

Research Paper

Attachment Style and Spirituality as Determinants of People's Love for Humanity

Dr. Sunita Singh¹, Dr. Sachin Panchal^{2*}

ABSTRACT

The present study examined the role of attachment styles and spirituality in predicting love for humanity among adolescents, with attention to gender differences. A total of 180 adolescents were recruited from Amroha and Moradabad cities using purposive sampling. Participants completed standardized measures of love for humanity, attachment styles, and spirituality. Descriptive statistics revealed that female adolescents scored higher than males on love for humanity and spirituality, while males scored slightly higher on dismissive attachment. Regression analyses indicated that, for the overall sample, secure attachment and spirituality positively predicted love for humanity, whereas dismissive attachment was a negative predictor, accounting for 36.2% of the variance. When analyzed separately, the predictive model explained 26.2% of the variance among males and 42.8% among females, highlighting stronger predictive effects of secure attachment and spirituality for female adolescents. Fearful attachment, although correlated with love for humanity, did not emerge as a significant predictor in any model. The findings underscore the importance of fostering secure relational bonds and spiritual orientation to enhance adolescents' prosocial attitudes and humanitarian values. Implications for educational and counseling interventions aimed at promoting empathy, compassion, and social responsibility are discussed.

Keywords: *Love for humanity, Attachment styles, Spirituality, Adolescents, Gender differences*

Love for humanity encompasses an enduring concern for and connection with all people irrespective of relational proximity. It is broader than love for close others and includes altruistic and universalistic attitudes and behaviors (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). Understanding individual differences in love for humanity is important because it correlates with prosocial behavior, well-being, and social cohesion. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982; Ainsworth, 1978) is well established in explaining variations in interpersonal relationships, trust, and emotional responsiveness. Adult attachment styles typically include secure, anxious, and avoidant (with disorganized sometimes added), based on internal working models of self and others. Secure attachment is associated with comfort with closeness, trust in others, and a fondness for altruistic and relational behavior, while insecure styles (anxious, avoidant) are linked to difficulties in empathy, closeness, or emotional

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Raghunath Girls (P. G.) College, Meerut

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Jagdish Saran Hindu P.G. College, Amroha

*Corresponding Author

Received: October 18, 2025; Revision Received: February 24, 2026; Accepted: February 28, 2026

Attachment Style and Spirituality as Determinants of People's Love for Humanity

regulation. Spirituality is also known to shape moral values, community connection, and beliefs about human worth and responsibility. Many religious traditions promote love, compassion, and duty toward others; religiosity (beliefs, practices, religious identity, religious coping) has been positively linked to prosociality (Bayramoglu, Harma, & Yilmaz, 2018; Ahmed, 2009). However, the interplay between attachment and religiosity in predicting love for humanity is less well charted. For instance, attachment to God (a religious-attachment concept) interacts with other psychological variables to influence prosocial intentions (Bayramoglu et al., 2018).

Attachment Style and Prosocial Values/Behavior

Research has consistently found that secure attachment is positively associated with prosocial behaviors, values, and attitudes toward others. For example, a study of Chinese undergraduate students (Shi, Wang, He, & Wu, 2020) found that secure attachment predicted higher levels of prosocial behavior, mediated by moral disengagement and moderated by moral identity. Attachment security correlates with self-transcendence and universalistic values (i.e. concern for welfare of all) as shown in a study of Spanish adults using the Portrait Values Questionnaire. Additionally, in children, secure attachments with caregivers are associated with greater empathy, better emotion regulation, and more helping behavior (i.e., prosocial acts) during middle childhood.

Religion, Attachment to God, and Prosociality

Religion or religiosity—as measured by belief, frequency of practice, importance, or attachment to God—has also been linked to compassion and universal love. Sprecher & Fehr (2005) found that people who are more religious or spiritual report higher compassionate love for humanity than those less religious. Bayramoglu, Harma, & Yilmaz (2018) demonstrated that “attachment to God” predicts prosocial intentions in Turkey, partly via the belief in God as a moral/authoritarian figure. Further, quasi-experimental work from rural India found that students deeply engaged in religious education (Madrasah pupils) were more cooperative in public goods games and more generous in dictator games than others.

