

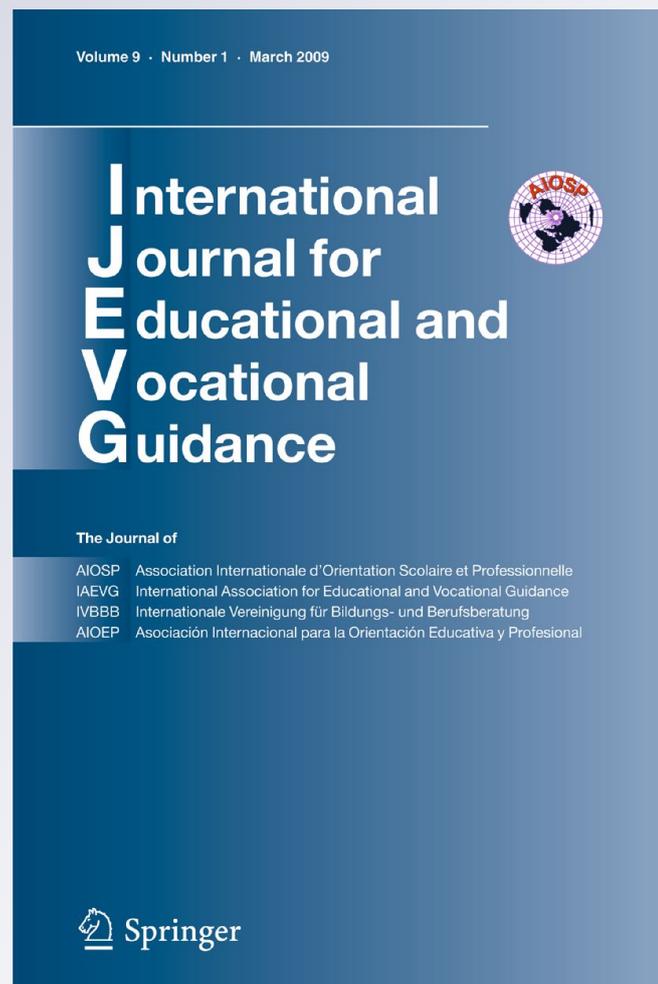
Striking the right note: the cultural preparedness approach to developing resonant career guidance programmes

G. Arulmani

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Striking the right note: the cultural preparedness approach to developing resonant career guidance programmes

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Abstract Cultural preparedness is presented as a conceptual framework that could guide the development of culture-resonant interventions. The *Jiva* careers programme is presented as a case study to illustrate a method of career and livelihood planning based upon Indian epistemology and cultural practices. Social cognitive environments and career beliefs are discussed as key factors that characterise a group's orientation to career development. An impact analysis is described. Traditional knowledge is highlighted as an important resource for constructing career guidance programmes to address the needs of clients from different cultural heritages.

Résumé. Saisir le bon thème : l'approche de la préparation culturelle au développement de programmes d'orientation spécifiques. La préparation culturelle est présentée comme un cadre conceptuel qui pourrait guider l'élaboration d'interventions adaptées aux spécificités culturelles. Le programme de carrière *Jiva* est présenté comme une étude de cas pour illustrer une méthode de planification de carrière et des moyens d'existence basés sur l'épistémologie et les pratiques culturelles indiennes. Les environnements sociaux cognitifs et les croyances vis-à-vis de la carrière sont discutés comme des facteurs clés qui caractérisent l'orientation

This article is based on a series of workshops presented by Gideon Arulmani, assisted by Jayashree Vyasrajan, Sachin Kumar, Sajma Aravind and Esther Sailo at the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance-Jiva Conference held in Bangalore, India, October 8–10, 2010.

G. Arulmani (✉)
The Promise Foundation, Bangalore, India
e-mail: garulmani@t-p-f.org

G. Arulmani
Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, UK

G. Arulmani
Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong, India

d'un groupe vers le développement de carrière. Une analyse d'impact est décrite. Les savoirs traditionnels sont mis en évidence comme une ressource importante pour la construction de programmes d'orientation professionnelle afin de répondre aux besoins des clients ayant divers héritages culturels.

