

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING: EXAMINING THE SEQUENTIAL MEDIATION EFFECTS

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ABSTRACT

Attachments are an integral element of the human experience from birth to death. Early experiences with caregiver and adult attachments are crucial for human emotional and cognitive development and it is a strong basis for mental health and psychological adjustment. Despite this, little research on the relationship of these attachments has been undertaken on subjective well-being.

This study intended to investigate the relation of secure attachment style with subjective well-being through serial mediation effect of self-esteem and emotional intelligence. Process macro version 3.4 in SPSS 23 and AMOS 21.0 were used to evaluate survey data of 266 respondents.

The findings of the study revealed that secure attachment style play a significant role in enhancing the subjective well-being of people and a positive significant relation was found between them. Also, this relationship was mediated by both self-esteem and emotional intelligence which supports the serial mediation model. Hence, the results exhibit that secure attachment style predicts self-esteem and emotional intelligence, which in turn influences the subjective well-being of persons. Furthermore, both direct and indirect effects were statistically significant.

Theoretical and practical implications are discussed based on the findings of the study.

KEYWORDS

attachment styles, emotional intelligence, self-esteem, subjective well-being

INTRODUCTION

Subjective well-being (SWB) is a relatively emerging psychological construct in the field of positive psychology which was firstly explored by Edward Diener in 1984. Ed Diener and his colleagues defined subjective well-being as composed of three components - life satisfaction, pleasant

emotions, and unpleasant emotions [1]. They defined subjective well-being as an individual's cognitive and affective self-evaluation [2]. The cognitive component is defined as the way people might think about their life satisfaction as a whole, while the affective element will be defined as people's emotions, feelings, or moods, such as

when a person feels happiness [3,4]. Therefore, SWB can be defined as a cognitive evaluation of life that is filled with pleasant emotions without unpleasant emotions. Similarly, other previous research on the correlates of subjective well-being also supported affective components of subjective well-being and life satisfaction as extremely important [2]. Further, after determining that demographic characteristics such as income only explain a small portion of happiness variation, then research focused on psychological determinants of subjective well-being [1,2]. Among the psychological determinants, social relationships were found to be significantly more strongly linked to satisfaction than objective measurements like income [5], and relatedness was one of the key determinants to influence happiness [6,7]. Similarly, relationship-enhancing attributes and personality traits were also found to be highly associated variables with subjective well-being among other traits [8]. Given the complexity of the topic of relationships, studies have focused on various components of relationships that contribute to subjective well-being. Attachment, as a feature of close relationships, has been identified as one of the important relationship characteristics that may be highly related to subjective well-being [6] or satisfaction of life [9]. However, the relationship between attachment in close relationships and subjective well-being is less well understood.

On the other hand, attachment refers to a feeling of trust in others to respond and assist people in times of need, and it is a strong basis for mental health and psychological adjustment [10]. Attachment is an emotional bond formed with another person who is regarded as a security source and provides a safe foundation for exploration of the surroundings [9]. Internal cognitive-affective working models, which are mental representations of self and others, and connections derived through child-parent interactions, are thought to impact a child's attachment behaviour and have long-term effects on subsequent relationships [11]. Thus, adult emotional relationships are seen as extensions of child-parent attachments. Different attachment categories, such as secure, dismissive, preoccupied, and fearful are described based on perceived trustworthiness and availability of others and perceived worth of self [12].

The term secure attachment style (SAS) refers to a person's ability to openly express their feelings with their family, friends and partners and adults who have a secure attachment style may rely on their partners and, in turn, let

their partners rely on them. In the dismissive style, people believe that being in a relationship is not necessary to feel complete. They don't want to rely on others to seek support and approval and don't let others rely on them. People with a preoccupied attachment style place a high value on their relationships, but they are often concerned that their partners are not as invested in the relationship as they are and fearful people seek intimacy and closeness, yet they have problems trusting and relying on others. They have trouble regulating their emotions and avoid significant emotional attachments because they are afraid of being hurt. Later, two dimensions were discovered beneath these categories or styles: Anxiety and avoidance [13]. So, the avoidance dimension refers to how much people want restricted intimacy and prefer to be mentally and emotionally independent, whereas the anxiety dimension refers to how much people worry that their relationship partners would not be around or abandon them.

