

# Karma-Yoga: Construct Validation Using Value Systems and Emotional Intelligence

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*The construct of Karma-Yoga was validated using value systems and emotional intelligence in two studies. The first study based on a group of 60 executives found that the essence of Karma-Yoga is a sense of duty or obligation towards others, and that believing in the law of karma, existence of a soul, and salvation lead to Karma-Yoga. Individuals who rated high on Karma-Yoga preferred other oriented terminal values such as 'a world at peace' as compared to self-oriented terminal values such as 'mature love'. On the other hand, individuals who rated low on Karma-Yoga showed exactly the opposite preferences. High Karma-Yoga individuals rated moral values like being 'responsible' and being 'obedient' significantly higher than low Karma-Yoga individuals. The second study based on a group of 37 students found that Karma-Yoga was highly correlated with emotional intelligence.*

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## INTRODUCTION

For an enduring and sustainable progress of societies, it is important that leaders identify and build on the core components of the cultural ethos and customize some of the cultural artifacts to suit modern times (Krishnan, 2003). The relationship between humankind and work has been elaborated in India through the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The *Gita*, which is part of the epic *Mahabharata*, explains the philosophy of right action or *Karma-Yoga* using the situation of Arjuna, a warrior on the

battlefield who finds himself helpless when he is called to action. The text of the *Gita* is a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna where Krishna explains the meaning of life, the place of work within life, and the right way to work.

An earlier study (Mulla and Krishnan, 2006) identified two dimensions of *Karma-Yoga* viz., sense of duty or obligation towards others and an absence of desire for rewards. The dimensions of *Karma-Yoga* were then validated using two facets of the personality trait of

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conscientiousness, viz., dutifulness and striving for achievement, using hierarchical regression and a test for moderation. They found that belief in the Indian philosophy enhanced duty orientation, and absence of desire for rewards enhanced life satisfaction. There was moderate support for their hypothesis that dutifulness was more strongly related to *Karma-Yoga* when achievement striving was low than when it was high.

According to Rokeach (1968), human personality consists of three distinct domains. The behavioral domain which consists of observable behaviors, the affective domain which consists of feelings, emotions, and attitudes, and the cognitive domain which consists of the intellect, which reasons and evaluates. The *Karma-Yoga* construct has already been validated in the behavioral domain (Mulla and Krishnan, 2006). This paper attempts to further validate the *Karma-Yoga* construct in the cognitive and affective domains using Rokeach's universal values and emotional intelligence respectively. In addition to the two dimensions of *Karma-Yoga* identified by Mulla and Krishnan (2006), this study also explores an additional dimension of *Karma-Yoga* i.e., equanimity to pairs of opposites.

Before we explore the concept of *Karma-Yoga*, it is important for us to understand some of the fundamental beliefs of Indian philosophy, which form the foundation of *Karma-Yoga*.

## FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Despite the numerous schools of thought, three beliefs are fundamental to Indian philosophy (Dasgupta, 1991, p. 71). First, the belief in the *karma* theory i.e., all actions that are done have the power to ordain for their doer's joy or sorrow in the future, depending if the action is good or bad. Often, individuals may be required to take birth in another body to fully experience the joy or suffering that is due to them because of their past actions. The second belief is in the existence of a permanent entity, called *atma* or soul, which is our true unknown nature, pure and untouched by the impurities of our ordinary life. The third belief is about the doctrine of *mukti* or salvation. Since actions lead us through this endless cycle of birth and death, if we could be free of all such emotions or desires that lead us to action, then there would be no fuel (in the form of joys or sorrows to be experienced) to propel us into another birth and we would be free of this eternal cycle. Krishnan (2001) describes the four basic components of the Indian worldview as (i) an understanding of the real nature of this world (theory of *Maya*); (ii) preference to action over inaction; (iii) perceiving the potentially divine nature of oneself and others; and (iv) visualizing freedom as the supreme goal of human existence. The *Gita* builds on these beliefs and suggests a way out of the cycle of birth and death by selflessly performing one's duties depending on one's position in the society.

## WHAT IS KARMA-YOGA?

The word *karma* comes from the Sanskrit root *kri*, which means *doing*, *affairs*, or

activity and includes all the actions that a person performs whether they are of the body, speech, or mind. The word *yoga* comes from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, which means, *to join*. However, in the *Mahabharata* it is used in three ways: as a special skill, device, intelligent method, or graceful way of performing actions (*Gita* chapter 2, verse 50); as equability of mind towards success or failure (*Gita* chapter 2, verse 48); and as the device for eliminating the natural tendency of *karma* to create bondage (*Gita* chapter 2, verse 50). Since the two later definitions of *yoga* speak of the relationship of *yoga* with action, the terms *yoga* and *Karma-Yoga* are used interchangeably at various instances in the *Gita* (Tilak, 1915/2000). For the purpose of our paper, we will use the word *yoga* to mean 'device' or 'intelligent method' and hence the term *Karma-Yoga* would be 'a technique for intelligently performing actions'.

Since the ultimate goal of all beings is to free the soul from the cycle of birth and death, any method that enables release from this perpetual cycle is preferable to any other method that is likely to bind the human soul to the cycle. Hence, whether we define *Karma-Yoga* as, "a technique for intelligently performing actions" or "a technique for performing actions in a manner that the soul is not bound by the effects of the action" we mean the same thing (Tilak, 1915/2000).