Although there is strong evidence separately for attachment style and spirituality in predicting prosocial values and behavior, few studies have tested both predictors together in relation to love for humanity (i.e. compassionate love toward all people). It is also unclear whether religiosity moderates the effect of attachment style—i.e. whether being religious can compensate for insecure attachment in promoting love for humanity.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the effect of attachment style (secure, dismissive, anxious and fearful) on love for humanity.
2. To examine the effect of spirituality on love for humanity.
3. To compare the findings regarding the effect of attachment styles and spirituality on love for humanity among male and female adolescents.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. Secure attachment will be positively associated with higher love for humanity.
2. Insecure attachment styles (dismissive, anxious, avoidant) will be negatively associated with love for humanity.
3. Spirituality will be positively associated with higher love for humanity.
4. There will be gender difference in the effect of attachment styles and spirituality on love for humanity.

METHODOLOGY

Design: For this study a **Correlational and predictive research design** was employed. It examines the relationships among multiple variables (attachment styles, spirituality and gender) and predicts the extent to which attachment and spirituality explain variance in love for humanity.

Participants: By using purposive sampling method, 190 adolescent (age range 14–19) were recruited through from Amroha and Moradabad city of Uttar Pradesh.

Tools used for Data Collection

Following psychological tests were used to collect the data:

- 1. Attachment Style:** Attachment was measured using the Inventory for Attachment Style (IAS) developed by Kumar and Pareek (2021). This 24-items inventory assesses the four attachment types: secure, anxious, dismissive, and fearful. Internal reliability (alpha-coefficient) for the four subtests ranges from .71 to $\alpha = .89$.
- 2. Spirituality Scale:** Spirituality Scale, constructed and standardized by prof. S. N. Rai and Mrs. Deepika Gupta, contains 56 items which measure ten dimensions: Commitment, Spiritual history, Private religious practices, Forgiveness, Spiritual coping, Religious support, Meaning, Belief, Daily spiritual experiences, Organizational religiousness. The test-retest reliability of this test is .87 and validity is .83.
- 3. Love for Humanity (Compassionate Love for Humanity):** Love for humanity was measured via the *Compassionate Love Scale for Humanity – Short Form* (CLS-H-SF) (Chiesi, Lau, & Saklofske, 2020), which has good psychometric properties. Using an IRT analytical approach and taking in account the item content, the current study suggests that the CLS-H-SF demonstrated strong reliability and validity in measuring compassionate love.

RESULTS

Table-1 presents the mean differences between male and female students on love for humanity, spirituality, and attachment styles. Female students reported a higher mean score on love for humanity ($M = 89.30$, $SD = 14.999$) compared to males ($M = 78.77$, $SD = 16.737$), with the overall mean being 84.03 ($SD = 16.704$). In terms of spirituality, females ($M = 172.29$, $SD = 23.577$) also scored slightly higher than males ($M = 168.64$, $SD = 24.505$). Regarding secure attachment, females obtained a higher mean ($M = 24.59$, $SD = 2.638$) compared to males ($M = 23.68$, $SD = 2.343$). On dismissive attachment, males scored higher ($M = 16.48$, $SD = 4.864$) than females ($M = 14.75$, $SD = 4.231$). For anxious attachment, females reported a higher mean ($M = 18.11$, $SD = 3.515$) than males ($M = 17.36$, $SD = 4.468$). Finally, on fearful attachment, males ($M = 13.37$, $SD = 4.161$) and females ($M = 13.06$, $SD = 3.858$) reported nearly similar scores.

