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Research Paper

Interplay of Rationality and Resilience Via Mediating Triguna Dominance

Manvee Goyal[1]*, Dr. Sudha Rathore[2]

ABSTRACT

The present study explored the mediational role of Triguna between Rationality and Resilience in middle adults. Significant results of correlation and regression followed mediational analysis. Results asserted mediational role of Rajas and Tamas guna. The relationship of Rationality with Resilience was 0.15 points higher as mediated by Rajas guna, while 0.29 points higher as mediated by Tamas guna. Sattva guna had no mediational role. The study can contribute to the development of theories/models integrating cognitive aspect of rationality, and resilience, from an Eastern perspective. Results can be implied in fields of Psychotherapy, rehabilitation, counselling and existential psychology to develop interventions and techniques to increase Rationality, Resilience, and Sattva guna while decreasing Rajas and Tamas guna to boost mental health.

Keywords: *Rationality, Triguna, Resilience, Well-Being, Indian Psychology*

Inquisitiveness to decode the mystery of origin of facts is research. Since the emergence of positive psychology, researchers have been attempting to establish the relationship between positive psychological variables, individual characteristics and environmental factors, to find ways towards better psychological health. In recent decades, Eastern perspectives have become the kingpin in such exploration. Despite the myriad of studies present in the psychological literature with respect to positive psychological variables, there is a need to study them in relation to the cognitive aspects of human behaviour, furthermore so, in the light of Eastern perspective. Thus, the present study has attempted to explore the relationship of cognitive aspect of individuals, that is, rationality, with the positive psychological variable, which is resilience, and how their relationship is mediated by the Eastern concept of the dominance of Triguna- Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

Rationality is overriding intuitive responses to reach the appropriate one. Researchers discarded earlier belief that psychology explains only deviations from rationality and emphasized the role of behavioural theories in rationality and decision-making (Mercer, 2005; Simon, 1986). It was suggested that rationality shapes positive and negative emotions and the consequent decisions can be explained by essentially taking into account

[1]Research Scholar, Discipline of Psychology, Department of Health and Behavioural Sciences, IIS (Deemed to be University), SFS, Gurukul Marg, Mansarovar, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
[2]Senior Assistant Professor, Discipline of Psychology, Department of Health and Behavioural Sciences, IIS (Deemed to be University), SFS, Gurukul Marg, Mansarovar, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
*Corresponding Author

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psychological, biological, social, and ethical aspects (Steele, 2004; Clore, 2011). CRT-7 was found to predict rationality and rationality to succor resilience (Toplak, West and Stanovich, 2014; Dryden, 2007).

Resilience, is the ability to return to the previous level of functioning when faced with adversities. It indicates adaptive coping, increase motivation, and predicts well-being and recovery (Kimhi and Eshel, 2009; Mayordomo et. al., 2016; Secades et. al., 2016; Nelson et. al., 2022). Social and cultural factors were found to influence resilience development (Clauss-Ehlers, 2008). Higher intelligence level was indicated as non-crucial for resilient responses, however, rationality acts as an aid (Kitano and Lewis (2004). Resilience has been indicated to be modifiable and improvable, where stress lowers it while Sattva guna dominance enhances it (Chakradhar, Arumugham and Venkataraman, 2022; Sullivan et.al, 2018; Verma and Tiwari, 2017; Connor and Davidson, 2003).

Triguna is the ancient Indian system of personality structure scripted in Bhagwad Gita, Sankhya Yoga and Charak Samhita. Sattva relates to knowledge and light, Rajas to activity and restlessness, and Tamas to dullness and inertia. Researchers suggest that the interaction of three gunas can explain all psychological phenomena and consequent behaviour, where Sattva explains positive affect, positive variables like resilience, well-being and rationality, while Rajas and Tamas explains negative affect and psychological dysfunction. Thus, there is positive relationship between Rajas and Tamas, and they have negative relationship with Sattva. (Lakshmi Bai et. al, 1975; Balodhi, 2005; Singh, 2008; Bryant, 2009; Das and Gopal, 2009; Khanna et. al, 2013; Puta and Sedlmeier, 2014; Singh et.al, 2015; Singh et. al, 2016).
Research evidences of prediction of well-being dimensions and Resilience by Triguna and their linkages with Rationality motivated the study. The study would extend the dimensions of extant studies and would be of interest to both theoretical and applied psychologists.

