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***Research paper***



# Integrating Yogic and Psychological Frameworks: Evaluating The MES-Q Model for Enhancing Mental, Emotional, Spiritual Health and Quality of Life

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## Abstract

**Background**: Mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being are deeply interconnected dimensions of health, particularly in youth facing social and psychological stressors. Existing interventions often address these dimensions in isolation. This study, utilizing the MES-Q intervention, aims to bridge this gap.
**Objectives:** This study evaluates the efficacy of the MES-Q (Mental, Emotional, Spiritual Quotient) intervention, a structured, six-step psychospiritual model developed over three decades, grounded in the Pancha Kosha framework and psychological science.
**Methods:** A pre–post experimental study was conducted with 107 undergraduate students from two colleges in Mumbai. Participants completed validated scales for Mental Quotient (MQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), Spiritual Quotient (SQ), and Quality of Life (QOL) before and after a 30-hour intervention. The MES-Q program incorporated techniques such as guided journaling, introspective silence, group dialogue, value clarification, and visualization exercises. Data were analyzed using paired t-tests, Cohen's d effect sizes, and two-way ANOVA to assess subgroup variability.
**Results:** Statistically significant improvements were observed in MQ ($t = 2.38$, $p = 0.019$, Cohen's $d = 0.230$, small), EQ ($t = 10.83$, $p = 0.000$, $d = 1.047$, large), and SQ ($t = 2.78$, $p = 0.006$, $d = 0.269$, small). QOL did not show a statistically significant change ($t = 0.24$, $p = 0.815$). Subgroup analyses indicated that females benefitted more strongly than males across all domains, particularly in EQ and SQ.
**Conclusion:** The MES-Q intervention significantly improved inner faculties of cognition, emotion, and spiritual awareness, with large effects on EQ and small but reliable effects on MQ and SQ. These findings support the integrative potential of yogic and psychological tools. While QOL remained unchanged in the short term, MES-Q offers a promising model for long-term well-being enhancement and can be adapted for educational, therapeutic, and community-based mental health programs.
**Implications for practice:** MES-Q can be integrated into college-based mental health initiatives and youth development programs, and is also applicable to adult populations, offering a scalable model to strengthen resilience, emotional intelligence, and spiritual awareness across diverse groups.

***Keywords***: *Psychospiritual Intervention; MES-Q Model, Pancha Kosha Framework; Mental Quotient (MQ); Emotional Quotient (EQ); Spiritual Quotient (SQ); Quality of Life (QOL); Resilience; College Students; Adult Populations; Youth Mental Health; Well-Being Enhancement.*

## 1. Introduction

The modern pursuit of external achievement often overlooks internal harmony, leading to rising levels of psychological distress despite access to education, health care, and digital connectivity. In today's performance-driven society, many individuals, especially youth, struggle with anxiety, identity confusion, and emotional burnout. This crisis calls for comprehensive approaches that integrate not just cognitive tools but also emotional and spiritual dimensions of human experience. This study, utilizing the MES-Q intervention, aims to bridge this gap.
**Mental Quotient (MQ)** refers to cognitive functioning, including logical reasoning, memory, problem-solving ability, and intellectual flexibility. In the MES-Q model, MQ is addressed through reflective inquiry, cognitive reframing, and goal-setting practices that enhance clarity and mental resilience. An elevated MQ supports academic, professional success and adaptability in life. A key feature of MES-Q is its focus on activating and strengthening the Manomaya Kosha, which is where the MIND is located, which is critical in addressing cognitive distortions, emotional reactivity, and self-limiting beliefs.
**Emotional Quotient (EQ)** or emotional intelligence encompasses emotional awareness, regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills. These competencies are crucial for healthy relationships, self-mastery, and managing adversity. MES-Q incorporates activities like guided journaling, emotional mapping, and group sharing to activate the Manomaya Kosha and strengthen EQ.

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**Spiritual Quotient (SQ)** refers to an individual's ability to experience purpose, alignment with values, interconnectedness, and inner peace. Unlike religiosity, SQ transcends doctrine and focuses on experiential depth. Through introspective silence, meditative visualization, and value clarification, MES-Q engages the Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya Koshas to nurture SQ. This dimension is especially important in buffering existential stress and fostering long-term resilience.

