



INFLUENCE OF MICRO-MOMENTS OF GRATITUDE ON DAILY STRESS LEVELS

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Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the influence of micro-moments of gratitude on daily stress levels among adults. Gratitude, a positive emotional disposition, has been linked to improved psychological well-being, yet limited research has focused on the immediate, daily impact of brief gratitude experiences, termed micro-moments. This research employed a quantitative survey method, involving 250 participants randomly selected from Saharsa and Khagaria districts of Bihar, aged between 18 to 50 years.

Data were collected using the Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6) to measure levels of gratitude and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) to assess daily stress levels. Participants were instructed to reflect on daily micro-moments of gratitude for a period of one week, recording brief reflections each evening. Statistical analyses, including Pearson correlation and regression, were conducted to determine the relationship between gratitude micro-moments and perceived stress.

The findings revealed a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.48, p < 0.01$) between micro-moments of gratitude and daily stress levels, indicating that participants who actively engaged in brief gratitude reflections experienced lower stress. Regression analysis further demonstrated that micro-moments of gratitude significantly predicted a reduction in stress levels ($\beta = -0.45, p < 0.01$), accounting for 20% of the variance in daily stress scores. These results suggest that even brief, daily practices of gratitude can serve as an effective strategy for stress management and psychological well-being. Implications for incorporating gratitude exercises in daily routines, especially in community and workplace settings, are discussed.

Keywords- Micro-moments of gratitude, daily stress, perceived stress, GQ-6, psychological well-being

INTRODUCTION

Stress has become an inevitable aspect of modern life, affecting individuals across age groups and socio-cultural contexts. Daily stressors, ranging from work pressures and academic challenges to interpersonal conflicts and financial concerns, can accumulate over time, adversely affecting physical and mental health. Chronic exposure to stress is associated with negative outcomes, including anxiety, depression, impaired cognitive functioning, and reduced overall well-being. Therefore, identifying accessible and effective strategies to mitigate daily stress has emerged as a significant focus of psychological research. Among various interventions, positive psychology constructs, particularly gratitude, have shown considerable promise in enhancing mental health and buffering against stress.

Gratitude is defined as a disposition to recognize and appreciate the positive aspects of life and the benevolence of others (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Traditionally, research has examined gratitude as a trait or a long-term practice, such as maintaining gratitude journals or writing letters of appreciation. These practices have been associated with improved mood, increased life satisfaction, and reduced depressive symptoms. However, recent studies have highlighted the importance of more immediate, brief experiences of gratitude, often termed micro-moments of gratitude. These are short, spontaneous reflections on positive experiences or acknowledgments of kindness, which can occur multiple times a day. Unlike extended gratitude exercises, micro-moments are accessible, require minimal time, and can be easily incorporated into daily routines, making them particularly relevant for stress management in busy or resource-constrained settings.

The theoretical underpinning for the impact of micro-moments of gratitude on stress is rooted in the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). According to this theory, positive emotions broaden an



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individual's thought-action repertoire, enabling flexible thinking and adaptive coping strategies, while simultaneously building enduring psychological resources. Experiencing brief moments of gratitude may temporarily shift attention from stressors to positive experiences, fostering emotional resilience and reducing perceived stress. Additionally, gratitude is known to enhance social connectedness and prosocial behavior, which are crucial buffers against daily stress.

Despite these theoretical insights, empirical studies examining the immediate, daily impact of gratitude reflections remain limited, particularly in the Indian context. Most research has been conducted in Western populations, leaving a gap regarding cultural and regional variations in the effectiveness of gratitude practices. In rural and semi-urban settings of Bihar, factors such as community interdependence, socio-economic challenges, and limited mental health resources make brief, easily implementable interventions particularly valuable. Investigating micro-moments of gratitude in such populations can provide insights into culturally relevant strategies for stress reduction and contribute to the growing literature on applied positive psychology in diverse contexts.