METHOD

Objectives

- To study the relationship among Rationality, Triguna and Resilience
- To explore the interactive effect of Rationality on Triguna and Resilience
- To explore the interactive effect of Triguna on Resilience
- To investigate the meditational role of Triguna between Rationality and Resilience

Hypotheses

- There is relation among Rationality, Triguna and Resilience.
- Rationality predicts Triguna dominance and Resilience.
- Triguna dominance predicts Resilience
- Triguna dominance mediates the relationship between Rationality and resilience

Sample

The sample consisted of 100 participants from middle adulthood (40 to 65 years) who were employed and urban residents. Participants with mental or chronic physical illnesses, those of rural domicile, non-working and retirees were excluded.

Instruments

Three measures were used in this study. These are as follows:

1. **Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT-7):** The original 3-item version was given by Shane Frederick (2005). Toplak et al. (2014) gave 7-item version as a strong

independent predictor of performance on rational thinking tasks. CRT could be interpreted as an actual measure of rational thought. The internal consistency reliability was substantial, with Cronbach's alpha 0.72. Predictive validity was well established.

2. **Vedic Personality Inventory (VPI):** It was developed by David Wolf (1999). It has 56 items to be answered on 7-point Likert scale. Construct validity and factorial validity was established. Cronbach's alpha for the three subscales Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are .93, .94 and .94 respectively.
3. **Brief Resilience Scale (BRS):** It was developed by Smith et. al (2008). It has 6 items. It is a 5-point Likert scale. Internal consistency was well established, with Cronbach's alpha of about 0.91. Predictive and convergent validity was found to be good.

Procedure

The sample population was identified and informed consent was taken for their voluntary participation. They had the choice to withdraw from the research at any time. Responses were collected through online questionnaires. The responses were scored and results were deduced using SPSS.

Statistical Analyses

The following methods of statistical analyses were used in the present study.

1. Descriptive statistics
2. Correlation
3. Regression
4. Mediational analysis by process

Research design

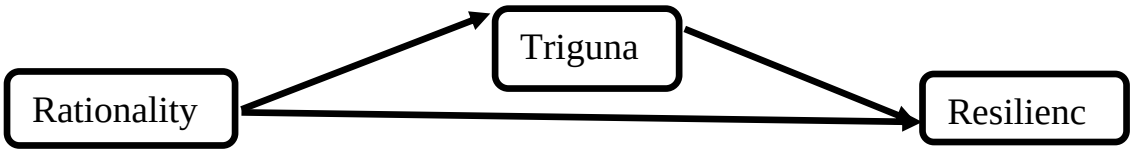

Figure 1 Causal Research design of the study

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were analyzed by employing descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (Mean and S.D.) were calculated for all variables, followed by correlational analysis. The three guna - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are analyzed separately.

Table 1: Correlational Analyses of Independent Variable, i.e., Rationality, Dependent Variable, i.e., Resilience, and Mediator Variable, i.e., Triguna (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas)

	Rationality	**Resilience**	**Sattva**	**Rajas**	**Tamas**
Rationality	1	.302**	.192	-.382*	-.407**
Resilience		1	.500**	-.334**	-.516**
Sattva			1	-.201*	-.449**
Rajas				1	.850**
Tamas					1

*Note: **= significant at p<0.01; *= significant at p<0.05*

Table 1 shows correlational analysis indicating statistically significant relationships between almost all the variables. It indicates significant positive relationship of rationality with resilience (r = 0.302; p<0.01), while significant negative relationship with Rajas (r = -0.382; p<0.05) and Tamas (r = -0.407; p<0.01). The relationship of rationality with Sattva (r = 0.192; p>0.05) was not found to be significant. The relationship of resilience was significantly positive with Sattva (r = 0.500; p<0.01), while significantly negative with Rajas (r = -0.334; p<0.01) and Tamas (r = -0.516; p<0.01). Sattva is indicated to be negatively related with Rajas (r = -0.201; p<0.05) and Tamas (r = -0.449; p<0.01), while there is significant positive relationship between Rajas and Tamas (r = 0.850; p<0.01). By the correlational analysis, hypothesis 1 is accepted which suggest significant relationships among Rationality, Triguna and Resilience.

