

# Titikṣā in Modern Adversity: Exploring Resilience Through the Lens of Vedāntic Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** With rising stress and mental health issues among youth, there's a critical need for resilience-building strategies. *Titikṣā*, a Vedāntic principle, emphasizes coping with adversity through forbearance and equanimity, providing valuable insights into resilience, mental strength, and adaptability.

**Objectives:** This research explores the concept of *Titikṣā* in Vedāntic philosophy and its practical relevance for building resilience among students facing academic stress. It highlights *Titikṣā* as a tool for mental fortitude and adaptability in overcoming challenges. By integrating this ancient principle with contemporary psychological approaches, the study aims to enhance cross-disciplinary understanding of resilience, contributing to better mental health strategies and well-being for young adults.

**Methods:** The study was conducted among 60 students (39 male, 21 female) who participated in an online survey involving hypothetical situations that tested their problem-solving attitudes. Thematic analysis was the methodology used to explore problem-solving attitudes and resilience.

**Results:** Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) was employed to explore problem-solving attitudes and resilience identified six key themes: *Dhṛti* (Cultivating Steadfast Resilience Through Self-Belief and Perseverance), *Yathābhīmata* (Embracing Acceptance and Adaptation in Adversity), *Upadeśa* (Gaining insight through seeking support and guidance), *Ṣatva* (achieving a balance between passion and practicality), *Sādhanā* (transforming failure into a learning opportunity), and *San̄kalpa* (nurturing faith and spiritual resilience through commitment).

**Conclusion:** This research highlights *Titikṣā* as a valuable framework for developing resilience in adversity. By integrating *Titikṣā* with contemporary psychological approaches, the study offers a holistic model for addressing students' mental health challenges. The six identified themes provide practical pathways for cultivating inner strength, emotional stability, and adaptability. Combining ancient Vedāntic wisdom with modern resilience strategies enhances understanding of well-being and promotes psychological balance and long-term resilience. The findings contribute to discussions on culturally informed mental health interventions and underscore the need for interdisciplinary collaboration in fostering emotional and psychological strength.

**Keywords:** Adversity, Resilience, Indian Young Adults, *Titikṣā*, Vedāntic Philosophy

## INTRODUCTION

### Titikṣā

Titikṣā is a concept from the Indian philosophical school Vedānta that refers to patience and resilience in the face of suffering. Titikṣā is a spiritual quality essential for self-actualization and enlightenment derived from the Sanskrit root 'tj,' meaning "to tolerate." The Upaniṣad, the Bhagavadgītā, and other classical Vedāntic texts describe Titikṣā as part of Sādhanā (spiritual practice) and a prerequisite of mokṣa (liberation).

The Īśa Upaniṣad's verse 'tena tyaktena bhunjīthāḥ' (enjoy by renunciation) conveys this idea of going through life detached and unyielding (Olivelle, 1998). In the Bhagavadgītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa counsels Arjuna to embrace Titikṣā for inner equilibrium: 'The contacts of the senses with their objects, O son of Kuntī, which cause heat and cold, pleasure and pain are transitory; accept them bravely, O Bhārata.' (Easwaran, 2020). According to Śāṅkarācārya's "Vivekacūḍāmaṇi," Titikṣā is defined as "sahanam sarvaduḥkhānām apratikārapūrvakam, cintāvilāparahitam sa titikṣā nigadyate" (endurance of all afflictions without countering them; without anxiety or lamentation) (Madhavananda, 2013). When examining Titikṣā, current scholars compare it to the present day's definition of resilience. Radhakrishnan defined Titikṣā as an advanced form of psychological strength that helps individuals navigate life's challenges with equanimity (Radhakrishnan, 1992). It also serves as a method for self-improvement and emotional stability (Sharma, 2000a). Comparative studies show that various spiritual traditions share universal concepts like stoicism in adversity and equanimity in the Bhagavadgītā, reflected in other spiritual paths as well (Dasgupta, 2017b).

### Resilience in Contemporary Psychology

Resilience, as defined by the American Psychological Association (2014), is "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress." This section explores the evolving definitions, theoretical frameworks, and foundational research on resilience, with a focus on youth. Early research conceptualized resilience as "ego resilience," viewing it as a trait or personality characteristic (Funder & Block, 1989). Resilience is now understood as a dynamic, multi-dimensional process encompassing adaptability, social support, and emotional regulation, particularly in response to the heightened stressors introduced by recent global events, including the COVID-19 pandemic (Fullerton et al., 2021; Ungar, 2021). Current perspectives highlight resilience as a process that can be developed, strengthened, and facilitated by external and internal resources. The social-ecological model further expanded this understanding, describing resilience as a multi-level phenomenon that involves the capacity to access psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources for well-being. (Ungar, 2021)