Table-1: Mean Scores and SD of Love for Humanity, Spirituality, and Attachment Styles

Gender	Love for Humanity	Secure	Dismissive	Anxious	Fearful	Spirituality
Male	78.77	23.68	16.48	17.36	13.37	168.64
	<i>16.737</i>	<i>2.343</i>	<i>4.864</i>	<i>4.468</i>	<i>4.161</i>	<i>24.505</i>
Female	89.30	24.59	14.75	18.11	13.06	172.29
	<i>14.999</i>	<i>2.638</i>	<i>4.231</i>	<i>3.515</i>	<i>3.858</i>	<i>23.577</i>
Total	84.03	24.16	15.56	17.76	13.21	170.51
	<i>16.704</i>	<i>2.537</i>	<i>4.606</i>	<i>3.995</i>	<i>4.004</i>	<i>24.035</i>

Note: The values shown in *Italic* are Standard Deviation

Attachment Style and Spirituality as Determinants of People's Love for Humanity

Table 2 presents the regression analysis conducted to examine the predictors of love for humanity among adolescents. The calculated values of $R = .618$ and $F = 19.60$ ($p < .01$) indicate that the regression model significantly predicts love for humanity. The predictors included in the model account for 36.2% of the variance in love for humanity ($R^2 = .362$), which suggests a moderately strong explanatory power. Among the predictors, secure attachment emerged as the strongest positive predictor ($\beta = .337$, $t = 4.829$, $p < .01$, $r = .494$), indicating that adolescents with higher levels of secure attachment are more likely to demonstrate greater love for humanity. Spirituality was also a significant positive predictor ($\beta = .216$, $t = 3.279$, $p < .01$, $r = .343$), suggesting that higher spiritual orientation enhances adolescents' love for humanity. In contrast, dismissive attachment showed a significant negative prediction ($\beta = -.274$, $t = -3.740$, $p < .01$, $r = -.451$), which indicates that adolescents who have dismissive attachment styles are less likely to exhibit love for humanity. Although fearful attachment demonstrated a significant negative correlation with love for humanity ($r = -.396$), it did not emerge as a significant predictor within the regression model. These findings highlight that secure attachment and spirituality are key facilitators, whereas dismissive attachment functions as a barrier in fostering adolescents' love for humanity. The results emphasize the importance of supportive relational bonds and spiritual orientation as positive psychological resources. The non-significant role of fearful attachment suggests that while it relates negatively, its predictive power is overshadowed by other attachment dimensions. Overall, the regression model affirms that both attachment patterns and spirituality play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' capacity for universal love and compassion.

Table-2: Regression Analysis Predicting Love for Humanity from Attachment Styles and Spirituality

Predictors	Regression Coefficient			Correlation	F-value
	B	Beta	t	r	
(Constant)	30.171		2.027		.618 (.362) 19.60**
Secure Attachment	2.143	.337	4.829**	.494**	
Dismissive Attachment	-.961	-.274	-3.740**	-.451**	
Anxious Attachment	-.130	-.032	-.478	-.006	
Fearful Attachment	-.257	-.059	-.794	-.396**	
Spirituality	.143	.216	3.279**	.343**	

**= Significant at .01-level.

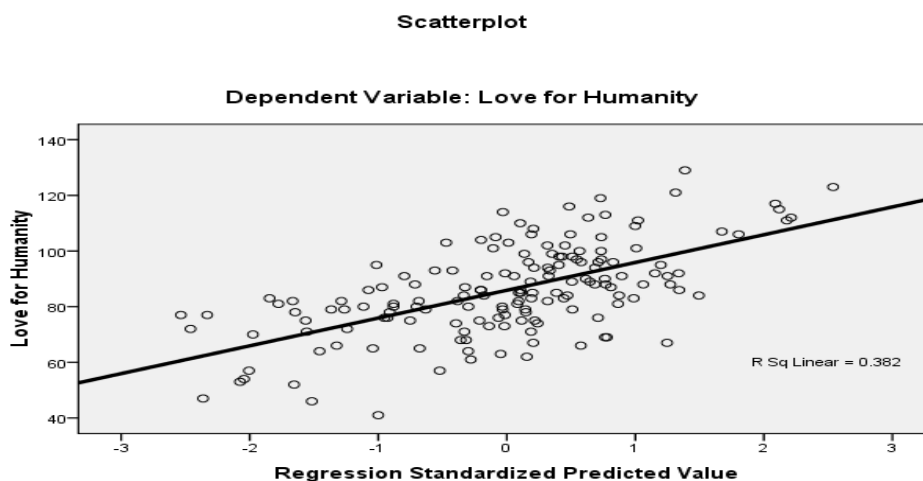


Figure-1: Scatterplot Showing the Relationship between Love for Humanity and Attachment Styles and Spirituality among Adolescents