Regression analysis

Significant relationships between almost all the variables of the study motivated to perform regression analysis to understand significant predictions among these variables. By regression analysis, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 are accepted which indicated that rationality predicts Triguna dominance and Resilience, and Triguna dominance predicts Resilience, respectively.

Direct Pathways

Model I: Prediction of Resilience by Rationality and Triguna

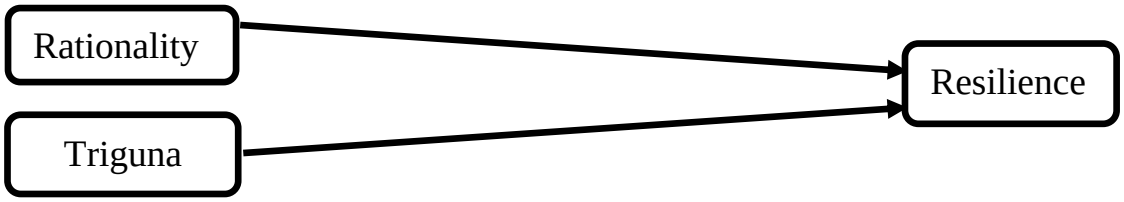

Figure 2: Regression analysis to predict resilience from rationality and Triguna

Table 2: Regression analysis showing prediction of resilience from rationality and Triguna

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	8.202	2.909		2.820	.006
	Rationality	.172	.133	.116	1.289	.200
	Sattva	.086	.030	.289	2.914	.004
	Rajas	.035	.029	.203	1.205	.231
	Tamas	-.069	.025	-.512	-2.759	.007

Dependent Variable: Resilience

(NOTE: Fit for Model R2 = .375; Adjusted R2 =.349; F (4,95) = 14.126, p<0.01)

Through this table, it can be seen that rationality and Triguna account for 34.9% of variance in predicting resilience. It was found that sattva (β = .289, p<0.01), and tamas (β = -.512, p<0.01) predicted resilience. While it is indicated that rationality (β = .116, p>0.05) and Rajas (β = .203, p>0.05) not predicted resilience.

Model II: Prediction of Sattva guna by Rationality

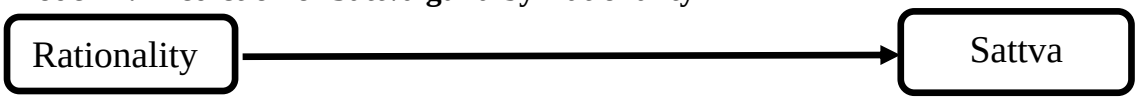

Figure 3: Regression analysis to predict Sattva guna from rationality

Table 3: Regression analysis showing prediction of Sattva guna from rationality

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	84.866	1.922		44.148	.000
	Rationality	.955	.495	.192	1.929	.057

Dependent Variable: Sattva guna
(NOTE: Fit for Model R2 = .037; Adjusted R2 = .027; F (1,98) = 3.720, p>0.05)

Through this table, it can be seen that rationality account for 2.7% of variance in Sattva guna. It was found that rationality (β = .192, p>0.05) not predicted Sattva guna significantly.

Model III: Prediction of Rajas guna by Rationality

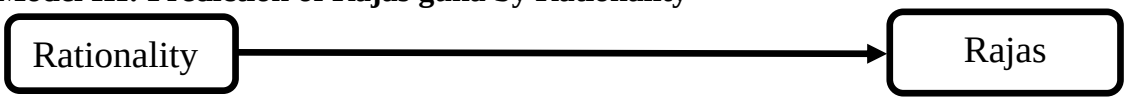

Figure 4: Regression analysis to predict Rajas guna from rationality

Table 4: Regression analysis showing prediction of Rajas guna from rationality

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	75.658	3.122		24.235	.000
	Rationality	-3.272	.804	-.382	-4.068	.000

Dependent Variable: Rajas guna
(NOTE: Fit for Model R2 = .146; Adjusted R2 = .137; F (1,98) = 16.552, p<0.01)

Through this table, it can be seen that rationality account for 13.7% of variance in predicting Rajas guna. It was found that rationality (β = -.382, p<0.01) predicted Rajas guna.