Research on youth resilience has significantly deepened our understanding of the protective factors that promote positive adaptation. The Kauai Longitudinal Study (Werner, 1992) emphasized the critical role of stable, caring relationships in fostering resilience. Beyond external support, internal resources are also vital. Project Competence (Masten & Tellegen, 2012) identified self-regulation skills as essential to resilience, a finding reinforced by neurobiological studies that link self-regulation to improved stress responses and adaptive functioning (Feder et al., 2009). The Rochester Child Resilience Project (Cowen et al., 1996) similarly highlighted the importance of a sense of mastery and control, aligning with Bandura's concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills are also key components of resilience. The research underscores the importance of these abilities in navigating complex challenges (Southwick & Charney, 2018). Complementing this, the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study emphasizes the role of supportive environments, such as schools and communities, in promoting resilience (Poulton et al., 2015). Emerging research further expands this understanding by examining resilience at the molecular level. Epigenetic studies suggest that environmental factors can influence gene expression related to stress responses (Zannas & West, 2014). Additionally, recent studies have highlighted the role of cultural and spiritual contexts in shaping resilience, broadening its scope to include diverse backgrounds and beliefs

(Boyden & Mann, 2005; Kirmayer et al., 2011). Several intervention programs, such as Brunwasser's Penn Resiliency Program, Kumpfer's Strengthening Families Program, and Jonkaman's Communities That Care, aim to enhance resilience through protective skills and supportive environments (Brunwasser et al., 2009). Integrating traditional philosophies, such as Titikṣā, with modern resilience frameworks offers a holistic approach to coping with adversity (Pillay et al., 2008). Although such integration faces resistance due to cultural differences, these traditional perspectives provide a deeper, often spiritual, understanding of resilience, complementing modern psychological strategies and enriching both theoretical foundations and practical interventions for fostering adaptability.

### **Integrating Titikṣā with Resilience**

Ancient psychological approaches like Vedānta resonate with contemporary frameworks for holistic resilience by integrating mind and body practices (Troy et al., 2023). Techniques like asparśa-yoga promote non-attachment, peace, and fearlessness, aligning with modern mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2023), while Ātma-Vicāra (self-inquiry) reduces stress by strengthening the ego (Williams et al., 2015). Vedāntic principles also reflect methods like self-image training and cognitive restructuring to cultivate mental endurance (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). The dynamic process of resilience is reinforced by Titikṣā, emphasizing emotional control and detachment from external disturbances (Ungar, 2021). Both Titikṣā and resilience focus on maintaining inner balance during adversity and enhancing well-being through internal strength, emotional control, and adaptive problem-solving (Deshmukh, 2011).

Integrating Titikṣā with Western resilience models is challenging due to cultural differences, but creating an approach that fuses these ideologies can benefit diverse populations (Hayes et al., 2011). This approach would help students develop the psychological skills needed to handle adversity, leading to mental stability and improved health (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

### **Significance of the Study**

The study holds significant relevance because it combines ancient wisdom with modern-day challenges. The idea of Titikṣā in Vedāntic philosophy highlights the need for overcoming obstacles with composure and patience. The research further shows that amid contemporary adversities cultural traditions such as Titikṣā can complement current psychological strategies and bring a holistic approach to resilience against stress while maintaining stability in coping mechanisms. Incorporating philosophical concepts with contemporary psychological techniques would also honor India's rich philosophical legacy toward the youth while still addressing the realities of today. Moreover, adopting cultural or philosophical perspectives that are typically left out in Western frameworks enables deeper reflection on issues concerning mental health and well-being, among others.

Globally speaking, this research article adds depth to the discourse on mental health and well-being, introducing Indian Vedāntic philosophy as an alternative perspective in particular. In addition to these investigations, it promotes interdisciplinary research aimed at building a more comprehensive understanding of resilience through blending psychology, philosophy, and therapeutic practices together. Today's world is globalized and different forms of adversity are encountered. The Vedāntic philosophy that is the subject of this work provides insights that apply to all contexts, as demonstrated by how old ideas could offer contemporary solutions that better support human resilience than in the past, thus encouraging more inclusive approaches to human resource development worldwide.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study seeks to define and explain Titikṣā in terms of Vedāntic philosophy, showing how it promotes the ability to endure suffering with patience and detachment and is useful for students in modern times who have to cope with several problems at the same time, especially in the education phase. Also, another important objective is aimed at investigating where Titikṣā meets modern psychological concepts such as resilience,

merging these old teachings with new-age psychological practices to form an integrative framework for stress management and emotional well-being. Besides, the research will attempt to bring together Vedāntic philosophy and contemporary psychology to promote a more comprehensive understanding of resilience through interdisciplinary dialogue. This present research will confine itself to culturally specific challenges faced by university students in Delhi so that its findings may not only be relevant but also applicable within the Indian context. Ultimately, the study aims at bridging the gap between ancient wisdom and modern psychological practices, thus providing insightful recommendations on how to improve one's well-being in today's highly competitive, stressful society.

