

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH QUANTITATIVE OPEN ACCESS

The Relationship Between Attachment Styles and Love Attitudes of Undergraduate Nursing Students

Gul Sultan Ozeren 

Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Sinop University, Sinop, Turkey

Correspondence: Gul Sultan Ozeren (gulsultan@sinop.edu.tr)**Received:** 9 May 2025 | **Revised:** 3 July 2025 | **Accepted:** 19 September 2025**Funding:** The author received no specific funding for this work.**Keywords:** attachment style | love attitude | nursing | nursing undergraduate | student nurse

ABSTRACT

Aim: Exploring the attachment styles and love attitudes of young nursing candidates sheds light on their personal and interpersonal experiences. This study aimed to examine undergraduate nursing students' attachment styles and love attitudes and the relationship between them.

Design and Methods: This study was conducted at a state university in northern Turkiye, with 335 undergraduate nursing students completing the Relationship Questionnaire Survey (RQS) and the Love Attitudes Scale (LAS). The study used a cross-sectional design and the convenience sampling method. [Correction added on 27 January 2026, after first online publication: the blinding was not removed from the 'Design and Methods' section of the abstract prior to original publication, and the original version read "This study was conducted at a state university in northern X". This has been corrected to "This study was conducted at a state university in northern Turkiye" in this version.]

Results: The results of the correlation analysis of the scores obtained from the participants' responses indicated a negative relationship between secure attachment and mania love. Conversely, positive correlations were identified between secure attachment and storge love, obsessive attachment and mania love, fearful attachment and mania love and indifferent attachment and pragma love.

Patient or Public Contribution: It is very important for university students, especially nursing students, to protect and strengthen their own emotional well-being and that of those they care for. It is necessary to develop special educational content and establish psychosocial support units tailored to young nursing candidates that promote secure attachment and functional close relationships. Additionally, grounding educational content and psychosocial support units in self-compassion, self-esteem and physical and spiritual empowerment is crucial. The effectiveness of these initiatives must be rigorously evaluated to ascertain their impact.

1 | Introduction

The present moment, particularly for young individuals, is characterised by a series of challenges, particularly in the cultivation of self-knowledge and self-realisation. The intricacies of human relationships are experienced in a more authentic and nuanced manner. Feelings such as isolation, engagement with the virtual

world, fear, emotional isolation and loneliness, which have been prevalent during the pandemic and its subsequent period, underscore the fundamental need for human connection and emotional expression. In this context, it is imperative to examine the characteristics of close relationships among university students, particularly nursing undergraduates, to safeguard and fortify both themselves and the individuals for whom they provide care.

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

© 2025 The Author(s). *Nursing Open* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Attachment theory provides a framework for understanding the associations between interpersonal relationships, stress and health. While attachment relationships form the basis of all close relationships, they also affect future interpersonal relationships (Cozolino 2016). The quality of these relationships and expectations from adults depends on their attachment style in early childhood (Cozolino 2016). According to Bowlby (1988), who developed the attachment theory, secure attachment (i.e., the confidence that one is competent and lovable and that others will be responsive and supportive when needed) serves as a reliable resource in times of need. Secure attachment is one of the foundations for both mental health and social cohesion (Mikulincer and Shaver 2019). Building on Bowlby's original definitions of attachment, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) advanced a four-category attachment model by integrating two distinct internal working models: self and others. This model delineated four distinct attachment categories: secure, anxious, rejecting and fearful; these demonstrate the extent to which individuals have positive or negative perceptions of themselves and others.

In the healthcare field, the needs of individuals with attachment issues are of paramount importance. This is because treatments and diseases often expose healthcare providers and patients to conditions of stress, vulnerability and the need for support (Maunder and Hunter 2016). A meta-analysis by Zhang et al. (2022) found a positive link between high levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance of negative emotions, such as depression, anxiety and loneliness, and a negative link with positive emotions, such as life satisfaction and self-esteem. (Griffin and Bartholomew 1994a), (Griffin and Bartholomew 1994b) defined attachment style as the manner in which individuals approach both personal and professional relationships. Attachment relationships constitute the core of close relationships; one of the most arduous areas of close relationships is love relationships. Hazan and Shaver's (1987) seminal work posited that secure, avoidant and anxious-ambivalent attachment styles exhibited in infancy, as delineated by Ainsworth et al. (1978), can be adapted to the context of romantic relationships in adulthood and may influence the experience of romantic love in adults.

