

Gratitude and Life Satisfaction as Predictors of Organizational Commitment in Anganwadi Workers

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Abstract

The present study explored the relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction, and organizational commitment by considering a sample of 110 Anganwadi workers from Anganwadi Centers, Department of Social Work, Jammu. Simple random sampling was employed for the collection of data. Correlational analysis of the data indicated that gratitude, life satisfaction, and organizational commitment are significantly correlated. Regression analysis revealed that gratitude is the predictor of organizational commitment and life satisfaction promotes continuance commitment. Theoretical and practical implications of the results were also discussed.

Keywords : anganwadi workers, gratitude, life satisfaction, organizational commitment

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Even though India has made tremendous growth in the last few decades (OECD, 2012) and due to industrialization, people have moved to urban areas, yet, a major population of India resides in rural areas (Census of India, 2011). One of the important aspects of rural areas is the Anganwadi centers (AWCs). Anganwadi workers (AWWs) are involved in important tasks of community support that thrives on their efficiency.

AWWs are active in outreach activities and are involved in social welfare of people that requires a lot of interaction with those who come from rural areas and motivate them to take up various services being offered (Sandhyarani & Rao, 2013). The work of AWWs is highly demanding. The interaction and effectiveness of AWWs may be influenced by factors such as gratitude, life satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Committed employees tend to display behavior in cognizance with the goals of an organization (Jiang & Huang, 2002). Positive psychology in organizations is concerned with psychological capacities within an individual that can be managed and acts as a contributor of enhanced performance and desirable organizational behavior (Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

Gratitude and Organizational Commitment

The expression of gratitude and its positive effects has gained an importance in the field of positive organizational

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behavior. Gratitude is an affective trait or disposition, which may be induced (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006), is reflected in the expression of thankfulness to acknowledge the efforts made by others, and is regarded as responsible for the benefits drawn from thereof (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). Gratitude serves as a reinforcer for prosocial behavior and establishing relationships. Great body of research has delved into exploration of benefits incurred from gratitude.

Organizational commitment is an important organizational subject as committed employees benefit their organizations, and display various favorable organizational outcomes. Maintenance of organizational commitment is a viable organizational goal. The personal goals as well as organizational goals are accomplished better by the committed employees. Rather, committed employees consider organizational goals like that of theirs and would like to remain affiliated with their organization (Hunt, Wood, & Chonko, 1989; Miller & Lee, 2001). As per the tridimensional approach (Meyer & Allen, 1997), organizational commitment comprises of affective, continuance, and normative components. Affective commitment represents an employee's emotional attachment, identification, and involvement in the organization. Continuance commitment can be regarded as an attachment to the organization, where the employee makes an evaluation of remaining associated with the organization, which is based on avoidance of negative economic consequences. Normative commitment is a sense of belongingness to the organization based upon the obligation to sustain membership in the organization.

A variety of factors have been identified that shape organizational commitment. Such factors include job-related factors (Randall, 1990), employment opportunities (Curry, Wakefield, Price, & Mueller, 1986), personal characteristics (Meyer & Allen, 1997), and positive relationships (Randall, 1990). As organizational commitment brings forth the desirable organizational outcomes, identification of more factors in the incremental rise of organizational commitment will be an interesting subject for research. Therefore, in this study, we focus on gratitude as the possible explanatory factor in the development of organizational commitment. Scanty empirical investigations have been carried out in this front. Raggio and Folse (2006) investigated how perceptions of gratitude predict affective commitment. The study revealed that gratitude improves employee's affective commitment. Positive correlation between the two variables was evident in previous studies (Fazal e Hasan, 2013; Ting & Yeh, 2014).

Life Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Life satisfaction may be defined as having a positive or favorable attitude towards life. The studies conducted to explore the relationship between life satisfaction and organizational commitment have reported inconsistent findings. Wasti (2002) found affective commitment to be significantly and positively correlated with life satisfaction, whereas continuance commitment was found to be significantly and negatively related to life satisfaction. Lambert, Kim, Kelley, and Hogan (2013) also reported a negative association between the two variables. Mclean and Andrew (1999) conducted a study among social service managers and social workers to determine the relationship between organizational commitment and life satisfaction. The study found that commitment was higher among employees who had higher satisfaction, and was lower among employees who had lower satisfaction. The analysis showed that continuance commitment was primarily associated with life satisfaction.

