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# DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE INDIAN CHARACTER STRENGTH SCALE

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The present study aims to develop and validate the Indian Character Strength Scale (ICSS) to assess virtues of young adults and seeks psychometric evidence for the same. A sample of 350, Indian young adults between the age of 18 to 25 years was drawn using random sampling technique from Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, New Delhi and Haryana. The sample constituted of 121 males and 229 females. Items for ICSS were generated, validated by experts and after appropriate statistical analysis; correlation was established with the VIA-72. The results revealed a high correlation and internal consistency with SCVI values as 0.97 and Cronbach's Alpha values as .809.

Key Words: Character Strength, Virtues Values in Action, Indian Character Strength

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## INTRODUCTION

Positive Psychology drew attention from the "disease model" that aimed to fix the wrong, to the positive psychology model that was determined to enhance and encourage the qualities, characteristics and traits, which amplify growth and development in different aspects of life.

The impetus in the rise of interest in positive psychology created opportunities for the applications of its principles, and developing instruments and tools for constructs like optimism, hope, personal growth satisfaction with life etc. signifying a growth in the field. (Hutz, 2014).

Seligman and his associates revived the interest in research towards character strengths and virtues. They classified 24 character strengths and then assigned them to 6 universal virtues in the classification as mentioned in the Values in Action (VIA), which are Wisdom, Courage, Humanity, Justice, Temperance and Transcendence. These 24 strengths match with either of the 6 virtues and their evaluation is facilitated with the Values in action inventory of strengths. Cawley and associates (2000) defined virtues as those qualities, which individuals possesses and considers them as fundamental principles of morality and well-being.

The terms Virtues and character strengths are used interchangeably, however it is to be understood that virtues are clusters of particular character strengths and character strengths are nothing but psychological elements, practices and procedures through which virtues are defined. (Sandage, Hill, & Vang, 2003).

A leading body of research exhibit that these strengths and virtues are not just related to positive experiences at professional and personal front, enhanced academic performance, positive health choices but have proved very efficient in mitigating negative effects of mood disorders. (Buschor, Proyer, & Ruch, 2013; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004; Ruch et al., 2010, Peterson, Park, Pole, D'Andrea, & Seligman, 2008) (Proyer, Gander, Wellenzohn, & Ruch, 2013, Weber & Ruch, 2012).

Promoting these character strengths and virtues promotes happiness, physical and mental health and leads to enhancement in academic and overall performance among not just adolescents and youth but across all age groups and genders. Character strengths are viewed as internally determining factors of a satiated, successful life apart from some of the important, yet peripheral factors such as education, career, wealth etc.(Weber 2021). It is therefore imperative to investigate and explore in this field so that assistance in all walks of life may be provided by the teachers, family members as well as professionals to youth and adolescents, be it related to academics, relations or leisure. (Park, 2009).

It is quite evident that Character Strengths and virtues possess a vital role in leading a content and happy life; it is also observed however that further research and longitudinal studies are required to understand the effectiveness of character strengths and how they can be enhanced (Ruch, Martí, Proyer et al 2014).

While Values in Action has been researched, translated and adapted across the world to identify and evaluate the virtues and have provided sufficient evidence for its usefulness, research demonstrates that long questionnaires and surveys tend to have an adverse effect on respondents in terms of fatigue, misclassification, and premature termination whereas questionnaires, scales and surveys that are short in length may elicit high and accurate responses from participants. (Shalqvist, & Yong et al, 2011; Herzog& Bachman, 1981; Egleston, Miller & Meropol, 2011).

It was observed after the review of literature on the study of character strength and virtues, that there was a scarcity of work in the above-mentioned area in India and there are few tools are available in India for assessing character strength based on work on Seligman and Peterson. It is also not possible to study and test numerous variables at different measurement point, therefore the authors decided to develop an indigenous tool because of particulars of Indian population that is also economic, precise and short to assess the twenty four character strengths of VIA classification as well as to avoid copyright related issues.

The Indian Character Strength Scale (ICSS) correlation will be checked with Values in Action (VIA) for descriptive statistics as well as social and demographic variables and the two tools will be compared. The study seeks to obtain concurrent validity of the ICSA with VIA-72.