Individuals who exhibit a secure attachment style are characterised by a positive model of self-worth and the belief that others are generally sensitive and accepting of their expressions of love (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991; Holmes and Johnson 2009). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that individuals with a secure attachment style report a sense of ease in confiding and placing trust in their romantic partners (Fraley and Bonanno 2004) and experience minimal difficulty in developing close emotional connections with these individuals (Fuller and Fincham 1995). Secure adults who describe their love experiences as happy, reliable and lasting (Collins and Read 1990) tend to establish satisfying, committed and long-term relationships throughout their lives (Mikulincer and Shaver 2003).

A considerable body of research has been dedicated to the study of romantic love, with scholars examining the various ways in which it is expressed and experienced. Lee (1973, 1988) is particularly renowned for his classification of love styles, which

are also referred to as the colours of love. Building upon this seminal work, Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) developed the love attitudes scale, with the six love styles as follows: Primary love styles: Eros=passionate love, Ludus=game-playing love, Storge=friendship love; Secondary love styles: Pragma=logistical, 'shopping list' love, Mania=possessive, dependent love, and Agape=all-giving, selfless love.

Love is associated with various positive emotions, including life satisfaction, excitement, happiness and euphoria. Conversely, it can also precipitate negative emotions, such as stress and jealousy. The intensity of love can vary and is subject to change over time. A substantial body of research has demonstrated that love has a beneficial effect on health. Love activates dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with reward and stress reduction. The release of oxytocin, also known as the 'bonding hormone', occurs as a result of love. This neurochemical plays a role in relieving anxiety (Cherry 2022; Johnson 2014; Fabella 2023). Furthermore, the presence of a romantic partner has been demonstrated to mitigate feelings of loneliness, which is a well-documented cause of anxiety (Mayer and Vanderheiden 2021). Love has also been shown to encourage individuals to prioritise their well-being (Cherry 2022; Johnson 2014; Fabella 2023). This phenomenon is supported by studies indicating that married couples tend to live longer than those who are single (Cherry 2022; Johnson 2014; Fabella 2023). Furthermore, the experience of love is not only emotional but also behavioural, with the relational nature of love between people often resulting in the expression of feelings, which in turn are reflected in actions (Mayer and Vanderheiden 2021).

The establishment of therapeutic relationships with patients is widely recognised as a fundamental component in the effective delivery of nursing care and practice (G. S. Ozeren 2018; Price 2017). Therapeutic communication is dependent on an exploration of the important stages of nursing students' perceptions of themselves and others, and their tendency to show love, interest, compassion and care. In this context, it may be effective and useful to examine attachment styles and love attitudes at the internally sourced and externally oriented level. Based on available data, this study defined the attachment styles and love attitudes of undergraduate nursing participants and focused on the relationship between attachment styles and love styles to determine the participants' tendencies to perceive and understand their close relationships.

2 | Materials and Methods

2.1 | Design

This descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted with students from the Nursing Department of the Faculty of Health Sciences at a state university in the northern region of Türkiye.

2.2 | Participants

This study was conducted with a sample of 390 students enrolled in an undergraduate nursing programme at a state university in

the northern region of Türkiye. The objective of the study was to involve all students who were continuing their education in the nursing undergraduate programme at the relevant institution from 2022 to 2023. The participants were informed verbally and in writing, and their consent was obtained. After excluding students who did not want to participate or complete the questionnaires, a total of 335 participants were included, resulting in a participation rate of 86%.

2.3 | Data Collection

A short information form, the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) and Attitudes Towards Love Scale (LAS) were used as data collection instruments. The students were informed about the research and stated that their participation was voluntary. Participants were asked to complete the data collection form anonymously to ensure confidentiality. The average time required to complete the data collection forms was between 15 and 20 min.

2.4 | Data Collection Tools

2.4.1 | Participant Information Form

The researcher developed a short information form to record the participants' gender, age, and class characteristics.

2.4.2 | Relationships Scale Questionnaire (RSQ)

The scale developed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) uses a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=does not describe me at all; 7=completely describes me) consisting of 30 items. This scale is used to measure four attachment styles: 'secure', 'fearful', 'indifferent' and 'obsessive'. It was adapted to Turkish culture by Sumer and Gungor (1999). The Turkish version consists of 17 items. Increases in scores in factors other than the secure attachment dimension indicate insecure attachment. Participants are categorised into one of the four attachment styles according to the attachment style with the highest mean score. The internal consistency coefficients of the sub-dimensions in the scale ranged between 0.27 and 0.61, and the test-retest reliability is 0.78. Notably, the total score is not derived from the scale; instead, factor scores are evaluated. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.63.