A positive correlation was reported between life satisfaction and organizational commitment (Lan, 2004; Tepper, 2000) and between life satisfaction and affective commitment (Kumari & Afroz, 2013; Lambert et al., 2013; Vanaki & Vagharseyyedin, 2009). Ali and Zilli (2013) found that life satisfaction was a predictor of organizational commitment.

Only a small amount of research to understand the linkages between gratitude, life satisfaction, and organizational commitment has been conducted (Fazal e Hasan, 2013; Ting & Yeh, 2014). So far, the studies conducted to measure the correlation between these variables are largely from various sectors, and the field of social work has remained untouched and neglected. Research that expressly traces the effects of gratitude in

organizations is clearly needed as the foundation of empirical research is thin and is yet to be kindled in this area. Limited consideration has been given to the role of gratitude in the organizational context (Waters, 2012). As per the broaden - and - build theory, positive emotions produce individuals who work at higher levels with sustained efforts and become an agency in which individuals and organizations thrive. The present study would help to open the door to a new and different venue for the study of positive organizational behavior in establishing organizational commitment. Moreover, the knowledge of what makes AWWs committed is important for retaining them in the organization.

Objective of the Study

The study aims to explore whether gratitude and life satisfaction among AWWs is a predictor of organizational commitment.

Hypotheses Development

The review of relevant studies revealed that many researchers have explored the relationship between life satisfaction and organizational commitment. The studies conducted to explore the relationship between life satisfaction and organizational commitment have been inconclusive as inconsistent findings have been reported (Kumari & Afroz, 2013 ; Lan, 2004; Lambert et al., 2013; Mclean & Andrew, 1999; Tepper, 2000; Wasti, 2002). On the basis of the review, the following hypotheses are framed:

→ **H1:** Life satisfaction has a significant relationship with organizational commitment.

Scanty research has been done on the relationship between gratitude and organizational commitment (Fazal e Hasan, 2013; Raggio & Folse, 2006; Ting & Yeh, 2014).

The hypothesis emanated is:

→ **H2:** Gratitude has a significant relationship with organizational commitment.

In considering the studies reporting the relationship of gratitude with life satisfaction, gratitude with organizational commitment, and life satisfaction with organizational commitment, the following hypothesis is proposed :

→ **H3:** Life satisfaction and gratitude significantly predict organizational commitment.

Research Methodology

🔗 Variables

- Control Variable: Years in Service.
- Predictor Variable: Gratitude and Life Satisfaction.
- Criterion Variable: Organizational Commitment.

🔗 **Research Design :** There are two types of correlation research designs: Explanatory design and prediction design. Prediction design was opted for the current study.

🔗 **Sample :** Using simple random sampling technique, the data were collected from AWWs of Ranbir Singh Pura block in Jammu district (J&K). The sample consisted of 110 participants. There are 320 Anganwadi centers with

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Item	Description	Frequency	%
Age	20-30 years	24	21.7
	31- 40 years	29	26.3
	41- 50 years	45	40.7
	51-60 years	12	10.8
Qualification	Matric	36	32.7
	12th	32	29.1
	Graduate	42	38.2

Table 2. Correlation Between Organizational Commitment, Life Satisfaction, & Gratitude

Variables	Life Satisfaction	Gratitude
Affective commitment	.402**	.710**
Continuance commitment	.383**	.543**
Normative commitment	.322**	.645**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

640 AWWs in Ranbir Singh Pura block. The list with detailed particulars of the AWWs was obtained from the office, and with the help of random number generator (Star Trek, n.d.), the participants to be taken as a sample were chosen. The sample was limited to the AWWs willing to participate in the study and who were present at the time of data collection.

The demographic characteristics of the sample respondents are presented in the Table 1.

Measurements

→ **Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6)** : It was developed by McCullough et al. (2002). It is a short, self-report measure. The participants answered six items on a 1 to 7 scale (1= *strongly disagree*, 7= *strongly agree*). The Cronbach's alpha (reliability) ranged from .76 to .86.

→ **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)** : It was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). It consisted of five items. The participants rated five items on a 7- point Likert scale, ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. The reliability of the scale ranged from .82 to .84. The scale has high convergent validity.

