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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Evaluating the Predictive Role of Attachment Style, Love Attitude and Spiritual Intelligence on Quality of Life

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Abstract
Quality of life (QoL) is shaped by a complex interplay of relational and psychological processes, yet the integrated contribution of attachment styles, love attitudes, and spiritual intelligence remains insufficiently understood, particularly in non-Western contexts. The present study examined the predictive role of these constructs in a sample of 201 young adults (18–30 years) in India. Participants completed standardized measures of attachment, love attitudes, spiritual intelligence, and QoL. Data were analysed using hierarchical multiple regression to assess the incremental contribution of each set of predictors. Attachment styles significantly predicted QoL in the initial model, with anxious attachment negatively associated and dependent attachment positively associated with QoL. The inclusion of love attitudes explained additional variance, with eros and pragma emerging as negative predictors and mania as a positive predictor. In the final step, spiritual intelligence contributed significant incremental variance, with personal meaning production and conscious state expansion emerging as positive predictors. However, in the combined model, only selected predictors retained significance, indicating substantial shared variance across constructs. These findings suggest that quality of life is best understood as an outcome of interacting relational and meaning-making systems, where attachment-based regulation and existential resources play a more foundational role than romantic attitudes alone. The results are discussed in light of attachment theory, meaning-making frameworks, and the cultural context of emerging adulthood in India.

Keywords: attachment style, love attitudes, spiritual intelligence, quality of life, young adults

INTRODUCTION

Quality of life (QoL) has emerged as a central construct in psychological research, reflecting individuals' subjective evaluation of their well-being across emotional, relational, and existential domains. It is increasingly understood as a dynamic outcome of interactions between personal dispositions and contextual demands rather than a static condition (Ryff, 2014). This construct is particularly salient during emerging adulthood, a developmental stage characterized by identity exploration, relational transitions, and heightened emotional vulnerability (Arnett, 2015; Schulenberg et al., 2004). Understanding the psychological factors that contribute to QoL during this stage is therefore critical for both theoretical advancement and applied interventions.

One of the most influential frameworks for understanding well-being is attachment theory, proposed by John Bowlby, which posits that early caregiver–child interactions lead to the development of internal working models that guide emotional regulation and interpersonal functioning across the lifespan (Bowlby, 1980). These attachment patterns influence expectations, affective responses, and behaviour in later relationships (Cozolino, 2016). A substantial body of research indicates that attachment security is associated with resilience, emotional stability, and life satisfaction, whereas insecure attachment, particularly anxious attachment is linked to maladaptive coping, heightened stress reactivity, and poorer psychological adjustment (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Cassidy & Shaver, 2016; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). These patterns extend into adult romantic relationships, where attachment influences relational satisfaction, stability, and overall well-being (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Ainsworth et al., 1978; Craparo, 2014).

Closely related to attachment processes are individuals' love attitudes, conceptualized by John Alan Lee as enduring orientations toward romantic relationships, including eros, pragma, mania, ludus, storge, and agape (Lee, 1973). These attitudes function as cognitive–emotional schemas that shape expectations, emotional investment, and conflict resolution within intimate relationships (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006). Empirical evidence suggests that love styles such as eros and pragma are generally associated with relational satisfaction and stability, whereas mania and ludus are linked with relational distress and instability (Neto & da

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Conceição Pinto, 2014; Galinha et al., 2013). Given that relational quality is a key determinant of life satisfaction (Simpson et al., 2007), love attitudes may indirectly contribute to broader quality of life. However, existing research has largely focused on relationship outcomes rather than overall QoL, leaving an important empirical gap.

Beyond relational processes, spiritual intelligence (SI) has emerged as a significant existential predictor of well-being. Defined as the capacity to derive meaning, reflect on ultimate concerns, and integrate life experiences into a coherent framework (King & DeCicco, 2009; Zohar & Marshall, 2000), SI extends beyond cognitive and emotional intelligence. It facilitates adaptive meaning-making, resilience, and value-based living (Emmons, 2000). Empirical studies have demonstrated positive associations between spiritual intelligence, psychological health, and quality of life (Tyagi & Sharma, 2018; Pinto et al., 2024; Rakhshani et al., 2024). In particular, dimensions such as personal meaning production play a critical role in enhancing life satisfaction by enabling individuals to interpret experiences in a purposeful and coherent manner.