## METHOD

### Participants

This study focused on university students facing heavy academic workloads and high stress. We included 60 participants (39 males and 21 females) pursuing undergraduate or postgraduate degrees. The survey examined five hypothetical life scenarios, asking participants how they would resolve these challenges, using convenience sampling to identify participants.

### Data Collection

Data was collected through a structured survey following guidelines for research set by the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2001) encompassing informed consent, participant welfare, ethical considerations, research registration, risks and costs, etc. The questionnaire aimed to assess resilience and problem-solving mindsets, with specific questions related to hypothetical difficulties. This method was chosen for its feasibility in gathering a large, uniform sample and facilitating straightforward data analysis. Although it lacked interactivity and the ability to probe deeper into responses, it provided valuable insights into these constructs among young adult students, highlighting potential areas for future interventions.

### Procedure

The study began with the creation of a survey questionnaire designed to investigate the Vedāntic philosophy of *Titikṣā*, or endurance, and its contribution to young adults' resilience. The questionnaire aimed to gather data on individual responses to difficult situations, coping mechanisms, and perspectives on resilience. Best practices were followed in using simple, clear language (Creswell & Poth, 2017) to enhance understanding and participant engagement. The research objectives, participants' roles, and ethical considerations were explained before data collection. The survey questionnaire included 5 hypothetical daily life difficult scenarios given as follows:

*Scenario 1.* In this scenario, participants imagined being a student facing overwhelming challenges. Burdened by financial struggles, they work long hours after school to support their family. These pressures lead to social isolation, as fear of judgment causes them to withdraw from peers. Additionally, the student battles dyslexia, further hindering their academic progress. The situation worsens when their family relocates to a new city, adding emotional strain and intensifying their feelings of inadequacy and disconnection from others.

*Scenario 2.* In this scenario, the participant imagines themselves as an aspiring writer, grieving their mother's death, and taking a low-paying teaching job to cope with financial struggles. After falling in love, starting a family, and going through a painful divorce, they become a single parent. Unemployed and facing financial instability, they are torn between pursuing their passion for writing, despite ongoing rejection, or seeking stable employment to provide for their son and secure their future.

*Scenario 3.* In this scenario, the participant imagines themselves as a basketball player who faces a series of challenges and setbacks, starting with the disappointment of dropping out of their high school team.

Throughout their career, they endure numerous obstacles, missing over 9,000 shots and losing nearly 300 games. The most difficult moments come from missing the game-winning shot 26 times, each a painful reminder of the hurdles they must overcome in their relentless pursuit of success.

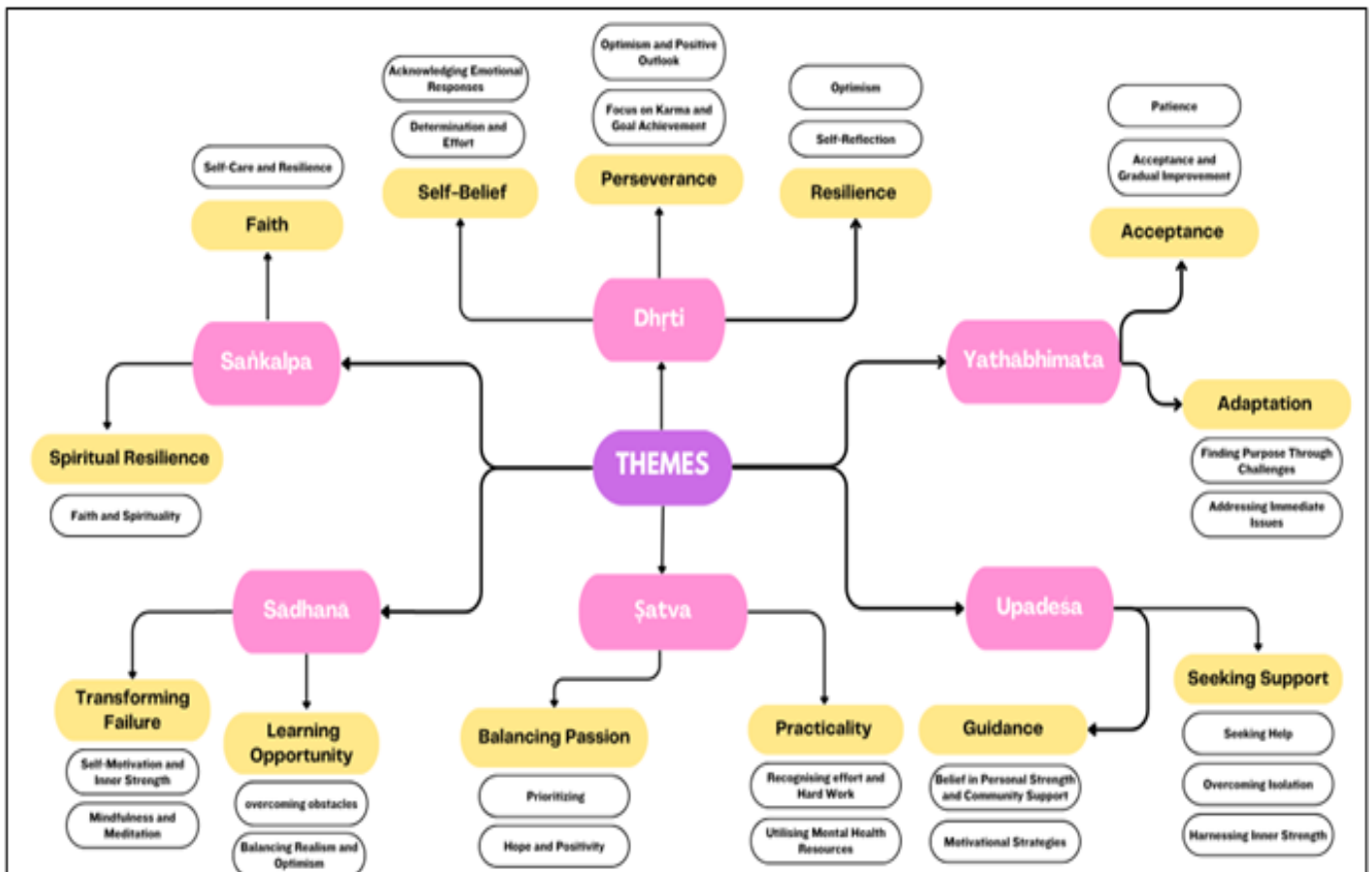
*Scenario 4.* Participants are asked to imagine being born into poverty and unable to pursue education; a person is married off at a young age. Abandoned by their spouse during pregnancy, they face extreme hardship and must give birth alone in a cowshed. Homeless and struggling to survive, they take refuge in a burial ground while scavenging for food to feed their baby. Overwhelmed by hunger, despair, and the relentless suffering of their situation, they begin to consider suicide as an escape from what feels like a hopeless and desperate existence.