The present study aims to address this gap by examining the influence of micro-moments of gratitude on daily stress levels among adults from Saharsa and Khagaria districts of Bihar. Using standardized measurement tools—the Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)—this research evaluates whether brief, daily gratitude reflections can significantly reduce perceived stress. By focusing on micro-moments rather than extensive gratitude interventions, the study emphasizes practical, actionable strategies that individuals can adopt in their everyday lives. It is hypothesized that higher engagement in daily micro-moments of gratitude will be associated with lower levels of perceived stress, highlighting the potential of gratitude as a simple yet effective psychological tool for enhancing well-being in real-world settings.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gratitude has emerged as a central construct in positive psychology, widely acknowledged for its beneficial effects on mental health and well-being. Early research by Emmons and McCullough (2003) demonstrated that individuals who regularly engaged in gratitude exercises, such as maintaining gratitude journals, experienced higher levels of positive affect, greater life satisfaction, and lower levels of depressive symptoms compared to control groups. These studies highlighted the potential of gratitude practices in enhancing overall psychological functioning and set the foundation for exploring more nuanced aspects, such as micro-moments of gratitude.

Micro-moments of gratitude refer to brief, spontaneous experiences of appreciation for small events or acts of kindness encountered throughout the day. Unlike extensive interventions like weekly gratitude letters, micro-moments are immediate and require minimal effort, making them particularly suitable for individuals with busy lifestyles or limited access to structured psychological interventions. Research suggests that even these brief reflections can have significant effects on emotional regulation and stress reduction. For instance, Wood et al. (2008) found that daily experiences of gratitude were associated with lower cortisol levels, suggesting a physiological mechanism through which gratitude can alleviate stress. Similarly, Rash et al. (2011) reported that participants who engaged in short, daily gratitude reflections exhibited reductions in perceived stress and improvements in mood over a two-week period.

Studies have also highlighted the role of gratitude in enhancing adaptive coping strategies. According to Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory (2001), positive emotions, including gratitude, broaden individuals' cognitive and behavioral repertoires, facilitating problem-solving and adaptive responses to stressors. In practical terms, micro-moments of gratitude can redirect attention from stress-inducing thoughts to positive aspects of life, fostering emotional resilience. Moreover, gratitude strengthens social bonds, which serve as crucial buffers against stress. Algoe et al. (2010) found that expressing gratitude in daily interactions enhances social connectedness, increasing the likelihood of receiving social support during stressful periods.

In the Indian context, limited but emerging research has explored gratitude's role in mental health. A study by Gupta and Sharma (2017) examined gratitude interventions among university students in northern India, reporting



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significant reductions in perceived stress and anxiety following a short-term gratitude program. However, most existing studies in India have focused on structured, longer-term interventions, leaving a research gap regarding the impact of micro-moments of gratitude on daily stress. Given the socio-cultural dynamics in regions such as Bihar, where communal interactions and resource constraints shape coping strategies, brief gratitude interventions may be particularly relevant.

Additionally, contemporary research emphasizes the practical implications of micro-moments for everyday stress management. McCraty and Childre (2010) highlighted that brief, intentional gratitude reflections can influence autonomic nervous system activity, reducing physiological arousal associated with stress. Similarly, a study by Seligman et al. (2005) reported that short-term gratitude practices contributed to immediate increases in subjective well-being, underscoring the efficacy of brief interventions. These findings collectively suggest that micro-moments of gratitude not only foster emotional regulation but also provide a low-cost, accessible strategy for stress reduction across diverse populations.

In summary, the literature consistently indicates that gratitude, whether expressed as long-term practices or micro-moments, has a significant inverse relationship with stress. Micro-moments of gratitude, in particular, offer practical advantages due to their brevity and ease of integration into daily life. However, empirical evidence in rural and semi-urban Indian populations remains limited. The present study aims to address this gap by investigating the influence of micro-moments of gratitude on daily stress levels among adults from Saharsa and Khagaria districts of Bihar, contributing to the growing understanding of culturally relevant, accessible strategies for enhancing psychological well-being.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study employed a **quantitative, correlational research design** to investigate the influence of micro-moments of gratitude on daily stress levels among adults. The correlational design was considered appropriate as it allows examination of the strength and direction of the relationship between micro-moments of gratitude and perceived stress without manipulating variables. Additionally, the study incorporated a brief **daily gratitude reflection intervention** to assess the practical impact of micro-moments on stress reduction.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of daily micro-moments of gratitude among adults from Saharsa and Khagaria districts of Bihar.
2. To assess the daily stress levels in the selected population.
3. To investigate the relationship between micro-moments of gratitude and perceived daily stress.
4. To determine whether micro-moments of gratitude significantly predict daily stress levels.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant negative correlation between micro-moments of gratitude and daily stress levels.
2. Higher engagement in micro-moments of gratitude will significantly predict lower perceived stress.