Although there are few studies, research focusing on the relationship between attachment styles and subjective well-being found that securely attached people had a less negative affect and more positive affect [14], and that attachment dimensions were linked to everyday subjective emotional experiences [15]. In another study [16], found a link between attachment and subjective well-being, demonstrating a link between people's general attachment security and their well-being. Overall, these research findings seem to point to a link between attachment and subjective well-being. Furthermore, self-esteem (SE) described as a person's positive or negative attitude toward oneself, and emotional intelligence (EI) is a cognitive phenomenon about reasoning or solving problems in the emotion domain and understanding one's emotional tendencies and dispositions, has recently emerged as a significant construct with strong linkages to psychological flourishing and mental health as well as the stable attachment. So, the goal of this study was to look into the role of attachment in subjective well-being, as well as the significance of self-esteem and emotional intelligence as a mediating factor.

This present study explores the mediating role of self-esteem and emotional intelligence between the association of secure attachment style and subjective well-being among the people of Punjab and Chandigarh Tricity. This research's use of self-esteem and emotional intelligence as a mediator is consistent with previous studies [17-20]. Aside from individual mediation, the study will focus on serial

mediation of self-esteem and emotional intelligence, which will be a significant contribution. These two mediating variables are important in improving subjective well-being [21-24]. Now the question arises "How do secure attachment style enhances subjective well-being through self-esteem and emotional intelligence?" To answer this question, a serial mediation conceptual framework was developed and studied.

The current study is worthwhile for several reasons. The study's originality is that it has used objectives and models that had not previously been studied. Furthermore, existing research has not looked into the relationship between the variables indicated above, particularly on the adults of Punjab and Chandigarh Tricity, where respondents may have different characteristics and work settings than in previous studies. As a result, the current study will fill in gaps in the existing literature.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES FORMULATION

ATTACHMENT THEORY

Early experiences with caregivers, are crucial for human emotional and cognitive development [9]. Although attachment behaviours are especially obvious in early childhood, attachment is an integral element of the human experience from birth to death [25]. Hazan and Shaver extended this attachment theory to adult relationships, defining friendships, romantic love, or pair bonding, as an attachment process [11]. Therefore, the theory is considered a suitable theoretical base for studying the relationship between attachment style and subjective well-being. Supporting this, a research study [26] stated that people would have high subjective well-being if they have good relationships. Similarly, this theory is applied to comprehend the relationship between the other constructs of the study.

SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

Attachment theory is a valid framework for understanding individual variations in happiness and many studies have provided empirical evidence to support the idea that good family relationships can contribute to a sense of well-being [27]. So, the social environment in which individuals live has an important role in individual behaviour. Moreover, according to [28], secure attachments are favourably connected with happiness, but attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance have both been shown to be

adversely correlated with life satisfaction and wellbeing [29]. Secure attachment is linked to positive emotions through social interactions [30], as well as happiness, reduced negative affect, and fewer psychiatric symptoms [31]. But attachment anxiety and avoidance have been linked to more pain and lower well-being [32], as well as negatively associated with global happiness [33] as an anxious attachment can result in the development of maladaptive affect regulation strategies, which can lead to negative mood and interpersonal issues [34], low romantic relationship satisfaction [35], and less positive emotions [36]. Also, the outcomes are more complicated for avoidance deactivation approaches. Thus, it can be implied that secure attachments with friends and family enhance the subjective well-being of people. So, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: Secure attachment style positively affects subjective well-being.

MEDIATION OF SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is a person's positive or negative attitude toward oneself as well as a person's favourable or unfavourable view of himself or herself. Self-esteem is a feeling of a person that he considers himself worthy or unworthy [37].

It has been claimed that attachment experiences are significant in shaping people's self-images and, as a result, their ability to control emotions [17]. Also, there are many existing links between insecure attachment and poor self-esteem [38]. Furthermore, in the opinion of [39], self-esteem and spiritual belief affect dependent and anxious attachment in females only and not in males which contradicts the findings of [40], who claimed that both genders have reduced self-esteem as a result of attachment experiences. In addition, past research has linked secure attachment to self-worth in the context of family support. Similarly, researchers have emphasized the role of self-esteem in determining happiness in recent decades and consider self-esteem to be one of the greatest predictors of wellbeing [41]. According to social identity theory, the relational self is an important part of one's selfhood, and one's assessment of the relational self is linked to subjective well-being [42]. Further, relational self-esteem was found to be connected with many indices of well-being (positive affect, purpose in life, depression) in one of the few studies that explicitly assessed self-esteem. It means individuals who felt more connected and related to significant persons such as family and friends were more

likely to demonstrate optimal functioning [43,44]. Numerous studies have also found that those who have a strong bond with their parents have greater levels of psychological well-being [21,22]. So, after finding the relationship of self-esteem with attachments and subjective well-being, existing literature recommends self-esteem may mediate the relationship between secure attachment style and subjective well-being. Hence, this study is using self-esteem as a mediator between secure attachment style and subjective well-being.