Zusammenfassung. Den richtigen Ton treffen: Der kulturelle Vorbereitungs-Ansatz zur Entwicklung von resonanten Berufsberatungsprogrammen. Kulturelle Vorbereitung wird als ein konzeptueller Rahmen vorgestellt, der die Entwicklung von Kultur-resonanten Interventionen leiten könnte. Das *Jiva* Laufbahn Programm wird als eine Fallstudie für ein Verfahren zur Laufbahn- und Lebens-Planung präsentiert, welches auf der indischen Epistemologie und kulturellen Praktiken basiert. Sozial-kognitive Umgebungen und Laufbahn Überzeugungen werden als Schlüsselfaktoren diskutiert, welche die Orientierung einer Gruppe zur beruflichen Entwicklung prägen. Eine Analyse der Wirkung wird beschrieben. Traditionelles Wissen wird als eine wichtige Ressource für die Gestaltung von Berufsberatungs-Programmen hervorgehoben, um auf die Bedürfnisse von Klienten mit unterschiedlichem kulturellem Erbe einzugehen.

Resumen. Dando la Nota Correcta: El Enfoque de Adaptación Cultural para Desarrollar Programas de Orientación con Impacto. La sensibilidad o adaptación cultural (tener en cuenta la cultura) se presenta como un marco conceptual que podría servir de guía para el desarrollo de intervenciones en las que la cultura sea una parte importante de las mismas. El programa *Jiva* de orientación profesional se presenta como estudio de caso para ilustrar un método de planificación de la carrera y del proyecto de vida basado en la epistemología y prácticas culturales de la India. Se analizan las creencias profesionales y el ambiente social-cognitivo como factores clave que caracterizan la orientación (tendencia) de un grupo hacia el desarrollo de la carrera. Se describe el análisis de impacto. Se destaca el conocimiento tradicional como un recurso importante en la elaboración de programas de orientación profesional para atender a las necesidades de clientes de diferente bagaje cultural.

Keywords Cultural preparedness · India · Impact · Career beliefs · Traditional knowledge

Many of us may have had the experience of hearing a glass pane or tumbler vibrate when a bell rings or when a musical instrument hits a certain note. Physicists use the word *resonate* to explain this phenomenon. This article discusses the importance of career counselling interventions resonating with a culture in order to sharpen their relevance to those who receive the service. By this we mean that the effectiveness of an intervention could be higher when the ideas and concepts that lie behind an intervention cohere with the history, values and beliefs of a particular community. Over the years, geopolitical forces such as colonisation and globalisation have intruded into existing ways of living and eroded the value placed on tenets of local

cultures. As a result, age old customs, skills and knowledge bases are written off in the contemporary context as being unscientific and impractical (Bissell, 2010).

There is, however, increasing academic interest in finding answers to questions related to the effectiveness of counselling interventions. For example, in 2007, an entire issue of *The Counseling Psychologist* (volume 35, issue 6) examined culture relevant programmes for preventive and mental health services. Reese and Vera (2007) warn that theoretical or practical applications of educational and health interventions emerging from worldviews that are different from the worldview of the community that the intervention is intended to serve, could face challenges of cultural relevance, community participation, and ultimately, programme effectiveness. This challenge of programme effectiveness is accentuated when 'universal' principles that underlie a service delivery theme, are used for programme development without considering how they could be adapted to the 'particular' characteristics of a specific context (Griffin & Miller, 2007).

Most published methods of guidance and counselling emerged in an environment wherein the counsellor and counselee belonged to a similar cultural background. However, today there is a higher likelihood of counsellor and counselee coming from differing cultural contexts, each influenced and guided by their own beliefs and orientations to work and career. Furthermore, career guidance is rapidly emerging as a strongly felt need in non-Western contexts (Arulmani, 2010). It must also be noted that the developing world has been poorly represented in the international guidance and counselling community. There is an urgent need for models and methods of guidance and counselling that are relevant to the culture and economies of these countries.

Located in the Indian cultural context, the first part of this paper presents the notion of *cultural preparedness* as a concept that could guide the development of culture-resonant programmes for guidance and counselling. It then presents an attempt to develop and implement methods of career guidance in India that are sensitive to felt needs. Data that examine the impact and outcome of these methods in comparison to a more universal approach to career guidance are presented. Finally, the implications of the cultural preparedness approach for research and practice are discussed.