Attachment Style and Spirituality as Determinants of People's Love for Humanity

Table 2 presents the regression analysis predicting love for humanity among male adolescents. The obtained values of $R = .559$ and $F = 6.264$ ($p < .01$) confirm that the regression model significantly predicts the outcome variable. The predictors included in the model account for 26.2% of the variance in love for humanity (Adjusted $R^2 = .262$), suggesting a moderate explanatory strength. Within the model, secure attachment was found to be a significant positive predictor ($\beta = .257$, $t = 2.351$, $p < .05$, $r = .411$, $p < .01$), indicating that higher levels of secure attachment are associated with greater love for humanity among male adolescents. Spirituality also emerged as a positive predictor ($\beta = .234$, $t = 2.085$, $p < .05$, $r = .365$, $p < .01$), suggesting that adolescents with higher spiritual orientation are more inclined to show love and concern for others. In contrast, dismissive attachment was identified as a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -.262$, $t = 2.19$, $p < .05$, $r = -.406$, $p < .01$), implying that those with higher dismissive tendencies are less likely to express love for humanity. Although fearful attachment demonstrated a significant negative correlation with love for humanity ($r = -.375$), it did not function as a significant predictor in the regression model. These findings suggest that secure attachment and spirituality facilitate prosocial attitudes, while dismissive attachment acts as a hindrance in developing universal compassion. The non-significant predictive role of fearful attachment indicates that its influence is overshadowed when other predictors are considered simultaneously. Overall, the model highlights the joint role of relational security and spiritual orientation in enhancing love for humanity among male adolescents. This underscores the value of strengthening secure attachment bonds and fostering spirituality as pathways to encourage prosocial and humanitarian attitudes in young males.

Table 3 presents the regression analysis predicting love for humanity among female adolescents. The values of $R = .680$ and $F = 13.572$ ($p < .01$) confirm that the model significantly predicts the dependent variable. The predictors collectively explained 42.8% of the variance in love for humanity (Adjusted $R^2 = .428$), suggesting a stronger explanatory power compared to the model for male adolescents. Secure attachment emerged as the most powerful positive predictor ($\beta = .322$, $t = 3.478$, $p < .01$, $r = .527$, $p < .01$), highlighting that securely attached female adolescents tend to report greater love for humanity. Spirituality also showed a positive predictive role ($\beta = .191$, $t = 2.279$, $p < .05$, $r = .306$, $p < .01$), indicating that higher levels of spiritual orientation contribute to humanitarian attitudes. On the other hand, dismissive attachment was a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -.282$, $t = 3.021$, $p < .01$, $r = -.444$, $p < .01$), suggesting that adolescents with dismissive tendencies are less likely to demonstrate compassion and universal love. Although fearful attachment was negatively correlated with love for humanity ($r = -.440$), it did not emerge as a significant predictor in the regression model. When compared to male adolescents, the predictive model for females accounted for a larger portion of variance (42.8% vs. 26.2%), demonstrating a stronger role of attachment and spirituality in shaping prosocial orientation among female adolescents. Additionally, the effect of secure attachment appeared more pronounced in females, as indicated by higher beta and correlation values, while spirituality maintained a positive role across both groups, though slightly stronger in males. Dismissive attachment consistently acted as a negative predictor in both genders, but its strength was marginally greater in females. These findings suggest that secure relational bonds and spiritual engagement play a more influential role in fostering love for humanity among female adolescents than their male counterparts, underscoring gender-based variations in the dynamics of attachment and spirituality.