## **Need and Significance**

Virtues help individuals to build up optimistic outlook in life and reinforce positive beliefs along with good habits. Inculcating and practicing moral values and character strengths leads to a content and happy life and brings out the positive emotions and characteristics that may be

latent or hidden in an individual. Psychometric profiling for the virtues and character strength therefore becomes crucial to identify, assess and raise awareness related to virtues. The developers realized that knowledge and awareness related to cultural peculiarities and differences of the population on whom the tools are to be administered is essential, therefore the tool was developed keeping in mind the objectives of assessment of virtues with help of indigenous tool for Indian population.

#### **METHOD**

#### **Construction of the Instrument**

A total of 117 items were generated by the authors on the basis of Seligman's classification that are related to Character Strengths, other related literature as well as from the focused group discussions among seasoned professionals of the filed. The items were developed on the basis of criteria suggested by **Pasquali (2010)**, which was as follows, objectivity, simplicity, clarity, relevance, precision, variety, modality, typicality, credibility and breadth. The generated items were then sent for experts ratings and on the basis of rating appropriate statistical procedure vague, redundant or unrequired items were removed and the others were retained.

## **SAMPLE**

The present study consists of 350 Indian young adults; 121 males and 229 females between the ages of 18 to 25 years, drawn from Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, New Delhi and Haryana using the method of random sampling.

## **Inclusion criteria**

- 1. 18 years and above
- 2. Participants who are signed written informed consent form
- 3. Higher secondary education
- 4. Indian Nationality

#### **Instruments**

## Socio – Demographic Data Sheet

The data sheet was used to collect the necessary information regarding the age, gender, family type, number of siblings and socio-economic status along with attached consent form.

#### **Indian Character Strength Scale (ICSS)**

ICSS – Indian Character Strength Scale developed by Abilash Kasi and Dr. Ruchi Joshi (2022). ICSS is used to measure the level of virtuousness of an Indian Adults. The scale consists of 6 dimensions which was adapted from the classification of character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, n.d.) are as follows, 1) Wisdom and Knowledge, 2) Courage, 3) Humanity, 4) Justice, 5) Temperance, 6) Transcendence. This scale consists of 48 items with 4-point rating response N- Never, R-Rarely, O-Occasionally and A-Always

## Values in Action – 72 (VIA-72)

VIA-72 was developed by McGrath from the original VIA-IS. Its internal consistency reliability is .75, initial validity coefficients range is between .36 to .48. The scale consist of 72 items with 5-point rating response very much, likely, neutral, unlike me, very much unlike me **PROCEDURE** 

The participants provided the necessary details in the socio-demographic sheet following which they were requested to put their signature on the written informed consent form .ICSS Scale and VIA-72 were administered subsequently. Clear and explicit instructions were given to participants and their queries, if any were entertained. The administration took 20-25 minutes time.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

# **Content Validity**

According to Klieger et al. (2018), one of the key standardization processes or statements for behaviorally anchored rating scales and behavioral summary scales was subject matter expert ratings (Kell et al., 2017). There are several studies that have been undertaken throughout a wide variety of domains and fields and have provided satisfactory results that are based on the judgement and assessment of SMEs (Helloit, Chalmers & Wingrove, 1985). In the majority of management and organizational contexts, SMEs are very active and prominent (Sakket & Wilson, 1982). The 48-item tool was distributed to ten experts that consisted of seasoned practitioners and academicians of Psychology and apart from experts of English language. The responses for each statement included "extremely effective," "somewhat effective," "average," "slightly ineffective," and "very ineffective" (Note & Scale, 1994). After considering all the experts opinion items sounding vague, redundant and unclear were removed, following which 48 items was retained for the finalized scale. Item level content validity index (I-CVI) was found to be 0.75 and scale level content validity index (S-CVI) was found to be 0.97, that signifies that the items are highly effective and can be retained.

Table 1 Shows that the frequency and percentage of the socio-demographic data (N=350)

Socio-Demograph	nic Data's	Frequency	Percentage %
	Male	121	34.6
Sex	Female	229	65.4
	18-19	191	54.7
Age	20-21	81	23.2
	22-23	52	14.9
	24-25	26	7.4
	Joint family	55	15.7
Type of Family	Nuclear family	261	74.6
	Single Parent	28	8.0
	Others	6	1.
Socio-economic status	High	15	4.3
	Middle	328	93.7
	Lower	7	2.0