Cultural preparedness

The most commonly used theories of counselling are largely based on Western epistemologies. The methods that emerge from these theories are often a response to needs expressed from within these cultures. As we have described elsewhere, "... these approaches were in effect developed by a people, for a people with certain orientations... both the creators of the service as well as the consumers of the service are culturally prepared in a closely similar manner to offer and partake of the service..." (Arulmani, 2009, p. 253). Within this environment of cultural preparedness, conditions could be created for a certain form of counselling to be effective. This does not mean that the same conditions are necessary or sufficient in other cultural contexts. The time is well-nigh for a deeper consideration of

approaches that would support the creation of counselling methods whereby clients from different cultural heritages are effectively served. Researchers concerned with the cultural relevance of interventions (e.g., Griffin & Miller, 2007; Reese & Vera, 2007) have pointed out that the development of programmes must be based upon a deep knowledge of the ways of life and world views of the community for which the programme is being developed.

Constructs from the Indian context

We now draw upon the Indian context to illustrate the notion of cultural preparedness by highlighting some of the key characteristics of the Indian way of life that influence orientations to work and career.

Religion and spirituality: The sacred in the secular

Religion and spirituality permeate almost all aspects of the Indian way of life. It is more common for a person who has grown up in this context to first turn to the culturally sanctioned representatives of religion and spirituality in the community before turning to a secular counsellor. Against this background, a helper (e.g., career counsellor) would be perceived as a guide and a giver of advice. The help-seeker, therefore, would expect to be 'given' the solution to his or her queries and to be led and pointed in the 'right' direction. It is not at all uncommon in a career guidance session, for example, for the client and the family to expect to be 'told' what the best career for their child would be and for the counsellor too, to be prepared to engage in a directive and advice-oriented interaction.

Dharma: The code of duty

Dharma is a fundamental value which translated literally means to 'uphold'. The individual and the cosmos, the self and nature, the person and society are all perceived as being a part of a single continuity. It is the principle which holds all aspects of the cosmos in balanced harmony. According to the concept of dharma, boundaries between the self and the other are porous. It is a code that describes 'right living', an engagement that is always mutually supportive, facilitative rather than exploitative, giving and at the same time receiving. This worldview presents a platform upon which separateness as well as interdependence can be simultaneously expressed. Disturbance of dharma or the lack of adherence to dharma leads to discomfort and distress at the level of the individual and to unrest and even to disaster at the level of the community, nation and cosmos.

Karma and samsara: Deterministic and nonlinear orientations

The deterministic orientation of Indian philosophy rests upon the concepts of *karma* and *samsara*. *Samsara* describes life to be cyclical and portrays an individual's existence as spanning lifetimes, beginning, progressing, ending, and beginning once again. *Karma Yoga* is a doctrine that explains the manner in which a person must

engage with life's roles and responsibilities. Accordingly the person is exhorted to be involved with life fully and completely, but with *nishkama*, without selfish passion. Taken together, samsara and karma describe a non-linear view of existence and of development. Development is not conceived as unidirectional, progressing from a beginning to an end. Instead, development is seen as a constantly regenerating cycle that builds upon earlier development. At a superficial level such an understanding of life may seem to be fatalistic, evoking a sense of inevitability. At a deeper level however, the notions of karma and samsara encourage action and promote the individual's self-mediation of life situations. Karma places 'effort' at centre-stage and empowers the individual to shape the future through actions executed thoughtfully and wilfully in the present.

Ashramas: Life stages

The *ashrama* system of ancient India divides a lifetime into ashramas or stages, with clearly defined duties to be performed at each stage. During the initial stages the individual is encouraged to be materialistically oriented, working hard to earn a livelihood and create wealth. The latter stages have a different character. The individual is expected to continue to work, but now work is for the purpose of serving society, without the objective of personal gain. Indian orientations, therefore, are not only 'other-worldly'. They encourage vigorous temporal and materialistic engagements and as one's life plays out, one matures and moves toward the service of others.

These are beliefs that have been distilled into practice over hundreds of years and tested by the collective experience of the community. Although they seem to be esoteric and far removed from the rough and tumble of daily life, these constructs are in fact deeply embedded in Indian culture and guide day-to-day living. Psychologists in India have begun to use these constructs in their therapeutic practice and it has been pointed out that tapping into these already established beliefs contribute to a high degree of efficacy at the practical and every day level (e.g., Kakar, 2003).

In keeping with the theme of cultural preparedness, the next section of the paper describes the development of a framework for guidance and counselling that draws upon the cultural symbols described above.