**Quality of Life (QOL)** is a broad, multidimensional construct encompassing physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, environmental context, and spiritual meaning. While the MES-Q methodology primarily targets internal capacities (MQ, EQ, SQ), these are hypothesized to influence QOL over time. *Improvements in inner quotients often precede tangible changes in lifestyle satisfaction and external conditions.*

## 1.1. The Pancha Kosha: a five-layered journey into the self:

One ancient framework that offers a holistic view of human well-being is the Pancha Kosha model from yogic philosophy, first described in the Taittiriya Upanishad (circa 6th century BCE). In Sanskrit, pancha means "five" and kosha means "sheath" or "layer." The theory describes the self as composed of five concentric layers, each influencing and dependent on the others. Like nesting dolls, the outer layers support and protect the inner ones, while the inner layers guide and inspire the outer.

These sheaths range from the most tangible physical body to the most subtle essence of bliss. In yogic thought, the outer layer is where most of us start our awareness, dominated by the body's needs, and the inner layers are progressively revealed through mindful living, self-inquiry, and spiritual practice.

**1) Annamaya Kosha: The Physical Sheath**

The outermost layer, Annamaya Kosha, refers to the physical body made of "anna," or food. This includes muscles, bones, organs, and all biological processes. It is sustained by nutrition, hydration, rest, and physical activity. This sheath is entirely tangible and measurable, the Tangible (Physical) layer, the body you can see, touch, and care for. From a yogic perspective, it is the "vehicle" for life and the necessary foundation for deeper exploration of self. A healthy Annamaya Kosha allows the subtler layers to function well; imbalance here, through poor diet, illness, or neglect, can block progress in the inner journey.

**2) Pranamaya Kosha – The Vital Energy Sheath**

Beneath the physical body lies the Pranamaya Kosha, the sheath of life energy (prana). This is subtler than the physical form, not visible to the naked eye but sensed as vitality, vigor, or fatigue. It is part of the Astral Body, operating through breath and energy channels (nadis). Balanced prana supports emotional steadiness and resilience, while imbalances, such as shallow breathing or erratic energy, can disrupt both health and mood. Breathwork, yoga, and mindful movement nourish this sheath, making life feel more vibrant and connected.

**3) Manomaya Kosha – The Mental-Emotional Sheath**

The Manomaya Kosha represents the mind (manas) and emotions. It processes sensory input, generates thoughts, and shapes emotional responses. This, too, is part of the Astral Body. While intangible, its influence can be seen in behavior, relationships, and life choices. When unsettled, it can cloud judgment and feed anxiety; when calm, it fosters clarity and healthy connection with others. Practices like meditation, journaling, and cultivating positive mental habits strengthen this sheath, helping the mind become a steady ally rather than a restless critic.

**4) Vijnanamaya Kosha – The Wisdom Sheath**

Deeper still is the Vijnanamaya Kosha, the sheath of higher intellect (vijnana) and intuitive insight. It governs self-awareness, moral reasoning, and the ability to discern truth from illusion. Like the previous two layers, it belongs to the Astral Body, but operates on a refined level, guiding choices and aligning actions with inner values. When developed, it supports authenticity, purpose, and the courage to live by one's truth; when dormant, life tends to be driven by habit or social conditioning rather than conscious intent.

**5) Anandamaya Kosha – The Bliss Sheath**

At the innermost core lies the Anandamaya Kosha, the sheath of bliss (ananda). This is part of the Causal Body, representing the formless essence of joy and spiritual connection. It is not a fleeting pleasure, but deep inner contentment that remains steady even in life's challenges. Many describe it as a sense of "coming home" to oneself, a state of peace that exists independently of external circumstances. Yogic philosophy holds that the journey inward through the koshas ultimately reveals this blissful core, which is always present but often obscured by the noise of the outer layers.