2.4.3 | Love Attitude Scale-Short Form (LAS)

This scale was developed by Hendrick et al. (1998), extending Lee's (1973) classification of love to determine the forms of love in dyadic relationships. It measures six forms of love: 'eros', 'ludus', 'storge', 'pragma', 'mania' and 'agape'. Scores on each subscale vary between 4 and 20, with higher scores indicating a stronger preference for that particular form of love. The LAS uses a 5-point Likert-type scale, with 1 representing 'absolutely false' and 5 representing 'absolutely true'. In Hendrick et al.'s (1998) study ascertaining the validity and reliability of the Attitudes Towards Love Scale, the Cronbach's

alpha of the subscales varied between 0.62 and 0.88, depending on the factor analysis. Furthermore, the Cronbach alpha of the scale translated into Turkish by Buyuksahin and Hovardaoglu (2004) ranged between 0.62 and 0.88 for each subscale. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was between 0.64 and 0.86.

2.5 | Ethical Principles

Permission was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Sinop University prior to the commencement of the research (2019–2045). The research procedure was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. [Correction added on 27 January 2026, after first online publication: the blinding was not removed from the 'Ethical Principles' section prior to original publication, and the original version read "Permission was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of X University prior to the commencement of the research (2019–2045)". This has been corrected to "Permission was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Sinop University prior to the commencement of the research (2019–45)".]

2.6 | Statistical Analysis

The data analysis was conducted using the SPSS 20.0 software program. The descriptive statistics of the qualitative variables in the study were presented as frequency and percentage, while the descriptive statistics of the quantitative data were presented as mean, standard deviation, median, minimum and maximum values. The normality of the quantitative data was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test, and the Mann–Whitney U-test was employed to compare independent paired groups. Spearman's correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between the scales. The statistical significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

2.7 | Limitations

The study sample was limited to students enrolled at a state university. The scope of the research subject, as measured by the questionnaire and scale questions, was limited to quantifiable dimensions.

3 | Findings

The nursing students who participated (Table 1) in this study were predominantly women (61%). The mean age of the participants is 22 (min–max = 19–30). The majority of participants resided in urban areas for most of their lives (54%). Participants' primary source of support during challenging periods of their lives was their mother (57%). However, 4% of participants indicated that they had not received any support from anyone.

The nursing students participating in the study had the highest 'indifferent attachment' style (4.64 ± 0.99) and 'passionate love' attitude (3.47 ± 0.44).

TABLE 1 | Participants' general mean RSQ and LAS subscale scores.

Attachment style	Mean $\pm$ Std. deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Secure	4.28 $\pm$ 1.14	1.00	7.00
Fearful	3.90 $\pm$ 0.94	1.80	6.80
Preoccupied	3.97 $\pm$ 0.97	1.75	6.50
Dismissing	4.64 $\pm$ 0.99	1.60	7.00
Love attitudes			
Eros	3.47 $\pm$ 0.44	2.50	5.00
Ludus	2.49 $\pm$ 0.59	1.25	4.25
Storge	3.03 $\pm$ 0.73	1.25	5.00
Pragma	3.24 $\pm$ 0.61	1.50	4.75
Mani	3.24 $\pm$ 0.73	1.25	5.25
Agape	2.95 $\pm$ 0.75	1.00	4.50

Note: Mann–Whitney U test.

TABLE 2 | Participants' attachment styles and love attitudes according to gender.

Attachment styles/love attitudes/subscales	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean	p
Secure	Women	203	3.85	0.970	0.068	0.40
	Man	132	3.98	0.897	0.078	
Fearful	Women	203	4.30	1.142	0.080	0.99
	Man	132	4.27	1.159	0.101	
Preoccupied	Women	203	3.96	0.988	0.069	0.64
	Man	132	3.99	0.968	0.084	
Dismissing	Women	203	4.72	0.981	0.069	0.91
	Man	132	4.53	1.013	0.088	
Eros	Women	203	3.44	0.438	0.031	0.66
	Man	132	3.53	0.447	0.039	
Ludus	Women	203	2.52	0.628	0.044	0.04
	Man	132	2.46	0.535	0.047	
Storge	Women	203	3.04	0.701	0.049	0.20
	Man	132	3.01	0.784	0.068	
Pragma	Women	203	3.25	0.616	0.043	0.72
	Man	132	3.23	0.621	0.054	
Mani	Women	203	3.27	0.702	0.049	0.21
	Man	132	3.21	0.779	0.068	
Agape	Women	203	2.99	0.732	0.051	0.47
	Man	132	2.90	0.777	0.068	

Note: Mann–Whitney U test.

The investigation revealed no statistically significant differences in the attachment styles of participating nursing students according to gender. However, a statistically significant difference was identified in the 'ludus' in the love attitudes of the students according to gender, with women exhibiting greater tendency towards 'ludus' love attitudes Table 2.