*Scenario 5.* Participants are asked to imagine themselves growing up in a remote town in India. A person juggles household responsibilities while pursuing their dream of becoming a pilot. Despite financial hardships, they remain determined and dedicate themselves to studying aeronautical engineering. Their ambition leads them to apply for the Air Force, hoping to take flight and achieve their goals. However, they face a devastating setback when they are the only applicant not selected. This crushing disappointment forces them to reconsider their dreams and explore alternative career paths.

Participants were asked how they would cope with setbacks, imagining themselves in those situations. After data collection, responses were transcribed for accurate analysis. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) was employed to identify patterns and themes in participant experiences, selected for its ability to capture complex information. This approach facilitated a thorough understanding of how the concept of *Titikṣā* relates to resilience among young adults, providing practical insights into wellness strategies rooted in Vedāntic philosophy.

## Data Analysis

Fig. 1. Diagrammatic Representation of Thematic Analysis.



The survey data underwent a systematic thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) characterized by coding and categorizing. Coding involved tagging portions of data with commonalities, while categorizing grouped these codes into broader themes based on shared significance. This process aimed to uncover the structures within the qualitative data, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of recurring ideas. The identified themes included cultivating resilience through self-belief and perseverance, embracing acceptance and adaptation in adversity, seeking support, transforming failure into learning opportunities, nurturing faith and spiritual resilience, and how these foster *Titikṣā* in young adults. A flowchart depicting these themes, sub-themes, and associated codes is provided above (see Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of thematic analysis).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Dhṛti Cultivating Steadfast Resilience Through Self-Belief and Perseverance**

In exploring the theme of *Dhṛti* (steadiness of mind), the responses from participants illustrate how self-belief and perseverance help individuals overcome adversity. Quotes such as "*I would focus on Puruṣārtha and overlook current difficulties and proceed ahead to achieve my goals and desires*" emphasize the importance of maintaining focus on *Puruṣārtha* (life goals) and *Karma Yoga* (duty to work), even in the face of short-term challenges (Easwaran, 2007; Ranganathan, 2018). This steady mindset, rooted in *Dhṛti*, encourages viewing failures as stepping stones to success, a concept similar to the modern idea of 'grit,' which emphasizes sustained interest and effort toward long-term goals, as reflected in statements like, "*Failure will tell me how not to fail again, and I will keep going with a positive mindset because every success is a ladder of failure.*" (Duckworth, 2016).

The persistence and self-reflection seen in participants' responses further highlight *Dhṛti* as a key factor in resilience. Personal growth and commitment to one's goals were evident in quotes such as, "*I would push myself to improve and never give up on a passion for the game.*" This demonstrates how *Dhṛti* fosters resilience by encouraging individuals to embrace every obstacle as an opportunity for self-improvement. Participants noted, "*I'd embrace every obstacle as a chance for self-improvement, a means to sharpen both my abilities and mental fortitude,*" aligning this theme with modern psychological perspectives on grit, mental fortitude, and the growth mindset (Buchanan & Greig, 2021; Dweck, 2014; Mrazek et al., 2018).