## 1.2. The human journey through the sheaths

Progressing from the Annamaya Kosha to the Anandamaya Kosha mirrors the arc of human growth. We begin life deeply identified with our physical form, meeting its needs and shaping our identity around it. As awareness expands, we tune into the flow of energy and vitality, then into the mental and emotional landscapes that color our reality. With further maturity, wisdom and discernment take root, guiding our actions from a place of deeper understanding. Ultimately, the journey brings us to the Anandamaya Kosha, the realization that beyond body, breath, thought, and even intellect lies an unshakable core of peace and joy. This journey, if undertaken without awareness, may take a few years, decades, or lifetimes, depending on the individual's past and present karmas. However, the MES-Q method accelerates this process of awareness and inner transformation in mere 30 hours of this structured process.

This movement inward is not about rejecting the outer layers, but integrating them, caring for the body, nurturing energy, stabilizing the mind, cultivating wisdom, so that the bliss at the centre can shine through into everyday life. In this way, the Pancha Kosha model becomes not just a philosophical map, but a living, breathing guide to holistic well-being. This is the reason why it is said that "Look Inwards, you have all the answers to your questions within you".

This multilayered model resonates with emerging integrative frameworks in modern psychology that advocate for biopsychosocial and spiritual approaches to health. However, while psychology offers tools for measuring and modifying mental and emotional states, it often lacks structured engagement with spiritual dimensions. This gap is addressed in the MES-Q methodology.

While MES-Q is rooted in the Indian philosophical tradition and draws upon concepts from the Pancha Kosha model, it is designed as a bespoke, structured framework rather than a rigid, one-size-fits-all program. Many cultures possess analogous concepts and models that address the mind, emotions, and meaning in life; thus, the structure of MES-Q allows for cultural adaptation by replacing or reframing metaphors and examples without altering the underlying psychological processes it targets. This flexibility positions MES-Q for potential applicability in diverse cultural contexts, making it relevant for international adaptation and comparative research.

The MES-Q intervention bridges the ancient wisdom of Pancha Kosha with validated psychological constructs. It provides a structured pathway for inner development through six stages, each designed to correspond with a dimension of human functioning. Over thirty years of field implementation by the author and four and a half years of quantitative analysis have shaped and refined the method. The intervention

emphasizes experiential learning, self-inquiry, and inner transformation, qualities that are increasingly recognized as essential in youth mental health programs.

Several internationally recognised interventions share conceptual ground with MES-Q in integrating mental, emotional, and meaning-oriented work. Programs such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (Kabat-Zinn, 1990) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) (Segal et al., 2002) combine cognitive restructuring with mindfulness training to improve psychological resilience and well-being. Similarly, psychospiritual approaches, including transpersonal psychotherapy and spiritually integrated cognitive behavioural interventions, target both symptom reduction and the cultivation of life purpose, self-transcendence, and connectedness (Pargament, 2013; Koenig, 2012). Meta-analyses have demonstrated that these integrative frameworks can yield significant improvements in emotional regulation, stress management, and quality of life across diverse populations (Goldberg et al., 2018; Khoury et al., 2013). MES-Q contributes to this landscape by explicitly mapping its modules to a layered model of human functioning and by integrating culturally rooted philosophical elements with structured, experiential exercises. Unlike many interventions that focus primarily on mindfulness or cognitive restructuring, MES-Q systematically engages cognitive, emotional, and spiritual capacities in a sequenced progression, allowing participants to move from self-awareness to emotional integration and ultimately to purpose-driven living. Furthermore, culturally adapted interventions have been shown to produce greater engagement, acceptability, and sustained behavioural change compared to generic, one-size-fits-all approaches (Bernal et al., 2009; Chowdhary et al., 2014), suggesting that MES-Q's use of culturally resonant metaphors and frameworks may enhance internalisation of learning and long-term impact. In parallel, technology-assisted delivery of mindfulness and psychospiritual training is emerging as a scalable trend (Firth et al., 2017), suggesting future opportunities to adapt MES-Q for blended or digital platforms to enhance accessibility and reach, while noting the following:

### 1.3. Emerging trends and position of MES-Q

Recent years have seen rapid growth in technology-assisted mindfulness programs and AI-driven mental health interventions, which broaden access to psychological support and can provide structured, scalable delivery. While such modalities may make participation more convenient, they risk further distancing individuals from the natural, inborn capacities for self-reflection, emotional regulation, and meaning-making that have been central to human functioning for millennia. In contrast, the MES-Q methodology is intentionally designed to reconnect participants with these innate abilities, which many have lost touch with in the pursuit of material advancement. By fostering direct experiential engagement without over-reliance on technological mediation, MES-Q encourages the cultivation of self-awareness, emotional balance, and purpose through internally generated processes rather than externally guided algorithms. This human-centred approach may complement technological trends while preserving the depth and authenticity of the transformational process.