An examination of the relationship between participants' attachment styles and love attitudes revealed a significantly inverse, low-level relationship between secure attachment and mania love ($r = -0.147$). Additionally, a significantly strong, low-level relationship was identified between secure attachment and storge love ($r = 0.127$), indifferent attachment and pragmatic love,

TABLE 3 | Correlation between participants' RSQ and LAS scores.

	Secure	Fearful	Preoccupied	Dismissing	Eros	Ludus	Storge	Pragma	Mani	Agape
Secure	—									
	—									
	—									
Fearful	−0.167**									
	0.002	—								
	335									
Preoccupied	−0.115*	0.115*								
	0.036	0.035	—							
	335	335								
Dismissing	0.067	0.485**	−0.111*							
	0.224	0.000	0.042	—						
	335	335	335							
Eros	0.029	0.040	0.170**	−0.053						
	0.598	0.466	0.002	0.330	—					
	335	335	335	335						
Ludus	−0.066	−0.032	0.101	0.014	−0.003					
	0.230	0.555	0.066	0.796	0.952	—				
	335	335	335	335	335					
Storge	0.127*	0.037	0.001	0.095	0.261**	0.047				
	0.020	0.504	0.983	0.081	0.000	0.392				
	335	335	335	335	335	335				
Pragma	−0.101	0.069	0.138*	0.155**	0.048	0.025	0.010			
	0.066	0.205	0.011	0.005	0.377	0.652	0.849	—		
	335	335	335	335	335	335	335			
Mani	−0.147**	0.264**	0.329**	0.057	0.060	0.090	0.055	0.210**		
	0.007	0.000	0.000	0.299	0.270	0.098	0.319	0.000	—	
	335	335	335	335	335	335	335	335		
Agape	0.022	−0.051	0.145**	−0.067	0.061	0.006	0.103	−0.035	0.433**	
	0.687	0.353	0.008	0.223	0.268	0.906	0.061	0.518	0.000	
	335	335	335	335	335	335	335	335	335	—

Note: *r*: Spearman correlation test; *p* < 0.05.

Abbreviations: LAS, Love Attitude Scale; RSQ, Relationships Scale Questionnaire.

obsessive attachment and 'eros' ($r=0.170$), and between obsessive attachment and agape love ($r=0.145$). A moderately strong and significant relationship was identified between obsessive attachment and mania love ($r=0.329$) Table 3.

4 | Discussion

Nursing students' attachment styles and love attitudes did not show a significant difference according to the variables of age, the place where most of their life was spent and the person who

helped them in difficult times. Notably, most participants received help from their mother when they encountered difficulties in life. This finding underscores the notion that the mother serves as a universal anchor for emotional and psychological safety, underscoring the need for a secure foundation in the life of an individual.

The majority of nursing students who participated in the study had an 'indifferent attachment' style. Those with indifferent attachments have positive self-models of themselves and negative mental models of others (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991).

Our findings are similar to those of G. S. Ozeren (2022), who also found that the majority of undergraduate nursing students have 'indifferent attachment' styles. In Ardenghi et al.'s (2020) study on preclinical medical students, the 'indifferent attachment' style was also prevalent. Many studies have emphasised the importance of attachment styles for health professionals. Indifferent attachment is a form of insecure attachment which impairs empathy towards clients (Rubino et al. 2000) and treatment processes (Fuentes et al. 2019) in health professionals. The ability to form strong working alliances has been linked to health professionals' general attachment patterns (Eames and Roth 2000; Petrowski et al. 2013; Schauenburg et al. 2010). The study results of Hiebler-Ragger et al. emphasised the importance of the supervision relationship for the well-being and professional performance of health professionals while emphasising the interactions between the underlying attachment parameters (Hiebler-Ragger et al. 2021). Another study found that insecure attachment styles in medical students were significantly associated with depressive symptoms (Colonnello et al. 2022). In addition, attachment anxiety and avoidance have been linked to depressive symptoms through increased negative and decreased positive self-compassion (Yang et al. 2024). In a study examining the relationship between burnout, sense of coherence and attachment in healthcare workers, the final model, in which avoidant and anxious attachment were included as additional predictors, explained 30% of the variance in burnout symptoms (Hiebler-Ragger et al. 2021). In light of these data, studies on the attachment styles of individuals who work and are candidates to work in the field of healthcare, where physical-spiritual empowerment is needed as a difficult working area, are very important.