The *Jiva* approach to guidance and counselling

Jiva means 'life' in almost all Indian languages. The foregoing discussion highlights that work and occupation are deeply integrated with the individual's life as a whole. Work is not seen merely as a job to be done or a livelihood to be earned. It is expressed as an extension of one's life, guided by clearly defined cultural practices. Based on this understanding of cultural preparedness in the Indian context, we developed an approach to guidance and counselling called the *Jiva* method of guidance and counselling which is based on five principles.

Principle 1. Career as a spiral: a nonlinear approach to career development

Rarely does a career develop in a linear and sequential manner. It has its ups and downs and grows with the individual. Over time, one returns to where one started, but in a qualitatively different manner: one is older and more mature. One moves from the path that one was a part of, onto a related, but different path. This Jiva principle draws from the cultural construct of samsara which symbolises the circularity of life. Jiva uses the image of a spiral to describe development. Career development is depicted not merely as achieving mastery over age-specific developmental tasks. Instead, it is portrayed as a collection of overlapping movements whereby the individual's engagement with work is a continuous elaboration and construction, characterised by adaptation, discovery and renewal. These movements may not necessarily always point in the 'forward' direction. The world of work may require new learning to face new challenges, it may require the individual to return to earlier learnings, it may also require the individual to let go of earlier positions and begin anew.

Principle 2. Dispassionate decision-making: assess before you accept

Career choice is often influenced strongly by labour market cycles, pushing 'personhood' to the background. Engagement with the world of work may in effect be dictated by the short-term interests of employers, where 'growth' becomes a double-edged sword—benefiting a few by exploiting many others. The nature of economic development today has caused the emergence of new occupational opportunities in some economies. In contexts that were previously deficient of opportunities, career choosers rush to grasp opportunities merely because they exist, placing a 'good job' at the centre of their decision rather than personal potentials and personal satisfaction. On the other hand, workers in other economies are haunted by the spectre of job loss. Despair and disillusionment could follow in the wake of retrenchment. The Jiva approach responds to this situation with the karmic concept of nishkama which exhorts the individual to practice dispassion in the face of emotional arousal. The principle focuses on restraint, flexibility and self-mediation. The application of this principle would be to support the individual to shape the future through actions executed thoughtfully and wilfully in the present. It points to fostering the career development skill of weighing up pros and cons and then accepting or perhaps even rejecting a possibility.

Principle 3. Sensitivity to the 'other': practicing a sustainable career

Global warming, renewable energy, waste management, transportation alternatives, and social justice are examples of issues that today impact all careers. Furthermore, the forces of globalisation and economic development tend to push traditional occupations and livelihoods to the background. Age-old ways of working in harmony with the environment are placed at a lower level of prestige and status. Crafts represent traditional work cultures that are integrated with ways of living and follow an engagement with the world of work that is spontaneously supportive of

the environment. Yet, such approaches are increasingly considered irrelevant in an industrialised, market economy. The term 'career' today is often synonymous with a singular promotion of the self, increasing consumption and an unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. Sensitivity to the 'other' is a deeply cherished Indian custom, rooted in the concept of dharma. Jiva draws upon this enduring cultural value and asks the individual to define the purpose and outcomes of his/her engagement with work. This principle points out that the manner in which an individual engages with work should be a reflection of 'right living', aiming to promote harmony within oneself, the community, and the environment. The integration of the principle of dharma into career, could lead toward a situation wherein the realisation of an individual's potential would support rather than exploit the environment in which the career is practiced.

Principle 4. The changing and the unchanged: coping with unpredictability

The last decade has seen tremendous shifts in the world of work and the labour market. The notion of the traditional "9 to 5 job" has changed and the contemporary worker must perhaps consider 5 to 9 jobs in one lifetime! Tractenberg, Streumer, and Zolingen (2002) use the terms de-linearisation and de-synchronisation of time and space to describe the manner in which information and communication technologies (ICT) allow for the creation of virtual workspaces that need not have specific geographical locations. It is common today for workers to use a variety of ICTs to enter a virtual workplace within which they interact with people who live in different parts of the globe and together complete units of work without ever 'meeting' each other. Indeed today, "geography has become history", resulting in the migration of jobs rather than people. This dramatic change in the nature of work, places the career chooser in a situation where uncertainty and unpredictability must be effectively managed. Indian philosophers describe the cosmos as a paradox of change and constancy and point out that while the form may change, the essence remains the same. This Jiva principle sensitises the young person to the fact that a career develops in finding the balance between what changes and what does not change. Personal interests, for example, are more liable to change through external influences while aptitudes are relatively more stable. Jobs are tied to the boom and bust of the labour market. But a career, composed as it is of a collection of jobs, does not go out of demand as easily.

