

Effects of Gratitude And Trust in Volunteerism on Well Being

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Abstract

This research reports the point consistently to the conclusion that volunteer activities or volunteerism are (positively & negatively) associated with gratitude (the word gratitude has a number of different meanings, depending upon the context), trust and wellbeing. Why do significant numbers of people indulge in the unpaid helping activities known as volunteerism? What triggers the need of volunteering in people? Volunteerism is known to benefit the volunteer in many ways. One of the major benefits of volunteerism is well-being. Also, the emotion of gratitude and trust or trustworthiness has seemed to have a positive effect on an individual's well-being. Many variable differences are assessed (Age, Gender, SES, Professions etc). Sample size was (N=350). Data from 3 age groups i.e. Below 23 years, 24-55 years and 55 years and above was collected. The results revealed age difference in well-being. An association between different variables and well-being was also found. In this study, we have tried to find out the various reasons which lead an individual into volunteerism, and how being indulged in voluntary acts, gratitude and trust amongst each other affect the individual's well-being. The results have an implication for future research.

Key words : *Gratitue, Trust, Volunteerism and Well-Being*

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Introduction

Gratitude is consensually a sense of thankfulness and is in response to receiving a gift, whether the gift is a tangible benefit from specific other or a moment of a peaceful bliss evoked by the natural beauty. The word Gratitude is derived from the Latin word Gratia, means 'Grace', 'Graciousness' or 'Gratefulness'. All derivatives from the Latin root have to do with Kindness, Generousness, Gift and the beauty of giving and receiving, or getting something for nothing. (Pruyser, 1976). Prototypically, Gratitude stems from the perception that one has benefitted due to the actions of another person. There is an acknowledgement that one has received a gift

and an appreciation for and recognition of the values of that gift. A distinction can be made between personal and transpersonal gratitude.

As per traditions, Gratitude can be thought of as a virtue that contributes to living well. Classical writers focused on the good life emphasized the cultivation and expression of gratitude for the health and vitality of both citizenry and society. Across cultures and time spans, experiences and expressions of both basic and desirable aspects of human personality and social life. The first influential theoretical treatment of gratitude from a broad communal perspective arose from the political economist Adam Smith (1790/1976) in his volume ' The theory of moral sentiments'. Smith proposed

Gratitude as an essential social emotion – on a par with emotions such as resentment and affection. Gratitude is according to Smith, one of the primary motivators of benefactor. The Sociologist (Simmel, 1950) argued that gratitude was a cognitive emotional supplement to sustain one's reciprocal obligations.

Building the work of Smith, Simmel and others; McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons and Larson (2001) theorised that Gratitude is a moral effect—that is one with moral processors and consequences. McCullough et al. (2002) initially defined the disposition toward gratitude "as a generalized tendency to recognize and respond with grateful emotion to the roles of other people's benevolence in the positive experiences and outcomes that one obtains". Later, Emmons and McCullough (2003) noted broader conceptualizations of gratitude as "an emotion, an attitude, a moral virtue, a habit, a personality trait, or a coping response" (p. 377). Consistent with this broader conceptualization, they also noted that gratitude has cognitive and emotional components. Watkins et al. (2003) have chosen to focus on grateful traits and define the grateful disposition as one that predisposes an individual to experience this state. Watkins et al. define grateful affect as Guralnik (1971) does which is "a feeling of thankful appreciation for favours received". Friedman (1989, 2000) defines gratitude as being thankful for: (a) people, situations, and circumstances in life, (b) what you have received, experienced, and learned, (c) spiritual source/resources within, (d) abundance within, (e) what you give and forgive, (f) your inner qualities, and (g) future positive experiences, prosperity, and blessings.

Trust

One of the most important of these factors is trust (Kramer, 1999) because trust often is based on an expectation of reciprocity (Yamagishi and Kiyonari, 2000). It has special significance in situations of interdependence

(Chaudhuri et al. 2001). Establishing a reputation of being trustworthy can be a critical factor for eliciting cooperation in future interactions (e.g., Milinski et al. 2001). Because in-group members are attributed more positive characteristics than are out-group members (Mullen et al. 1992), they are viewed as more distinctly individual than are out-group members (Mullen and Hu, 1989) and are seen as more similar to the self. Thus, people are generally more trusting of in-group than out-group members (Turner et al. 1987) and are more likely to dismiss and forgive negative actions of in-group than the out-group members.

