 items, 15 items were standardized to measure *Sattva Guna* and the other 19 items and 22 items were developed for *Rajas* and *Tamas Gunas*, respectively. This personality questionnaire has good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .70$  to  $.92$ ) measured in terms of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (Wolf, 1998). Other researchers have reported reliability coefficients of this measure that ranged from .74 to .79 (Das, 1999; Shilpa & Venkatesha Murthy, 2012). The scale also possesses a good construct validity across cultures (Singh et al., 2016).

*Self-Compassion Scale.* The self-compassion of the participants was assessed through the Self-Compassion Scale developed by Neff (2003b). This measure of self-compassion denotes thoughts, emotions and behaviours related to all the dimensions of self-compassion proposed by Neff (2003b). The scale comprises statements that assess the extent to which people respond to their feelings of inadequacy with self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness and over-identification. The scale consists of 26 items with a five-point scale from *almost never* to *almost always*. Out of a total of 26 items, 5 items belonged to self-kindness, 5 items to self-judgment, 4 items to common humanity, 4 items to isolation, 4 items to mindfulness and 4 items to over-identification. The cumulative scores on self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness subscales were indicative of positive self-compassion whereas the sum of the scores on self-judgment, isolation and over-identification represented negative self-compassion. The internal reliability of the Self-Compassion Scale has been reported to be consistently good in many studies across cultures (Allen, Goldwasser, & Leary, 2012; Neff & Pommier, 2013; Werner et al., 2012). A large number of studies have shown the empirical validity of the six-factor structure of the translated versions of the scale across cultures (Arimitsu, 2014; Azizi, Mohammadkhani, Foroughi, Lotfi, & Bahramkhani, 2013; Castilho, Pinto-Gouveia, & Duarte, 2015; Garcia-Campayo et al., 2014; Montero-Marin et al., 2018) and populations (Neff et al., 2020; Tóth-Király & Neff, 2020).

*Achievement Goal Orientations Scale.* The achievement goal orientations of the participants were measured with the help of Achievement Goal Orientation Scale (Midgley et al., 1998). The scale comprises 18 items with a 5-point scale that ranges from *almost never* to *almost always*. This measure contains three subscales of achievement goal orientations, namely, task goal orientation, ability-approach and ability-avoidance goal orientations. These three subscales denote mastery goals, performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals, respectively. The first subscale consists of six items that represent the concern with the understanding and learning of the class materials while the second subscale contains six items that measure the concerns of the participants who were trying to outperform others to demonstrate their ability. The last subscale also contains six items that reflect the concern of the participants with not seeing themselves as incompetent or inferior to others. This measure of achievement goal orientations has exhibited good psychometric properties (Midgley et al., 1998). The researchers have estimated internal reliability for mastery, performance-approach and performance-avoidance to be  $\alpha = .81$ ,  $\alpha = .81$ , and  $\alpha = .86$ , respectively (Midgley et al., 1998; Neff et al., 2005).

## PROCEDURE

The proposal of the study was submitted to the Ethics Committee of Doctor Harisingh Gour University, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, India. After the approval, the participants were consulted personally and debriefed about the basic goals of the study. The data collection was started only after the submission of written consent by the participants. The scales were administered in small groups of 20 to 25 participants for the sake of convenience and accuracy. To ascertain the accuracy of the understanding of the instructions and reliability of the responses of the participants, the first author read out the instructions loud along with the speed of the participants to control the time of presentation of each item of the measures of the study. No compensation was provided to them for their participation in the study. After completion of the data collection, the raw scores of the scales were computed.

## PLAN OF DATA ANALYSIS

The obtained raw data were arranged with care as per the design of the statistical analysis. The data of the study were treated with the help of SPSS Statistics version 26. Determination of the mean, standard deviations, factor analysis, coefficient of correlation, hierarchical regression analysis and path analysis were carried out. As the data were not normally distributed, the bootstrapping method of computing correlations and hierarchical regression were employed adopting the criteria of 5000 bootstrap samples.

## RESULTS

The results have been presented in four sections. In the first section, the results of factor analysis have been displayed followed by the second section which comprises the coefficients of correlations. The hierarchical regression analysis has been presented in the third section. The fourth section entails the results of path analysis.

## FACTOR ANALYSIS

As conceptualized in the present study and indirectly supported and validated by earlier studies, the two-factor model of self-compassion was validated using both exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic approaches. In the exploratory factor analytic approach, we conducted a principal component analysis on the six-subcales of the SCS. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample adequacy was well over .5 (.68) and the Bartlett test of sphericity was also found

to be significant, suggesting that the correlation matrix is adequate for factor analysis. All the diagonal values of the anti-image correlation matrix were also above .50, providing further evidence for the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The scree plot suggested retaining two components, and thus two components were extracted and rotated using the Varimax method. The rotated component matrix is presented in Table 1.