Model IV: Prediction of Tamas guna by Rationality

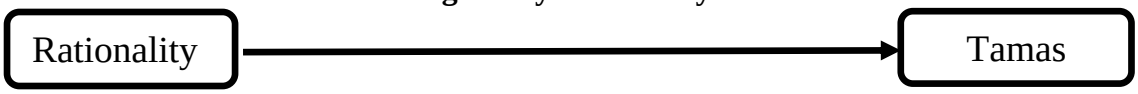

Figure 5: Regression analysis to predict Tamas guna from rationality

Table 5: Regression analysis showing prediction of Tamas guna from rationality

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	72.218	3.959		18.241	.000
	Rationality	-4.479	1.020	-.407	-4.392	.000

Dependent Variable: Tamas guna
(NOTE: Fit for Model R2 = .166; Adjusted R2 = .157; F (1,98) = 19.289, p<0.01)

Through this table, it can be seen that rationality account for 15.7% of variance in Tamas guna. It was found that rationality (β = -.407, $p<0.01$) predicted Tamas guna.

Mediational analysis

Significant results of regression motivated to perform mediational analysis by process. By mediational analysis, hypothesis 4 is accepted which proposed that Triguna dominance mediates the relationship between Rationality and Resilience.

Indirect Pathways

Model V: Mediation analysis of Sattva guna between Rationality and Resilience

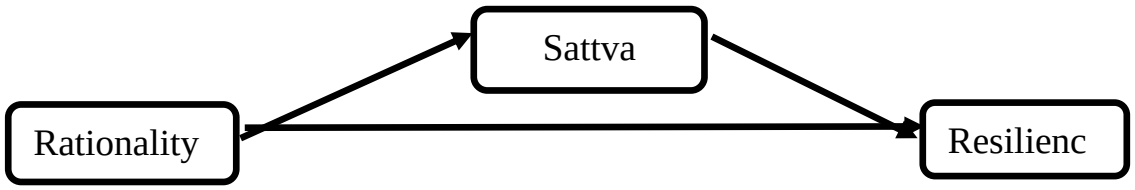

Figure 6: Mediation analysis showing indirect effect of Sattva guna on the relationship between rationality and resilience

Table 6: Mediation analysis of Sattva guna between rationality and resilience

Indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	**Boot SE**	**Boot LLCI**	**Boot ULCI**
Sattva	.1314	.0709	-.0043	.2752

X = Rationality; Y= Resilience

Table 6 shows the mediation analysis to ascertain that Sattva guna acts as a mediator between rationality and resilience. Since LLCI (-.0043) and ULCI (.2752) range contain zero, therefore, sattva guna does not act as a mediator between rationality and resilience. As it has been found that Sattva guna is not significantly correlated with rationality, it may explain the inability of sattva in mediating the relationship between rationality and resilience. Clore (2011) believed about rationality that the human thoughts are sometimes automatic, heuristic, unconscious, and guided by emotion instead of being strictly logical and reasoned, which allow rational outcomes without high cost of conscious deliberation. While researches on Sattva guna suggests involvement of conscious and mindful appraisal of things and events in decision-making. This difference in cognitive processing, where rationality do not influence Sattva guna, may account for the non-mediating relationship. It is also supported by the two approaches of rationality studied by Sturm (2012). First is "heuristics and biases" approach - humans deviate systematically from the norms of formal models of rationality, and second is "bounded rationality" approach - humans do not often use formal norms in reasoning. Sattva guna always emphasize going by norms. Additionally, Clore (2011) also asserted that cognitive constraints on negative emotions can reduce distress, while freeing positive emotions from such constraints can enhance religious experience. This view of rationality does not align with the view of sattva guna that emphasizes emotional stability already present in Satvic individuals. Thus, rationality and Sattva guna may be considered to have a positive relationship with resilience independently without an indirect effect. This finding can also be explained with the Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development. According to this theory, optimum cognitive development takes place by three cognitive processes: assimilation, accommodation and equilibration. Assimilation is modification of new information to fit it into existing cognitive schemas. Accommodation is modification of existing cognitive schemas to accommodate new

information. And, Equilibration is removing inconsistencies and maintaining cognitive equilibrium in cognitive structures. It is clear that these three cognitive processes involve rational thinking, free from cognitive errors and biases, which leads to better cognitive development in childhood, that helps an individual to make rational decisions during adulthood and throughout life. The purpose of this cognitive development is to maintain the balance between individual life and environment by positive adaptation and coping. Thus, this increased rational tendencies can be linked to development of resilience. However, these processes may or may not involve Sattva characteristics of employing or developing spiritual knowledge, having good memory, being calm, liberality and purity of means. Thus, rationality and resilience may be considered to have a positive relationship independently without an indirect effect of Sattva guna.