Trust is also a critical factor in intergroup relation – i.e., in interaction between the two groups. However, trust between groups is more difficult to achieve than between individuals. Insko, Schopler, and their colleagues have demonstrated a fundamental individual group discontinuity effect in which groups are less trusting and less trustworthy in their interactions and exchange with other groups than are individuals (Insko et al. 2001). In part as a consequence of greater disputes between individuals (Insko et al. 2004), groups are substantially less cooperative with one another than are individuals.

Volunteering

In Indian context, the word volunteerism is denoted by 'seva' or 'praopkar', In our holy book "The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice. Do thou, therefore, O son of Kunti, perform action for that sake alone, free from all attachment. (Bhagdwad Gita III:9). This law of seva is instinctively followed by every sentient and insentient member of cosmos. Individual in a community cooperatively strive, without ego or egocentric desires, the cosmic forces that constitute the environment will cherish them in return. In short, when man work with yajna spirit, the outer circumstances miraculously

changes their pattern to become conducive to the common will of the community that strives for the good for all. This concept of *seva* is very much similar to western notion of volunteerism. Volunteering – defined as freely choosing payment for community, charitable or religious organisation – would appear to be fairly straightforward activity. One widely accepted definition of voluntary work is that, in addition to it being voluntary, it takes place within a formal organisational structure, is self-governing, is not profit distributing and is independent of government (Salamon and Sokolowski 2001, Kendall and Knapp 1993). This has been described as formal volunteering and operationalized as volunteering taking place in the form of unpaid help as a part of a group, organisation or club (Staetsky and Mohan 2011). There are alternative ways to define volunteering, of course. Most commonly the definition is extended to include so-called 'informal' volunteering, so incorporating activities conducted outside of the structures of a voluntary organisation such as providing unpaid help to a friend or neighbour or society. Widening the definition of volunteering for a study such as this, however, runs the risk of incorporating activities that have heterogeneous impacts on quality of life; informal and formal volunteering may have very different meanings and significance to the roles and identities of the individuals' concerned (Wilson and Musick 1997, Williams, 2003).

Well Being

Well-being is a multidimensional concept and there is some value in attempting to tackle as many dimensions of this as possible. Three axes of well-being are worth considering. The first is to cover both positive and negative dimensions of well-being (Huppert and Whittington 2003). The second is to consider hedonic and eudemonic dimensions (Beddington et al. 2008, Vitterso 2004). The

hedonic dimension of affect is concerned with happiness and satisfaction, and is typically assessed using measures of emotional state reflecting evaluative responses to life circumstances. The eudemonic dimension covers capability and functioning that is reflected in autonomy, or self-determination and the pursuit of valued goals. Participating in voluntary activities is a component of the eudemonic dimension, so the focus here will be on the hedonic dimension of well-being. The third axis of well-being to consider is evaluated versus experienced well-being (Kahneman and Riis 2005). There is increasing interest in contrasting how life is evaluated in broad terms and the experience of affect while engaged in particular activities. It is possible that negative or positive affect while conducting an activity is not fully reflected in how one feels in general about one's life, and such differences might be meaningful for the choices we make and the outcomes we experience (Kahneman and Riis 2005).

Present Study

The focus of this paper is on Role of Volunteerism or Volunteering in Well-being, that is, Work intended to provide some benefit to another person or group of people, defined as freely choosing to work without payment for a community, charitable or religious organization – would appear to be a fairly straightforward activity leads to well-being in the society. There are many of terms which effects volunteerism (i.e., Gratitude, Compassion, Helpfulness, Curiosity, Trust etc.) (Aristotle, 2000). In this study, we only drew the effect of Gratitude and Trust in persona to intimate or participate in volunteering activities. Volunteerism can be divided into three categories, being a) altruism, b) helping, and c) cooperation. The focus of this paper lies on the category of helping since it can be considered the broadest and subgroup of volunteerism. These studies examine how the

experience of volunteering impacts on the way people feel and how they evaluate their lives as a whole. One common finding is that people who volunteer are more likely to report being happy. The service aspect of the volunteer action often results in people reporting the experience of a “warm glow” which they associate with helping someone and contributing to the public good in addition to feeling stronger and more energetic. For older persons, volunteering also leads to more positive moods, as well as less anxiety and fewer feelings of helplessness and hopelessness (Akintola, 2010).