It is evident from the rotated component matrix that mindfulness, self-kindness and common humanity loaded significantly on the first component (or factor) and may be labelled as positive self-compassion. Isolation, over-identification and self-judgement loaded significantly on the second component and this component may be labelled as negative self-compassion. Thus, the findings of the exploratory factor analysis clearly provide support to our hypothesis that the SCS is better represented by a two-factor model, viz., positive self-compassion and negative self-compassion. The first factor (positive self-compassion) explained 32.44% of the total variance whereas the second factor (negative self-compassion) explained an additional 32.22% of the total variance.

To further validate the said two-factor model of self-compassion, a maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis was conducted and after allowing a few error terms to covary the said two factor model (see Figure 1) was found to have a good fit to the data ( $\chi^2/df = 2.45$ , GFI = .992, AGFI = .967, TLI = .964, CFI = .988, RMSEA = .054, SRMR = .032). The standardized factor loadings are displayed in Figure 1, and it is evident that all the factor loadings were above .60. These observations provide further

evidence for the validity of the two-factor model of the Self-Compassion Scale. Further, the correlation between the two factors (i.e. positive and negative self-compassion) was also found to be negative but low ( $r = -.26$ ), suggesting that it is better to treat positive and negative self-compassion as independent yet minimally negatively related.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The mean, standard deviation and coefficient of correlations among the overall scores of the predictors and criterion measures were computed (see Table 2). Sig-

Table 1  
Rotated two-factor model of the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b)

Dimensions of self-compassion	Components	
	1	2
Mindfulness	.823	
Self-kindness	.796	
Common humanity	.763	
Isolation		.828
Over-identification		.825
Self-judgement		.727

Note. N = 377. The extraction method was principal component factoring with a Varimax method rotation. Adapted from Neff, 2003b.

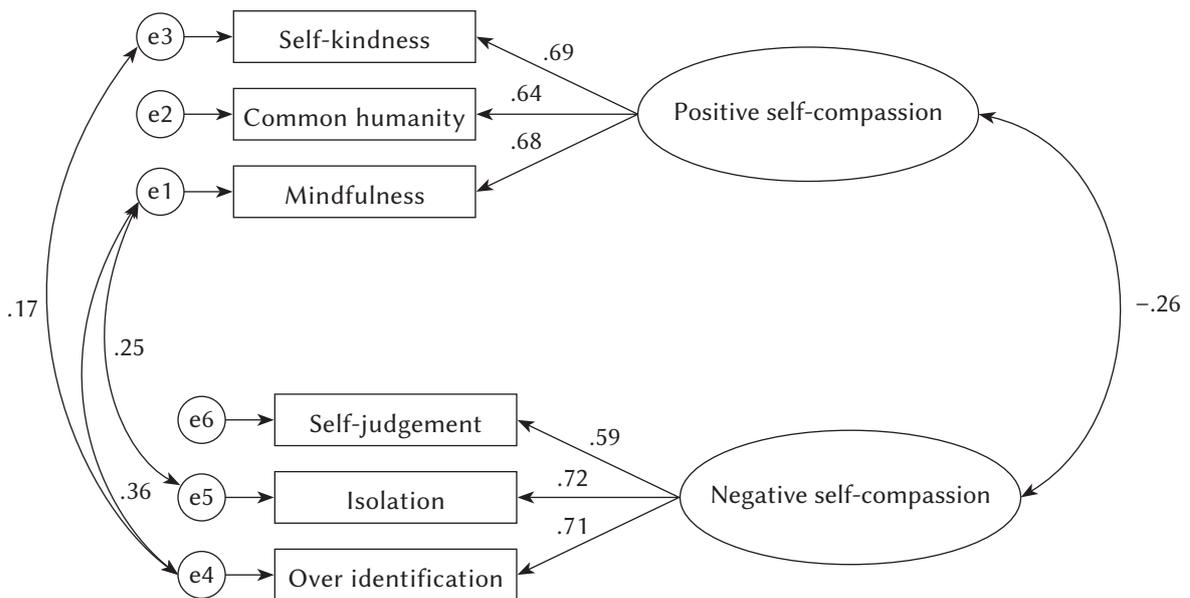


Figure 1. Correlated two-factor model of the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b).