The importance of hope and positive thinking also emerged as integral to *Dhṛti*, particularly in maintaining resilience. For instance, quotes such as "*Endurance and cultivating an optimistic outlook would serve as the linchpin in conquering these challenges*" reflect how participants relied on inner strength and positive affirmations to persevere. Statements like, "*I will further strengthen these by adding positive affirmations to each action that I decide to take*" illustrate the role of emotional intelligence and self-motivation in navigating adversity (Gross, 2015; Troy et al., 2023; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007). This steady focus on long-term goals, driven by *Dhṛti*, reveals its role in helping individuals navigate adversity, consistent with modern psychological research.

In conclusion, *Dhṛti* stands out as a key theme that encapsulates the steadiness of mind necessary for resilience, complementing the broader Vedāntic concept of *Titikṣā* (endurance). By cultivating *Dhṛti*, individuals can persist through life's challenges with determination, clarity, and an unwavering focus on long-term aspirations.

### **Yathābhīmata: Embracing Acceptance and Adaptation in Adversity**

The *Yathābhīmata* principle, meaning "according to one's wish," plays a crucial role in cultivating the virtue of *Titikṣā* (endurance), as reflected in the survey responses. *Yathābhīmata* involves selecting a meaningful object of attention to steady the mind, fostering acceptance, and making accommodative efforts to flourish amidst adversity (Bryant, 2015a; Kanojia, 2022). This aligns closely with *Titikṣā* from Vedānta, which emphasizes enduring life's challenges with calm and equanimity. Just as patience fosters resilience,

acceptance, and proactive efforts also play a significant role in navigating adversity. Participants echoed this sentiment with responses such as, *"Time heals all wounds; things will probably get better with time,"* illustrating the link between resilience and recovery. Through adaptive coping, hope, and stress management, resilient individuals build psychological strength to thrive amidst adversity (Masten, 2001). The resilience within Yathābhīmata, or adaptive flexibility in the face of adversity, resonates with recent research that highlights the capacity for positive adjustment and recovery after trauma (Bonanno & Diminich, 2013). As one participant stated, *"I would keep reminding myself that healing and improvement take time,"* emphasizing the role of patience in fostering resilience (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

Acceptance emerged as another key aspect of Yathābhīmata, with participants highlighting its value in building resilience. Accepting one's circumstances while simultaneously making efforts toward gradual improvement was a recurring theme. One participant shared, *"Accepting my situation and making small, consistent efforts toward improvement, I believe slow improvement is possible,"* indicating how acceptance helps build resilience by refocusing attention on what can be done (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). Acceptance fosters gradual, sustained resilience over time. Another participant reinforced this by stating, *"Acceptance of my current reality would drive me to take small steps toward bettering my circumstances."* Setting small, achievable goals during adversity strengthens resilience and helps individuals thrive even in challenging situations (Bonanno & Diminich, 2013). This combination of acceptance and incremental progress enables individuals to manage stress effectively and recover from adversity (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013).

Proactivity is also essential in achieving Yathābhīmata and cultivating Titikṣā. By engaging in proactive efforts, individuals can prevent challenges from escalating and enhance their sense of control over difficult situations. As one participant noted, *"Combining acceptance with proactive efforts can help stabilize my situation and create a better future."* Such actions enable better stress management and resilience-building by instilling a sense of control over adversity (Carver, 1998). Another participant added, *"I would accept the reality of my situation and proactively look for other career paths,"* demonstrating how proactive efforts foster adaptive coping and resilience. In integrating acceptance and proactive efforts, Yathābhīmata becomes a pathway to achieving Titikṣā, where long-term endurance is maintained by steady psychological adjustments. These two principles work hand in hand to foster resilience, helping individuals withstand life's challenges without disturbance.

Thus, by harnessing the principles of Yathābhīmata—through patience, acceptance, gradual improvement, and proactivity—individuals can steadily cultivate the virtue of Titikṣā. In doing so, they build the resilience and mental endurance necessary to navigate life's inevitable adversities.

### **Upadeśa: Gaining Insight Through Seeking Support and Guidance**

The Sanskrit concept of *Upadeśa*, which means "advice" or "instruction," highlights the importance of seeking support when confronting adversity. Participants in the study emphasized turning to family and friends for guidance, which aligns with the Vedāntic principle of *Satsanga*, or associating with the wise. This reliance on social connections is backed by research indicating that strong interpersonal ties help reduce stress and enhance psychological well-being (Southwick et al., 2005). Additionally, breaking cycles of isolation by reaching out to teachers, counselors, or friends was seen as essential for resilience, reflecting the proactive pursuit of support emphasized in *Upadeśa*. Seeking social support, central to the concept of *Upadeśa*, is validated by recent findings that highlight the importance of social connections in enhancing resilience during times of adversity (Southwick et al., 2014).