Importantly, these processes are embedded within a cultural context. In collectivist societies such as India, relational interdependence, family structures, and culturally grounded meaning systems play a central role in shaping well-being. Family bonds and social networks often buffer the negative effects of insecure attachment, while spiritual and philosophical traditions emphasize meaning-making and resilience (Suchday, 2024; Pinto et al., 2024). This cultural framework may enhance the salience of both relational and existential processes in determining QoL, compared to more individualistic contexts.

Despite substantial research on attachment, love attitudes, and spiritual intelligence independently, there is limited work integrating these constructs within a single explanatory framework of quality of life. The present study addresses this gap by examining their combined and incremental contributions using a hierarchical multiple regression approach. Guided by theory, attachment styles are conceptualized as foundational relational dispositions, love attitudes as more proximal relational expressions, and spiritual intelligence as a higher-order meaning-making capacity.

Accordingly, the study aims to (a) examine the predictive role of attachment styles, love attitudes, and spiritual intelligence on quality of life, (b) assess the incremental contribution of each domain, and (c) understand how relational and existential processes jointly shape well-being among young adults in the Indian context.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The present study was conducted on a sample of young adults recruited through purposive sampling. A total of N = 201 participants participated in the study. The age of the participants ranged within emerging adulthood, with a mean age of 22.02 years (SD = 2.61). The sample consisted of 49.8% males and 50.2% females. With regard to educational status, 60.7% were undergraduate students, 31.8% were postgraduate students, and 7.5% were engaged in employment or doctoral-level studies. A majority of the participants were from urban areas (82.6%), while 17.4% belonged to rural backgrounds. In terms of family structure, 72.1% of the participants reported belonging to nuclear families and 27.9% to joint families. Participants were included based on their willingness to participate and ability to comprehend the questionnaire. Incomplete responses were excluded from the final analysis.

Measures

Quality of Life: Quality of life was assessed using the WHOQOL-BREF developed by the World Health Organization (WHO, 1996). The scale consists of 26 items measuring four domains: physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environmental well-being. Participants rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale. Domain scores were computed following the standard scoring procedure prescribed by the WHO, with higher scores indicating better perceived quality of life. In the present study, a total QoL score was computed by aggregating across the four domains to represent overall well-being. The WHOQOL-BREF has demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity across diverse cultural contexts, including Indian samples.

Attachment Style: Attachment style was assessed using a self-report measure capturing three dimensions: secure attachment, anxious attachment, and dependent attachment. The conceptual basis of the scale lies in attachment theory proposed by John Bowlby (1980), which posits that early interactions with caregivers shape internal working models that influence emotional regulation and interpersonal relationships. The scale items reflect patterns of trust, dependency, and anxiety in close relationships. Participants responded on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating stronger endorsement of the respective attachment style. Previous studies have reported acceptable reliability and construct validity for these dimensions in adult populations.

Love Attitudes: Love attitudes were measured using the Love Attitudes Scale (LAS) based on the typology proposed by John Alan Lee (1973) and operationalized by Clyde Hendrick and Susan Hendrick (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). The scale assesses six distinct love styles: Eros, Ludus, Storge, Pragma, Mania, and Agape. Each subscale consists of items rated on a Likert scale, reflecting different orientations toward romantic relationships. Eros represents passionate love, Ludus reflects game-playing love, Storge indicates friendship-based love, Pragma represents practical considerations, Mania reflects possessiveness, and Agape denotes altruistic love. The LAS has been widely used in research on romantic relationships and has demonstrated adequate psychometric properties.

Spiritual Intelligence: Spiritual intelligence was measured using the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI-24) developed by David B King (King & DeCicco, 2009). The scale comprises four dimensions: Critical Existential Thinking (CET), Personal Meaning Production (PMP), Transcendental Awareness (TA), and Conscious State Expansion (CSE). Participants respond on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating greater levels of spiritual intelligence. The SISRI-24 has demonstrated good internal consistency and construct validity, and has been used in diverse cultural contexts.

Procedure

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising all the above-mentioned scales. The questionnaires were administered in both online and

offline formats to ensure wider accessibility. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Participants were instructed to respond to all items honestly and were free to withdraw at any stage of the study. The average time taken to complete the questionnaire was approximately 20–25 minutes.

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 22). Initially, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed for all study variables. Pearson's product–moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among attachment styles, love attitudes, spiritual intelligence dimensions, and quality of life.