→ **Organizational Commitment Scale (Meyer & Allen 1997)** : The revised questionnaire consisted of 18 items or statements dealing with organizational commitment. It had sub dimensions, that is, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment. The respondents had to respond on a 7- point Likert type scale ranging from 7(*strongly agree*) to 1 (*strongly disagree*) by choosing (only) not more than one response. Cronbach's alpha (reliability) for organizational commitment ranged from .77 to .99 (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Somers & Birnbaum, 1998).

→ **Procedure** : For the purpose of carrying out the present study, the Department of Social Welfare, Ranbir Singh Pura block in Jammu district was approached. The block has 320 AWCs with 640 AWWs. We personally visited the Department and sought permission from the Child Development Project Officer (C.D.P.O) to obtain data from

the AWWs. The day when monthly progress report meeting is held was selected as all the AWWs are present on this day. The study was conducted in March 2014. The list of all the AWWs in the block was obtained. The permission to meet the AWWs and to collect data was sought nearly a month in advance for the actual collection of data. Using the random number generator, the participants to be taken as a sample were chosen. The data were collected in one day as it is possible to get the data when all the AWWs assemble at one place. Barring the meeting day, all the AWWs are engrossed in field work, and it is not possible to reach them due to large distances and remoteness of areas.

On the stipulated time and date, as per the appointment, the respective officer concerned was approached. As soon as the meeting was over, the AWWs were briefed about the purpose of the study. All the randomly selected AWWs gave their consent to participate in the study. Confidentiality was assured. The questionnaires were administered in a group. Though the questionnaires could be self-administered, every care was taken that the AWWs followed the instructions. Hence, verbal instructions were given for greater clarity. Care was taken to ensure that the participants filled in the questionnaires without consulting each other. As soon as the questionnaires were filled in, they were collected. Using the key, the scoring was done for the questionnaires. The data were coded in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS, 20th version) and were subjected to statistical analysis.

➤ **Statistical Tools/ Techniques :** The data were subjected to Pearson's product moment correlation (bivariate correlation) and multiple regression.

Analysis and Results

By subjecting the data to statistical analysis, the following results were obtained:

By examining the Table 2, correlation between affective commitment and life satisfaction is found to be positively and moderately correlated [$r(110) = +.402, p < .001$, two tailed]. With an increase in affective commitment, there will be an increase in life satisfaction of the AWWs. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Kumari & Afroz, 2013; Lambert et al., 2013; Vanaki & Vagharseyyedin, 2009; Wasti, 2002). Furthermore, the correlation between continuance commitment and life satisfaction is found to be significant at the 0.01 level [$r(110) = +.383, p < .001$, two tailed], that is, a positive correlation. An increase in continuance commitment will increase the life satisfaction. The strength of the correlation between continuance commitment and life satisfaction is found to be low. The result is consistent with the findings of Mclean and Andrew (1999). Many previous studies have contradictorily reflected a negative correlation between continuance commitment and life satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2013; Wasti, 2002). The correlation between normative commitment and life satisfaction is found to be significant at the 0.01 level [$r(110) = +.322, p < .01$, two tailed], that is, positive correlation. Thus, as the normative commitment will increase, the life satisfaction will also increase. The strength of the correlation is found to be weak.

Previously, not much work has been done in this field. The findings indicate that the more the AWWs identify with their organization and feel the need to stay within the organization, the more likely they are to be satisfied in their lives. It also indicates that when the AWWs feel it would be costly to leave the present organization because of certain reasons, and they feel that their coworkers and immediate supervisors will not consider it wise on their part to leave their organization, it would ultimately lead them to reconsider their decision, and stay in the organization. These findings support the hypothesis H1.

The Table 2 shows that the correlation between affective commitment and gratitude is significant at the 0.01 level [$r(110) = +.710, p < .001$, two tailed], that is, positive, which shows that as the affective commitment increases, the gratitude among the AWWs will also increase. The value shows a high correlation. Fazal e Hasan (2013) also found a relationship between affective commitment and gratitude. Correlation between continuance commitment and gratitude is also found to be significant at the 0.01 level [$r(110) = +.543, p < .001$, two tailed],

Table 3. Prediction of Organizational Commitment Based on Gratitude and Life Satisfaction

Criterion Variable: Organizational Commitment			
Predictor Variable	Dimension of Criterion Variable	Beta (β)	Significance
Life Satisfaction	Affective Commitment	.229	.156
Gratitude		.863	.000
Life Satisfaction	Continuance Commitment	.297	.051
Gratitude		.482	.000
Life Satisfaction	Normative Commitment	.074	.596
Gratitude		.651	.000

that is, positive, which shows that as the continuance commitment increases, the gratitude will also increase. The value shows that there is moderate correlation. A positive relationship between affective commitment and gratitude was also reported in the previous studies (Fazal e Hasan, 2013; Raggio & Folse, 2006; Ting & Yeh, 2014).