## DIMENSIONS OF KARMA-YOGA

Mulla and Krishnan (2006) identified the dimensions of *Karma-Yoga* using a

contemporary version of the *Gita* (Gandhi, 1946/2001). Each verse was content-analyzed and classified into three categories viz., activities prescribed to reach the ideal state (69 verses); description of the ideal state of a person (145 verses); and outcomes on achieving the ideal state (76 verses). Since, *Karma-Yoga* is the path to reach the ideal liberated state through work, Mulla and Krishnan (2006) further analyzed the types of activities prescribed to reach the ideal state and found that five types of activities were described in the *Gita*: devotion to god or seeing god in all beings (22 verses); performing actions without attachment (16 verses); meditation or focusing on the soul (10 verses); being neutral to opposites, or keeping senses under control (10 verses); and doing one's duty in society (8 verses). These five activities were then matched with the four equivalent paths to reach the ideal state viz., the path of meditation *Raja-Yoga*, the path of knowledge *Jnana-Yoga*, the path of devotion *Bhakti-Yoga*, the path of action *Karma-Yoga*. In this manner, Mulla and Krishnan (2006) categorized 'devotion to god' as the path of devotion and 'meditation or focusing on the soul' as the path of meditation or the path of knowledge. From this they deduced that *karma yoga* must be described by one or more of the remaining three items viz., performing action without attachment, doing one's duty, and being neutral to opposites.

The essence of *Karma-Yoga* is given in the *Gita* (Radhakrishnan, 1948/1993) chapter 2, verse 47, which says, "To action

alone hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment to inaction". This verse of the *Gita* is also mentioned by Tilak (1915/2000 p. 895), as giving the entire import of *Karma-Yoga* in a short and beautiful form. Later in the *Gita* (Radhakrishnan, 1948/1993, chapter 3, verses 12, 13, and 16), Arjuna is told that persons who survive on this earth and use its resources without working are living in sin, and hence man is obliged to work selflessly in order to fulfill his/her duty towards the world. Hence, based on the results of our content analysis and the interpretation of the verses of the *Gita*, we take *Karma-Yoga* to be made up of three dimensions: a sense of obligation or duty towards others, an absence of desire for rewards, and a sense of equanimity which enables one to be neutral to environmental influences.

#### SENSE OF OBLIGATION OR DUTY TOWARDS OTHERS

The body has a natural tendency to act; the *Gita* states that actions motivated by a desire bind the soul into the cycle of birth and death. Hence, the only way by which one can effectively function in society is by developing a sense of obligation or duty towards others. In this manner, all actions become a repayment of a debt and the actor is free of any motive for the actions.

The belief in the law of cause and effect makes us realize that we are placed in a particular situation because of unfulfilled past obligations on our part and one develops a sense of connectedness with all beings. When our belief in the

law of cause and effect is coupled with the belief in the doctrine of salvation, it makes us strive to live a moral life for the benefit of society. The sense of connectedness coupled with our striving to live a moral life for the benefit of society, creates a sense of duty or obligation towards others in us.

#### ABSENCE OF A DESIRE FOR REWARDS

When an individual is able to discriminate between what is eternal—*soul* and what is transient—*the body* and is able to increasingly identify with the soul, one's actions are more spontaneous and are not motivated by any material gratification. Besides, reduced identification with the body creates resilience towards physical pleasures and pain. As a result of this, there arises in the individual, an absence of desire for rewards.

In addition, since the outcomes of one's actions are dependant on an elaborate chain of cause and effect, all that is in the individual's control is performance of that action. Hence, one ceases to have a feeling of ownership towards one's actions and believes that the actions happen naturally and the bodily organs are just an instrument for their execution. This lack of ownership for actions coupled with the sense of obligation to others creates a complete disinterest in the mind of the seeker for any form of material or social rewards.

#### SENSE OF EQUANIMITY

According to the *Gita* chapter 2, verse 14, the senses interact with the

material objects of the world and because of these interactions, there is perception of happiness or pain in the mind of the person experiencing the sense objects. The perception of happiness or pain leads to desire, which is nothing but a wish to experience again or avoid something that has once been experienced by the senses. This leads to further interaction of the senses with material objects. Thus, even when the object of desire is enjoyed, our desires are not extinguished, instead, the desires grow like a fire on which oil has been poured (Tilak, 1915/2000).

One way out of this perpetual cycle of desire is the complete annihilation of all desires by the renunciation of all actions. Another method is to be able to control in one's mind the experience of pain and happiness, i.e., being neutral to the experiences of our senses (Tilak, 1915/2000).

According to the *Gita*, when one does what one has to do, with perfect mental control, after giving up the desire for the result, and with a frame of mind that is equal towards pain and happiness, there remains no fear or possibility of experiencing the unhappiness of actions. If one can perform actions with such a spirit, it will not become necessary to give up actions. Hence, the *Gita* recommends that we keep our organs under control and allow them to perform the various activities, not for a selfish purpose, but apathetically, without desire, and for the welfare of others (Tilak, 1915/2000).

For individuals, who believe in the eternal nature of the soul and the

inherent divinity of all beings, there develops a sense of equanimity or resilience towards all physical and mental disturbances.

### BELIEFS IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND THE DIMENSIONS OF KARMA-YOGA

The *Gita* (chapter 3, verse 3) explains that there are two paths, which lead to the goal of liberation and each is suited for a person of a particular temperament (Radhakrishnan, 1993, p. 132). The path of renunciation, meditation, and intellectual inquiry is prescribed for those persons whose natural tendency is to explore the inner life of the spirit while the path of action is for persons who are involved in the affairs of the world. For a person who does not renounce the world and is a part of the society, *Karma-Yoga* naturally evolves from the fundamental beliefs of the Indian worldview.