Table 2

Zero-order correlations among various dimensions of personality, self-compassion and academic goal orientations of the participants (N = 377)

S. No.	Measures	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Age	20.01 (2.02)	1								
2.	Sattva	80.64 (9.34)	.04	1							
3.	Rajas	64.15 (12.42)	.03	-.17**	1						
4.	Tamas	71.26 (17.23)	-.03	-.29**	.58**	1					
5.	PSC	48.45 (6.50)	-.01	.30**	-.10	-.13*	1				
6.	NSC	38.82 (8.11)	.04	.05	-.26**	-.44**	-.10	1			
7.	MAS	24.92 (2.71)	.03	.28**	-.16**	-.11*	.29**	-.004	1		
8.	PAPP	23.19 (3.91)	-.04	.16**	.12*	.06	.14**	-.19**	.21**	1	
9.	PAVO	18.17 (4.87)	.06	.09	.11*	.09	.19**	-.25**	.10*	.39**	1

Note. PSC – positive self-compassion, NSC – negative self-compassion, Sattva – Sattva Guna (quality), Rajas – Rajas Guna (quality), Tamas – Tamas Guna (quality), MAS – mastery, PAPP – performance-approach, PAVO – performance-avoidance; \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

nificant positive correlations were observed among *Sattva Guna* (quality) and positive self-compassion, mastery and performance-approach and performance-avoidance while it had negative correlations with *Rajas* and *Tamas Gunas* (see Table 2). The *Rajas Guna* showed significant positive correlations with the *Tamas Guna*, performance-approach and performance-avoidance and negative correlations with negative self-compassion and mastery. The *Tamas Guna* showed negative correlations with positive self-compassion, negative self-compassion and mastery along with small positive non-significant correlations with performance-approach and performance-avoidance (see Table 2). Moreover, positive self-compassion was positively correlated with mastery, performance-approach and performance-avoidance along with a small non-significant negative correlation with negative self-compassion. Negative self-compassion exhibited significant negative correlations with performance-approach and performance-avoidance, and a small negative correlation with mastery (see Table 2).

#### HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSES

Hierarchical regression was employed to partial out the relative contributions of gender, age, personality

(*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas Gunas*) and self-compassion (positive and negative aspects) in the variability of the scores of academic goal orientations (mastery, performance-approach and performance-avoidance) of the participants. The demographic variables (gender and age) were entered at step 1 followed by personality (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas Gunas*), which was entered at step 2 in a stepwise fashion. Lastly, self-compassion (positive and negative aspects) was entered at step 3. The results showed that demographic variables (gender and age) accounted for significant variance by contributing 3.90% in the scores of mastery ( $R^2 = .04$ ,  $F(2, 374) = 7.58$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Personality also accounted for significant variance in the scores of mastery. Out of three dimensions, the contribution of only *Sattva* was statistically significant (10.70%), which is depicted in Model 2 ( $R^2 = .11$ ,  $F(3, 371) = 9.43$ ,  $p = .001$ ). In addition to gender and *Sattva Guna*, positive self-compassion contributed significant variance of 15.50% to mastery ( $R^2 = .16$ ,  $F(2, 369) = 10.49$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Thus, positive self-compassion ( $\beta = .23$ ) emerged as the most significant predictor of mastery followed by *Sattva Guna* ( $\beta = .18$ ) and gender ( $\beta = .14$ ) (see Table 3).

The results further showed that demographic variables (gender and age) accounted for significant variance by contributing 2.20% in the scores of perfor-

mance-approach ( $R^2 = .02$ ,  $F(2, 374) = 3.75$ ,  $p = .024$ ). Likewise, personality accounted for significant variance in the scores of performance-approach. Out of three dimensions, the *Sattva* and *Rajas Gunas* contributed significantly to the performance-approach (7.30%), which is presented in Model 2 ( $R^2 = .07$ ,  $F(3, 371) = 7.15$ ,  $p = .001$ ). In addition to gender and *Sattva Guna*, negative self-compassion signifi-

cantly contributed 10.70% to performance-approach ( $R^2 = .11$ ,  $F(2, 369) = 6.99$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Thus, *Rajas Guna* ( $\beta = -.19$ ) emerged as the most significant predictor of performance-approach followed by negative self-compassion ( $\beta = -.17$ ), gender ( $\beta = .14$ ) and *Sattva Guna* ( $\beta = .13$ ) (see Table 4).

Moreover, personality accounted for significant variance in the scores of performance-avoidance

Table 3

Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for variables predicting mastery of the participants ( $N = 377$ )

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	1.06	.28	.20**	.71	.28	.13**	.78	.27	.14**
Age	0.05	.07	.04	.04	.07	.03	.05	.07	.04
Sattva				.07	.02	.25**	.05	.02	.18**
Rajas				-.02	.01	-.11	-.02	.01	-.10
Tamas				.01	.01	.04	.01	.01	.05
PSC							.10	.02	.23**
NSC							.00	.02	.00
$R^2$		.04			.11			.16	
$\Delta R^2$		.04			.07			.05	
$\Delta F$		7.58**			9.43**			10.49**	