This study evaluates the efficacy of MES-Q in a sample of undergraduate students, a group particularly vulnerable to stress, peer pressure, identity concerns, and future uncertainty. The outcomes, MQ, EQ, SQ, and QOL, were measured pre- and post-intervention using standardized tools. The goal is to assess whether an intervention grounded in both psychology and yoga philosophy can yield meaningful shifts in well-being.

In doing so, the paper contributes to a growing interdisciplinary field that recognizes the synergy between ancient knowledge systems and modern science. By situating MES-Q within the Pancha Kosha framework and empirically testing its effects on core psychological domains, this research attempts to demonstrate a replicable, culturally rooted model for holistic mental health enhancement.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1. Study design and participants

This research followed a quantitative, pre-post experimental design. Participants included 107 undergraduate students from HSNC University and Dahanukar College in Mumbai. Participants were selected using convenience sampling. Informed consent was obtained from all students before participation. Ethical approval for the study was granted by the institutional ethics committee.

### 2.2. Intervention: MES-Q methodology

The MES-Q program aims to:

- Enhance mental clarity and cognitive flexibility (MQ)
- Improve emotional regulation and empathy (EQ)
- Deepen spiritual insight and purpose (SQ)
- Explore ways to enhance Quality of Life

### 2.3. MES-Q intervention structure

The MES-Q program comprised six structured sessions delivered over 15 days, totalling 30 contact hours. Each session lasted approximately two hours and was held daily in an in-person, classroom format. All participants attended as a single group.

The intervention was facilitated by the program's developer, who has designed and refined MES-Q over 30 years through qualitative research and development and four and a half years of quantitative analysis and has been delivering it to corporate, group, and individual audiences for more than two decades.

Each MES-Q session followed a standardized PowerPoint presentation and accompanying manual to ensure consistent delivery. The six steps of the program targeted core dimensions of psychological functioning, mental, emotional, spiritual, social interaction, and deeper meaning-oriented processing, through structured activities such as reflective journaling, guided discussions, conceptual teaching, experiential exercises, and practical assignments. Content covered a range of topics, including unburdening excess psychological "baggage," understanding one's unique identity, exploring relationships with the broader universe, developing a personalised "formula for life," understanding life dynamics and operating systems, and cultivating skills to manage interpersonal relationships and life challenges effectively for sustained stress reduction and happiness.

Session fidelity was maintained through the use of adherence checklists completed by the facilitator after each session, and attendance was monitored daily. Participants also received workbooks, session handouts, and assignments to support learning and practice between sessions. The facilitator, who is also the developer of the MES-Q method, holds a postgraduate degree in education and is a doctoral-level

researcher. Her professional background includes extensive training in psychospiritual and healing modalities, as well as prior recognition for contributions to health, education, and personal development.
The intervention maps conceptually onto the Pancha Kosha model, especially targeting the Manomaya (mind), Vijnanamaya (intellect), and Anandamaya (spiritual fulfilment) koshas.