Model VI: Mediation analysis of Rajas guna between Rationality and Resilience

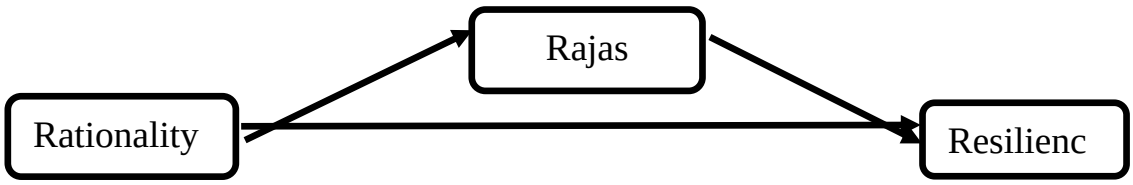

Figure 7: Mediation analysis showing indirect effect of Rajas guna on the relationship between rationality and resilience

Table 7: Mediation analysis of Rajas guna between rationality and resilience
Indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	**Boot SE**	**Boot LLCI**	**Boot ULCI**
Rajas	.1458	.0686	.0390	.3108

X = Rationality; Y= Resilience

Table 7 shows the mediation analysis to ascertain that Rajas guna acts as a mediator between rationality and resilience. Since LLCI (.0390) and ULCI (.3108) range does not contain zero, therefore, there is likely to be a genuine indirect effect. Therefore, rajas guna mediates the relationship between rationality and resilience. The relationship between rationality and resilience was .15 points higher as mediated by Rajas guna. According to the concept of rationality developed by Kanheman and Tversky, rationality requires attention to facts, concentration on environmental factors and careful analysis of the context in order to go beyond the intuitive and reflex responses which may have been influenced by the cognitive errors and biases. The increase in rationality, therefore, have an inverse effect on Rajas guna, which is characterized by restlessness, attentional problems, anxiety, aggressive tendencies and intrusive behaviours as evident from the study done by Das and Gopal (2009). This decrease in Rajas guna have an inverse effect on resilience which is characterized by maintaining cool in the face of adversity and aiming to positive adaptation in the changing environment rather than succumbing to anxiety, aggression, intrusive feelings and negative thoughts. The result is also supported by the views of Kitano and Lewis (2004) who asserted cognitive ability to be an aid to resilience, especially as it relates to problem solving and coping. This finding can also be explained with Taylor's Cognitive Adaptation Theory. According to this theory, during life transitions, such as learning about a chronic illness, individuals try to adjust to the new reality. The process of adjustment or cognitive adaptation includes three aspects: searching for positive meaning in the situation or optimism, trying to re-attain mastery in life, and self-enhancement. The process of searching for positive meaning involve application of rationality in reappraisal of the situation and reordering life

priorities. This furthers the process to re-attain mastery in life which involves the decrease in Rajas characteristics of anxiety, restlessness, pessimism, impatience, impulsivity, hyperactivity and concerns about self. This cognitive adaptation leads to self-enhancement by positively adjusting to the new reality and realizing new goals and purposes, which characterizes resilience. Thus, Rajas guna can be considered to have a genuine indirect effect on the relationship between rationality and resilience.