Illustrates the frequency and percentage for the socio demographic data of the participants contribute the frequency and percentage males constitutes 121(34.6%,) females were 229 (50.7%.). Participants between the age of 18 to 19 were 191 (23.2% to) 7.4% between the age 20 to 25 years. Those belonging to joint family were 15.7% remaining 82.6% percentage belong to nuclear family type, single parent and others. Analysis of social and economic status was as follows; 4.3% high class, 93.7% middle class and 2.0% belonged to lower class family or economic status

Table 2 Shows that the relationship between Indian Character Strength Scale and Values in Action Scale

(N=350)

Dimensions	VIA-72 – D1	VIA-72 – D2	VIA-72 – D3	VIA-72 – D4	VIA-72 – D5	VIA-72 – D6
ICSS-Wisdom and Knowledge	.041	.021	.310**	.502**	074	.385**
ICSS-Courage	031	.060	.348**	.414**	015	.511**
ICSS-Humanity	.055	.000	1.000**	.419**	029	.472**
ICSS-Justice	.046	.007	.419**	1.000**	.018	.264**
ICSS- Temperance	.027	.063	.379**	.410**	061	.414**
ICSS- Transcendence	.013	003	.472**	.264**	061	1.000**

<sup>\*\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation table exhibits a positive relationship between VIA-72-D3, D4, and D6 and the ICSS-Wisdom and Knowledge, bravery, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. In considerations of correlations with D3, wisdom is correlated at.310, courage at.348, humanity at 1.000, justice at.419, temperance at.379, and transcendence at.472. D4 and D6 have distinct values and are positively connected with the ICSS and VIA dimensions, respectively. D5 and ICSS Dimensions have a negative correlation. Negative correlations among courage and D1 at -.031, transcendence and D2 at -.003. According to statistical properties, any test items were decreased in two ways, such as (1) if the correlation value is less than 0.30 and (2) by deleting the items that demonstrated a greater Cronbach's alpha than the general Cronbach's alpha (UCLA Institute for Digital Research Education, 2018). Other things might be kept. Although

the present study focused on enhancing test score reliability when adding or removing items from the scale, it took this as its fundamental theme when developing the instrument. No items with values greater than the total Cronbach alpha were eliminated.

Table 3 demonstrates the relationship among the Indian Character Strength Scale and Values in Action (VIA-72) of concurrent validity

Tests	Mean	S.D	R
<b>Indian Character Strength Scale</b>	162.19	14.765	<del></del>
Values in Action – 72 Scale	167.03	10.086	.732**

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).

According to Pearson Product Moment Correlation calculations, Table 4 displays the correlation between the Indian Character Strength Scale and the Values in Action - 72 Scale (N = 350). The Values in Action - 72 Scale's mean and standard deviation were 167.03 10.086 and 162.19 14.765 for the Indian Character Strength Scale, respectively. With a concurrent validity of 0.732\*\*, the developed instrument has a good level of validity. The concurrent validity indicates the extent to which the findings of one instrument is related to another similar and widely accepted instrument which was created to measure common constructs and phenomenon. The findings thus reveal acceptable level of validity.

It's determined by comparing a measure to another one that has already been verified through a standardized process (Okoro, 2002). It does a highly theoretical analysis of a tool's applicability (Messick, 1989). For instance, an old, challenging exam that is deemed helpful should be replaced with a contemporary and simpler one.

Table 4 shows the reliability statistics of the items in the Indian Character Strength Scale (After item deletion)

Sl.No		Scale Mean	Scale Variance	Cronbach's
	Items	If Item	If Item Deleted	Alpha If Item
		Deleted		Deleted
1.	I try/explore	155.28	201.126	.891
	learning new skills			
2.	I prefer coming up with multiple ideas rather focusing on one	155.41	203.288	.893
3.	I take interest in knowing about new findings/facts	154.98	204.354	.893

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4.	I think in a unique way to execute plans	155.28	199.520	.891
5.	I try to update myself about recent developments in all fields	155.66	201.376	.892
6.	I attempt to gain knowledge through all sources.	155.47	201.884	.893
7.	I provide wise ideas and counsel my friend	155.45	199.309	.891
8.	I view from different perspectives than focusing on one	155.23	199.293	.891
9.	I speak truth in all circumstances	155.50	202.850	.893
10.	I am being honest and trustworthy in my profession	154.92	200.709	.891
11.	I face tough situations boldly without feeling threatened	155.49	197.733	.890
12.	I accomplish my goals despite of obstacles	155.35	200.277	.891
13.	I view life as an amusement	155.36	201.694	.894
14.	I approach life with enthusiasm	155.33	200.212	.892