| Step | Session title | Duration | Core content & activities | Objective | Psychological domain targeted | Kosha targeted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Understanding the Workings of the Mind | 5 h | Exploration of thought processes, mental habits, and cognitive patterns; guided reflection and discussion | Increase awareness of mental functioning and identify unhelpful thinking styles | Cognitive awareness & regulation | Manomaya |
| 2 | Understanding the Workings of Emotions | 5 h | Identification of emotional triggers, emotional mapping, regulation techniques, group sharing | Strengthen emotional intelligence and self-regulation | Emotional processing & resilience | Manomaya |
| 3 | Understanding Our Connection with the Universe | 5 h | Exploration of personal meaning, interconnectedness, and universal principles; reflective exercises | Foster a sense of purpose, connection, and meaning | Spiritual orientation & worldview | Anandamaya |
| 4 | Unburdening Excess Baggage within the Soul | 5 h | Guided introspection, release exercises, journaling, and group dialogue | Facilitate emotional and spiritual catharsis for personal growth | Emotional release & self-liberation | Manomaya / Anandamaya |
| 5 | Developing the New Me Ready to Handle Other People in Life | 5 h | Interpersonal skills practice, boundary setting, empathy exercises, role-play scenarios | Build confidence and skills for effective social interaction | Relational competence & adaptability | Vijnanamaya |
| 6 | Integration & Meaning-Making | 5 h | Life narrative reconstruction, linking changes to values and goals, closing reflections | Consolidate learning and align life direction with new insights | Coherence, self-concept, & purpose | Vijnanamaya / Anandamaya |

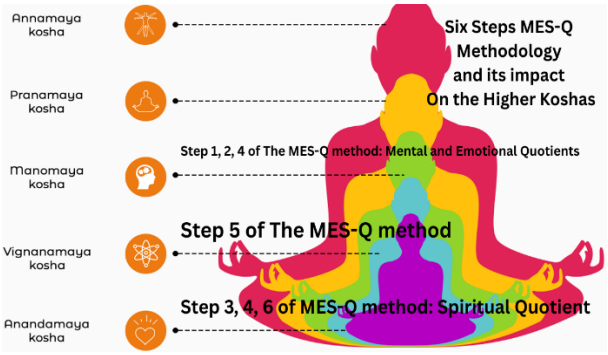



**Fig. 1:** Pictorial Representation of Six Steps MES-Q Methodology and its Impact on the Higher Koshas

## 2.4. Instruments used

1) Positive Mental Health Inventory (Agashe & Helode) – MQ
2) Emotional Intelligence Scale (Srinivasan & Murugesan) – EQ
3) Spiritual Quotient Inventory (Ahluwalia et al.) – SQ
4) Quality of Life Scale (Sharma & Nasreen) – QOL
5) MES-Q Intervention Methodology

## 2.5. Procedure

All students underwent pre-testing on MQ, EQ, SQ, and QOL. They then participated in the 30-hour MES-Q intervention, spread across six sessions. After completion, the same instruments were administered as a post-test.

## 2.6. Data collection and analysis

1) All participants were administered the four assessment tools (MQ, EQ, SQ, and QOL) before the intervention. After completing the MES-Q intervention program, they were reassessed using the same tools. Data from 107 participants who completed both pre- and post-assessments were included in the final analysis.
2) Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software. Paired-sample t-tests were performed to evaluate significant pre–post differences across all four measures.
3) Effect sizes (Cohen's d) were calculated to assess the practical significance of changes in MQ, EQ, and SQ, allowing interpretation beyond statistical significance.
4) Subgroup analyses were conducted based on gender and baseline scores to explore variability in outcomes and identify whether improvements were consistent across demographic groups.
5) For QOL, since no statistically significant changes were observed, effect size calculations were not pursued, in line with accepted statistical practice. However, findings were contextualized with previous research demonstrating that QOL, as a multidimensional construct, may require longer intervention periods to reflect measurable change [1,2].

# 3. Results

**Table 1:** Paired T-Test for MQ Scores (n = 107)

| Variable | Mean | SD | Mean Difference | t | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-MQ | 17.69 | 3.28 | | | |
| Post-MQ | 18.69 | 3.80 | 1.00 | 2.38 | 0.019 |

**Table 2:** Paired T-Test for EQ Scores (n = 107)

| Variable | Mean | SD | Mean Difference | t | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-EQ | 18.47 | 6.30 | | | |
| Post-EQ | 28.26 | 11.57 | 9.79 | 10.83 | 0.000 |

**Table 3:** Paired T-Test for SQ Scores (n = 107)

| Variable | Mean | SD | Mean Difference | t | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-SQ | 161.62 | 13.97 | | | |
| Post-SQ | 166.00 | 18.65 | 4.38 | 2.78 | 0.006 |