The participants 'eros' attitude was determined to be the most pronounced. 'Eros' is a typical characteristic of people who have a passionate and romantic attitude towards love; it is based on both the feeling of passion and physical and emotional attraction to the partner (Lee 1973, 1988; Raffagnino and Puddu 2018). A study by Fabella (2023) with college students in the Philippines found 'eros' to be the most prevalent love attitude, as indicated by the mean sub-dimension scores of the participants. In a recent study examining the relationship between love attitude and personal values in young adults, the highest score in terms of subscale mean scores was obtained from 'ludus' (Shams and Atta 2024). In general, studies have shown that 'eros' love attitudes tend to support adaptive emotional experiences (Karandashev 2022), and this inference was generally positive in this study.

The investigation revealed no statistically significant differences in the attachment styles of participating nursing students according to gender. However, a statistically significant difference was identified in the 'ludus' attitude in love attitudes of students according to gender, with women exhibiting a higher tendency towards the 'ludus' love attitude. 'Ludus' is a characteristic exhibited by individuals who perceive love as a game; those who adopt a 'ludus' type of love seek instant gratification and therefore engage in relationships without commitment. In conflict situations, ludus love attitudes tend to involve destructive strategies, such as dominance and greater impulsivity in interactions, instead of constructive strategies (Zacchilli et al. 2009). In a study conducted with university students, it was found that there was a difference between men and women

in terms of agape love types, with men having higher age scores than women (Bugay and Tezer 2008). However, a contradictory finding emerged in another study that aimed to ascertain gender disparities in love styles among university students. This study concluded that there was no gender-based distinction in love styles (Binti Kamardin 2007). A subsequent study revealed a gender-based distinction in the agape love style, with female participants exhibiting a higher propensity for agape-type love attitudes than male participants (Wan Shahrazad et al. 2012). Meta-analyses of numerous studies have demonstrated the prevalence of positive emotionality among individuals with 'eros' love attitudes and negative emotionality among individuals with 'ludus' and 'mania' love attitudes. The results of the empirical studies demonstrated that individuals with ludus and mania tended to experience more negative emotions, whereas those with 'eros' experienced more positive emotions. The love of individuals with ludus types can be interpreted as defensive attitudes towards negative emotional experiences (Karandashev 2022). Current studies on social media influence report that exposure to unrealistic body standards and harmful social comparisons is significant (it is fair to say that this is more pressurising for women). Through likes, comments and shares, the measurable criteria for social approval and personal worth are distorted. The interactive nature of social media encourages users to seek approval for their physical appearance, promoting dopamine-driven feedback loops that emphasise appearance as a critical source of self-esteem. Furthermore, the anonymity and distance afforded by digital platforms can, on occasion, result in the perpetration of cyberbullying and body humiliation, thereby exacerbating the detrimental impact on individuals' body images and mental health (Bodroža et al. 2022; Merino et al. 2024; Yu and Jung 2018). The findings of this study can be interpreted as a reflection of the social media culture in recent years, with women, especially young women, who tend to exhibit more aggression and defensiveness towards love or dating relationships, devaluing and gamifying for the sake of self-protection.

Examination of the relationship between students' attachment styles and love attitudes revealed no gender-based differences. However, a negative correlation was identified between secure attachment and mania love, as determined by a correlation analysis of participant responses. Secure attachment, as defined by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), is characterised by self-confidence and the acceptance of others, involving the allowance of autonomy. Mania love, in contrast, is typified by possessive and jealous tendencies. The findings of this study are consistent with these theoretical perspectives. A positive relationship was identified between secure attachment and mania love. A secure attachment style is characterised by positive self-perception and the perception of others as positive, good and reliable (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991). Storge love involves a strong commitment to the relationship, with the partner regarded as a friend with similar attitudes and values (Lee 1973). This finding is consistent with the results of the present study. The findings of this study demonstrate a strong positive relationship between obsessive attachment and mania love, in which an individual's self-perception is negative and their perception of others is positive (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991; Bartholomew and Shaver 1998). For an individual who experiences their partner as indispensable, love is, at best, an obsession; in fact, manic love is precisely this form of

obsessive love (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991; Bartholomew and Shaver 1998). A positive relationship has been found between fearful attachment and mania love (Karandashev 2022). The former is characterised by negative self-perception and the perception of others in the individual (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991; Bartholomew and Shaver 1998), whereas the latter is possessive and dependent. Additionally, mania-type love is interpreted as a defensive attitude related to negative emotional experiences (Karandashev 2022). The manifestation of such a relationship is characterised by an aversion to the prospect of abandonment, which can manifest as a tendency towards overprotective behaviour. This dynamic is recognised as engendering a state of mutual dissatisfaction that is detrimental to both parties' well-being, and a notable correlation has been identified between indifferent attachment and pragmatic love. Individuals exhibiting indifferent attachments demonstrate positive self-perception while simultaneously perceiving others negatively. This tendency is characterised by an inherent trust in one's own capabilities. This individual perceives themselves as competent in numerous domains but harbours a conviction of the unreliability of others (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991; Bartholomew and Shaver 1998). Pragmatism is distinguished from the pragmatic perspective of love, necessitating the deliberate consideration of the demographic characteristics of potential partners. The pragmatic lover seeks similarities in background and interests that could make that person a good partner in life (Hendrick and Hendrick 1986). This connection appears to be a set of strategic backgrounds that prioritise self-interest over emotional sharing.