H2: Self-esteem positively mediates the relationship between secure attachment style and subjective well-being.

MEDIATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence (EI) has progressed in two directions, each based on a different conceptualization [45,46]. As a result of this evolution, two types of EI have emerged: ability EI and trait EI [46,47]. Ability EI is defined by [48] as a set of three adaptive abilities: emotion perception and expression, emotion management, and emotion used in problem-solving. Trait EI is conceptualized as a set of emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions, i.e., self-efficacy in the emotion domain [24,49]. This view assumes that emotions are subjective, and thus anything emotion-related (including emotional intelligence) is equally subjective, and hence cannot be objectively quantified. As a result, self-report questionnaires are used in this study. It appears that the two conceptualizations differ not on whether EI is a cognitive phenomenon, but on what the cognitive phenomenon is about—if it is about reasoning or solving problems in the emotion domain, it is an ability [45], if it is about understanding one's emotional tendencies and dispositions, it is a trait [24,45].

Attachment theory is also a paradigm of emotional regulation [18,50]. According to [50], internal working models of attachment could be seen as the complete process that orients an individual's emotional reactions to stressful situations. Internal working models are full character methods for controlling emotions and directing behaviours. When it comes to attachment styles, research shows that secure people can cope better with negative emotions in social interactions than insecure people [50] and have more positive feelings within interactions [14], and pleasant emotional skills [51]. Hence, secure attachment style has a significant impact on EI [19], and EI, as a set of abilities to process and comprehend emotions, has a significant impact on an individual's wellbeing [20].

As subjective well-being, anxiety and stress are linked to both ability EI and trait EI. In the opinion of [23,46,52], ability EI has been linked to increased life satisfaction, improved affective well-being (increased positive affect and decreased negative affect and reduced stress). Above and beyond, trait EI also indicated enhanced life satisfaction [24]. Kong and Zhao discovered that this association was mediated by affect, with higher trait EI related with enhanced positive affect and decreased negative affect, both of which contributed to increased life satisfaction [53]. Hence, the literature shows that secure attachment style has a positive significant relation with emotional intelligence and further, emotional intelligence has a significant effect on subjective well-being. So, based on these prior studies, this study is using emotional intelligence as a mediator between secure attachment style and subjective well-being.

H3: Emotional intelligence positively mediates the relationship between secure attachment style and subjective well-being.

SERIAL MEDIATION

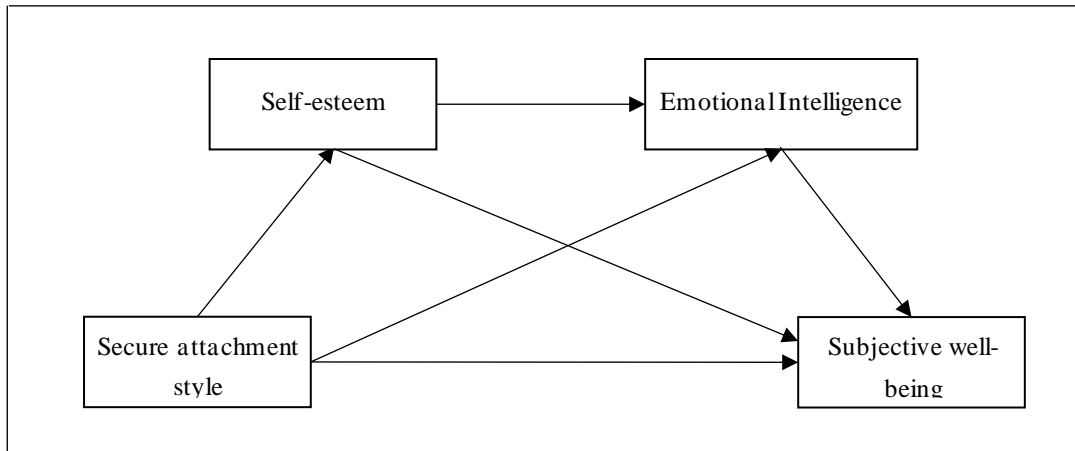
The current study examines the serial mediation effect. Taking all hypotheses proposed above, the present study foresees that the relationship between secure attachment style and subjective well-being can be mediated by SE and EI (a serial mediation). Former studies provide empirical evidence to confirm the positive association between attachment orientations and self-esteem [43,44]. Individuals who felt more connected and related to important people in their lives, such as family and friends, were more likely to perform at their best. People with high self-esteem have a high level of emotional processing and control power, which leads to high emotional intelligence [17]. Furthermore, Higher EI can enhance life satisfaction, improve affective wellbeing [23,46,52,53]. Hence, it can be seen that self-esteem developed by secured attachments will positively influence emotional intelligence and it will ultimately lead to influencing SWB. As a result, it is feasible that SE and EI not only play an individual mediating role in the link between secure attachment style and subjective well-being but also relate with each other and play a serial mediation role in the relationship at the same time. Thus, the following hypothesis has been proposed when taken together.