Firstly, when an individual believes that all beings are divine and that all beings are connected to each other through an elaborate chain of cause and effect, there develops in the person a sense of connectedness to all beings. According to the law of *karma*, every event that we experience and every individual with whom we come in contact is the outcome of some past action or relationship with that individual. Hence, the main purpose of the current interaction is the repayment of some past debt or obligation to that individual. As a result of understanding this essential interconnectedness of all beings,

one develops a sense of obligation or duty towards others.

Secondly, when an individual believes that the final goal of life is liberation from the cycle of birth and death and this liberation is possible only if one gives up hankering for the results of one's actions, there develops a tendency for performing selfless service. This selfless service i.e., actions performed without a desire for material rewards do not bind the soul to the cycle of birth and death and are conducive to attain the final goal of liberation.

Finally, when an individual is convinced that he or she is not the physical body but is in reality the eternal soul which cannot be affected by events in the external environment, there develops in the person an indifference to environmental constraints. As a result of this, the individual develops equanimity to opposites.

Hence, we hypothesized that for individuals who are part of society, the extent of their belief in the fundamental tenets of the Indian worldview will be positively related to their *Karma-Yoga* orientation (Hypothesis 1).

## VALIDATION OF THE KARMA-YOGA CONSTRUCT

As mentioned earlier, human personality consists of three distinct domains. The behavioral domain consists of observable behaviors, the affective domain consists of feelings, emotions, and attitudes, and the cognitive domain consists of the

intellect, which reasons and evaluates. Our validation of the *Karma-Yoga* construct must address each of these three domains of human personality. Mulla and Krishnan (2006) studied the relationship of *Karma-Yoga* with self-reported personality factors, which are enduring patterns of behavior. This study builds on the earlier study by looking at the relationship of *Karma-Yoga* with the cognitive and the affective domain.

Values form part of the cognitive domain, which is the innermost core of the personality and which affects the other two aspects i.e., the affective, and the behavioral domains. Values are prescriptive or exhortatory beliefs, which advocate a certain course of action, or a certain state of existence as desirable or undesirable e.g., I believe it is desirable that children should obey their elders (Rokeach, 1968).

## VALUE SYSTEM

Rokeach (1973) defined a value as an, "enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or endstate of existence". A belief concerning a desirable mode of conduct was called an instrumental value and a belief concerning a desirable end-state of existence was called a terminal value. If a person values freedom as an end-state of existence, it means that he or she believes that freedom is preferable to slavery. Values can be looked upon as being hierarchical in nature, leading to the idea of a value system.

A set of rank-ordered values is called a value system. A person's value system is enduring and value systems affect how people feel about themselves and their work. Empirical studies have shown how value systems affect personal and organizational effectiveness (Meglino and Ravlin, 1998).

### ROKEACH'S VALUE SURVEY

Rokeach's (1973) value survey is the most commonly used instrument for measuring value system. It has two lists of values arranged alphabetically—one consisting of 18 terminal values and the other consisting of 18 instrumental values. Each value is presented along with a brief definition in parenthesis and respondents are asked to arrange the values in each set in order of importance to and as guiding principles in their life, thereby recording their value systems. The value survey has been found to be both reliable and valid. All the values are socially desirable ones, but no significant relationship has been found between value rankings and the tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner.

### KARMA-YOGA AND TERMINAL VALUES

Values are a standard for guiding actions and for developing attitudes towards objects and situations, for justifying one's own and others' actions and attitudes, for morally judging self and others, and for comparing self with others. Values are derived from underlying needs, yet they are different from needs. While needs are subconscious or unconscious motives,

values are in the cognitive domain and are accessible to the person. While needs may be antisocial or selfish and hence may not be openly admitted, these needs after being transformed into values based on institutional goals and demands, can be openly admitted, advocated, exhorted, and defended by oneself and others in a socially sanctioned language. Thus, values provide us with a standard to guide us in our efforts to satisfy our needs, and also maintain and enhance our self-esteem (Rokeach, 1978).

Rokeach (1973) considered terminal values to be of two kinds—those that are self-focused called personal values, and those that are others-focused called social values. Krishnan (2001) showed that transformational leaders gave higher importance to others-focused social values. Individuals who are high on *Karma-Yoga* see their lives and their work as a means of discharging their obligations to society. Such individuals are more likely to give more priority to social values such as 'a world at peace', 'a world of beauty', 'equality', 'national security', and 'social recognition'.

Hence, we hypothesize that individuals high on *Karma-Yoga* will give higher priority to social values (Hypothesis 2).

### KARMA-YOGA AND INSTRUMENTAL VALUES

A concept similar to *Karma-Yoga* is deontic motivation i.e., motivation determined by a feeling of obligation. Schwartz (1983) explains the origin of

deontic motivation by using Freud's Oedipus complex. During childhood, the child who is attracted to the mother develops hostility towards the father and hence fears annihilation by the stronger personality of the father. As a defence against this, the child creates a superego in order to identify with the father. The individual thus creates a symbolic new self, which is known as the ego-ideal, and is superior to the physical organic self. Since, the organic self can never be totally substituted by the ego-ideal, it remains repressed. The presence of these two identities create an existential dilemma or a tension which we feel as obligation.

The superego contains three components: rejection of the organic self, critical self-consciousness, and the image of an impossible ideal self. When the attitude of an external powerful authority is internalized, the mind begins to reject spontaneous impulses. In order to avoid the criticism of the internalized powerful figure, the mind develops a sense of compulsion, which is present in the feeling of obligation. The image of the ideal self is the opposite of the organic self and it gives direction to work carried out under deontic motivation. Thus, the individual feels a sense of pride or moral worthiness in having lived upto the standards of the ego-ideal (Schwartz, 1983).