A review of the literature revealed no other studies that examined the relationship between attachment styles and love attitudes of nursing students, the results of which indicate that attachment theory offers a useful perspective on adult-love relationships (Feeney and Noller 1990). The results obtained in this study also support the notion that attachment theory provides a solid and understandable core structure to explain attitudes towards love. One study identified that avoidant attachment style was a significant predictor of eros, pragma and agape love types, while another study found that anxious attachment style was a significant predictor of eros, pragma, ludus and manic love types (Sahin and Parlak 2020). Another study examined the relationship between love attitudes and attachment styles of university students in terms of gender characteristics, finding that a secure attachment style was positively associated with eros in males, and an anxious attachment style was positively associated with mania in females (Fourmanov 2022). The study also found that women's love attitudes were less affected by attachment styles, with only fearful attachment style being a positive predictor of mania, and anxious attachment style being a positive predictor of mania and agape. The findings obtained by Fourmanov demonstrated a partial overlap with the findings obtained in this study, and it is evident that further specialised studies are required in this field. Main et al. (1985) conducted seminal research in this field and proposed that individuals with secure attachment patterns report a greater sense of relationship satisfaction. Conversely, those who experience a rejected, neglected or inconsistent parenting style during early development, and consequently do not receive a sufficiently inclusive and caring caregiver experience, are more likely to exhibit an insecure

attachment pattern in their romantic relationships during adulthood. This prompts consideration of the significance of transmitting secure attachment and functional love attitudes from one generation to the next, as well as the patterns that each nursing student will transfer from their personal life story to their professional life. Bowlby (1969) asserts that once an attachment is established as secure or insecure at an early age, it is challenging to alter. Conversely, relational therapies are attachment-based and function by leveraging neuroplasticity. Consequently, scientific research in the domain of attachment and human relationships has indicated that significant relationships such as friendship, marriage and psychotherapy can reactivate these processes and modify the structure of the brain (G. S. Ozeren 2018).

Finally, the reconstruction of secure attachment in close relationships is of paramount importance and necessity for university-aged youth. Secure attachment and profound love represent a scientific and philosophical approach to fostering compassion, understanding, inclusivity and efficiency in the delivery of healthcare, particularly among university nursing students themselves, their families, their social environment, their colleagues and their patients in their professional settings. On a broader scale, it is imperative for further research to examine the variations in attachment styles and love attitudes that are specific to the region, culture and generation. Special educational content and psychosocial support units specific to the nursing profession, based on self-compassion, self-esteem and physical and spiritual empowerment, should be developed and their effectiveness evaluated.

Acknowledgements

Permission was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Sinop University prior to the commencement of the research (2019–2045). The research procedure was carried out in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

References

- Ainsworth, M. D. S., M. C. Blehar, E. Waters, and S. Wall. 1978. *Patterns of Attachment: A Psychological Study of the Strange Situation*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ardenghi, S., G. Rampoldi, M. Bani, and M. G. Strepparava. 2020. "Attachment Styles as Predictors of Self-Reported Empathy in Medical Students During Pre-Clinical Years." *Patient Education and Counseling* 103, no. 5: 965–970.
- Bartholomew, K., and L. M. Horowitz. 1991. "Attachment Styles Among Young Adults: A Test of a Four-Category Model." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 61, no. 2: 226–244. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.61.2.226>.
- Bartholomew, K., and P. R. Shaver. 1998. "Methods of Assessing Adult Attachment: Do They Converge?" In *Attachment Theory and Close*