Principle 5. Give, in order to receive: the reciprocity of career development

Career is a mechanism whereby society utilises the services of its members to contribute to its wellbeing, progress and development. The larger society in return compensates the individual for delivering a particular service. An individual's career, therefore, has its being in the dynamic interaction between the garnering of personal gain and the services he/she renders to society at large. Career development suffers or even grinds to a halt when this delicate balance is disturbed. The ashrama system describes life as played out in stages and points to a stage when one's duty is to use one's achievements as a platform of service to others. It must be

noted, however, that this is not merely an encouragement to render altruistic service. Each stage describes the duties to be performed by the individual as well as the care to be directed toward the individual by the larger community. Jiva uses this concept to highlight that successful career development is based on a continuous process of 'giving' and 'receiving'. This principle also has relevance to the career guidance professional highlighting that the counselling interaction could be a teaching–learning experience both for the client and for the counsellor. Thereby, the counsellor is also a learner and opens herself/himself to the client's background and way of life. Career counselling then becomes a 'give' and 'receive' partnership based on reciprocity between counsellor and counselee.

Applying the Jiva Approach

The Jiva approach to guidance and counselling uses these culturally embedded symbols and beliefs as the scaffolding upon which career development workshops are conducted. These workshops take participants through career counselling activities such as learning about one's self and the world of work, developing career alternatives, and career path planning. The key Jiva ingredient is that cultural preparedness is taken into account by linking career development activities to the five Jiva principles.

Cultural preparedness and social cognitive environments

Social cognitions

Bandura (1986) presents the construct of social cognitions to refer to the conglomerate of attitudes, opinions, convictions, and notions that coalesce and emerge as a particular group's way of thinking. Prevailing philosophies and cultural practices tend to create an environment of attitudes and beliefs which we have referred to as social cognitive environments (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). A multiplicity of social cognitions could exist within a given social cognitive environment and could vary from one group to another. These beliefs could be in relation to marriage, sexuality, food habits, gender relations, child rearing or any other aspect of a given group's engagement with its surroundings. These social cognitions then guide and influence the group's behaviour.

Career beliefs

Social cognitive environments could engender habitual ways of thinking with reference to work, occupation, and career. Within these environments, positive or negative values could be attributed to work in general, toward occupational clusters as well as to the notion of career development. We have referred to these cognitions as career beliefs, which are culturally mediated beliefs held by a group about the meaning and purpose of work (e.g., Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). Krumboltz's (1994) early work on career beliefs has indicated that irrespective of their accuracy,

career beliefs exert facilitative or inhibitive influences on individuals' decisions and actions as they attempt to develop and implement career goals. Our field experience has consistently demonstrated that when career beliefs are not addressed, the effects of career counselling are often negligible (e.g., Arulmani & Abdulla, 2007; Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2005; Arulmani, Van Laar, & Easton, 2003). The cultural preparedness approach to career guidance, therefore, keeps career beliefs at the forefront of career guidance interventions.

Comparison of two interventions in an Indian context

Aim

The paper now describes a study, the aim of which was to examine the relative impact of two careers interventions: Work Awareness and You (WAY) and the Jiva Programme for Career and Livelihood Planning. It was hypothesised that both interventions would lead to a significant reduction in negativity of career beliefs, and that the Jiva intervention would result in a greater reduction of negativity of career beliefs than the WAY intervention.

A brief description of the interventions

WAY and Jiva are systematic career guidance programmes developed by the author that are based on principles that would commonly undergird most career guidance services. Accordingly, both WAY and Jiva address self-awareness, understanding the world of work, developing career alternatives and career path planning. The programmes are offered in modules, through the workshop format. They are for a duration of 20 hours, integrated into the school timetable, and spread out over a

Table 1 Promoting self-understanding: an illustration of the difference between the WAY and Jiva career guidance programmes