Like the terminal values, instrumental values are also of two kinds—those which when violated arouse pangs of conscience or feelings of guilt for wrongdoing called moral values, and those which when

violated lead to feelings of shame about personal inadequacy called competence or self-actualization values (Rokeach, 1973).

Individuals who are rated high on *Karma-Yoga* have a strong sense of obligation, which could have been developed as a result of the Oedipus complex experienced in their childhood. Such individuals have a strong superego and are more likely to emphasize moral values such as being 'courageous', 'forgiving', 'helpful', 'honest', 'loving', 'obedient', 'polite', 'responsible', and 'self-controlled'. The instrumental value 'broadminded' has been found to be the opposite to the value of 'self-controlled'. Hence, individuals high on *Karma-Yoga* are also likely to give lower priority to the value of being 'broad-mindedness'.

Hence, we hypothesize that those individuals who are high on *Karma-Yoga* will give higher priority to moral values such as being courageous, forgiving, helpful, honest, loving, obedient, polity, responsible, and self-controlled and lower priority to the moral value of being broadminded (Hypothesis 3).

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to recognize and regulate emotion in oneself and others (Spector, 2005). Emotional intelligence is a useful construct because of its use in understanding emotional labor and its ability to predict outcomes in the areas of leadership, and job performance (Daus and Ashkanasy, 2005).



Studies on emotional intelligence have followed one of the two predominant models viz., the ability approach that views emotional intelligence as a set of cognitive abilities and the mixed or dispositional approach that combines abilities and a broad range of personality traits (Caruso *et al.*, 2002; and Tett *et al.*, 2005). As an ability or skill, emotional intelligence is a capacity to engage in valued behavior, which entails a degree of mutability (e.g., through training), and calls for measurement in the context of correctness (i.e., right/wrong answers). As a disposition, emotional intelligence is a relatively stable inclination or tendency amenable to self-description. The ability model of emotional intelligence was developed by Mayer, Salovey and their associates, while the mixed model of emotional intelligence was popularized through the works of Goleman (1995 and 1998).

Mayer *et al.* (2004) describe the ability model as a four-branch model of emotional intelligence. According to this model, emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to regulate emotions reflectively to promote emotional and intellectual growth. According to this model, emotional intelligence is conceived of as an ability that can be measured using objective, ability-based measures. The model does not focus on personality traits or dispositions per se, except as an outcome of having the underlying skills (Caruso *et al.*, 2002).

Sensing the need for a short, practical, and empirically valid measure of emotional intelligence, Wong and Law (2002) developed a 16-item scale based on the ability model of emotional intelligence proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). The scale, called the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) was developed and validated using samples of managers, employees, and students in Hong Kong.

### KARMA-YOGA AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Salovey and Mayer (1990) conceptualized emotional intelligence as a set of skills, which contribute to the accurate appraisal, and expression of emotion in oneself and in others, the effective regulation of emotion in self and others, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve goals in one's life. A central characteristic of emotionally intelligent behavior is empathy, i.e., the ability to comprehend another's feelings and to reexperience them oneself. The set of mental processes using emotional intelligence which include: a) appraising and expressing emotions in the self and others; b) regulating emotion in the self and others; and c) using emotions in adaptive ways, form the foundation of empathetic helping behaviors (Salovey and Mayer, 1990).

Individuals who are rated high on *Karma-Yoga* feel a sense of connectedness with others. As a result of this feeling of oneness they are able to perceive the feelings and needs of people around them easily, and are likely to be more emotionally intelligent.

Hence, we hypothesize that individuals who are high on *Karma-Yoga* will also be high on emotional intelligence (Hypothesis 4).

## STUDY 1

### PARTICIPANTS

Sixty executives attending training programs at a business school, from ages 25 years to 54 years (Median = 36) across a number of organizations in India were studied. The sample included 53 male and seven female respondents. 18 were graduates, 36 were postgraduates, and 4 had Ph.Ds. (2 undisclosed).

### MEASURES

The scales for belief in Indian philosophy and *Karma-Yoga* were first developed by Mulla and Krishnan (2006) and later updated for this study based on inputs from a panel of experts in Indian philosophy. The scale for beliefs in Indian philosophy contained seven items. Three of the items were pertaining to a belief in the law of *karma*, two of the items were pertaining to a belief in the *atma* or *soul*, one item was about *mukti* or liberation, and one item was about *maya* or the inexplicable nature of the world. The scale used for measuring beliefs in Indian philosophy has been included in Annexure 1.

The scale for *Karma-Yoga* was made up of the three dimensions of *Karma-Yoga* viz., sense of duty or obligation towards others (5-items), absence of desire for rewards (7-items), and a sense of equanimity towards opposites (13-items). The scale used for measuring the dimensions of *Karma-Yoga* has been included in Annexure 2.

The ranking of the terminal and the instrumental values was done by participants using the Rokeach Value Survey (Rokeach, 1973).

### DATA ANALYSIS

The reliability of the scale for beliefs in Indian philosophy was found to be unsatisfactory (Cronbach alpha = 0.66). When the item pertaining to *maya* was dropped, the reliability was acceptable (Cronbach alpha = 0.72). All items for this scale loaded onto a single factor.

The reliability of the *Karma-Yoga*—sense of duty scale was found to be acceptable (Cronbach alpha = 0.69) after dropping one item (“I happily do whatever task is assigned to me, even if I do not enjoy it”). The reliability of the *Karma-Yoga*—absence of desire for rewards scale was found to be acceptable (Cronbach alpha = 0.68) after dropping three items (“I work in order to get some personal benefits”; “While working on an important task, I focus more on the process rather than the outcome”; and “I strive to be selfless in whatever activity I undertake”). Each of the two reduced scales i.e., *Karma-Yoga* – sense of duty and *Karma-Yoga* – absence of desire for rewards individually loaded on a single factor. Also when all the selected items of these two dimensions of *Karma-Yoga* were taken together, they loaded onto two clean factors with *Karma-Yoga*—sense of duty items in one factor and *Karma-Yoga*—absence of desire for rewards on another factor.