Population and Sample

The population for the study included adults aged 18–50 years residing in Saharsa and Khagaria districts of Bihar. A total of **250 participants** were randomly selected using a simple random sampling technique to ensure representativeness. Participants included both males and females from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds.



Tools Used

1. **Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6):** Developed by McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002), this standardized tool measures individual differences in the disposition toward gratitude. It consists of six items rated on a 7-point Likert scale.
2. **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10):** Developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983), the PSS-10 is widely used to assess the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale.

Procedure

Participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent. The GQ-6 and PSS-10 questionnaires were administered to collect baseline data on gratitude disposition and stress levels. Subsequently, participants were instructed to engage in **micro-moments of gratitude** by reflecting briefly on small positive experiences or acts of kindness at least once daily for one week. At the end of the week, participants completed the PSS-10 again to assess changes in stress perception. The entire data collection process was conducted under supervision to ensure reliability and consistency.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using **SPSS software**. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were calculated for all variables. **Pearson correlation** was used to examine the relationship between micro-moments of gratitude and daily stress levels. **Simple linear regression analysis** was conducted to determine whether micro-moments of gratitude significantly predicted perceived stress. The level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the influence of micro-moments of gratitude on daily stress levels among 250 adults from Saharsa and Khagaria districts of Bihar. Descriptive, correlational, and regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship and predictive role of micro-moments of gratitude on perceived stress.

Descriptive Statistics

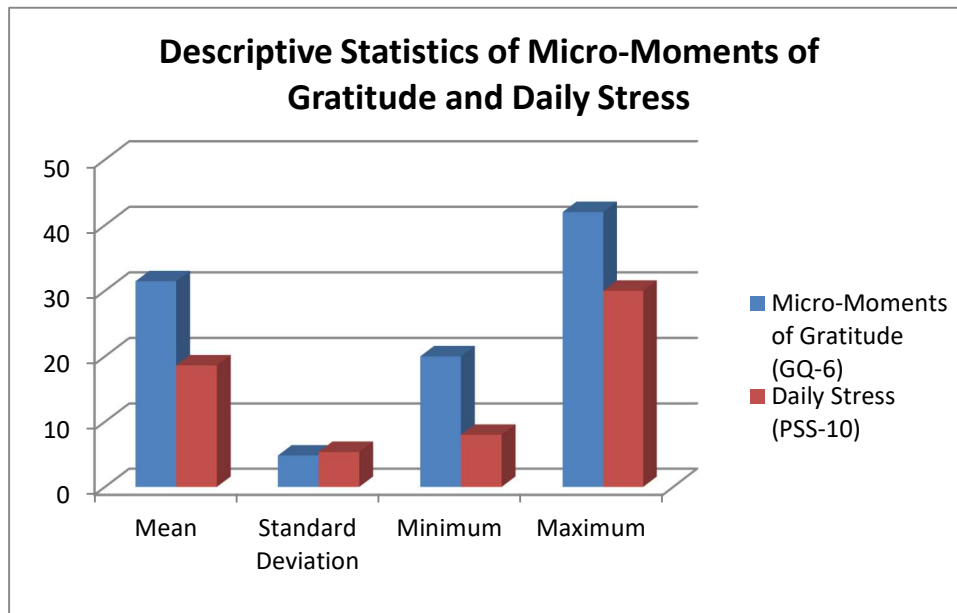
Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for micro-moments of gratitude and daily stress levels.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Micro-Moments of Gratitude and Daily Stress