The correlation between normative commitment and gratitude is found to be significant at the 0.01 level [$r(110) = +.645, p < .001$, two tailed]. The value is positive and moderate, which shows that with an increase in normative commitment of AWWs, the gratitude increases. Previously, not much work has been done in this field. AWWs feeling grateful are committed to the organization. AWWs feel an urge to remain with their organization. The more grateful they feel, the greater is their identification with the organizational goals. Hence, AWWs felt that it is costly to leave the organization and preferred to remain and continue with their tasks, in spite of some dissatisfactions. These findings are supportive of the hypothesis H2.

Using the enter method, multiple regression was run to predict organizational commitment from life satisfaction and gratitude. A full model with all the possible predictor variables was employed for the regression analysis. Unadjusted R for the data is .716 and R^2 is .513. Both the variables in combination predict affective commitment in AWWs. The full model is statistically significant ($F = 56.346, df = 2, 107, sig = .000$).

Inspection of the coefficient table (Table 3) reveals that beta values for gratitude as a predictor of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment are significant. Raggio and Folse (2006) investigated how perceptions of gratitude predict affective commitment and reported similar findings. The current study reveals that gratitude improves an employee's affective commitment. However, only $\beta = .297$ for life satisfaction as a predictor of continuance commitment is significant, which shows that of the three components of organizational commitment, only continuance commitment is promoted by life satisfaction, as $p < .05$ (Table 3). Ali and Zilli (2013) also reported life satisfaction as a predictor of organizational commitment. Hence, gratitude is the predictor of all the components of organizational commitment, while life satisfaction predicts only continuance commitment, which leads to the acceptance of hypothesis H3.

Conclusion

The study explored the relationship between gratitude, life satisfaction, and organizational commitment. It also assessed the contribution of gratitude and life satisfaction in development of organizational commitment in AWWs. This research has provided sufficient evidence that feeling and expressing gratitude gives rise to organizational commitment. All the three components of organizational commitment, that is, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment can be maintained by nourishing gratitude well in AWWs. Gratitude brings about elevation in emotional attachment, identification, and involvement of the AWWs in the organization. It amalgamates the feel of association with the organization, thereby minimizing negative economic outcomes. Furthermore, it deepens the sense of belongingness to the organization and provides sustenance of membership within the organization. The employee's life satisfaction might affect their

continuance commitment. It is clear that even in the absence of life satisfaction, the employees' commitment to the organization gets accentuated. Though the AWWs might be low on life satisfaction, gratitude impels them to attain the goals set for them.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study has contributed to the research work in the area of positive organizational behavior and has opened an avenue for recognizing the need of developing gratitude in employees, as theoretically, the current study has indicated that gratitude is a predictor of organizational commitment. AWWs work under the social welfare department, and their main task is to help others. They are highly active in outreach activities. They need to visit and interact with villagers and disseminate correct information to them. AWWs are required to interact and communicate with others, and only committed AWWs can deal effectively and communicate better. Committed AWWs are likely to work more and for a longer duration. Special interventions may be designed to enhance gratitude in AWWs so that it boosts their prosocial behavior and also influences their commitment to their organization.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The study has some limitations; particularly, the responses given by the AWWs might be due to social desirability, and hence, may not be accurate. Due to dearth of time and limited resources, only one block within Jammu district could be covered. The study is cross sectional as it was conducted at one point of time.

The current study opens new doors for future research. As the data were collected from the AWWs only, the generalizability of the findings is limited, and only further research that would include employees from various organizations involved in social work or other social work settings might make the findings more valid and applicable. A comparative study can be conducted while drawing the sample population from other blocks. Explanatory research design was used for the present study; exploratory research design may be used in future research studies. It would be useful to consider exploring the antecedents of gratitude in social workers as it is highly relevant for their jobs.

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