WAY (universalist approach)	Jiva (based on clients' cultural preparedness)
Participants take a standardised interest inventory and an aptitude test which are designed to provide insights across five areas: Linguistic, Analytical-Logical, Spatial, Personal and Physical-Mechanical. Their scores are computed to find the overlap between their interests and aptitudes. This overlap point is identified as their area of highest potential and in this way the participant learns about her/his current strengths and weaknesses	Participants are oriented to the five Jiva principles through a group activity. They then take the same interest and aptitude tests and learn about their potentials is fed back to them. The inventories and tests are followed by an activity that draws from the Indian concept of <i>ashramas</i> : life unfolds in stages, each stage has roles and responsibilities, each stage builds upon the experiences of the earlier stage, the manner in which one's potential manifests itself varies from one stage to another. In this way, Jiva links self-understanding to the Jiva principle that career develops in a spiral. Psychometric information about personal potential is interpreted into clients' cultural framework

period of 3 months. The key difference between the programmes is that Jiva takes the cultural preparedness approach and is based on the five Jiva principles. These principles would be recognised with ease and spontaneity and resonate with a typical Indian audience. WAY, on the other hand, is based on commonly accepted principles of career guidance. It takes a more universalist approach and is not aligned specifically to a culture or tradition. One of the activities from the module under the self-understanding theme of both programmes is described in Table 1 to illustrate this difference.

Participants

It has been shown that socioeconomic status (SES) differentially mediates the career development needs and career beliefs of young people (Arulmani et al., 2003). Hence, this study focused on one SES group, namely, high school students from lower SES homes.

WAY and Jiva programmes are conducted simultaneously in schools around Bangalore, South India. All schools in the district are offered the programme and they are free to agree to have the programme implemented in their schools. At the time of this study, students in six schools had attended a WAY programme, students in five had attended Jiva, and students in eight schools were on the waiting list. One school each was randomly selected from the WAY and Jiva schools. Data pertaining to all the students who completed all components of the programme/s were included in the study. One of the schools on the waiting list was selected randomly as the control group and all students were included in the study.

The three schools in the study were government-run schools, located in different parts of Bangalore city. These schools attract students from a wide catchment area and maybe considered representative of urban high school students from low SES homes. The sample comprised 484 students aged 13 and 17 years ($M = 15.12$, $SD = .8$), of which 35.5% were girls and 64.5% were boys. The size of the control group was 151. The WAY and Jiva groups were made up of 162 and 172 students, respectively.

Instruments

The Career Belief Patterns Scale (CBPS) Version 2 (Arulmani, 2008), was used to assess students' career beliefs. This is a standardised scale with 32 vignettes reflecting real life career development situations. Response choices are structured on a seven-point scale with 1 anchored to the semantic label "*I would not agree with this at all*" and 7 anchored to the label "*I agree completely*". Interim numbers from 2 to 6 are linked to semantic labels that reflect increasingly higher negativity in career beliefs. Therefore, higher scores on this scale reflect higher levels of negativity toward career development. The scale is designed to yield a global career belief patterns score as well as subscores for the seven factors it measures. The CBPS has a 6-week test-retest reliability of .76. It has norms for interpreting the scores of Indian males and females in the age range of 13-to-22 years for each of low, middle and upper-middle SES groups. Percentile norms are presented as low, low-average, average, high-average, and high, where *low* refers to the lowest range

of negativity in career beliefs and *high* refers to the highest range of negativity tapped by the CBPS.

Participants' SES was determined using the Socioeconomic Status Profile (SESP) (Arulmani, 2006). The SESP obtains SES information along multiple dimensions: parents' education, parents' occupations, material possessions, family income per month, type of housing, electricity and water connection, and reading material available in the home. Each of these categories are given a weighted score and summated to obtain a total SES score. The range of scores obtainable on this scale is 23 (minimum) and 191(maximum). Higher scores indicate higher SES levels and norms allow for categorisation of scores into low, middle, and upper-middle SES levels. The SESP has a 6-week test–retest reliability of .81.