H4: Self-esteem and emotional intelligence serially mediate the relationship between secure attachment style and subjective well-being.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

Based on the above literature and hypotheses, the following conceptual framework has been framed:

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



METHODOLOGY

SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

The study investigates the association between secure attachment style and subjective well-being of adults of North India by using a quantitative cross-section research design. Convenience sampling was used to collect the data from the adults of Punjab and Chandigarh Tricity in north India and data was collected from different age groups. To make the sample more representative, it included respondents from urban, rural, and semi-urban areas, as well as married/unmarried men and women from nuclear and joint families. A structured questionnaire was distributed to collect the responses in November-December 2021

A closed-ended questionnaire was distributed to 300 people, and 282 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 94 per cent. Due to incomplete and invalid responses, 16 of the submitted questionnaires were discarded. Data for the study were collected at two points in time, separated by three weeks, to eliminate common method biases. Closed-ended questions were chosen because respondents would find it easier to complete the questionnaire, and the study would take less time and expense to complete. Before proceeding on to analysis, the primary conditions of sample size and data accuracy were met. A minimum sample size of 100-150 is deemed appropriate for analyzing a model [54]. As a result, the

current study's effective sample size of 266 is adequate for analyzing the proposed model.

MEASUREMENT DEVELOPMENT

The variables in the present study were measured using existing scales extracted from previous literature. The secure attachment style was measured by nine items adapted from the revised adult attachment scale of Collins and Read [55]. These nine items were developed based on the 'depend' and 'close' dimensions of scale. The sample item is "I find it relatively easy to get close to people." For subjective well-being, a five-item life satisfaction scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffen was used [3]. The sample item is "I am satisfied with my life" and for self-esteem, a five-item scale has been constructed based on a scale developed by Rosenberg with modifications as per the requirement of the study [37]. The sample item is "I feel that I have a number of good qualities." A five-item scale was constructed to measure emotional intelligence from the self-reported emotional intelligence test (SSEIT) [20]. The sample item is "I am aware of my emotions as I experience them." All the scales except adult attachment scale items used five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and for adult attachment scale items used five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (not at all characteristics) to 5 (very characteristic).

SAMPLING ADEQUACY AND FACTOR ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is used to determine sampling adequacy. KMO value of more than .8 indicates that the sample is adequate for the analysis. According to Bartlett's test, p-value < .001 make up the constructs are significantly satisfying.

All the scales were validated and standardized. However, factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to re-evaluate the scales' applicability for the current study. Cronbach's alpha, with a minimum threshold of 0.6, was used to assess the constructs' internal reliability [56]. Table 2 shows the factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha results.

TABLE 1: KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.889
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5747.014
	Df	176
	Sig.	.000

Source: Primary Data

TABLE 2: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX

Variables	Items	Factor Loading			
		1	2	3	4
Secure Attachment Style (Cronbach's alpha = .912)	SAS1	.787			
	SAS2	.828			
	SAS3	.724			
	SAS4	.681			
	SAS5	.793			
	SAS6	.757			
	SAS7	.767			
	SAS8	.723			
	SAS9	.656			
Self-Esteem (Cronbach's alpha = .845)	SE1		.771		
	SE2		.774		
	SE3		.607		
	SE4		.687		

	SE5		.782		
Emotional Intelligence (Cronbach's alpha = .878)	E1			.684	
	E2			.772	
	E3			.787	
	E4			.775	
	E5			.663	
Subjective well-being (Cronbach's alpha = .897)	SWB1				.767
	SWB2				.678
	SWB3				.833
	SWB4				.784
	SWB5				.832