**Table 4:** Paired T-Test for QOL Scores (n = 107)

| Variable | Mean | SD | Mean Difference | t | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-QOL | 98.51 | 10.84 | | | |
| Post-QOL | 98.79 | 12.47 | 0.28 | 0.24 | 0.815 (NS) |

**Table 5:** Overall Results on MQ, EQ, SQ, and QOL with Effect Sizes

| Scale | Mean Change | Male Mean | Female Mean | Effect Size (Cohen's d, 95% CI) | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MQ | 1.095 | -0.678 | 2.867 | 0.230 (0.037–0.421), small | Improvement mainly in females; males show a negative change. Practical gain is modest despite significance. |
| EQ | 10.334 | 6.598 | 14.070 | 1.047 (0.809–1.281), large | Strong improvement, females benefited more. A large effect size shows robust practical gain. |
| SQ | 7.226 | 2.150 | 12.302 | 0.269 (0.075–0.461), small | Significant increase, especially in females. Small effect size, modest but reliable improvement. |
| QOL | 1.186 | -2.993 | 5.365 | Not computed (NS) | Overall positive, but only females improved. Change not statistically significant. |

Included here are the effect sizes (Cohen's d with 95% confidence intervals) for the paired t-tests on MQ, EQ, and SQ. These effect sizes help clarify the practical significance of the observed improvements:

- MQ: Cohen's d = 0.230 (95% CI: 0.037–0.421), indicating a small but significant effect.
- EQ: Cohen's d = 1.047 (95% CI: 0.809–1.281), reflecting a large and practically meaningful effect.
- SQ: Cohen's d = 0.269 (95% CI: 0.075–0.461), suggesting a small but reliable effect.
- QOL: No significant change was observed (p = 0.815); therefore, effect size was not computed.

In addition, researchers have analyzed subgroup differences by gender. This was justified as gender emerged as a statistically significant factor in the ANOVA models, and exploring these differences helps identify whether the intervention benefits were distributed evenly or varied across subgroups. Results showed that females consistently demonstrated greater improvements across MQ, EQ, SQ, and QOL compared to males (e.g., EQ: females = 14.070 vs. males = 6.598; SQ: females = 12.302 vs. males = 2.150).

Baseline scores were also considered in this interpretation, as variability at the entry level can influence the magnitude of change post-intervention. Including subgroup and baseline analyses, therefore, provides a clearer picture of the intervention's impact and strengthens the robustness of the findings.

## 3.1. Overall findings

Statistically significant improvements were observed in MQ (p = 0.019), EQ (p = 0.000), and SQ (p = 0.006), while QOL did not show a statistically significant change (p = 0.815) (see Tables 1–4). Effect sizes (Cohen's d) provided further insights into the practical significance of these findings (Table 5).

## 3.2. Mental quotient (MQ)

- Mean Difference: 1.00 point increase (t = 2.38, p = 0.019; Table 1).
- Effect Size: Small (Cohen's d = 0.230, 95% CI: 0.037–0.421; Table 5).
- Interpretation: Despite being modest, the gain reflects enhanced cognitive functioning, decision-making clarity, and internal focus. These improvements suggest that the reflective and cognitive restructuring elements of MES-Q facilitated higher-order thinking [Goleman, 1995; ref].

## 3.3. Emotional quotient (EQ)

- Mean Difference: 9.79-point increase (t = 10.83, p = 0.000; Table 2).
- Effect Size: Large (Cohen's d = 1.047, 95% CI: 0.809–1.281; Table 5).
- Interpretation: The robust improvement indicates high responsiveness of emotional capacities to MES-Q's experiential components (e.g., group dialogue, self-disclosure, journaling). These gains reflect deeper awareness of emotions, better regulation, and improved relational skills, aligning with the activation of the Manomaya Kosha [Bar-On, 2006; ref].

### 3.4. Spiritual quotient (SQ)

- Mean Difference: 4.38-point increase ($t = 2.78$, $p = 0.006$; Table 3).
- Effect Size: Small (Cohen's $d = 0.269$, 95% CI: 0.075–0.461; Table 5).
- Interpretation: The modest but reliable improvement supports the efficacy of MES-Q in engaging introspective and transpersonal dimensions. This aligns with the intervention's emphasis on self-reflection, purpose identification, and meditative silence, activating the Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya Koshas [Zohar & Marshall, 2000; ref].