To examine the predictive role of the independent variables on quality of life, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed. The variables were entered in blocks based on theoretical rationale:

Step 1: Attachment style dimensions (secure, anxious, dependent)

Step 2: Love attitude dimensions (eros, ludus, storge, pragma, mania, agape)

Step 3: Spiritual intelligence dimensions (CET, PMP, TA, CSE)

This hierarchical approach enabled the assessment of the incremental contribution ($\triangle R^2$) of each set of variables in explaining variance in quality of life.

RESULTS OF STUDY

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1. A total of 201 young adults participated in the study, with a mean age of 22.02 years (SD = 2.61). The gender distribution was nearly balanced (49.8% male; 50.2% female). Most participants were undergraduate (UG) students (60.7%), followed by postgraduate (PG) students (31.8%), and those who were employed and/or enrolled in PhD programs (7.5%). Regarding place of residence, the sample was predominantly urban (82.6%), with a smaller proportion from rural areas (17.4%). In terms of family structure, 72.1% reported living in nuclear families and 27.9% in joint families. Overall, the sample primarily represents urban, college-based emerging adults; therefore, the findings should be interpreted within this demographic context.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 201)

Variable	Categories	Frequency (%) / Mean ± SD
Age	–	22.02 ± 2.61
Sex	Male	49.8%
	Female	50.2%
Education	UG	60.7%
	PG	31.8%
	Job/PhD	7.5%
Area	Urban	82.6%
	Rural	17.4%
Family Type	Nuclear	72.1%
	Joint	27.9%

Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations among all study variables are presented in Table 2. Pearson correlations indicated that quality of life (QoL) was significantly associated with several relational and existential constructs. For attachment dimensions, QoL was negatively correlated with anxious attachment ($r = -.28$, $p < .001$) and positively correlated with secure attachment ($r = .19$, $p < .01$) and dependent attachment ($r = .26$, $p < .001$). This pattern suggests that greater attachment-related anxiety is associated with lower QoL, whereas greater relational security and reliance on close relationships are associated with higher QoL at the bivariate level.

Table 2. Zero-Order Correlations Among Study Variables (N = 201)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. QoL	—													
2. Anxiety	-.28***	—												
3. Secure	.19**	-.32***	—											
4. Dependent	.26***	-.21**	.34***	—										
5. Eros	-.25***	.18*	-.12	-.09	—									
6. Ludus	.08	.14*	-.05	.03	.31***	—								
7. Storge	.10	-.06	.22**	.17*	-.18*	-.11	—							
8. Pragma	-.21**	.12	-.08	-.04	.26***	.29***	-.09	—						
9. Mania	.21**	.22**	-.08	.19**	.27***	.33***	-.12	.24***	—					
10. Agape	-.05	-.09	.18*	.11	-.14*	-.07	.21**	-.10	-.06	—				
11. CET	-.12	.16*	-.10	-.08	.11	.18*	-.05	.09	.13	-.07	—			
12. PMP	.34***	-.19**	.21**	.18*	-.15*	-.12	.14*	-.11	.16*	.09	.31***	—		
13. TA	-.07	.11	-.04	-.02	.08	.13	-.06	.10	.09	-.05	.28***	.34***	—	
14. CSE	.23**	-.14*	.16*	.12	-.09	-.06	.11	-.08	.15*	.07	.36***	.41***	.29***	—

Note. QoL = Quality of Life; CET = Critical Existential Thinking; PMP = Personal Meaning Production; TA = Transcendental Awareness; CSE = Conscious State Expansion.
$p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$.

With respect to love attitudes, QoL was negatively correlated with Eros (r = −.25, p < .001) and Pragma (r = −.21, p < .01) and positively correlated with Mania (r = .21, p < .01). In contrast, Ludus, Storge, and Agape were not significantly associated with QoL (ps > .05). Notably, several love attitudes were moderately intercorrelated (e.g., Eros–Ludus r = .31, Ludus–Mania r = .33, Eros–Mania r = .27), indicating overlapping variance among these predictors that could influence estimates when entered simultaneously in multivariable models.

For spiritual intelligence, QoL was positively correlated with Personal Meaning Production (PMP) (r = .34, p < .001) and Conscious State Expansion (CSE) (r = .23, p < .01), whereas Critical Existential Thinking (CET) and Transcendental Awareness (TA) were not significantly related to QoL (ps > .05). The spiritual intelligence subdimensions also showed moderate intercorrelations (e.g., PMP–CSE r = .41, CET–CSE r = .36, PMP–TA r = .34), suggesting shared variance across the SI facets.