The third dimension of *Karma-Yoga* i.e., sense of equanimity was introduced for the first time in this study. The scale

showed a very low reliability (Cronbach alpha = 0.50) and an unclear factor structure.

## RESULTS

The means, standard deviations, and zero order correlations are reported in Table 1. The *Karma-Yoga* dimension of sense of equanimity was not included in the correlation matrix because the reliability was too low for it, to be considered as a distinct variable. The *Karma-Yoga* dimension of absence of desire for rewards showed a negative correlation with the other dimension of *Karma-Yoga* viz., sense of duty. Hence, it was not included in the further analysis.

The results of the regression of beliefs in Indian philosophy on the *Karma-Yoga* dimension of sense of duty are reported

in Table 2. The results support Hypothesis 1 that beliefs in Indian philosophy lead to *Karma-Yoga*.

## TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS 2 AND 3

The procedure for testing Hypothesis 2 was based on the procedure used by Krishnan (2001) for identifying the value systems of transformational leaders. The median score on *Karma-Yoga*—sense of duty was used to split the sample of respondents into two groups—low *Karma-Yoga* and high *Karma-Yoga*. The differences in value rankings between the two groups of respondents were analyzed in two different ways. The first approach adopted looked at each of the 36 values (18 terminal and 18 instrumental) separately. The Wilcoxon rank sum test was used to test a

**Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Zero-Order Intercorrelations**

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Belief in Indian Philosophy	3.47	0.72	(0.72)		
2. <i>Karma-Yoga</i> – Sense of Duty	3.98	0.63	0.43**	(0.69)	
3. <i>Karma-Yoga</i> – Absence of Desire for Reward	2.38	0.77	-0.21	-0.26*	(0.68)

**Note:** Coefficients alphas are in parenthesis along the diagonal.  $N = 60$ .  
 \*  $p < 0.05$ .  
 \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 2: Results of Regression Analysis to Check the Effect of Belief in Indian Philosophy on *Karma-Yoga* – Sense of Duty**

Predictor	95% CI						
	<i>b</i>	SE <i>b</i>	Lower	Upper	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.58	0.62	1.32	3.84	–	4.11	0
Beliefs in Indian Philosophy	0.44	0.11	0.22	0.66	0.50	4.05	0
Age	-0.01	0.01	-0.03	0.01	-0.12	-0.98	0.32
Sex (Male=1, Female=2)	0.20	0.24	-0.28	0.70	0.10	0.84	0.40

**Note:**  $N = 60$ .

statistically significant difference in value rankings given by low and high *Karma-Yoga* individuals. The second approach adopted was to arrive at two aggregate value systems (one terminal and one instrumental) for each of the two groups and then compare them across the two groups. The median rank assigned to each terminal value by the leaders in either group was calculated. The values were arranged in ascending order of median ranks to obtain the group's aggregate terminal value system (where two values had the same median rank, the mean was used to break the tie). The aggregate instrumental value systems of the two groups were also similarly obtained.

#### DIFFERENCES IN TERMINAL VALUES OF HIGH AND LOW KARMA-YOGA RESPONDENTS

In the case of terminal values, results of the Wilcoxon test indicated that the rankings given by low *Karma-Yoga* respondents (those who scored below the median score on *Karma-Yoga*) and high *Karma-Yoga* respondents (those who scored above the median score on *Karma-Yoga*) differed significantly in the case of two terminal values – 'mature love' ( $Z = -1.83, p = 0.06$ ) and 'national security' ( $Z = -2.03, p = 0.04$ ). High *Karma-Yoga* respondents assigned a significantly lower rank to 'mature love' as compared to low *Karma-Yoga* respondents. Also, high *Karma-Yoga* respondents assigned a significantly high rank to 'national security' as compared to low *Karma-Yoga* respondents. There was

no significant difference in individual value rankings in the case of the remaining 16 terminal values.

The aggregate terminal value systems of the two groups of respondents (low *Karma-Yoga* and high *Karma-Yoga*) are given in Table 3. The largest difference (at least 2.5 in median and 5 in aggregate rank) in terminal value ranking between the two groups of leaders was found for 'mature love', 'a world at peace', and 'social recognition'. High *Karma-Yoga* respondents as a group gave 'mature love' the 15<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 12.5) while the group of low *Karma-Yoga* respondents gave the same value 10<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 9). Secondly, high *Karma-Yoga* respondents as a group gave 'a world at peace' the 10<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 10) while the group of low *Karma-Yoga* respondents gave the same value the 15<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 13). Finally, high *Karma-Yoga* respondents as a group gave 'social recognition' the 6<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 7) while the group of low *Karma-Yoga* respondents gave the same value the 11<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 9.5).

A comparison of the value systems instead of individual value rankings indicated that high *Karma-Yoga* respondents considered 'a world at peace' more important than 'mature love' while low *Karma-Yoga* respondents did just the reverse. Thus, hypothesis 2 is partially supported.