Participants also acknowledged the necessity of meeting basic needs like shelter and food in extreme situations. This practical aspect of resilience corresponds to the Vedāntic teaching of *Titikṣā*, which advocates perseverance and seeking necessary help in times of hardship. For instance, one participant noted, *"I would try to seek shelter and all the available resources to stabilize my condition,"* demonstrating a pragmatic approach to resilience. Research supports this view, showing that access to fundamental resources

is vital for maintaining psychological stability (Ungar, 2011). Alongside external support, self-motivation was highlighted as a key strategy. Statements such as *"I would try to be kind to myself and motivate myself to be strong and brave"* illustrate internal *Upadeśa*, where self-guidance and positive self-talk are employed to navigate challenges effectively (Seligman, 1991).

The role of community support was another recurring theme; for example, *"I would seek support from school counselors, teachers, or community resources,"* indicates that participants value the emotional and practical support that community connections provide. This perspective resonates with the Vedāntic concept of *Anugraha*, which views the community as a source of grace and support. The integration of both external and internal guidance reflects a holistic approach to resilience, where community ties and personal strength work in tandem to bolster individuals during challenging times (Putnam, 2000).

Ultimately, the essence of *Upadeśa* is reflected in the concept of *Titikṣā*. This Vedāntic principle teaches that true resilience comes from the balance of internal fortitude and the willingness to seek and accept external guidance. Through *Titikṣā*, individuals can navigate adversities with a mindset of perseverance and growth, supported by both their inner resources and the wisdom and assistance of their communities.

### **Ṣatva: Achieving Balance Between Passion and Practicality**

The theme of *Ṣatva*, rooted in Vedāntic principles, particularly *Titikṣā* (forbearance), emphasizes the balance and maturity required to face life's challenges. In the context of this study, *Ṣatva* represents a state of purity, harmony, and clarity of mind, allowing individuals to remain stable amidst difficulties. According to the *Bhagavadgītā* and related Vedāntic texts, a *Sāttvika* mind remains undisturbed by desires (*rājas*) and ignorance (*tāmas*), fostering a balanced perspective toward success and failure (Sivananda, 1989). Participants in this study expressed similar approaches to balancing creative aspirations and practical responsibilities, illustrating a *Sāttvika* approach by prioritizing stability while maintaining a long-term vision for personal fulfillment. One participant shared: *"Faced with rejection in my writing journey, I'd consider finding a stable job to support my son and me. While it's tough to balance creative dreams with practical needs, ensuring my well-being may mean putting writing on hold temporarily."*

This *Sāttvika* mindset is further reflected in responses where individuals seek to harmonize passion with practicality. Participants discussed the need to secure stable employment while maintaining their creative pursuits, recognizing the importance of both responsibilities and dreams. One participant expressed: *"While securing a stable job for the immediate needs, I'd stay determined to pursue my writing dream, recognizing that a balance between creativity and practicality is essential for long-term fulfillment."* By setting manageable goals and exploring opportunities that balance financial stability with personal interests, participants demonstrated a mindset aligned with *Ṣatva*. This approach reflects a fundamental Vedāntic principle—working toward higher understanding and self-improvement without becoming overburdened by one's passions or duties. Such balance strengthens resilience and nurtures a calm, clear perspective, even when facing external challenges (Tejomayananda, 2007).

Additionally, *Ṣatva* supports resilience by fostering acceptance of unchangeable circumstances. In Vedāntic philosophy, this inner steadiness is crucial, allowing individuals to focus on their responsibilities without being consumed by concerns over outcomes. Participants' responses echoed this perspective, with one stating, *"I will step back to understand which of the situations around me are in my control and which are the result of other factors beyond my control."* This outlook, inspired by the *Bhagavadgītā*, cultivates inner tranquility and promotes a harmonious state of mind—one that can withstand life's inevitable uncertainties. A *Sāttvika* state allows individuals to accept situations as they come, maintaining composure and clarity in the face of challenges.

In conclusion, *Ṣatva* plays a critical role in fostering *Titikṣā* by promoting inner clarity, balance, and resilience. By embracing the qualities of *Ṣatva*—purity, harmony, and mental steadiness, individuals can better navigate challenges with patience and forbearance. This alignment between *Ṣatva* and *Titikṣā*



reinforces the central theme of the paper, highlighting the importance of cultivating inner stability to achieve both practical and aspirational goals amidst adversity.

### **Sādhanā: Transforming Failure into a Learning Opportunity**

The concept of Sādhanā, or disciplined practice, in Vedāntic philosophy, plays a crucial role in personal growth and self-realization. A key element of Sādhanā is transforming failures into learning opportunities. This practice promotes regular self-care routines that enhance one's ability to navigate adversity. One respondent shared, *"In such challenging situations filled with relentless hardships, I would go back to my basics and take on the challenges. I will follow the saying, 'When you are going through hell, keep going.' Submit all my distress, struggle, happiness, sadness, and everything else to the almighty."* This sentiment illustrates a strong commitment to perseverance and belief in the transformative power of adversity. Research further supports this by showing that resilience can be significantly improved through consistent self-care practices (Smith et al., 2008).