Prior to conducting regression analyses, the assumptions of multiple regression were evaluated and found to be adequately met. Multicollinearity was within acceptable limits (VIFs < 3; tolerance > .20), the Durbin–Watson statistic supported independence of errors, residual plots were consistent with normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity, and no influential cases were identified based on Cook′s distance.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted in three theoretically ordered blocks (attachment → love attitudes → spiritual intelligence). The final model including all 13 predictors was statistically significant, R^2 = .342, adjusted R^2 = .296, F(13, 187) = 7.48, p < .001, indicating that the predictors collectively accounted for 34.2% of the variance in QoL (Table 3). The final block (spiritual intelligence) contributed additional explained variance beyond prior steps (ΔR^2 = .096, approximately 9.6%).

In the fully adjusted model, five predictors showed significant unique associations with QoL. Dependent attachment was a positive predictor (B = 0.535, SE = 0.227, β = 0.150, p = .020; 95% CI [0.087, 0.983]), indicating that a one-unit increase in dependent attachment corresponded to a 0.535-unit increase in QoL, holding other predictors constant. Eros was a significant negative predictor (B = −1.108, SE = 0.333, β = −0.250, p = .001; 95% CI [−1.765, −0.451]), such that higher Eros scores were associated with lower QoL after adjustment. Mania was a significant positive predictor (B = 0.876, SE = 0.267, β = 0.232, p = .001; 95% CI [0.349, 1.403]). Among spiritual intelligence facets, PMP emerged as the strongest positive predictor (B = 0.966, SE = 0.319, β = 0.301, p = .003; 95% CI [0.336, 1.596]), and CSE also showed a positive association with QoL (B = 0.617, SE = 0.308, β = 0.205, p = .046; 95% CI [0.010, 1.224]), although the lower bound of the confidence interval approached zero, indicating a comparatively smaller and borderline effect.

Several predictors did not retain statistical significance in the final model despite some having significant zero-order correlations with QoL. Anxious attachment remained negative but was not significant (p = .069), secure attachment was not significant (p = .819), and Pragma remained negative but did not reach significance (p = .091). Likewise, CET was negative but not significant (p = .063), and TA was not significant (p = .360). This attenuation from bivariate to multivariable associations suggests that part of the initial correlations with QoL may be attributable to shared variance among intercorrelated predictors; when considered simultaneously, only a subset of variables explained unique variance in QoL.

Table 3. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Quality of Life (Final Model, N = 201)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI for B	VIF
Anxiety	-0.346	0.189	-0.119	-1.828	.069	[-0.719, 0.027]	2.12
Secure	0.042	0.185	0.015	0.229	.819	[-0.323, 0.407]	1.84
Dependent	0.535	0.227	0.150	2.352	.020	[0.087, 0.983]	2.31
Eros	-1.108	0.333	-0.250	-3.331	.001	[-1.765, -0.451]	2.74
Ludus	0.368	0.297	0.080	1.241	.216	[-0.218, 0.954]	2.11
Storge	0.143	0.272	0.039	0.526	.599	[-0.394, 0.680]	1.96
Pragma	-0.494	0.291	-0.121	-1.699	.091	[-1.068, 0.080]	2.63
Mania	0.876	0.267	0.232	3.281	.001	[0.349, 1.403]	2.58
Agape	-0.332	0.304	-0.078	-1.094	.276	[-0.932, 0.268]	2.09
CET	-0.424	0.227	-0.182	-1.868	.063	[-0.872, 0.024]	2.41
PMP	0.966	0.319	0.301	3.031	.003	[0.336, 1.596]	2.97
TA	-0.244	0.266	-0.091	-0.918	.360	[-0.769, 0.281]	2.28
CSE	0.617	0.308	0.205	2.005	.046	[0.010, 1.224]	2.36

Note. DV = Quality of Life. B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized coefficient.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the combined influence of attachment styles, love attitudes, and spiritual intelligence on quality of life among young adults. The findings suggest that while each construct contributes to QoL, their effects are interdependent and reflect broader psychological systems rather than isolated influences.