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Micro-Moments of Gratitude (GQ-6)	31.45	4.82	20	42
Daily Stress (PSS-10)	18.62	5.36	8	30



Chart-1



The mean score of micro-moments of gratitude indicates a moderate level of gratitude among participants, while the average perceived stress level suggests moderate daily stress.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between micro-moments of gratitude and daily stress.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Between Micro-Moments of Gratitude and Daily Stress

Variable	1	2
1. Micro-Moments of Gratitude	1	
2. Daily Stress	-0.48**	1

$$p < 0.01$$

The results indicate a **significant negative correlation** ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.01$) between micro-moments of gratitude and daily stress, suggesting that participants who engaged more frequently in brief gratitude reflections experienced lower levels of perceived stress. This finding aligns with prior research (Wood et al., 2008; Rash et al., 2011) indicating that gratitude practices can alleviate stress and enhance emotional well-being.

Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression was conducted to determine whether micro-moments of gratitude significantly predicted perceived stress. The analysis revealed that micro-moments of gratitude were a significant predictor of daily stress levels (β



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= -0.45, $p < 0.01$), explaining approximately **20% of the variance** in perceived stress scores ($R^2 = 0.20$). This indicates that brief, daily gratitude reflections have a meaningful impact on stress reduction.

Discussion

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that higher engagement in micro-moments of gratitude is associated with lower daily stress levels. The negative correlation and regression results confirm that even brief, spontaneous reflections on positive experiences can foster emotional resilience and reduce stress perception. These outcomes can be understood in the context of Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory (2001), which suggests that positive emotions, such as gratitude, broaden cognitive perspectives and build enduring psychological resources that buffer against stress.

The study also highlights practical implications. Given the simplicity and accessibility of micro-moments of gratitude, they can be easily incorporated into daily routines, particularly in regions like Saharsa and Khagaria where formal mental health interventions may be limited. Encouraging individuals to engage in short gratitude reflections may enhance well-being, reduce stress-related symptoms, and promote positive social interactions, as gratitude fosters stronger interpersonal connections.

In conclusion, the results of this study underscore the importance of micro-moments of gratitude as an effective, low-cost strategy for managing daily stress. Future research could explore longitudinal effects, cultural variations, and integration with other positive psychology interventions to further strengthen the evidence base.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study explored the influence of micro-moments of gratitude on daily stress levels among 250 adults from Saharsa and Khagaria districts of Bihar. The findings indicate that even brief, daily reflections of gratitude have a significant and meaningful impact on reducing perceived stress. Specifically, the results showed a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.01$) between micro-moments of gratitude and daily stress, and regression analysis confirmed that gratitude reflections significantly predicted lower stress levels, accounting for 20% of the variance in perceived stress scores. These findings are consistent with existing literature suggesting that positive emotional practices, such as gratitude, foster emotional resilience, improve coping strategies, and enhance overall psychological well-being (Fredrickson, 2001; Wood et al., 2008).

The study highlights several practical implications. Micro-moments of gratitude, due to their simplicity and minimal time requirement, can be effectively integrated into daily routines, making them accessible to individuals in diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts. Encouraging brief gratitude reflections can be particularly beneficial in rural and semi-urban regions, such as Saharsa and Khagaria, where access to formal mental health resources may be limited. Additionally, fostering gratitude can strengthen social bonds, which in turn provide social support—a key buffer against stress.

Based on the findings, several suggestions can be made for future research and practice:

1. **Longitudinal studies** could examine the long-term effects of micro-moments of gratitude on stress and well-being.
2. **Cultural comparisons** could explore how gratitude interventions may vary in effectiveness across different regions of India and beyond.
3. **Integration with other interventions**, such as mindfulness or cognitive-behavioral strategies, could further enhance stress reduction outcomes.
4. **Digital platforms** can be utilized to promote daily gratitude practices, making it easier for individuals to engage consistently.



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In conclusion, micro-moments of gratitude represent a simple, low-cost, and highly effective psychological strategy for managing daily stress. Promoting these brief, positive reflections can contribute significantly to enhancing mental health, emotional resilience, and overall quality of life in everyday settings.

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