Mindfulness and meditation are core aspects of Sādhanā, helping individuals maintain a balanced perspective and allowing them to learn from failures without judgment. One participant emphasized this: *"I will calmly think about the situation first. I will take help and advice from my well-wishers. I will practice meditation and exercises so that I can stay positive. I will try my best to improve and will focus on myself."* This approach aligns with Kabat-Zinn's research, which suggests that mindfulness meditation reduces stress and enhances emotional regulation, both vital for transforming failure into a learning experience (Kabat-Zinn, 2023). Self-motivation and inner strength are also critical in overcoming failure. As one respondent shared, *"Despite the setbacks, I never gave up on my passion for basketball. Each missed shot and defeat only fuelled my determination to improve and succeed. Every setback taught me valuable lessons about resilience and perseverance."* Research supports that intrinsic motivation fosters the resilience needed to overcome failures and achieve long-term goals (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The practice of Sādhanā encourages embracing challenges as part of the spiritual journey. One individual described their strategy: *"In this challenging journey, I would use each setback as a learning opportunity, focusing on improving my skills and mental resilience. I would seek guidance from mentors or coaches to refine my game. Staying persistent and maintaining a positive attitude would be crucial to overcoming these obstacles and achieving success in basketball."* This view aligns with research suggesting that resilience and the ability to overcome obstacles are linked to greater life satisfaction and success (Masten, 2001).

Ultimately, Sādhanā leads to the cultivation of Titikṣā. By nurturing resilience through self-care, mindfulness, and inner strength, individuals are empowered to endure hardships with patience and fortitude. This enduring practice reflects the transformative power of Sādhanā, allowing individuals to turn adversity into opportunities for personal and spiritual growth.

### **Saṅkalpa: Nurturing Faith and Spiritual Resilience Through Commitment**

The theme of *Saṅkalpa* (commitment) emphasizes the significant role of faith and spiritual resilience in overcoming adversity. Rooted in Vedāntic philosophy, *Saṅkalpa* represents the resolve to maintain spiritual beliefs and practices, fostering inner strength and perseverance (Burch, 1956; Maharaj, 2020; Misra et al., 2010; Ramakrishna Rao, 2011). This theme highlights how self-care, faith, motivational strategies, and the purpose derived from challenges contribute to enduring hardships and sustaining hope. Participants in the study reported turning to faith-based self-care practices to reinforce resilience.

Faith and spirituality emerged as critical components in sustaining resilience. Vedāntic teachings stress the importance of *dharma* (righteousness) and *shraddha* (faith) in maintaining balance amidst life's challenges (Bhawuk, 2013; Howard-Snyder & McKaughan, 2022; Mehrotra et al., 2013; Pant, 2023). One participant reflected, *"If I am in a situation, understand that God has bigger plans for me,"* aligning with Vedāntic views that faith in a divine plan offers a sense of purpose and direction, key for resilience. Another

participant expressed, *"I would consider myself as someone chosen by God to test how much endurance a woman has,"* demonstrating the belief in divine testing and the growth of personal resilience through faith. The concept of *Ishvara* (God) testing devotees is prevalent in Vedāntic thought, suggesting that enduring challenges with resilience lead to spiritual growth (Deutsch, 1980; Flood, 1996; Klostermaier, 2007; Radhakrishnan, 2008).

Motivational strategies rooted in spiritual beliefs also emerged from the data. One participant remarked, *"I will look at my situation as a result of my past karmas but will also try to see a brighter future for my kid,"* reflecting the Vedāntic understanding of *karma*—that present hardships are the result of past actions, yet there is hope for positive change through righteous deeds. This ability to find purpose through challenges is a key aspect of resilience, or *Titikṣā* (Fullerton et al., 2021; Tarakeshwar et al., 2003) while Vedāntic philosophy and teachings point to human experience as opportunities to learn and evolve to higher planes of self-realization, and spiritual elevation (Rambachan, 2012; Sharma, 2000b). One participant framed it this way: *Leverage on faith and confidence in himself being aligned with the Dharma and spiritual practice.*

The theme of *Saṅkalpa* highlights the integral role of faith and spiritual resilience in navigating adversity, consistent with Vedāntic teachings. By nurturing faith and commitment to spiritual practices, individuals cultivate the strength to face life's challenges with hope and perseverance.

### **Practical Application of Titikṣā**

Incorporating the Vedāntic principle of *Titikṣā* into daily life provides practical strategies for cultivating resilience, emotional balance, and adaptability. One application involves mindful acceptance and adaptability, where individuals recognize challenges as transient and address them with patience and non-reactivity. This aligns with mindfulness practices that enable people to focus on solutions rather than dwelling on adversities (Kabat-Zinn, 2023). Another application is transforming failures into learning opportunities, viewing setbacks as steps toward growth. This approach is consistent with the Bhagavad Gītā's emphasis on maintaining equanimity in success and failure (Easwaran, 2020). Keeping a journal to reflect on experiences and lessons can foster this mindset.