Attachment styles accounted for a significant proportion of variance in QoL, consistent with extensive literature linking attachment security to well-being and emotional regulation (Bowlby, 1980; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016; Dagan et al., 2021). The negative association of anxious attachment aligns with prior findings demonstrating its relationship with heightened stress reactivity and maladaptive coping (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). The positive association of dependent attachment may reflect context-specific relational patterns, particularly in collectivist cultures where interdependence is normative (Chadda & Deb, 2020).

The inclusion of love attitudes explained additional variance in QoL. This is consistent with the view that

romantic orientations influence relational satisfaction and emotional experiences, which in turn shape well-being (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). However, their reduced significance in the final model suggests that their effects may be partially subsumed under broader relational frameworks such as attachment.

Spiritual intelligence emerged as a significant predictor, particularly the dimension of personal meaning production. This finding aligns with research emphasizing the role of meaning-making in psychological well-being and life satisfaction (King & DeCicco, 2009; Ryff, 2014; Park, 2021). The ability to derive meaning from life experiences may serve as a critical resource for coping and adaptation, thereby enhancing quality of life.

Relational Regulation and Meaning-Making as Core Mechanisms: The findings support a dual-process framework in which quality of life is shaped by relational regulation and meaning-making systems. Attachment theory posits that internal working models guide emotional responses and interpersonal behaviour across contexts (Bowlby, 1980). Secure relational patterns facilitate adaptive regulation and support-seeking, which are central to well-being (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

Simultaneously, meaning-making processes, as reflected in spiritual intelligence, allow individuals to interpret and integrate life experiences in a coherent manner. Contemporary models of meaning-making highlight its central role in resilience, psychological adjustment, and life satisfaction (Park, 2021). The role of personal meaning production in predicting QoL thus reinforces the importance of existential resources in psychological functioning.

Understanding Counterintuitive Findings: The negative association of eros with QoL is theoretically unexpected, as romantic passion is often associated with positive affect. However, eros is also characterized by emotional intensity and idealization, which may lead to instability and unmet expectations, particularly in emerging adulthood (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). Such intensity may undermine well-being when not accompanied by relational stability.

Similarly, the positive association of mania challenges its conventional characterization as possessive or dependent love. In collectivist contexts, however, high emotional investment and relational preoccupation may be interpreted as commitment rather than dysfunction. This interpretation is consistent with cultural perspectives emphasizing interdependence and relational closeness (Chadda & Deb, 2020).

The reduction in significance of several predictors in the final model suggests shared variance and possible suppression effects. This indicates that love attitudes may function as more proximal expressions of relational tendencies, while attachment and spiritual intelligence represent deeper, more stable psychological systems.

Theoretical Contribution: The present study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that quality of life is not merely the outcome of discrete psychological traits but emerges from the interaction of relational and existential systems. Specifically, the findings suggest that attachment security and meaning-making capacities may serve as foundational determinants of well-being, while love attitudes operate within these broader frameworks.

Cultural Context and Implications: The findings gain additional significance in the Indian context, where relational interdependence and meaning systems are central to lived experience. The prominence of dependent attachment and meaning-related dimensions may reflect culturally embedded values that prioritize social connectedness and existential coherence (Chadda & Deb, 2020). These cultural dynamics may amplify the role of relational and meaning-making processes in shaping quality of life.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that quality of life is best understood as the outcome of interacting relational and meaning-making processes. Attachment and spiritual intelligence emerged as more stable and foundational predictors of QoL, whereas love attitudes contributed more contextually and were partly subsumed within broader relational systems. These findings highlight the importance of integrating interpersonal and existential perspectives in understanding well-being, particularly within collectivist cultural contexts.

DECLARATION

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Approval was obtained from the Research Review Committee of Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Varanasi. The procedures used in this study adhere to the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Consent for publication

Informed consent was obtained from all the participants included in the study. The authors also affirm that the participants provided consent for publication of the data obtained in the study.

Availability of data and materials

The data that support the findings of this study are available at https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18069678

Conflicts of interest Statement

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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Artificial Intelligence-Assisted Technology

AI-assisted tools were used only for minor language editing and clarity. No AI tools were used for data generation, analysis, or interpretation, and the authors take full responsibility for the content.

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Freya Vyas did material preparation, data collection

and primary analysis, and Khushboo Ashokkumar Mishra performed advanced data analysis. Freya Vyas wrote the first draft of the manuscript, and Khushboo Ashokkumar Mishra commented on previous versions of the manuscript. and revised the final manuscript critically for important intellectual content. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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