Procedure and plan of analysis

A pretest posttest experimental design was used to compare the impact of the WAY and Jiva programmes on the negativity of participants' career beliefs. All WAY and Jiva programmes begin with a pre-intervention assessment of participants' career belief status which is assessed once again immediately after the intervention is completed. The control group was assessed at the same time as the WAY and Jiva groups. This study is based upon an examination of this pre- (Time 1) and post- (Time 2) intervention data. The statistical analyses included the following: (a) All three groups were compared on the key outcome variable, negativity of career beliefs, at Time 1, in order to establish nonsignificant differences pre-intervention; (b) Gain scores were computed, followed by a one-way ANOVA using gain scores. As the pretest and posttest scores did not have equal (or proportional) variances and equal reliability, gain scores were judged to have high reliability (see Dimitrov & Rumrill, 2003); (c) As the equality of variances assumption was not met, the one-way ANOVA on gain scores was supplemented by the nonparametric equivalent, the Kruskal–Wallis test; (d) The interaction effect of a Repeated Measures ANOVA also tests whether the change from Time 1 to Time 2 is different across groups, and yields an F value identical to that yielded by a one-way ANOVA on gain scores (see Dimitrov & Rumrill, 2003). Therefore, this too was computed; (e) lastly, the Tamhane test was used for post hoc analyses as the equality of variances assumption was not met.

Results

Prior to intervention

At Time 1, all three groups (i.e., WAY, Jiva, and the control group) were similar on SES scores, $F(2, 481) = 1.11, p = .33$ (ns). Most importantly, the three groups did not differ significantly on the dependent variable, namely, negative career beliefs, $F(2, 481) = .74, p = .48$ (ns). Thus, as per the CBPS norms for low SES groups, the means of all three groups at Time 1 placed students of each group in the 'high' range of career belief negativity (see Table 2).

Table 2 Mean career belief pattern scores of the control, WAY and Jiva groups at Time 1 and Time 2

Groups (<i>n</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) Time 1	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>) Time 2
Control group (151)	150.72 (7.35)	161.63 (8.45)
WAY group (162)	151.69 (8.80)	107.51 (8.71)
Jiva group (172)	150.61 (9.92)	88.29 (17.28)

Note Higher scores indicate higher negativity.

Theoretical range = 32–224

Scores > 132 indicate the highest levels of negativity in career beliefs for low SES groups as per norms of the CBPS

Reduction in negativity of career beliefs as an outcome of intervention

Gain scores were computed using Time 1 and Time 2 CBPS scores. A gain score represents the difference between Time 1 and Time 2 scores (i.e., change) in the predicted direction. For this research, the gain score was calculated as mean CBPS score at Time 1 – Time 2, since a reduction in the negativity of career beliefs for the two experimental groups was expected.

The mean gain score of the control group was -10.91 ($SD = 8.36$; range: -32 to 9), indicating an increase in negativity of career beliefs. In contrast, the mean gain score of the WAY group was 44.18 ($SD = 5.45$; range: 30 – 58), indicating substantial reduction in negativity of career beliefs. In sharp contrast, the mean gain score of the Jiva group was 62.32 ($SD = 17.55$; range: 5 – 94), indicating marked reduction in the negativity of career beliefs.

As is typical of analysis of the pretest posttest control group experimental design, a one-way ANOVA was computed using gain scores (see Dimitrov & Rumrill, 2003). The difference in the mean gain scores of the three groups was highly significant, $F(2, 481) = 1,630.65$, $p < .0001$. Nonparametric test analysis also yielded the same finding (Kruskal–Wallis $\chi^2 = 370.78$, $p < .0001$). The F statistic for the interaction effect of a Repeated Measures ANOVA was also computed. As explained in the literature (see Dimitrov & Rumrill, 2003), and as found in this study as well, the F statistic for the interaction effect of a Repeated Measures ANOVA was identical to the F statistic obtained for the gain scores, $F(2, 481) = 1,630.65$, $p < .0001$.

A post hoc test that does not assume equality of variances across groups, namely Tamhane, was used. Post hoc analyses indicated highly significant differences, all in predicted directions. Thus, the mean gain score of the WAY group was better than the control group by 55.09 points on the CBPS ($p < .0001$); and the Jiva group was better than the control group by 73.24 points on the CBPS ($p < .0001$). Lastly, the Jiva group was better than the WAY group by 18.14 points on the CBPS ($p < .0001$). The Jiva group, therefore, showed the greatest reduction in the negativity of career beliefs post intervention. As per the CBPS norms for low SES groups, the control group remained at a 'high' level of negativity. In comparison, the mean score of the WAY group post-intervention decreased to the 'average' range of negativity, and the post-intervention mean score of the Jiva group shifted to the 'low-average' range.

As the standard deviation of the gain scores was higher for the Jiva group, the data were analysed further. These analyses showed that only 7% of the Jiva group did not benefit from intervention as did all of the WAY participants; very importantly, 25.2% of the Jiva group benefited *as much* from the Jiva intervention as the WAY participants, and as many as 67.8% of the Jiva group benefited *more* (achieved a greater reduction in the negativity of career beliefs) from the intervention than the WAY participants.