The extant literature shows that the Gratitude and Trust have positive associations with volunteerism which leads to well-being. While encouraging, there is a great deal of variance in the reported association. We argue that the links between Trust, Gratitude, Volunteerism and Well Being are well connected to each other and effects equally. We extend this limited approach in three important ways, in which try to see their effect on volunteerism. First, we consider Gratitude in both of its positive and negative effects and trust in the same sample and measure every of dimension of both terms. Second we consider assessment of volunteerism and well-being represent each part of the model including positively effective negative effect and if evaluation. Third we investigate the association between gratitude, Thus volunteerism and well-being in the standard scale. This should allow as examine the association in the sample that has different characteristics.

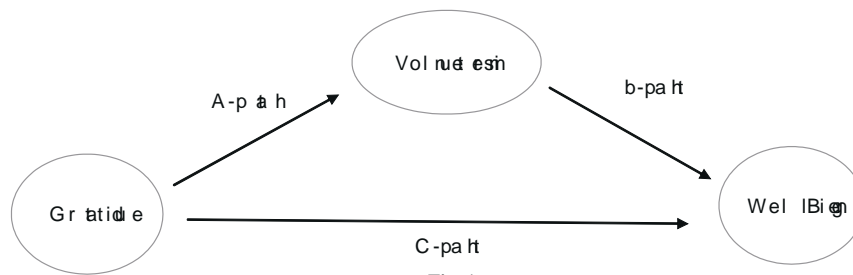


Fig. 1

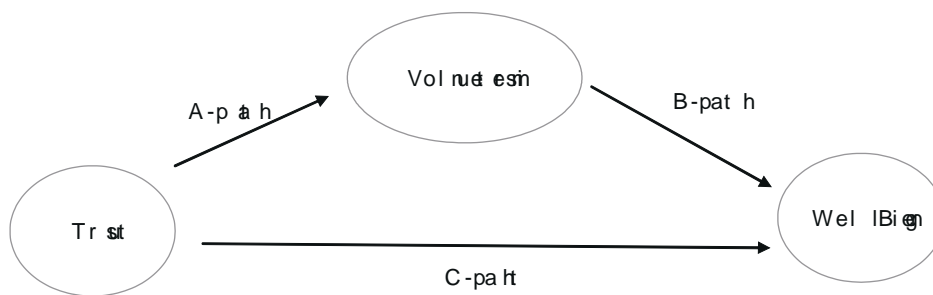


Fig. 2

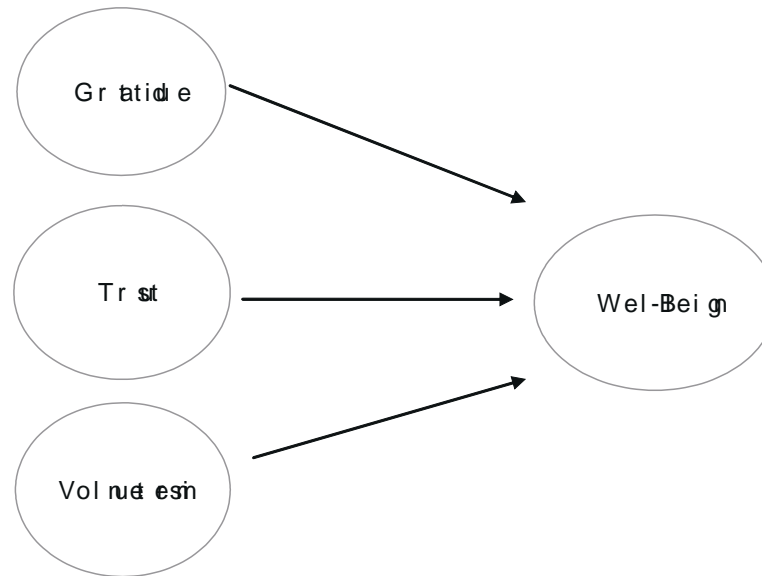


Fig. 3: Direct Effect of Gratitude, Trust and Volunteerism on Well-Being.