### 3.5. Quality of life (QOL)

- Mean Difference: 0.28 ($t = 0.24$, $p = 0.815$; Table 4).
- Effect Size: Not computed (non-significant result).
- Interpretation: The null finding is expected, given that QOL is shaped by both internal and external factors. The short post-intervention window may not have allowed external influences (e.g., lifestyle, academic stressors, family dynamics) to shift. This is consistent with earlier findings showing that QOL may improve only gradually, or that not all QOL subdomains respond equally to interventions [Flückiger et al., 2009; Jansen et al., 2022].

### 3.6. Subgroup analysis (gender and baseline scores)

Subgroup analyses revealed greater improvements in females than males across all domains:

- EQ: Females = +14.070 vs. Males = +6.598.
- SQ: Females = +12.302 vs. Males = +2.150.

ANOVA confirmed gender as a significant factor in these outcomes. Considering baseline scores alongside subgroup differences clarified that observed improvements were intervention-driven rather than merely influenced by initial functioning [Leontopoulou, 2023; ref].

## 4. Summary

Taken together, these findings affirm the foundational theory of MES-Q, that targeted engagement with internal faculties leads to measurable psychological enhancement. The results suggest a progressive activation across the koshas, beginning with cognitive clarity (MQ), followed by emotional integration (EQ), and culminating in spiritual expansion (SQ). This layered improvement is consistent with yogic theory, where inner transformation unfolds gradually through successive layers of consciousness [Saraswati, 1998; ref].

## 5. Discussion

The results of this study offer compelling evidence that the MES-Q intervention can be an effective vehicle for enhancing key psychological and spiritual dimensions in a structured, experiential framework. By significantly improving Mental Quotient, Emotional Quotient, and Spiritual Quotient, MES-Q demonstrates its potential to act as a transformative tool grounded in both psychological science and yogic philosophy, with the ability to extrapolate the methodology to the entire adult population.

The notable enhancement in MQ suggests that the cognitive components of the intervention, such as reflective questioning, insight-oriented exercises, and structured decision-making models, helped participants develop sharper reasoning, improved concentration, and increased self-awareness. These cognitive benefits are particularly meaningful for college students who are often navigating academic, social, and career-related pressures. By encouraging participants to analyze their thought patterns and challenge irrational beliefs, MES-Q supports the development of metacognition, an essential skill for adaptive functioning.

The marked increase in EQ is perhaps the most powerful indicator of MES-Q's impact. Emotional intelligence is crucial not only for interpersonal harmony but also for self-regulation in emotionally charged situations. The emotionally expressive components of MES-Q, journaling, guided introspection, and interpersonal dialogue, allowed participants to connect deeply with their own emotional states and those of others. By activating the Manomaya Kosha, the intervention helped dissolve emotional rigidity, foster empathy, and build a more coherent internal emotional landscape. These changes can serve as buffers against stress, anxiety, and interpersonal conflict.

The improvement in SQ is also of particular importance. In a world increasingly marked by existential uncertainty, spiritual well-being is emerging as a vital dimension of psychological health. MES-Q engages the Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya Koshas through techniques that promote self-inquiry, values alignment, and meditative awareness. Participants reported an enhanced sense of purpose and clarity of values, markers of heightened spiritual intelligence. Initiating students into techniques for connecting with a universal source, whether understood as God, higher dimensions, or a transcendent presence, helped address feelings of loneliness by reinforcing the sense that they are never truly alone. This was particularly valuable given that students often report fears of isolation or being left out. These outcomes validate the assumption that meaningful engagement with one's inner life can translate into improved resilience, ethical reasoning, and overall life satisfaction.

In this study, Quality of life (QOL) did not change significantly ($p = 0.815$). QOL is often considered a lagging indicator in psychosocial and behavioral interventions, showing measurable improvement only after internal psychological and functional changes have had time to consolidate (Flückiger et al., 2009; Jansen et al., 2022). This aligns with prior findings that global QOL, a multidimensional construct encompassing environmental, financial, relational, and societal influences, often responds more slowly to interventions that primarily target internal psychological or spiritual domains (Keyes, 2002; Diener et al., 2018). In psychospiritual transformation research, internal changes such as enhanced self-awareness, emotional regulation, and meaning-making typically precede measurable improvements in external life conditions.