Source: Primary Data

Note: 1) SAS=Secure Attachment Style, SE=Self-Esteem, EI=Emotional Intelligence, SWB=Subjective well-being

TESTING COMMON METHOD BIAS

Although the current study controls for common method bias by using self-reported data acquired through a survey questionnaire at two points in time. However, each participant responds to a survey, there is a risk of common method bias. The study used Harman's Single Factor Tool, which is the most extensively used test for assessing common method bias, to determine biasness. The variation explained in the study was determined at 35.07% which is less than Harman's stated criteria of 50% [57]. As a result, statistical data suggest that common technique bias does not pose a threat to the interpretation of the current study's findings.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed using SPSS 23 with Process macro version 3.4 and AMOS version 21.0 [58]. The constructs' reliability, correlation, and factor analysis were examined using SPSS 23. The validity of the scale was investigated through CFA in AMOS 21.0 and validity master [59]. Serial mediation was also examined using SPSS with PROCESS Macro (Model 6) and 5000 bootstrapping with a 95% confidence level [60].

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Table 3 shows the demographic profile of respondents following gender, age, marital status, family structure, and region.

TABLE 3: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Demographic Variables	Categories	Percentage
Gender	Male	54.7
	Female	45.3

Age	18-24	29
	25-35	47
	36-45	17
	Above 45	7
Marital Status	Unmarried	36.7
	Married	63.3
Family Structure	Nuclear Family	52.8
	Joint Family	47.2
Region	Rural	42.4
	Semi-urban	28.4
	Urban	29.2

Source: Primary Data

RESULTS:

The findings of descriptive statistics analysis and the correlation amongst variables are reported in Table 4 and all of the variables were found to be statistically significant and correlated.

MODEL FIT AND VALIDITY

The research model was examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with AMOS 21 to examine the overall model fit [61]. The goodness of fit measurement indices model value, GFI, PGFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA were investigated [59]. All of these values were found to be within acceptable ranges. Table 5 summarises the findings.

TABLE 4: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND INTER-CORRELATIONS AMONG VARIABLES

S. No.	Variables	M	SD	SAS	SE	EI	SWB
1.	Secure Attachment Style	3.55	.57	1			
2.	Self-Esteem	3.58	.56	.420**			
3.	Emotional Intelligence	3.84	.48	.365**	.525**		
4.	Subjective well-being	3.77	.57	.363**	.451**	.563**	1

Source: Primary Data

Note: 1) SAS=Secure attachment Style, SE=Self-Esteem, EI=Emotional Intelligence, SWB=Subjective well-being

2) N=266, **p<.01

TABLE 5: FIT STATISTICS OF THE MODEL

Model Fit	Model Statistics	Cut-off Criteria
CMIN	673.11	
DF	243	
CMIN/Df	2.77	≤3 (Hair et al., 2010),
GFI	.815	≥.8 (Homburg & Baumgartner, 1995)
PGFI	.72	≥.5 (Wu, 2009)
CFI	.97	≥.9 (Hair et al., 2010)
TLI	.96	≥ 0.90 (Byrne, 2013)
RMSEA	.077	≤.08 (Steiger, 1990)

Source: Primary Data

The convergent and discriminant validity of the scale constructs were investigated. The validity master was used to examine the validity that had already been established. All of the data were found to be within permissible ranges, such as CR>0.6 and AVE>0.5 [62] which confirms the internal

consistency and convergent validity. Furthermore, the results in Table 6 show that discriminant validity is satisfactory as the square root of AVEs for each construct exceeded its correlation coefficients with other constructs [62].

TABLE 6: CONVERGENT AND DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY STATISTIC OF VARIABLES

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	SE	SAS	SWB	EI
SE	0.890	0.619	0.360	0.899	0.787			
SAS	0.917	0.552	0.214	0.920	0.463	0.743		
SWB	0.899	0.642	0.401	0.910	0.502	0.395	0.801	
EI	0.879	0.593	0.401	0.882	0.600	0.418	0.633	0.770

Note: 1) SAS=Secure attachment Style, SWB=Subjective well-being, SE=Self-Esteem, EI= Emotional Intelligence

2) CR= Composite reliability, AVE= Average variance extracted MSV= maximum shared variance

RESULTS OF DIRECT EFFECTS :

The direct effect of all four constructs is shown in Table 7. Attachment style has a positive direct effect on subjective well-being ($\beta=.1359, p<0.004$), self-esteem ($\beta=.410, p<0.000$),

and emotional intelligence ($\beta=.1475, p<0.000$). Similarly, a positive significant impact of self-esteem on SWB ($\beta=.1751, p<0.001$), and EI ($\beta=.3867, p<0.000$) is observed. Further, EI was also found to be positively impacting SWB ($\beta=.5016, p<0.000$).