Also of interest, are the findings relating to SES. At Time 1, SES was strongly negatively correlated with career beliefs in all three groups ($r = -.65$ to $-.72$, $p < .0001$). In other words, even within low SES, the higher the SES, the lower was the negativity of career beliefs of the participants. Importantly, for the Jiva group, at Time 2 SES ceased to be correlated with career beliefs ($r = -.04$, $p = .61$, ns). In contrast, at Time 2 for the WAY group, despite the career beliefs becoming significantly less negative, SES continued to be correlated with career beliefs ($r = -.58$, $p < .0001$).

Discussion

It is being increasingly accepted that the success and long term sustainability of programmes and interventions are closely linked to the extent to which they integrate with the local context. For example, the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS) in its position paper (2001) asserts that traditional bodies of knowledge represent time tested methods and systems which are attuned to specific cultural contexts. Most importantly, it is emphasised that indigenous knowledge is not only a repository of practical techniques and empirical information but is also a guide for generating hypotheses, formulating research designs, creating methods and making interpretations. A further example is the call made by the International Council for Science (ICSU) to its members encouraging them to learn from indigenous knowledge (2002). Today almost all relevant UN institutions are committed to the validity of traditional knowledge sources as valuable reservoirs of knowledge.

This paper demonstrates the possibility of drawing upon non-Western epistemologies, philosophical constructs and cultural values, to formulate a career guidance intervention that is of relevance to a particular context. The paper further demonstrates that while a careers service that takes a universalist approach does have positive outcomes, an intervention that is contextualised is more effective. An important point to be noted here is that the intention of this paper is not merely to point to an 'Indian' approach to career guidance. Instead it is to highlight the value of recognising other frameworks as possessing ideas, concepts and constructs that would enrich a career counselling interaction. The cultural preparedness approach blends universal principles with particular needs. This paper reports Jiva as an example of aligning universal principles of career counselling activities to a specific cultural context. This principle could be extended to other contexts. Our own experience of using cultural preparedness in other countries has yielded significantly superior effects (e.g., Arulmani & Abdulla, 2007). The cultural preparedness

approach allows a careers programme to develop a contextually relevant identity and thereby integrate into the fabric of the way in which a people live their lives.

Embedded within the idea of cultural preparedness is the concept of social cognitive environments. As discussed above, career beliefs prevailing within a certain culture shape ideas and opinions about careers. A careers programme that addresses clients' beliefs about work, occupation and career has a higher chance of contributing to wellbeing. Career beliefs also have relevance for cross-cultural counselling. Beliefs about work are deep-rooted and it is likely that mindsets, beliefs and values prevailing at 'home' could continue to influence migrants' career development behaviour, even as they build their lives in their adopted countries. Counselling that does not account for these deeply held convictions could be cast away as being alien and irrelevant.

The final point we would like to highlight is the link between career and the environment. The panacea for 'growth' chanted today is largely characterised by consumption-oriented economic policies. The point that is ignored is that the resources to sustain this form of growth are limited. Converging evidence from a wide range of sources point clearly to the fact that we are living on precarious ecological credit, rapidly depleting the reserve of natural capital (Bissell, 2010). Included under this theme are the issues that surround social justice and traditional ways of living. We presently consume more than 25% of what the planet can replace. Yet, more than one-third of the world lives below the poverty line (Chen & Ravallion, 2004). The manner in which we practice our careers has a direct impact on these matters and career counselling can do much to address these issues. Indeed, the Jiva programme challenges its clients to consider the question: "When I set the sky as the limit, am I also turning the earth brown?" Career guidance would serve a larger cause if it moves beyond helping a person find a 'good' job to helping a person discover how he or she could contribute to the broader human situation.

The cultural preparedness paradigm asks researchers and practitioners irrespective of their backgrounds to recognise that a given culture has been already prepared in a certain way to engage with work, occupation and career. This paper began with the image of a bell and the idea of resonance. Sensitive career guidance professionals would ask themselves whether traditions different from their own have something to offer that would enrich their own view of guidance and counselling. Being sensitive to cultural preparedness implies being open to learning from others' customs and ways of living with a view to coming closer to delivering services that resonate with needs expressed in a particular situation.

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