In general, our first aim is to assess key dimensions of trust, gratitude, and well-being and examine the associations in a unique and, as of yet, understudied sample. Our second aim in this investigation is to examine potential mediators of the forgiveness, gratitude, and well-being association. Based on existing literature showing positive connections between forgiveness, gratitude, and well-being we hypothesized that forgiveness and gratitude would be positively associated with all aspects of well-being. Also based on existing theoretical work we expected that these associations would be mediated by positive affect and belief states. Our expectations can be summarized in the general, conceptual model presented in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2.

Method

Participant and Procedures

Participant in this study were 350 of all age group from both urban and suburban area of New Delhi, who were actively participated in

volunteering activities and who wants to. The sample almost equally split by gender, age and qualification. Measure of Gratitude, Trust, Volunteerism and Well Being are completed as part of standard intake battery of assessments. All participants were treated in accordance of American Psychologist Association (APA).

Table A

Type of Voluntary Acts	F	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
No Response	23	6.6	6.6	6.6
Religious	54	15.5	15.5	22.1
Cultural	25	7.2	7.2	29.2
Economic	30	8.6	8.6	37.8
Donation	56	16	16	53.9
Environmental Conservation	21	6	6	59.9
Social Work	49	14	14	73.9
Providing Information	23	6.6	6.6	80.5
Counselling	8	2.3	2.3	82.8
Mora than 2 activities	60	17.2	17.2	100

In this study, we see the effect of gratitude and trust on volunteerism is described in terms of participation and interest and its act in well-being of individual. Dependent variables were: Types of voluntary work (i.e., religious/cultural/Economic/donation/environmental conservation/social work/political/providing information/counselling /more than activities etc.) in which ever participated, Duration for which the person has worked as volunteer and frequency of voluntary work.

Based on the literature review, we clarify the effect of gratitude and trust on volunteerism which leads to well-being. Thus, the independent variables in this study are gratitude and trust and volunteerism has been used as a mediator.

In order to analyse the effect of gratitude and trust on volunteerism in well-being, and because of the dichotomous nature of dependent (outcomes) variables, multi variant logistic regression was used. For analysing, the determinants of scope of volunteering and donating we learn multiple linear regression. This technique was developed by Mac Kinson, Lockwood and Williams, (2004); Preacher and

Hayes, (2004). It is used in order to figure out the significance of the results.

Tools

Four different scales were used to study the effect of Gratitude and Trust on volunteerism in well-being of suburban and urban population (Delhi, NCR).

1. Gratitude Dispositional Scale developed by Michael E. McCullough, Robert A. Emmons and Jo – Ann Tsang (2002) having 6 items rated on 7 point rating scale starting from 1= Strongly Disagree to 7= Strongly Agree. The scale is positively related to optimism, Life Satisfaction, Hope, Spirituality and Forgiveness, Empathy and Pro Social Behaviour. ($\alpha=0.82-0.87$)

2. General Trust Scale developed by Yamagishi, T (1984) having 5 items rated on 5 point rating scale starting from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. It is specifically designed to measure two of the main factors that form general trust: (1) belief that other people are basically honest and (2) belief that trusting others is risky. The scale is positively related to the beliefs about honesty and trustworthiness of others, in general.

3. Volunteer motivation scale developed by Clary et al (1998) having 30 items rated on 7-point rating scale starting from 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree. The scale consists of six dimensions namely value, social, career, self –enhancement, protective and understanding ($\alpha=0.75-0.89$).