#### DIFFERENCES IN INSTRUMENTAL VALUES OF HIGH AND LOW KARMA-YOGA RESPONDENTS

In the case of instrumental values, results of the Wilcoxon test indicated that the

Table 3: Aggregate Terminal Value Systems of the Two Groups

Rank	Low Karma-Yoga (Median <sup>a</sup> )	High Karma-Yoga (Median <sup>a</sup> )
1.	A Comfortable Life (5)	Happiness (4.5)
2.	Self-Respect (5.5)	Family Security (5)
3.	An Exciting Life (5.5)	Self-Respect (6)
4.	Happiness (6)	A Sense of Accomplishment (7)
5.	Family Security (6.5)	A Comfortable Life (7)
6.	A Sense of Accomplishment (6.5)	Social Recognition (7)
7.	Freedom (8)	An Exciting Life (7.5)
8.	Inner Harmony (8.5)	Wisdom (8)
9.	True Friendship (9)	Freedom (9)
10.	Mature Love (9)	A World at Peace (10)
11.	Social Recognition (9.5)	Inner Harmony (11)
12.	Wisdom (10)	True Friendship (11)
13.	Equality (11)	National Security (11)
14.	Pleasure (12)	Equality (11.5)
15.	A World at Peace (13)	Mature love (12.5)
16.	National Security (13.5)	Pleasure (12.5)
17.	A World of Beauty (14)	A world of beauty (13)
18.	Salvation (15)	Salvation (15)
Note: <sup>a</sup> The median rank assigned to each value by respondents in the group is included in parenthesis next to the value.		

rankings given by low *Karma-Yoga* respondents (those who scored below the median score on *Karma-Yoga*) and high *Karma-Yoga* respondents (those who scored above the median score on *Karma-Yoga*) differed significantly in the case of four instrumental values—being ‘broadminded’ ( $Z = -1.90, p = 0.05$ ); ‘logical’ ( $Z = -2.43, p = 0.01$ ); ‘obedient’ ( $Z = -1.74, p = 0.08$ ); and ‘responsible’ ( $Z = -2.13, p = 0.03$ ). High *Karma-Yoga* respondents assigned a significantly higher rank to being ‘logical’, ‘obedient’, and ‘responsible’ as compared to low *Karma-Yoga* respondents. On the other hand low *Karma-Yoga* respondents

assigned a significantly lower rank to being ‘broadminded’ as compared to high *Karma-Yoga* respondents. There was no significant difference in individual value rankings in the case of the remaining 14 instrumental values.

The aggregate instrumental value systems of the two groups of respondents are given in Table 4. The largest difference (at least 4 in median and 5 in aggregate rank) in instrumental value ranking between the two groups of leaders was found for being ‘responsible’, ‘logical’, and ‘obedient’. High *Karma-Yoga* respondents as a group gave ‘responsible’ the 1<sup>st</sup> rank (median = 3.5) while the

**Table 4: Aggregate Instrumental Value Systems of the Two Groups**

Rank	Low Karma Yoga (median <sup>a</sup> )	High Karma Yoga (median <sup>a</sup> )
1.	Honest (4)	Responsible (3.5)
2.	Ambitious (5)	Ambitious (4.5)
3.	Capable (6.5)	Honest (5)
4.	Courageous (7)	Capable (7)
5.	Broadminded (7.5)	Logical (8)
6.	Responsible (8)	Courageous (8)
7.	Intellectual (9)	Helpful (8.5)
8.	Clean (9.5)	Broadminded (9.5)
9.	Self-Controlled (10)	Self-Controlled (9.5)
10.	Loving (10)	Obedient (10)
11.	Independent (10.5)	Polite (11)
12.	Cheerful (10.5)	Clean (11)
13.	Imaginative (10.5)	Intellectual (11.5)
14.	Helpful (11)	Loving (12)
15.	Forgiving (12)	Cheerful (12)
16.	Logical (12)	Independent (12)
17.	Polite (12.5)	Forgiving (12.5)
18.	Obedient (14)	Imaginative (13.5)
<b>Note:</b> <sup>a</sup> The median rank assigned to each value by respondents in the group is included in parenthesis next to the value.		

group of low *Karma-Yoga* respondents gave the same value 6<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 8). Secondly, high *Karma-Yoga* respondents as a group gave being 'logical' the 5<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 8) while the group of low *Karma-Yoga* respondents gave the same value 16<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 12). Finally, high *Karma-Yoga* respondents as a group gave being 'obedient' 10<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 10) while the group of low *Karma-Yoga* respondents gave the same value 18<sup>th</sup> rank (median = 14).

A comparison of the value systems indicated that high *Karma-Yoga* respondents considered being 'responsible' the most important instrumental value

while low *Karma-Yoga* respondents ranked the value of being 'responsible' at the 6<sup>th</sup> place lower in priority than being 'broadminded'.

## STUDY 2

### PARTICIPANTS

Thirty seven students attending a two year full time program in business management in India were studied. The sample included 36 male and one female respondent.

### MEASURES

The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) (Wong and

Law, 2002) was used to measure the four dimensions of emotional intelligence. Reliability of the facets of emotional intelligence viz., self-emotions appraisal, others' emotions appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion was found (Cronbach alphas for each of the facets were 0.70, 0.77, 0.69 and 0.64 respectively). Cronbach alpha for the overall scale of emotional intelligence was 0.81.

The reliability of *Karma-Yoga*—sense of duty scale was 0.70, while the reliabilities of the scales for *Karma-Yoga*—sense of equanimity and *Karma-Yoga* – absence of desire for rewards were 0.45 and 0.46 respectively. The reliabilities of the scales

for *Karma-Yoga* – sense of equanimity and *Karma-Yoga* – absence of desire for rewards did not substantially improve even after removing a number of items having low item-total correlations. Hence, in the further analysis, only the dimension of *Karma-Yoga* – sense of duty was used.