Note. All standardized regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ) belong to the final step of the analyses; *df* Model 1 = (2, 374), Model 2 = (3, 371) and Model 3 = (2, 369); PSC – positive self-compassion, NSC – negative self-compassion, Sattva – Sattva Guna (quality), Rajas – Rajas Guna (quality), Tamas – Tamas Guna (quality); \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 4

Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for variables predicting performance-approach of the participants ( $N = 377$ )

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	1.04	.40	.13**	1.21	.41	.16	1.22	.40	.16**
Age	-0.07	.10	-.04	-0.09	.10	-.05	-0.08	.10	-.04
Sattva				0.07	.02	.17**	0.05	.02	.13**
Rajas				0.06	.02	.18**	0.06	.02	.19**
Tamas				0.00	.01	.02	-0.01	.02	-.06
PSC							0.05	.03	.09
NSC							-0.08	.03	-.17**
$R^2$		.02			.07			.11	
$\Delta R^2$		.02			.05			.03	
$\Delta F$		3.75*			7.15**			6.99**	

Note. All standardized regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ) belong to the final step of the analyses; *df* Model 1 = (2, 374), Model 2 = (3, 371) and Model 3 = (2, 369); PSC – positive self-compassion, NSC – negative self-compassion, Sattva – Sattva Guna (quality), Rajas – Rajas Guna (quality), Tamas – Tamas Guna (quality); \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 5

Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for variables predicting performance-avoidance of the participants ( $N = 377$ )

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
Gender	.67	.50	.07	.82	.52	.08	.86	.50	.09
Age	.15	.12	.06	.14	.12	.06	.16	.12	.07
Sattva				.06	.03	.12**	.03	.03	.05
Rajas				.04	.03	.10	.04	.02	.10
Tamas				.02	.02	.08	-.01	.02	-.02
PSC							.12	.04	.16**
NSC							-.13	.03	-.22**
$R^2$		.01			.04			.11	
$\Delta R^2$		.01			.03			.07	
$\Delta F$		1.51			3.70*			14.60**	

Note. All standardized regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ) belong to the final step of the analyses; *df* Model 1 = (2, 374), Model 2 = (3, 371) and Model 3 = (2, 369); PSC – positive self-compassion, NSC – negative self-compassion, Sattva – Sattva Guna (quality), Rajas – Rajas Guna (quality), Tamas – Tamas Guna (quality); \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

( $R^2 = .04$ ,  $F(3, 371) = 3.70$ ,  $p = .012$ ). Out of three dimensions, only *Sattva Guna* contributed 3.70% significantly to the performance-avoidance of the participants. Model 3 showed that self-compassion also contributed 10.70% to the performance-avoidance of the participants ( $R^2 = .11$ ,  $F(2, 369) = 14.60$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Thus, negative self-compassion ( $\beta = -.22$ ) emerged as the most significant predictor of performance-avoidance followed by positive self-compassion ( $\beta = .16$ ) (see Table 5).

#### STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIP MODELLING (PATH ANALYSIS)

The foregoing findings suggest that the three domains of the *Triguna* personality theory and self-compassion are interrelated with each other and they are also linked with the goal orientations of the students. However, the interplay of these two constructs cannot be assessed using the correlation and regression approach and therefore a structural equation modelling approach (especially the path analytic approach) was followed. Using this approach, the structural relationship among the domains of personality, self-compassion and academic goal orientations was modelled and tested. In this path analysis model, the *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* domains of the *Triguna* personality theory were considered as the exogenous predictors whereas positive and negative self-compassion were considered as the endogenous mediator variables between the relationship of the

three *Gunas* with the goal orientations. Based on the factor structure model obtained in the present study (Figure 1), the scores of the latent construct of positive and negative self-compassion were imputed and were used in the model. Thus, it is not the aggregate or total scores of the individual indicators of the constructs of positive or negative self-compassion, but rather it represents the score of the latent constructs based on their respective indicators. The final model representing the interplay of the said variables in understanding the goal orientations of the students is presented in Figure 2. The path standardized coefficients are shown on each path and only those paths that were found statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) have been retained in the model. This model was found to be an excellent fit to the data as per the contemporary criteria of goodness of fit ( $\chi^2/df = 1.48$ , GFI = .993, AGFI = .974, TLI = .986, CFI = .995, RMSEA = .031, SRMR = .027).