Attachment Style and Spirituality as Determinants of People's Love for Humanity

Table-3: Regression Analysis Predicting Love for Humanity from Attachment Styles and Spirituality among Male Adolescents

Predictors	Regression Coefficient			Correlation	F-value
	B	Beta	t	r	
(Constant)	24.844		1.093		.559 (.262) 6.264**
Secure Attachment	1.788	.257	2.351*	.411**	
Dismissive Attachment	-.877	-.262	-2.190*	-.406**	
Anxious Attachment	.198	.054	.477	-.017	
Fearful Attachment	-.239	-.047	-.631	-.375**	
Spirituality	.149	.234	2.085*	.365**	

**= Significant at .01-level. *= Significant at .05-level.

Scatterplot

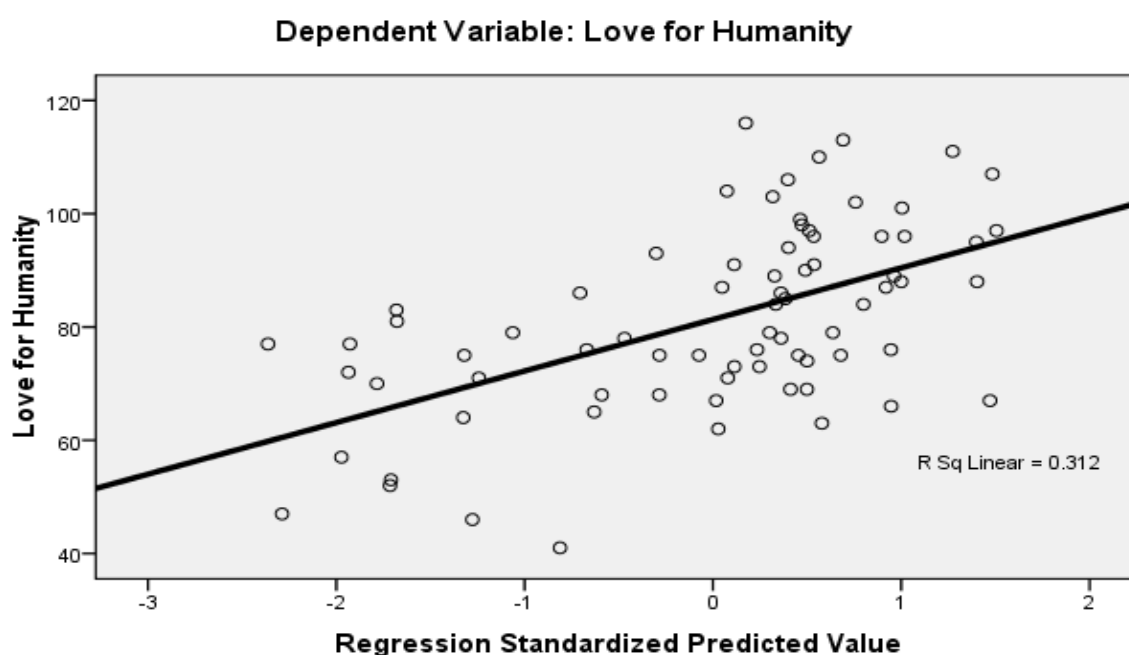


Figure-2: Scatterplot Showing the Relationship between Love for Humanity and Attachment Styles and Spirituality among Male Adolescents

Table-4: Regression Analysis Predicting Love for Humanity from Attachment Styles and Spirituality among Female Adolescents

Predictors	Regression Coefficient			Correlation	F-value
	B	Beta	t	r	
(Constant)	60.815		3.017		.680 (.428) 13.572**
Secure Attachment	1.827	.322	3.478**	.527**	
Dismissive Attachment	-.996	-.282	-3.021**	-.444**	
Anxious Attachment	-.779	-.183	-2.103*	-.257*	
Fearful Attachment	-.641	-.162	-1.705	-.440**	
Spirituality	.123	.191	2.279*	.306**	