## RESULTS

The means, standard deviations, and zero order correlations are reported in Table 5. The dimension of *Karma-Yoga*—sense of duty is highly correlated with all the four factors of emotional intelligence. Hence, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Table 5: Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations								
Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Karma Yoga- Sense of Duty	4.06	0.58	(0.70)					
2. Emotional Intelligence (EI)	3.95	0.41	0.73**	(0.81)				
3. EI- Self-Emotions Appraisal	3.93	0.51	0.52**	0.69**	(0.70)			
4. EI- Others' Emotions Appraisal	4.14	0.52	0.56**	0.67**	0.38**	(0.77)		
5. EI- Use of Emotion	4.10	0.57	0.48**	0.75**	0.44**	0.27	(0.69)	
6. EI- Regulation of Emotion	3.64	0.69	0.52**	0.75**	0.25	0.34*	0.42*	(0.64)
Note: Coefficients alphas are in parenthesis along the diagonal. $N = 37$ . * $p < 0.05$ . ** $p < 0.01$ .								

## DISCUSSION

### BELIEFS IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND THE KARMA-YOGA CONSTRUCT

Mulla and Krishnan (2006) found a relationship between the beliefs in Indian philosophy and *Karma-Yoga* – sense of duty. There was no relationship between beliefs of Indian philosophy and *Karma-*

*Yoga* – absence of desire for rewards. The results of this study are identical with the earlier study. Compared to the earlier study, in this study, we introduced one more dimension of *Karma-Yoga* i.e., sense of equanimity. However, the factor did not show adequate reliability to be included in the subsequent analysis. Based on these findings, we may conclude that sense of duty or an obligation towards

others is the stable core of *Karma-Yoga*. The other two dimensions viz., absence of desire for rewards and sense of equanimity may either be outcomes of *Karma-Yoga*, which manifest over a period. For example, if A borrows money from B, then A feels a sense of obligation (duty-orientation). Later when A is making efforts to return the borrowed amount back to B, A will not be affected by any pain or pleasure that is encountered in the process of repayment (equanimity). Finally, when A has repaid B, then A will not expect to be praised or rewarded by B (indifference to rewards) since whatever was done by A was out of a sense of duty or obligation towards B. In other words, duty-orientation of *Karma-Yoga* will enhance indifference to rewards and equanimity after sometime.

#### TERMINAL VALUE SYSTEMS OF KARMA-YOGIS

Individuals who were rated high on *Karma-Yoga* showed a distinct terminal value system, which was characterized by a high emphasis on other oriented values like 'a world at peace' as compared to self-oriented values such as 'mature love'. In fact individuals rated low on *Karma-Yoga* showed exactly the opposite prioritization of these values. High *Karma-Yoga* individuals also gave a significantly stronger emphasis on the other oriented value of 'national security'. Thus, our hypothesis that individuals high on *Karma-Yoga* would give emphasis to other oriented values as compared to self-oriented values is partly supported.

#### INSTRUMENTAL VALUE SYSTEMS OF KARMA-YOGIS

Those individuals who scored high on *Karma-Yoga*, rated being 'responsible' as the most important instrumental value. Responsibility means being dependable and reliable. Individuals who are highly duty oriented are likely to be highly responsible and dependable. High *Karma-Yoga* individuals also rated the value of 'obedience' significantly higher than low *Karma-Yoga* individuals. Both these values are moral values and are likely to arouse feelings of guilt if they are violated. In contrast, low *Karma-Yoga* individuals rated being 'broadminded' significantly higher than high *Karma-Yoga* individuals. In fact for low *Karma-Yoga* individuals, it was more important to be 'broadminded' rather than to be 'responsible'. Another interesting observation in the aggregate value systems of the two groups is that for low *Karma-Yoga* individuals, 'forgiving' (rank = 15) is more important than being 'obedient' (rank = 18). On the other hand for high *Karma-Yoga* individuals, being 'obedient' (rank = 10) is more important than 'forgiving' (rank = 17). The core of *Karma-Yoga* is being duty oriented and being able to follow one's duty even though it may be personally uncomfortable. In the *Gita*, Krishna advises Arjuna to follow the guidelines of his duty even though it means putting his relatives to death.

#### KARMA-YOGA AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Individuals' scores on *Karma-Yoga* were highly correlated with emotional



intelligence. Thus, individuals who were high on *Karma-Yoga* were also highly emotionally intelligent. The basis of emotional intelligence is empathy and the basis of *Karma-Yoga* is a sense of obligation towards others driven by a sense of interconnectedness towards all beings. The high correlation between *Karma-Yoga* and emotional intelligence suggests a common basis for both these constructs.

## LIMITATIONS

This paper has three main limitations. Firstly, the two studies are conducted on different samples. The first study explores the relationship between beliefs in Indian philosophy, *Karma-Yoga*, and values, whereas the second study explores the relationship between *Karma-Yoga* and emotional intelligence. The second study does not incorporate the variables of beliefs in Indian philosophy, and values. Hence, one is confined to a piecemeal analysis of the variables and are unable to comprehensively explore the relationship between all the variables. Also, since the second study was done on management students and not on working executives, its findings must be replicated on executives before the results can be generalized.

Secondly, all the variables are self-report and hence are subject to the biases and the limitations of self-report measures (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). Social desirability has not been controlled for some of our findings, especially the very

high correlation between emotional intelligence and *Karma-Yoga* may be a result of common method variance. One of the remedies suggested for the common method bias is the use of independent sources for predictor and criterion variables (Podsakoff and Organ 1986; and Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Hence, further studies should include peer reports of emotional intelligence or actual helping behavior of respondents.

Finally, the samples in both the studies are small and the reliabilities of the two scales developed by us (i.e., beliefs in Indian philosophy and *Karma-Yoga*) are quite low; hence our findings are at best intermediate conclusions until further data on larger samples can be gathered.