Model VII: Mediation analysis of Tamas guna between Rationality and Resilience

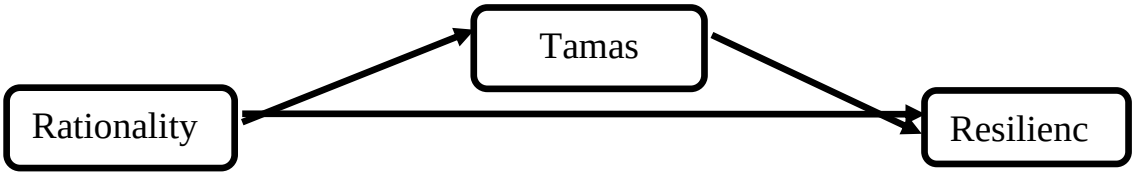

Figure 8: Mediation analysis showing indirect effect of Tamas guna on the relationship between rationality and resilience

Table 8: Mediation analysis of Tamas guna between rationality and resilience
Indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	**Boot SE**	**Boot LLCI**	**Boot ULCI**
Tamas	.2858	.0961	.1345	.5077

X = Rationality; Y= Resilience

Table 8 shows the mediation analysis to ascertain that tamas guna acts as a mediator between rationality and resilience. Since LLCI (.1345) and ULCI (.5077) range does not contain zero, therefore, there is likely to be a genuine indirect effect. Therefore, tamas guna mediates the relationship between rationality and resilience. The relationship between rationality and resilience was .29 points higher as mediated by Tamas guna. According to Balodhi (2005), *Tamas* guna is characterized by dullness and inertia. Its qualities are negligence, indolence, and laziness. Tamas guna dominance can be related with low level of rationality requiring efficient working towards problem-solving by careful attention and positive appraisal of situations. The dominance of Tamas guna with low level of rationality, in turn, influence resilience in a way which causes decrease in it as there is a lack of positive adaptation, reappraisal of events and employment of coping strategies. This can be explained with indirect variable-focussed model of resilience which proposes that a powerful influence of an asset/risk, here rationality (asset), on the outcome, here resilience, is itself affected by risks and resources, here Tamas guna (risk factor). This finding can also be understood in the light of existential theory given by Victor Frankl. He asserted that the central motivation of human life is the will to find meaning and purpose in life, which can be related with increased rationality as this goal requires rational decision-making among choices in life. For this purpose, a person needs to work towards creating a source of work/job, loving someone and viewing every problem has having positive meaning. The working of individual towards these objectives clearly shows a decrease in Tamas guna which relates to dullness and inertia. Then, the way of finding meaning involves adoption of a modified attitude towards inevitable sufferings and viewing them as having meaning for life. With this view, a person is better able to deal with the suffering and maintain their cool and normal functioning, therefore, the person becomes resilient. Thus, Tamas guna can be said to have a genuine indirect effect on the relationship of rationality with resilience.

CONCLUSION

The correlation of Rationality is positive with Resilience and negative with Tamas Guna, which is significant at 0.01 level; this relationship is negative and significant with Rajas Guna at 0.05 level; this relationship is positive but not significant with Satva Guna.

Resilience is predicted by Satva and Tamas Guna, but not predicted by Rajas Guna and Rationality. Rationality predicts Rajas and Tamas Guna but not Satva Guna.

Results assert the mediational role of Rajas and Tamas guna between Rationality and Resilience. The relationship of Rationality with Resilience is 0.15 points higher as mediated by Rajas guna, while 0.29 points higher as mediated by Tamas guna. Sattva Guna has no mediational role in their relationship.

Implications

- The positive relation of resilience with Sattva guna and negative relation with Rajas and Tamas guna, can aid researchers in explaining the extant theories and models of resilience from an Eastern perspective based on Triguna.
- Since all study variables significantly relate to resilience, it can contribute to development of its theories and models, with integrated effect of rationality and Triguna dominance.
- The study can aid rehabilitation psychology by implying simultaneous use of rationality and resilience to cope with life circumstances, thereby improving clients' quality of life and mental health.
- The study can act as a foundational basis for using the techniques to increase rationality and resilience in the clients of psychotherapy, to overcome various mental illnesses.

Suggestions

- Longitudinal studies are suggested to unveil the variations in interplay of the study variables during lifetime.
- Cross-sectional studies of rationality and Triguna with other positive psychological variables are suggested.
- The role of Triguna in increasing positivity and well-being needs to be explored. It requires establishing relations between Triguna and various positive psychological variables.
- Role of rising rationality along with resilience to enhance problem-solving and decision-making needs to be explored in context of counselling and guidance through interventions.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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