- Relationships, edited by J. A. Simpson and W. S. Rholes, 25–45. Guilford Press.
- Binti Kamardin, S. 2007. "Gaya Bercinta Di kalangan Pelajar UKM. (Love Styles Among UKM Students). Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis, Department of Psychology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia."
- Bodroža, B., V. Obradović, and S. Ivanović. 2022. "Active and Passive Selfie-Related Behaviors: Implications for Body Image, Self-Esteem and Mental Health." *Cyberpsychology* 16, no. 2. <https://doi.org/10.5817/CP2022-2-3>.
- Bowlby, J. 1969. *Attachment and Loss* (No. 79). Random House.
- Bowlby, J. 1988. *A Secure Base: Parent–Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development*. Basic Books.
- Bugay, A., and E. Tezer. 2008. "Attachment Styles and Loving Attitudes Among Turkish University Students." *2nd Annual Global Conference: Persons, Intimacy and Love*: 10–13.
- Buyuksahin, A., and S. Hovardaoglu. 2004. "Çiftlerin Aşka İlişkin Tutumlarının Lee'nin Çok Boyutlu Aşk Biçimleri Kapsamında İncelenmesi." *Türk Psikoloji Dergisi* 19, no. 54: 59–72.
- Cherry, K. 2022. "Is Love Biological or is it a Cultural Phenomenon? Verywell Mind." <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-love-2795343>.
- Collins, N. L., and S. J. Read. 1990. "Adult Attachment, Working Models, and Relationship Quality in Dating Couples." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58, no. 4: 644–663. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.58.4.644>.
- Colonnello, V., E. Fino, and P. M. Russo. 2022. "Attachment Anxiety and Depressive Symptoms in Undergraduate Medical Students: The Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation Strategies." *Perspectives on Medical Education* 11, no. 4: 207–212.
- Cozolino, L. 2016. *Why Therapy Works—Using Our Minds to Change Our Brains*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Eames, V., and A. Roth. 2000. "Patient Attachment Orientation and the Early Working Alliance -A Study of Patient and Therapist Reports of Alliance Quality and Ruptures." *Psychotherapy Research* 10, no. 4: 421–434.
- Fabella, F. E. T. 2023. "The Love Attitude That Influences One's Happiness: The Relationship Between Love Attitude Scale Scores and Oxford Happiness Scores of Selected College Students." *Galore International Journal of Applied Sciences and Humanities* 7, no. 2: 7–14.
- Feeney, J. A., and P. Noller. 1990. "Attachment Style as a Predictor of Adult Romantic Relationships." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58, no. 2: 281–291.
- Fourmanov, I. A. 2022. "Love Attitudes of Students With Different Attachment Styles." *Philosophy and Psychology* 3: 83–94.
- Fraley, R. C., and G. A. Bonanno. 2004. "Attachment and Loss: A Test of Three Competing Models on the Association Between Attachment-Related Avoidance and Adaptation to Bereavement." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 30, no. 7: 878–890. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167204264289>.
- Fuertes, J. N., M. Moore, and J. Ganley. 2019. "Therapists' and Clients' Ratings of Real Relationship, Attachment, Therapist Self-Disclosure, and Treatment Progress." *Psychotherapy Research* 29, no. 5: 594–606.
- Fuller, T. L., and F. D. Fincham. 1995. "Attachment Style in Married Couples: Relation to Current Marital Functioning, Stability Over Time, and Method of Assessment." *Personal Relationships* 2, no. 1: 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.1995.tb00075.x>.
- Griffin, D. W., and K. Bartholomew. 1994a. "Models of Self and Other: Fundamental Dimensions Underlying Measures of Adult Attachment." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67, no. 3: 430–445.
- Griffin, D. W., and K. Bartholomew. 1994b. "The Metaphysics of Measurement: The Case of Adult Attachment." In *Advances in Personal Relationships: Attachment Processes in Adulthood*, edited by K. Bartholomew and D. Perlman, vol. 5. Jessica Kingsley.
- Hazan, C., and P. Shaver. 1987. "Romantic Love Conceptualized as an Attachment Process." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52, no. 3: 511–524. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.52.3.511>.
- Hendrick, C., and S. Hendrick. 1986. "A Theory and Method of Love." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50, no. 2: 392–402. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.50.2.392>.
- Hendrick, C., S. S. Hendrick, and A. Dicke. 1998. "The Love Attitudes Scale: Short Form." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 15, no. 2: 147–159.
- Hiebler-Ragger, M., L. Nausner, A. Blaha, et al. 2021. "The Supervisory Relationship From an Attachment Perspective: Connections to Burnout and Sense of Coherence in Health Professionals." *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy* 28, no. 1: 124–136.
- Holmes, B. M., and K. R. Johnson. 2009. "Adult Attachment and Romantic Partner Preference: A Review." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 26, no. 6–7: 833–852. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509345653>.
- Johnson, S. 2014. *The Love Secret: The Revolutionary New Science of Romantic Relationships*. Hachette UK.
- Karandashev, V. 2022. "Adaptive and Maladaptive Love Attitudes." *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships* 16, no. 2: 158–177.
- Lee, J. A. 1973. *Colours of Love: An Exploration of the Ways of Loving*. New Press.
- Lee, J. A. 1988. "Love Styles." In *The Psychology of Love*, edited by R. J. Sternberg and M. L. Barnes. Yale University Press.
- Main, M., N. Kaplan, and J. Cassidy. 1985. "Security in Infancy, Childhood, and Adulthood: A Move to the Level of Representation." *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development* 50: 66–104.
- Maunder, R. G., and J. J. Hunter. 2016. "Can Patients be 'Attached' to Healthcare Providers? An Observational Study to Measure Attachment Phenomena in Patient–Provider Relationships." *BMJ Open* 6: e011068. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2016-011068>.
- Mayer, C. H., and E. Vanderheiden. 2021. *International Handbook of Love*. Springer.
- Merino, M., J. F. Tornero-Aguilera, A. Rubio-Zarapuz, C. V. Villanueva-Tobaldo, A. Martín-Rodríguez, and V. J. Clemente-Suárez. 2024. "Body Perceptions and Psychological Well-Being: A Review of the Impact of Social Media and Physical Measurements on Self-Esteem and Mental Health With a Focus on Body Image Satisfaction and Its Relationship With Cultural and Gender Factors." *Healthcare (Basel)* 12, no. 14: 1396.
- Mikulincer, M., and P. R. Shaver. 2003. "The Attachment Behavioral System in Adulthood: Activation, Psychodynamics, and Processes." In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, edited by M. Zanna, vol. 35. Academic Press.
- Mikulincer, M., and P. R. Shaver. 2019. "Attachment Orientations and Emotion Regulation." *Current Opinion in Psychology* 25: 6–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2018.02.006>.
- Ozeren, G. S. 2018. *Attachment and Human Relationships*. Vol. 1. Publication, Gece Kitaplığı.
- Ozeren, G. S. 2022. "The Correlation Between Emotion Regulation and Attachment Styles in Undergraduates." *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care* 58, no. 2: 482–490.