4. To measure well-being of individuals we used Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The SWLS is a short 7-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. A sample item is 'The conditions of my life are excellent'. SWLS is a 7-point scale covering ratings from 'strongly disagree' through 'strongly agree'.

Result

Multi Regression Analysis was conducted to assess each component of the proposed mediation model. First, It was found that Gratitude was directly positively associated with well-being ($\beta =.63, t(350) =348, p=.00$). It

was also found that Gratitude was positively related to volunteerism, ($\beta =.32, t(350)=348, p=.00$). The analysis further revealed that Trust was directly positively related to well-being ($\beta =.189, t(350)=348, p=.03$) and also to volunteerism ($\beta =.05, t(350)=348, p=.59$). Because both the a-path and b-path were significant of gratitude to volunteerism is significant but the a-path (trust to volunteerism) is non-significant, and also b-path (volunteerism to well-being) is significant, the mediation analysis was tested using the bootstrapping method with Bias-Corrected Confidence Estimates (Mac Kinson, Lockwood and Williams, 2004; Preacher and Hayes, 2004). In addition, results indicated that the direct effect of Gratitude on Well-Being became significant, ($\beta= .63, t(350) =348, p= .00$) when controlling for volunteerism and the effect of Trust on Well-Being also became significant ($\beta = .18, t(350) = 348, p= .00$) thus suggesting full mediation. Table1 and Table2 show the results.

Table1: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Well-Being

R ²	R ² change	F-value	Significant Predictor with Beta value		
			Predictor	Beta	t-value
0.28	.27	45.45	Gratitude	.55	8.78**
			Volunteerism	.22	5.18**
			Trust	.12	1.71*

**p<.01, *p<.05

Table2: Multiple Regression Analysis for Well-Being

Models	Predictor	Beta	t-value	Adjusted R2	F-value
1a	Gratitude	.63	9.91**	.27	66.34
1b	Trust	.19	2.14**	.11	24.27
2a	Volunteerism(As a mediating variable)	.33	6.61**	.11	43.81
3a	Gratitude	.56	8.89**	.27	66.34
3b	Trust	.18	2.08**	.11	24.27

**p<.01, *p<.05

Conclusion

The first aim of this study was to utilize key assessments of gratitude, trust, volunteerism and well-being and examine their associations in a sample of participants of all age groups and gender. It was hypothesized that gratitude and trust would be positively associated with all of the measures of volunteerism which leads to well-being. Bivariate results show strong support for this hypothesis. Associations between trust and volunteerism in well-being variables were moderate-to-strong in size as of previous studies of Whitener et al., (1998). Associations between gratitude and well-being variables were strong and consistent with previous work in terms of magnitude (Emmons and McCullough 2003; McCullough et al. 2002). The study revealed that the pattern of gratitude and trust positively effects volunteerism and leads to well-being. The study also revealed a positive relationship between volunteering and well-being: this finding is consistent with the studies of Akintola (2010) and Dag Hammarskjold (1975). The size of the associations is particularly impressive. The lowest correlation in the present study was .635 and the highest was .188.

In fact, evidence for the same already exists. Emmons and McCullough (2003) have demonstrated the effectiveness of gratitude manipulations as have Friedman and Toussaint (2006a). In both cases, positive changes in gratitude are linked with positive changes in well-being. Recently, Seligman et al. (2005) have also demonstrated that gratitude effects may have lasting value for well-being, which extends for one month and of the relation between trust and volunteerism by Whitener et al. (1998) and also the studies of Akintola (2010) and Dag Hammarskjold (1975) about the positive relation of volunteerism to well-being. However, the findings in the present study paint a dramatically different picture. All associations

between volunteerism and well-being were statistically significant, most at the $p < .001$ level, and moderate-to-strong in magnitude. Perhaps trust has its most dramatic effects for those who are struggling with significant relationship issues. This is an important issue because it appears that trust of oneself has the strongest connection to well-being out of all different types of forgiveness that were assessed. To our knowledge, the present study is the first study of its kind to examine the effect of gratitude, trust on volunteerism which leads to well-being in a unique sample of different categories which clear the view that the association of gratitude and trust positively affects the volunteerism and having strong relation to well-being.

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