From Figure 2, it is evident that the *Sattva Guna* has a significant direct effect on positive self-compassion ( $\beta = .36$ ,  $p = .001$ ), which, in turn, has a significant direct effect on mastery ( $\beta = .38$ ,  $p = .001$ ), and performance-approach ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p = .001$ ). However, the *Sattva* was found to have an indirect effect on performance-avoidance ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $p = .001$ ), performance-approach ( $\beta = .05$ ,  $p = .003$ ), as well as mastery ( $\beta = .09$ ,  $p = .005$ ) through positive self-compassion. On the other hand, the *Rajas Guna* did not show significant direct effects on either positive or negative self-compassion ( $p > .05$ ) but it showed a significant direct effect on performance-approach ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and

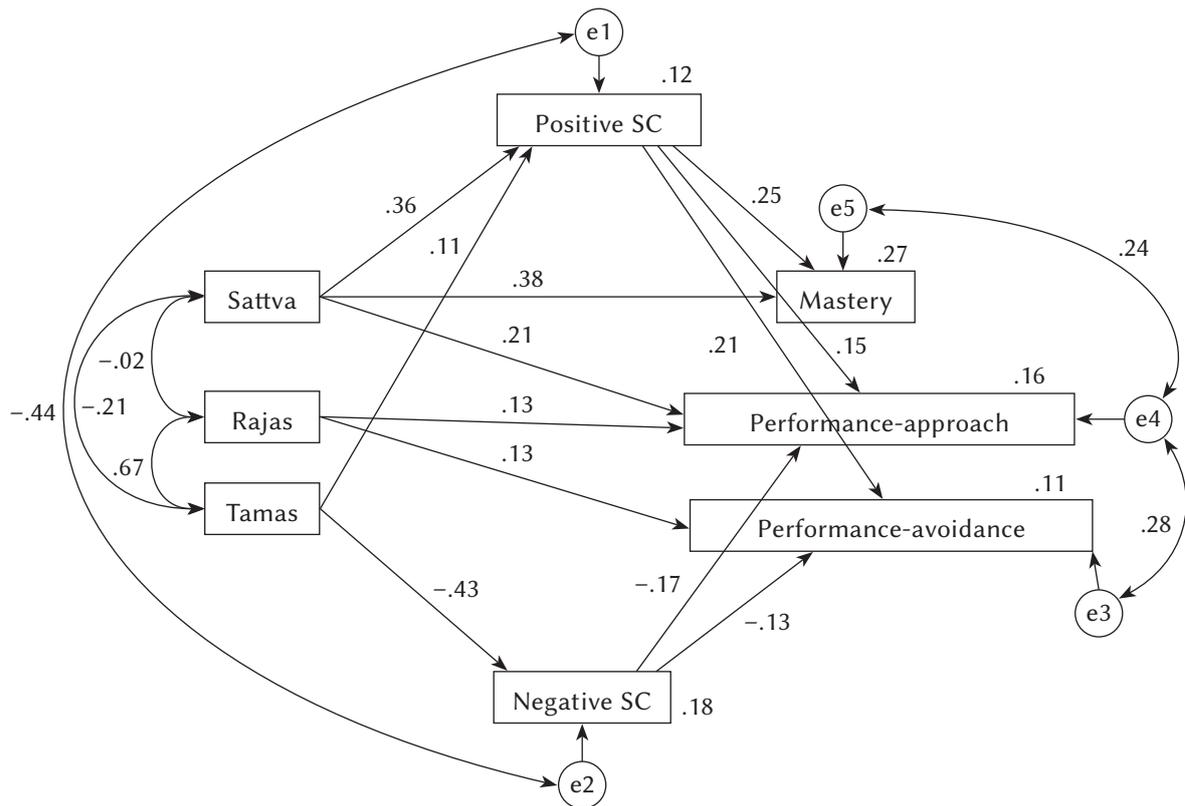


Figure 2. The interplay of the three Gunas (Sattva, Rajas, & Tamas) and positive-negative self-compassion in predicting the goal orientations.

performance-avoidance ( $\beta = .13, p = .011$ ). Further, the *Tamas Guna* showed a significant direct effect on positive self-compassion ( $\beta = .11, p = .013$ ) as well as negative self-compassion ( $\beta = -.43, p = .001$ ). Further, the *Tamas* was found to have a significant indirect effect on performance-avoidance both through negative self-compassion ( $\beta = .06, p = .010$ ) and positive self-compassion ( $\beta = .02, p = .005$ ). Similarly, its significant indirect effect was observed on performance-approach both through negative self-compassion ( $\beta = .08, p = .001$ ) and positive self-compassion ( $\beta = .02, p = .008$ ). However, the indirect effect of *Tamas* on mastery was mediated only by positive self-compassion ( $\beta = .03, p = .009$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study proved the contention that *Triguna* personality and self-compassion have a significant role in shaping the academic goal orientations of the participants. The factor analysis showed the empirical existence of the two-factor structure of the existing Self-Compassion Scale of Neff (2003b). The three dimensions of *Triguna* personality model evinced dissimilar relevance to explicate the two dimensions of self-compassion and dif-

ferent academic goal orientations. Likewise, positive and negative self-compassion exhibited significantly dissimilar roles in shaping the academic goal orientations. Gender, personality and self-compassion accounted for significant variance in the scores of the three academic goal orientations.