**= Significant at .01-level. *= Significant at .05-level.

Scatterplot

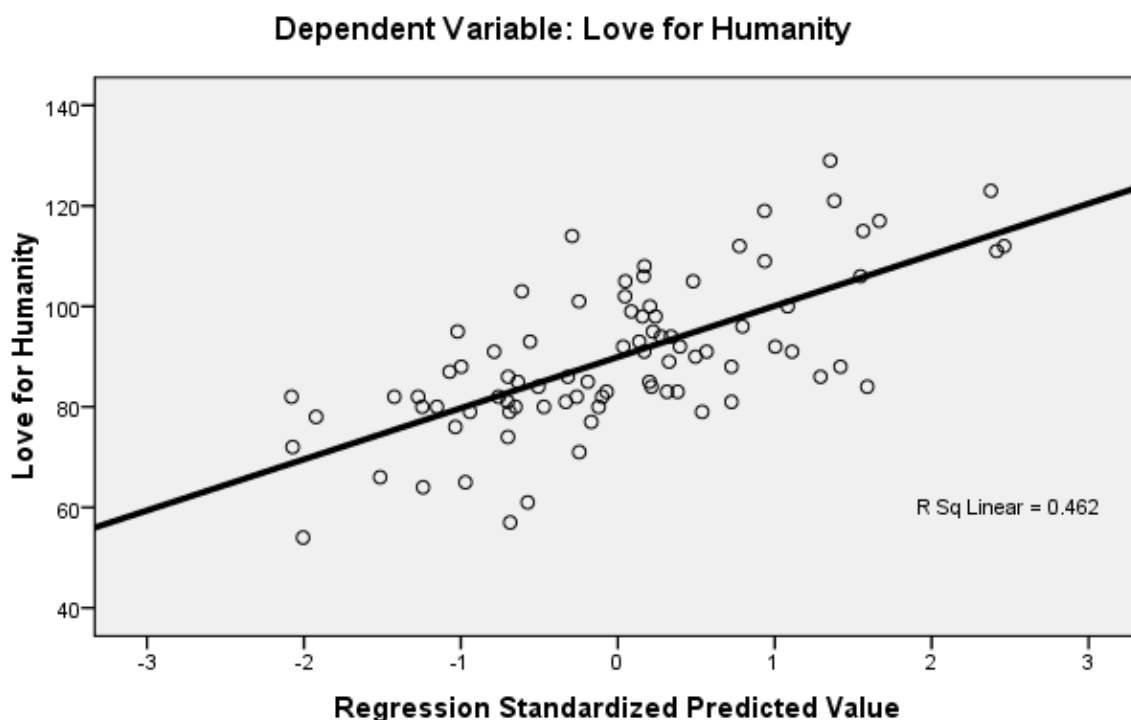


Figure-3: Scatterplot Showing the Relationship between Love for Humanity and Attachment Styles and Spirituality among Female Adolescents

DISCUSSION

The present findings highlight the significant role of attachment styles and spirituality in predicting adolescents' love for humanity, with noteworthy gender differences. At the overall level, the regression analysis demonstrated that secure attachment and spirituality positively predicted love for humanity, while dismissive attachment negatively predicted it, together explaining 36.2% of the variance. Fearful attachment, though significantly correlated, did not emerge as a predictor. This aligns with attachment theory, which emphasizes that secure attachment fosters trust, empathy, and openness toward others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016), while insecure patterns such as dismissive attachment reduce prosocial motivation (Gillath et al., 2017). Spirituality also proved to be a key determinant, supporting earlier work suggesting that spiritual orientation nurtures altruistic values and humanitarian concern (Saroglou, 2011).