Balancing aspirations with practicality, a principle rooted in *Ṣatva*, emphasizes clarity and harmony in decision-making. Individuals are encouraged to align their goals with realistic efforts while maintaining emotional stability (Bryant, 2015). For instance, achieving a work-life balance while pursuing professional success fosters long-term well-being. Building resilience through spiritual practices, as highlighted in *Saṅkalpa*, further strengthens inner fortitude. Practices like meditation, prayer, and yoga deepen one's commitment to a higher purpose, providing stability and hope amidst challenges (Madhavananda, 2013).

Additionally, the principle of *Upadeśa* underscores the importance of seeking guidance and support during adversity. Engaging with mentors, friends, or community resources can provide valuable perspectives and emotional support, enhancing psychological resilience (Southwick & Charney, 2018). Lastly, cultivating a growth-oriented mindset through *Dhṛti* fosters perseverance and self-belief. Setting incremental goals, celebrating small achievements, and using positive affirmations help maintain focus and motivation, echoing the dynamic process of resilience discussed in contemporary psychology (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013).

By integrating these principles, *Titikṣā* offers a holistic framework for overcoming adversity and fostering personal growth. Its practical applications—rooted in ancient Vedāntic wisdom yet validated by modern psychological research—equip individuals with tools to navigate the complexities of daily life with resilience and grace.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The present study offers a novel interpretation of Vedāntic philosophy, particularly the concept of *Titikṣā*, and its relevance to contemporary resilience theories about young adults facing adversity. Through a

rigorous thematic analysis of participant responses to hypothetical scenarios, we identified six key themes that illustrate the multifaceted nature of resilience. These themes include Dhṛti (the strength that arises from believing in one's abilities), Yathābhīmata (learning to accept the situation), Upadeśa (getting insight through support), Śatva (the ability to maintain the balance between enthusiasm and practicality), Sādhanā (switching failure to an experience or learning), and Saṅkalpa (spiritual resilience). Together, these themes suggest that resilience, viewed through a Vedāntic lens, is not merely about enduring adversities but rather involves a process of emerging stronger and learning through suffering.

This study provides several important contributions to our current understanding of resilience and coping. First, it bridges classical Indian teachings from the Vedas with modern resilience theories, which are typically grounded in Western perspectives. By incorporating Eastern philosophical systems with contemporary psychological theories, the study offers a more holistic understanding of post-traumatic growth, particularly within multicultural communities (Bhattacharyya, 2006). Secondly, the findings support the practical applicability of Vedāntic principles in everyday life, especially for young adults dealing with difficult life situations. Unlike conventional coping mechanisms, those who apply Vedāntic principles take a broader, more integrated approach to managing hardships. This has significant implications for developing culturally sensitive prevention and coping strategies for at-risk youth, particularly in societies where Vedāntic principles, or similar beliefs, can be adopted (Bryant, 2015b).

The discipline of Titikṣā is shown to improve the quality of life by enabling individuals to face and manage life's challenges with resilience. This perspective opens new directions for research in positive psychology, cultural positive psychology, and youth resilience, broadening how we think about coping strategies across different cultural contexts (Dasgupta, 2017a). The insights from this research extend beyond theoretical implications and hold practical value for educational institutions, counseling practices, and curriculum design (Chang et al., 2022; Dasgupta, 2017a). Moreover, future research should focus on analyzing the long-term effectiveness of interventions based on this model and exploring the cross-cultural and cross-educational generalization of resilience strategies. Such work would contribute to expanding the global understanding of resilience (Morgan, 2023; Ungar, 2021).

### Limitations and Scope for Future Research

The present study is not without its limitations. The sample size of 60 subjects was adequate for preliminary findings, although quite small, and limited the power of those findings and thus the generalization to a larger population in a statistical sense. Additionally, cautious interpretations of the gender imbalance lead one to be hesitant about the results as representative of the young adult female experience. The convenience sampling technique while recruiting study participants creates a provision for the possible occurrence of selection bias and brings the representativeness of the sample into question. Self-reported measures in surveys suffer from validity and accuracy problems. Such participants may be biased by the social desirability effect and tend to over-report positive behaviors while underreporting negative ones. Besides this, retrospective self-reporting is flawed through recall bias, which in turn may affect the correctness of the results on account of experiences and thoughts. The research is qualitative, and by default, any conclusion is subjective to interpretation, allowing a very high probability of researcher bias that can distort the conclusion. Therefore, there are possible limitations on the consistency and replicability of results. To overcome these shortcomings, future research should make an effort to recruit a larger and more gender-balanced sample, including different group representations, to increase the generalization of results. The use of random sampling techniques could contribute to the reduction of selection bias and an increased sample representation. Mixed methods using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies may provide a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon.

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