The *Triguna* personality theory has been suggested to be empirically useful to understand individual and intra-individual differences in cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions (Ilavarasu, Mohan, & Hankey, 2013). A relative abundance of the *Sattva Guna* cultivates fearlessness, purity of heart, truthfulness, calmness, peacefulness and compassion towards other beings while the dominance of *Rajas Guna* is linked with higher passion, anxiety, industriousness, sensuousness, jealousy and a lower spiritual persuasion. *Tamas Guna* catalyses ignorance, laziness, delusiveness, destructive behaviours, drowsiness, aggression, fear and idleness (Betal, 2015; Krishnamurthy, 1999). The basic attributes of the *Sattva Guna* make a person happy, compassionate, creative, satisfied and positive (Khanna et al., 2013; Krishnamurthy, 1999). *Trigunas* represent an array of behavioural predispositions which make it possible to develop a proper connection with one's self according to the changing demand of the situations (Krishnamurthy,

1999). Thus, the dissimilar nature and extent of correlations and predictive strengths of *Trigunas* for the positive and negative self-compassion in the present study are supported by these findings.

The relationship between *Triguna* personality traits and academic goal orientations can be explained in terms of the basic qualities of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas Gunas*. Researchers have argued that *Sattva Guna* pertains to the qualities of purity, honesty, seriousness, dutifulness, detachment, restraint, mental equilibrium, respect for superiors, satisfaction, intelligence, sense of control and strong determination (Bernard, 1996; Bhaktivedanta, 1994; Dasgupta, 1961; Shilpa & Venkatesha Murthy, 2011). Moreover, the *Sattvic* quality has been argued to reflect lowered worldly attachments and to remaining in balance in the odds of life and many positive personality attributes such as higher life satisfaction, ordinariness, simple lifestyle, seriousness, self-restraint attitude and goodness (Dasgupta, 1961; Potter, 1970; Shilpa & Venkatesha Murthy, 2011). *Sattva Guna* represents fearlessness, purity of heart, control over senses, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, compassion and absence of indecisiveness (Krishnamurthy, 1999). *Sattva Guna* also carries emotional stability (Betel, 2015), positive attitude, happiness, lightness, consciousness and spiritual orientation (Planet Ayurveda, 2020), abstract memory, realistic perception, and productive and abstract thinking (Dhulla, 2011). These attributes of *Sattvic* quality may be behind its positive correlation and predictive strength for mastery of the participants.

The *Rajas Guna* denotes passionate activity, strong gratification desire, lower spiritual interest, a higher dissatisfaction with the achievements of life, envious tendency and faith in a materialistic mindset (Das, 1999; Potter, 1970; Shilpa & Venkatesha Murthy, 2011). *Rajas Guna* cultivates rage, ferocious desires, restlessness, discontent, strong need to satisfy desires, constructive orientation, courage and enthusiasm, sensuousness, hatred, jealousy, lower spiritual pursuit, imitation, passion, anxiety, industriousness and higher ambition. It is also characterized by constructive but dominating nature and restlessness (Betel, 2015), active, stimulation-seeking, and achievement-orientation (Planet Ayurveda, 2020), and concrete memory, ego-involved perceptions, scattered thinking and imagination (Dhulla, 2011). These qualities of *Rajas* may be acting behind its significant contributions in the variability of performance-approach.

Conversely, the *Tamas Guna* is characterized by psychological imbalance, resentment, greed, lack of knowledge, egotism, sadness, idleness, procrastination and a feeling of helplessness (Das, 1999; Shilpa & Venkatesha Murthy, 2011) and people higher in this quality exhibit lower insight, erroneous orientation, carelessness, idleness and excess sleep (Dasgupta, 1961; Shilpa & Venkatesha Murthy, 2011).

*Tamas Guna* shows ignorance, lethargy, delusion, destruction, tiredness, anger and fear (Krishnamurthy, 1999). Additionally, it represents indifference (Betel, 2015), malpractices and self-centeredness (Banerjee, Pathak, & Mathur, 2020), resistance, heaviness, negative thoughts, inertness, lethargy and apathy (Planet Ayurveda, 2020), and distorted perception and confused thinking (Dhulla, 2011). These might be the reasons behind its negative correlations with positive self-compassion and mastery as well as its small positive non-significant correlations with performance-approach and performance-avoidance.