TABLE 7: RESULTS OF DIRECT EFFECT

Relationships	β	se	t	P	boot LLCI	boot ULCI
SAS -> SWB	.1359	.047	2.88	.004	.0433	.2284
SAS->SE	.4105	.046	8.77	.000	.3186	.5025

SAS-> EI	.1475	.040	3.61	.000	.0673	.2277
SE -> SWB	.1751	.052	3.32	.001	.0716	.2786
SE -> EI	.3867	.041	9.27	.000	.3047	.4687
EI->SWB	.5016	.059	8.38	.000	.3840	.6193

Source: Primary Data

Notes: 1. *** p -value < 0.01; ** p -value < 0.05

2. SAS=Secure attachment Style, SWB= Subjective well-being, SE= Self-Esteem, EI= Emotional Intelligence

RESULTS OF INDIRECT EFFECTS

The direct and indirect effects of self-esteem and emotional intelligence were examined. It was observed that after mediation analysis, the direct effect of SAS on SWB is positively significant ($\beta=.1359$, 95% CL: .4333, .2284), leading to acceptance of hypothesis H1. The total size of the indirect effect is ($\beta=.2255$, 95% CL: .1508, .3056), and was found to be statistically significant as there are no zeroes between LLCI and ULCI in the confidence interval. Mediation effect

of SE, H2 ($\beta=.0719$, 95% CL: .0244, .1286) and EI H3 ($\beta=.0740$, 95% CL: .0285, .1239) were found to be statistically significant. Simple mediation analyses predicted in hypotheses 2 and 3 are supported by the results. Further, examining the serial mediating effect H4 ($\beta=.0796$, 95% CL: .0480, .1178), is also found to be statistically significant. Through this, the serial mediation effect of SE and EI is confirmed in the relationship between SAS and SWB. As proposed, all the results were found to be statistically significant, supporting all hypotheses.

TABLE 8: SPECIFIC INDIRECT EFFECTS

Relationships	H	Effect	boot SE	boot LLCI	boot ULCI	Decision
Direct effect after mediation (SAS->SWB)	H1	.1359	.0470	.0433	.2284	Accepted
Total Indirect effect		.2255	.0394	.1508	.3056	
SAS -> SE -> SWB	H2	.0719	.0266	.0244	.1286	Accepted
SAS -> EI -> SWB	H3	.0740	.0245	.0285	.1239	Accepted
SAS->SE -> EI -> SWB	H4	.0796	.0178	.0480	.1178	Accepted

Source: Primary Data

Notes: 1. SAS=Secure attachment Style, SWB= Subjective well-being, SE= Self-Esteem, EI= Emotional Intelligence

2. Number of bootstrap samples for bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals: 5000.

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals: 95%

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this article was to better understand how secure attachments are related to the subjective well-being of respondents. The study presented and investigated a serial mediation model of secure attachment style impacting subjective well-being through self-esteem and emotional intelligence. The study's empirical findings indicate some significant conclusions.

Firstly, the study examined the direct and indirect effects of secure attachment style on subjective well-being (SWB). The study found that attachments are an essential element

influencing SWB. From hypothesis one, results exhibit a positive significant association between SAS and SWB, which explains that a person who has good family/friends' relationships can contribute to a healthy sense of well-being. These findings are consistent with previous studies [27,28,30] which also found a positive significant relationship between SAS and SWB. Both direct and indirect effects were found to be statistically significant. It explains that attachment received from the family and friends helps in enhancing the subjective well-being of respondents. From the perspective of attachment theory, when person experiences love and bonding from the parents, partner,

or friends, it will help in their emotional and cognitive development.