15.	I keep my aim fixed but the ways to reach flexible	155.38	198.932	.891
16.	I accept and learn from my mistakes	154.94	202.929	.892
17.	I nurture my close relationships	155.07	203.790	.893
18.	I understand the emotions of others	154.99	202.130	.892
19.	I offer help for people who are in need.	155.07	202.127	.892
20.	I believe that my partner is my source of happiness	155.56	201.315	.895
21.	I do good deeds for others without any expectations.	155.16	201.729	.891
22.	I understand the motives of others	155.34	202.376	.893
23.	I tend to be kind with everyone	154.98	203.349	.892
24.	I view my intimate partner as someone who fulfils me	155.63	201.451	.895
25.	I participate in group activities/team working	155.32	205.403	.895
26.	I take chances to lead the entire team	155.62	202.173	.894
27.	I take initiative in organizing group activities	155.60	204.513	.894

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28.	I follow justice in resolving social conflicts	155.32	199.866	.891
29.	I get along with the group members	155.30	200.281	.891
30.	I abide by ethics in treating people	155.27	203.677	.893
31.	I treat everyone equally even in adverse situations	155.16	200.219	.891
32.	I equally contribute as other members in the group	155.06	201.092	.891
33.	I forget the bad deeds done by others to me and focus on what's good in them	155.59	200.118	.892
34.	I am comfortable when I follow routine lifestyle.	155.39	202.795	.893
35.	I have my regular schedule and follow it	155.97	205.597	.897
36.	I forgive people who have done wrong to me	155.65	201.454	.893
37.	I talk only about things that I know well	155.20	204.320	.894
38.	I make choices only after proper analysis/investigati on	155.35	200.504	.891

39.	I tend to be in a moderate state in all circumstances	155.51	198.985	.891
40.	I don't do things that I might later regret	155.73	204.194	.895
41.	I admire the beauty of my surroundings	155.02	202.659	.892
42.	I am thankful to god for fulfilling with all my needs	155.27	200.525	.893
43.	I appreciate the excellence/talents in all aspects of life	155.03	202.136	.891
44.	I believe in higher consciousness beyond my life and activities	155.25	199.675	.892
45.	I enjoy laughing at comedies	154.74	206.805	.893
46.	I express gratitude to people who helped me in difficult situations	154.80	203.054	.892
47.	I firmly believe in the purpose and meaning of life	155.20	200.065	.892
48.	I like to bring smile/laughter in others with my sense of humour	154.94	202.982	.892

The extent to which an assessment tool generates similar findings and results after the measure is been administered several times is termed as reliability. The reliability analysis studies and establishes , how reliable a tool is it helps the developers and users to find out the systematic variations percentage after the assessment and evaluation of the correlation scores that are

obtained after the administration of the tool a number of times If a measurement consistently yields similar findings, it is considered to have high dependability.

Table 4 illustrates the reliability statistics of the items in the ICSS related to item deletion those items which if kept, would have lowered the value of Cronbach's Alpha were removed and remaining 48 ones were retained. Scale dependability is measured by Cronbach's alpha. It serves as one of the most reliable indicator of internal coherence.

Table 5 showing reliability statistics (Cronbach's Alpha) of Indian Character Strength Scale (ICSS)

No of Dimension	
6	

Developed by Lee Cronbach (1951), the Cronbach's alpha is one of the most relied upon measure for assessment of internal consistency, especially in case of multiple -choice or responses based on Likert scale. Internal consistency is the description of the extent to which the concept or constructs are being measured by all the items, within the instrument. It reflects inter-relation of all the items, in other words through this we interpret the correlation of the test with its own self. The value of Cronbach's alpha of ICSS is .809, which reflects a very good level of reliability that makes the ICSS as one of the promising measures for assessment of Virtues among the targeted population.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The objective of the study was to develop and validate the Indian character strength scale. The study included 350 samples of college students, between the age of 18 and 25 years. The statistical techniques were selected in accordance to the objective. Frequency was obtained for the social demographic data, which included gender, birth order, age, family status, and domicile. To obtain the reliability of the tool Cronbach's alpha was used. Excel sheet was used for entering the responses and Statistical Package for Social Sciences were used for the analysis.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The Indian Character Strength Scale promises to be a reliable tool for measuring level of virtuousness for the intended population. i.e. on the young Indian Adults (College Students) however further research and studies for refinement are recommended.

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