When findings were examined separately for male and female adolescents, distinct patterns emerged. For males, secure attachment and spirituality positively predicted love for humanity, while dismissive attachment negatively predicted it, together explaining 26.2% of the variance. This suggests that while relational security and spiritual orientation promote prosociality, tendencies toward emotional detachment hinder the development of universal compassion among male adolescents. By contrast, for females, the model accounted for a larger share of variance (42.8%), with secure attachment and spirituality again serving as positive predictors and dismissive attachment as a negative predictor. The predictive strength of secure attachment was greater among females, and the explained variance was notably higher, suggesting that female adolescents may be more strongly influenced by

Attachment Style and Spirituality as Determinants of People's Love for Humanity

relational and spiritual dimensions in shaping humanitarian values. These findings echo prior evidence that women typically score higher on relational closeness, empathy, and religiosity, which are linked to altruistic behavior (Eagly, 2009; Miller & Stark, 2002). Importantly, fearful attachment, despite its significant negative correlation with love for humanity in both genders, did not emerge as a significant predictor in any model. This indicates that while fear-based relational patterns may influence attitudes, their predictive role diminishes when secure, dismissive, and spiritual dimensions are considered together. Overall, these findings reinforce that secure attachment and spirituality are universal facilitators of love for humanity, but their impact is more pronounced among female adolescents.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study underscores that adolescents' capacity for love for humanity is significantly shaped by their attachment orientations and spiritual engagement. Secure attachment and spirituality consistently enhanced humanitarian attitudes, while dismissive attachment hindered them across both genders. Gender-specific differences revealed that the predictive model was stronger among female adolescents, with secure attachment exerting greater influence, reflecting the relational and empathetic orientation often associated with adolescent girls. For male adolescents, spirituality appeared relatively more important, though still secondary to secure attachment. These results suggest that interventions aimed at fostering secure relational bonds and strengthening spiritual values may enhance humanitarian concern, particularly when tailored to gender-specific pathways. By promoting supportive attachment relationships and spiritual development, educators, counselors, and parents can nurture adolescents' broader love for humanity, thereby fostering more compassionate and socially responsible future citizens.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, A. M. (2009). *Are Religious People More Prosocial? A Quasi-Experimental Study with Madrasah Pupils in a Rural Community in India*. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 48(2), 368-374. (Wiley Online Library)
- Bayramoglu, Y., Harma, M., & Yilmaz, O. (2018). The relationship between attachment to God, prosociality, and image of God. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, 40(2-3), 202-216. (Brill)
- Chiesi, F., Lau, C., & Saklofske, D. H. (2020). A revised short version of the compassionate love scale for humanity (CLS-H-SF): Evidence from item response theory analyses and validity testing. *BMC Psychology*, 8, Article 20. (BioMed Central)
- Eagly, A. H. (2009). The his and hers of prosocial behavior: An examination of the social psychology of gender. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(5), 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012716>
- Fraley, R. C., Waller, N. G., & Brennan, K. A. (2000). An item-response theory analysis of self-report measures of adult attachment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(2), 350-365.
- Gillath, O., Karantzas, G. C., & Selcuk, E. (2017). Attachment and prosocial behavior: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 21(4), 332-348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868317711743>
- Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2016). *Attachment in adulthood: Structure, dynamics, and change* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.
- Miller, A. S., & Stark, R. (2002). Gender and religiousness: Can socialization explanations be saved? *American Journal of Sociology*, 107(6), 1399-1423. <https://doi.org/10.1086/339220>

Attachment Style and Spirituality as Determinants of People's Love for Humanity

- Saroglou, V. (2011). Religion and spirituality as predictors of prosocial behaviors in different religions. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 50(1), 3–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.08.020>
- Shi, X., Wang, B., He, T., & Wu, L. (2020). Secure attachments predict prosocial behaviors: A moderated mediation study. *PsyCh Journal*, 9(5), 597-608.
- Sprecher, S., & Fehr, B. (2005). Compassionate love for close others and humanity. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22(5), 629-651.

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Singh, S. & Panchal, S. (2026). Attachment Style and Spirituality as Determinants of People's Love for Humanity. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 14(1), 942-950. DIP:18.01.092.20261401, DOI:10.25215/1401.092