- Petrowski, K., D. Pokorny, K. Nowacki, and A. Buchheim. 2013. "The Therapist's Attachment Representation and the Patient's Attachment to the Therapist." *Psychotherapy Research* 23, no. 1: 25–34.
- Price, B. 2017. "Developing Patient Rapport, Trust and Therapeutic Relationships." *Nursing Standard* 31: 52–63.
- Raffagnino, R., and L. Puddu. 2018. "Love Styles in Couple Relationships: A Literature Review." *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 6: 307–330.
- Rubino, G., C. Barker, T. Roth, and P. Ferson. 2000. "Therapist Empathy and Depth of Interpretation in Response to Potential Alliance Ruptures: The Role of Therapist and Patient Attachment Styles." *Psychotherapy Research* 10, no. 4: 408–420.
- Sahin, B. S., and S. Parlak. 2020. "Aşka İlişkin Tutumların Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantıları Yordayıcılığının İncelenmesi. Examining the Prediction of Love Attitude Styles on Experiences in Close Relationships." *Education in Science* 15, no. 3: 63–72.
- Schauenburg, H., A. Buchheim, K. Beckh, et al. 2010. "The Influence of Psychodynamically Oriented Therapists' Attachment Representations on Outcome and Alliance in Inpatient Psychotherapy." *Research* 20, no. 2: 193–202.
- Shams, A., and N. Atta. 2024. "Personal Values as Correlates of Love Attitude in Young Adults." *Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review* 2, no. 4: 131–146.
- Sumer, N., and D. Gungor. 1999. "Yetiskin Baglanma Stilleri Olceklerinin Turk Orneklemi Uzerinde Psikometrik Degerlendirmesi Ve Kulturlerarasi Bir Karsilastirma." *Turkish Journal of Psychology* 14, no. 43: 71–106.
- Wan Shahrazad, W. S., S. M. Hoesni, and S. T. Chong. 2012. "Investigating the Factor Structure of the Love Attitude Scale (LAS) With Malaysian Samples." *Asian Social Science* 8, no. 9: 66–73.
- Yang, S., Y. Ren, X. Song, J. Ge, and Y. Peng. 2024. "Insecure Attachment and Depressive Symptoms Among a Large Sample of gChinese Young Adults: The Mediating Role of Positive and Negative Self-Compassion." *Behavioral Science* 14, no. 3: 238.
- Yu, U. J., and J. Jung. 2018. "Effects of Self-Discrepancy and Self-Schema on Young Women's Body Image and Self-Esteem After Media Image Exposure." *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal* 47: 142–160.
- Zacchilli, T. L., C. Hendrick, and S. S. Hendrick. 2009. "The Romantic Partner Conflict Scale: A New Scale to Measure Relationship Conflict." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 26: 1073–1096. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509347936>.
- Zhang, X., J. Li, F. Xie, X. Chen, W. Xu, and N. W. Hudson. 2022. "The Relationship Between Adult Attachment and Mental Health: A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 123, no. 5: 1089–1137. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000437>.