It has been suggested that the *Sattva Guna* facilitates self-actualization needs and denotes non-violence, meditation, kindness, self-control, flexibility, creativity, intuition, self-sufficiency, strong willpower and selfless creativity (Daftuar & Sharma, 1998; Srivastava, 2012). These attributes of *Sattvic* make people more self-compassionate and intrinsically motivated. The *Rajas Guna* nourishes self-esteem needs and symbolizes passion, activity, enthusiasm, interest, practical intelligence, moderate creativity, quick social and practical problem-solving abilities, variable willpower and strong desire, which may lead its bearers to become more inclined towards a performance-approach (Daftuar & Sharma, 1998; Srivastava, 2012). The *Tamas Guna* helps to satisfy only the basic needs and carries illusions, ambiguity, idleness, fantasy, persistence, cautiousness, apprehension, delusion, miscomprehension, low level of competitiveness, weak willpower, conformity to group norms, sensuous pleasure-seeking and revenge (Daftuar & Sharma, 1998; Srivastava, 2012). These qualities of *Tamasics* make people more inclined to performance-avoidance. In essence, the spiritual, active and material qualities of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas Gunas*, respectively, have been suggested to be responsible for their differential associations and contributions to the various life outcomes (Srivastava, 2012). The *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasics* also differ in their learning mechanisms. For a *Sattvic*, learning occurs through vicarious, trial and error, cognitive, single-trial or insight methods, whereas instrumental and contiguity mechanisms are involved in the learning process of the *Rajasic* and the *Tamasic*, respectively (Daftuar & Sharma, 1998). These unique features of the three *Gunas* make them relevant to understand well-being and other life outcomes of individuals (Putta & Sedlmeier, 2014).

The factor analysis also evinced the empirical validity of the two-factor structure of the self-compassion measure developed by Neff (2003b). This finding has been mirrored in some recent studies across populations and cultures which have posited that positive dimensions of self-compassion (self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness) were more relevant to understand positive life outcomes while the negative dimensions (self-judgement, isolation and over-identification) appeared to be linked

with psychopathological symptoms (Muris et al., 2018; Muris & Otgaar, 2020; Pandey et al., 2019). Their differential nature of relationships and predictive strengths for the three-goal orientations in the present study provide further support to this argument. Thus, the findings suggest that the present self-compassion measure needs reconstruction and fresh standardization.

The findings showed that positive self-compassion was positively associated with mastery and negatively with performance goals. The researchers have suggested that positive self-compassion involves lesser fear of failure, greater perceived competence, emotional positive self-attitude, detachment from performance evaluations, self-worth, failure as a learning opportunity, a balanced perspective on shortcomings, positive perceptions of abilities, self-determination, emotional intelligence (the ability to experience one's feelings with clarity and to repair and regulate negative mood states) and adaptive emotion-focused coping strategies (Al-Awamleh, 2020; Neff et al., 2005, 2020; Parry, 2017). On the other hand, negative self-compassion involves emotional reactions, ruminative behaviour and avoidance-oriented strategies (Muris & Otgaar, 2020; Neff et al., 2005). Positive self-compassion was negatively related to and predicted performance-approach and avoidance goals while negative self-compassion was linked positively with and predicted performance-avoidance goals and was correlated negatively with performance-approach goals, similar to the earlier findings (Akin, 2008). Positive self-compassion may contribute mastery as it promotes autonomy, competence, engagement and relatedness (Babenko et al., 2018; Ten Cate, Kusurkar, & Williams, 2011). Also, it may enhance perseverance of effort, self-worth, consistency of interest and self-efficacy, which, in turn, may promote mastery and performance-approach (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020; Ståhlberg, Tuominen, Pulkka, & Niemivirta, 2019; Suprayogi, Ratriana, & Wulandari, 2019). Also, positive self-compassion facilitated acceptance of regretted experiences and adaptive emotional responses (Zhang & Chen, 2016), reduced ego-threat, high self-worth and positive attributions (Shimizu, Niiya, & Shigemasa, 2016) and increased self-improvement motivation (Breines & Chen, 2012).

Mastery orientation involves curiosity, the desire to develop skills, master tasks and understand new materials, internal standards for achievement, effort, appropriate attributions for success and failure, and acceptance of mistakes as part of the learning process (common humanity), higher levels of intrinsic motivation, greater effort and persistence at tasks, willingness to seek help and high levels of intrinsic motivation (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996), and enjoying and having satisfying life experiences and a greater sense of autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These attributes of mastery may be cultivated and

nourished more by the *Sattvic Guna* and positive self-compassion.

Performance-approach refers to the tendency of individuals to outperform others to show competence, self-worth, ability attributions for success and failure and to evaluate their ability through social comparisons with others. It increases intrinsic motivation, greater effort and more persistence at tasks on one hand and shows an unwillingness to seek help, anxiety and disruptive behaviours on the other (Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998). It also reflects superiority to others and fear of failure (Elliot & Church, 1997), and feelings of self-centeredness, disconnection from others, prejudice and violence towards ego-threatening objects (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). These features of performance-approach may naturally be found to remain close to the different degrees of the *Sattva* and *Rajas Gunas*, and positive self-compassion.