## CONCLUSION

The doctrine of *Karma-Yoga* forms the core of the Indian philosophy of work. Mulla and Krishnan (2006) investigated the relationship of *Karma-Yoga* with the facets of conscientiousness, a behavioral aspect of personality. This study continues the refinement of the *Karma-Yoga* construct by exploring its relationship with the cognitive and the affective aspects of personality. The cognitive aspects of personality are measured using terminal and instrumental values, while the affective aspects are measured using emotional intelligence. Our findings show that the essence of *Karma-Yoga* is a sense of duty or obligation towards others and that beliefs in Indian philosophy lead to *Karma-Yoga*.

We also found that *Karma-Yoga* was highly correlated with emotional intelligence. Individuals who are high on *Karma-Yoga* are likely to recognize their interconnectedness with other beings thereby developing a sense of empathy, which enables them to be emotionally intelligent.

The most significant finding of this study is the drastically different value systems of individuals who rate high on *Karma-Yoga* from those who rate low on *Karma-Yoga*. Individuals who rated high on *Karma-Yoga* preferred other oriented terminal values such as 'a world at peace' as compared to self-oriented terminal values such as 'mature love'. On the other hand, individuals who rated low on *Karma-Yoga* showed exactly the opposite preference. High *Karma-Yoga* individuals rated moral values like being 'responsible' and being 'obedient' significantly higher than low *Karma-Yoga* individuals.

By combining these findings one can arrive at the profile of a *Karma-Yogi*, i.e., an individual high on *Karma-Yoga*. The ideal *Karma-Yogi* is hence a person who believes in the law of *karma*, the existence of a *soul*, and the doctrine of salvation. The *Karma-Yogi* being highly empathetic, has a high sense of duty or obligation towards others, and strives towards other-oriented end values like 'a world at peace' or 'national security' even at the cost of personal desires. The *Karma-Yogi* is highly responsible, and obedient while executing his or her duties.

A better understanding of *Karma-Yoga* is useful to business in two ways. First, a person who is highly empathetic,

obedient, responsible, and duty oriented may fulfill a role in a service setting. Secondly, highly responsible individuals who strive towards other-oriented end values even at the cost of their own desires are ideal candidates for leadership. Selection criteria for such service oriented and leadership roles must be designed to identify responsible individuals who give high importance to 'other-oriented' values. The Rokeach (1973) value survey can be a handy instrument to identify such individuals early in their career. Also, training programs for service and leadership must attempt to develop qualities of emotional intelligence and increase the salience of 'other-oriented' values. Since values are part of the cognitive domain, unlike, needs or motives, they are easily accessible and can voluntarily be changed by an individual. The process of value confrontation is the most enduring and effective method of changing the values of individuals (Conroy, 1978; Sanders and Atwood, 1978; Sawa and Sawa, 1988; and Krishnan, 1997).

*Karma-Yoga* constitutes the Indian work ideal and can be harnessed by leaders to motivate their followers. Leaders who possess attributes of *Karma-Yoga* are likely to be role models for their subordinates and thus enhance their charismatic potential. Rather than adopt the conventional western models of motivation, which have an individualistic-hedonistic bias and are largely based on cognitive calculative processes, Indian managers can use more indigenous motivational models like *Karma-Yoga*.

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## ANNEXURE 1

## Scale for Beliefs in Indian Philosophy

1. If I do good deeds, I will get good results either in this life or in the next.\*
2. It is possible to grow spiritually by performing one's worldly duties selflessly.\*
3. Joys and sorrows experienced by me are a result of my actions in this life or earlier lives.\*
4. Irrespective of external tendencies, all beings are inherently divine.\*
5. While my body is subject to birth and death, my soul is eternal.\*
6. The ultimate goal of life is freedom from the cycle of birth and death.\*
7. This world is so complex that it is difficult for one to clearly predict the outcome of one's actions.

**Note:** \* Items retained in the final scale after reliability analysis.

## ANNEXURE 2

## Scale for Karma-Yoga

**Sense of Duty or Obligation Towards Others**

1. I am aware of my obligations to society.\*
2. I hesitate to do what is expected of me (-).\*
3. I willingly perform all duties, which are expected of me.\*
4. I feel it is my duty to contribute to society.\*
5. I happily do whatever task is assigned to me, even if I do not enjoy it.

**Absence of Desire for Rewards**

1. While working, I keep thinking about success or failure (-).\*
2. I strive to be selfless in whatever activity I undertake.
3. I expect to be rewarded for good work done (-).\*
4. I often dream of becoming very successful (-).\*
5. I am disappointed when the outcomes of my efforts do not yield the results I expected (-).\*
6. While working on an important task, I focus more on the process rather than the outcome.
7. I work in order to get some personal benefits (-).

**Equanimity to Opposites**

1. I go through life events without getting too worked up.
2. I can continue to work happily even in tough conditions.

(Contd...)

## ANNEXURE 2

(...contd)

### Scale for *Karma-Yoga*

3. If I make a mistake, I keep repenting for a while (-).
4. Even major events at the workplace do not affect me as they do to others.
5. I get easily distracted from my work (-).
6. Compared to others, I get less depressed if I fail on a task.
7. I feel strong when I am able to control my anger.
8. Compared to others, I get less excited by my success.
9. I can resist temptation.
10. I have an inclination to get withdrawn from what is happening around me.
11. I feel strong when I am able to have control over temptations.
12. I believe that restraining one's needs is better than yielding to them.
13. I am neutral to pleasure or pain in my life.

**Note:** \* Items retained in the final scale after reliability analysis.