Further, the study examined the mediating role of self-esteem (SE) and emotional intelligence (EI). As forecasted, the results were found to be positively significant. The study adds pieces of evidence to the existing literature [17,19,28,43,44] that examined the association of SE and EI with SAS and SWB. Firstly, the study forecasted the mediation effect of SE and found significant empirical results. The result exhibits similar findings with previous research [17] that examined the mediating role of SE between SAS and SWB. It explains that attachments are an important element to enhance self-esteem for increasing subjective well-being. Thus, persons should have better relationships with their family and friends to keep their self-esteem and subjective well-being high. Further, this study examined EI as a mediator between SAS and SWB. The results revealed the positive mediating role of EI between the relationship of SAS and SWB, similar to existing studies [19,20]. Its emphasis is that persons with secured attachments are more likely to be able to process and comprehend emotions and have high well-being. Therefore, attachments with family and friends help in enhancing emotional strength in persons, and then these positive emotions are responsible for high subjective well-being among them. Finally, this study analyzed the proposed serial mediation of SE and EI. The results revealed that both variables were statistically significant in influencing SAS on SWB. This is a key finding as this is the first study to analyze serial mediation in this relationship. The serial mediation effect describes that the higher the attachments among persons, the higher will be the level of self-esteem which will strengthen emotions and will ultimately lead to high subjective well-being of people. Hence, findings illuminate that self-esteem and emotional intelligence are significant factors to strengthen the positive association between attachment styles and subjective well-being.

IMPLICATIONS

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS:

The current study adds to the literature by incorporating numerous forms of evidence. To begin, the researchers focused on an important part of the wellbeing of people, namely secure attachment style to affect subjective well-being in the northern cities of India. However, previous studies majorly focus on anxious attachment style and

avoidance attachment style [26,63] but this study focused on the secure attachment style because according to the attachment theory adult relationships, friendships, romantic love, or pair bonding affects subjective well-being [9]. So, based on this theory, the variables secure attachment style and subjective well-being are employed in the study. Moreover, this study was also look into relationship between secure attachment style and subjective well-being through self-esteem and emotional intelligence. Hence, this is the first study to look at the relationship between SAS, SE, EI, and SWB and it makes a significant contribution by validating the serial mediation of SE and EI between secure attachment style and subjective well-being. Indeed, past research in India has looked at these variables separately, but not together. Furthermore, no previous study, to our knowledge, has looked at the underlying process mechanisms of SAS's influence from the perspectives of SE and EI. Moreover, the research model used in this study adds to the existing literature that SAS [27,28,30], SE [17,43,44] and EI [23,46,52,53] are the influencing variables that affect subjective well-being of people. As a result, this study illuminated a new HR research field for researchers, demonstrating that secure attachment style is critical to subjective well-being.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS:

The current study has practical implications in addition to its theoretical contribution. The previous study has not taken into account the potential role of SE and EI of people to shed light on the influence of SAS on SWB. As a result, the current study appears to be one of the first attempts to capture a holistic view of the asserted relationships among the people of India. From a practical viewpoint, the study findings can help in understanding the importance of attachments among persons to enhance their subjective well-being. Furthermore, this study appears to imply that, in addition to the attachments which define healthy relationships with friends and family, self-esteem and emotional intelligence can also be significant predictors for well-being. So, the findings of the study suggested that psychological counseling and guidance programs should be implemented focusing on secure attachments, subjective well-being, self-esteem and emotional intelligence so that people must have positive relationships with their family and friends to enhance their self-esteem and balance their emotions which will lead to high subjective well-being. Furthermore, it is crucial for the psychologists to encourage emotional education programmes that help adults to acquire emotional competences. The authors believe that these measures,

would be effective in improving attachments, self-esteem and emotional intelligence and developing subjective well-being of adults.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH SCOPE:

While the findings of the study highlighted the relevance of secure attachment style, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence on subjective well-being, however, there are significant limitations.

Firstly, even though the current study used a two-wave survey separated by a three-week interval data collection, the study is unable to draw firm causal conclusions about the relationship between attachment styles, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence on subjective well-being due to the short interval of data collection. A longitudinal or quasi-experimental study approach is encouraged for future research to better represent variances in the relationship of variables across time. Second, the study used a small data set of adults from northern cities of India, raising concerns about the study's generalizability. In future studies, the same model can be repeated with a larger sample size and diverse participant groups in other areas and countries to see if there is a cultural impact on the association under study. Third, the study mainly investigated attachment style as a factor impacting other factors. In future studies, scholars should also investigate the other variables (like employee performance, organization citizenship behavior, turnover intentions). Finally, this study just focused on mediators and did not look at any moderating variables (like education, gender), future studies might explore this.

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