Negative self-compassion denotes self-judgment, isolation and over-identification, which are characterized by a critical attitude and harsh treatment towards self, intolerance towards negative traits of self, self-depreciation, self-comparison, thinking about others, feeling of loneliness during failure in important domains of life, indulgence in negative habits, feeling of inferiority and over-identification and maximization of events (Neff, 2003b). With these, negative self-compassion may promote a conditional attitude, perfectionism and procrastination, which may harm positive progression (Flett & Hewitt, 2014). Performance-avoidance refers to the avoidance of situations of failures, incompetence, lower levels of intrinsic motivation, learned helplessness, disorganized efforts, an unwillingness to seek help and high levels of anxiety (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Ryan, Pintrich, & Midgley, 2001). Both types of performance goals involve fear of failure (Elliot, 1999). These qualities of performance goals may be argued to make them closely linked with the *Tamas Guna* and negative self-compassion.

The path analysis evinced the significance of the interplay between the *Triguna* personality model and the two-factor conceptualization of the existing Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b) and their direct and indirect effects on the three academic goal orientations. In essence, self-compassion comprises enhanced perceived competence and lesser fear of failure, which may facilitate its link with mastery goals. Self-compassion also helps to avoid harsh self-judgement and increases self-confidence to learn and lowers failure anxiety. In this way, it becomes associated with mastery goals. Thus, self-compassion is very relevant to understand the dynamics of the motivational patterns underlying academic achievement (Neff et al., 2005, 2020). Self-compassion also explains performance-avoidance as it generates a lesser fear of failure. In previous stud-

ies, self-compassion was positively associated with perceived competence and negatively linked with the fear of failure whereas both of these were positively associated with the performance-approach goals (Elliot & Church, 1997). It has been argued that a negative correlation of self-compassion with performance-approach goals is useful as the superiority over others that drives the individuals to adopt performance-approach goals symbolizes maladaptive behaviours such as self-centeredness, prejudice, violence and social withdrawal (Baumeister et al., 1996; Covington, 1992; Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996). In this way the negative association of performance-approach with self-compassion is beneficial (Neff et al., 2005, 2020).

In conclusion, the findings of the present study showed self-compassion to be closely associated with adaptive motivational patterns in academic contexts, which has also been reported by previous researchers (Neff et al., 2005, 2020; Pandey et al., 2019, 2020). The findings evinced that self-compassion may have facilitated the learning process by freeing the student participants from the unacceptable consequences of self-criticism, isolation and over-identification in the face of failures and inadequacies on one hand and may have provided them with a positive self-attitude, positive emotionality and logical mind through self-kindness, common humanity and emotional balance on the other. This constructive attitude towards the self has been suggested to help students focus on mastering tasks and keep a distance from worry about performance evaluations and failures in comparisons (Neff et al., 2005, 2020). The findings also demonstrated that *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas Gunas* enunciated in the ancient Indian knowledge system have significant implications for unearthing the nature and dynamics of self-compassion and motivational patterns (goal orientations) of the students. The findings also showed that the existing self-compassion measure (Neff, 2003b) incorporates both positive and negative dimensions having dissimilar implications for the three dimensions of academic goal orientations.

#### IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCHERS

The findings reflect a significant contribution to explicating the relationship among *Triguna* personality, self-compassion and academic goal orientations. Research on self-compassion is gaining greater importance among the researchers to uncover socio-cultural and cross-national differences. These new insights about the nature, genesis, expression and development of self-compassion of the student participants in terms of the *Triguna* personality model may have significant implications to understand human perfor-

mance in organizations, workplace, educational institutions, family and relationships. Further research on these constructs will facilitate the professionals in clinical, educational and organizational settings. Further scientific investigation of these constructs will also help to identify and redress the historical imbalance between resources, opportunities and protective factors for the people.

The findings of the current study have helped to develop new insights regarding the nature and dynamics of Indian conceptualizations of personality and its association with self-compassion and academic goal orientations. To better understand its nature and implications for academic success and life in general, longitudinal and cross-cultural studies are needed. This study was correlational in nature. Future studies may employ qualitative methods or mixed methods to uncover the basic nature of *Triguna* personality, self-compassion and academic goal orientations, especially in Indian socio-cultural milieu. Unlike the present study, which employed a comparatively small sample to fulfil its objectives, future research may involve larger and diverse samples to enhance the generalizability of these findings. Future researchers may focus on the cultural mechanisms inherent in *Triguna* personality and self-compassion shaping academic goal orientations. Future researchers should also involve participants belonging to non-student populations.

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