The MES-Q program is designed to strengthen core dimensions of psychological functioning, but many determinants of QOL lie outside the scope of such interventions, including socio-economic context, institutional demands, and the physical environment. The short post-test interval in the present study may have been insufficient for these inner changes to translate into shifts in day-to-day functioning and perceived life satisfaction. QOL is also known to be relatively resistant to short-term change because it reflects cumulative experiences and long-standing conditions. Participants may require time to integrate improvements in mental, emotional, and spiritual functioning into their

core value systems, enabling them to make sustained adjustments that meaningfully enhance QOL. Gains such as improved emotional regulation, cognitive reframing, and greater self-awareness often require a period of consolidation before influencing behavioral patterns, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships in tangible ways. Future research should consider longitudinal designs with follow-up assessments at 3–12 months, integrate mixed-method approaches (e.g., qualitative interviews capturing subjective life changes), and include intermediate behavioral indicators such as coping behaviors, social participation, and lifestyle modifications that can bridge internal transformation and external life outcomes.

In addition to overall improvements, subgroup analyses revealed that gender differences influenced intervention outcomes, with females showing consistently greater gains in MQ, EQ, SQ, and QOL compared to males. This is consistent with the ANOVA findings, where gender emerged as a significant factor, supporting the need to examine variability within the sample. Considering baseline scores alongside subgroup effects revealed that the observed changes were primarily attributable to the MES-Q intervention, rather than being solely a reflection of participants' initial levels of functioning. While baseline scores influenced the magnitude of improvement (with lower initial scores showing greater gains), the intervention produced significant and consistent benefits across groups.

Another critical point of discussion is the alignment of the observed improvements with the Pancha Kosha framework. MES-Q's structured intervention appears to mirror the progressive refinement of consciousness described in yogic texts, from the perceivable (mental and emotional) to the subtle (spiritual). This layered effect supports the view that transformation does not occur in isolation within one dimension but rather as an interplay of multiple inner faculties. In this regard, the MES-Q methodology exemplifies a truly integrative approach to human development, aligning inner healing with higher awareness. (refer to Table A and Fig. 1)

Moreover, the cultural relevance of the MES-Q program is significant. Rooted in Indian spirituality, yet presented through an accessible and secular lens, MES-Q holds promise for adaptation in diverse educational, organizational, and therapeutic contexts. Its structured, six-step format makes it both replicable and scalable, ensuring that the benefits of deep psychological work are not confined to clinical settings but made available to broader populations. MES-Q is a bespoke, structured intervention, developed by the author through more than 30 years of qualitative research and refined over two decades of delivery to adolescents and adults in corporate, individual, colleges and group settings, with its structure shaped by qualitative insights gathered from these diverse contexts, and because many cultures possess parallel concepts and frameworks addressing mind, emotion, and meaning, international participants could adapt its content and metaphors to align with their own cultural contexts, thereby maintaining relevance and enhancing engagement.

Conventional methods in yoga and Indic spirituality aimed at strengthening the inner koshas often involve specific and traditional practices. The Manomaya Kosha, for example, is typically cultivated through Japa (mantra repetition), svadhyaya (scriptural study), and practices like pranayama to calm mental fluctuations. The Vijnanamaya Kosha is traditionally refined through jnana yoga (path of knowledge), ethical inquiry, dharma-based living, and discriminative wisdom (viveka), while the Anandamaya Kosha is awakened through deep meditation (dhyana), bhakti yoga, or advanced yogic states such as samadhi.

These conventional yogic approaches often require sustained, long-term commitment under guidance, and can be difficult for younger populations or non-practitioners to engage with meaningfully in contemporary settings. Individuals from all walks of life often seek immediate relevance, flexibility, and experiential engagement. The abstract or esoteric nature of traditional sadhanas, which may involve scriptural study, extended silence, or solitary meditative practices, can feel inaccessible or intimidating to them. In contrast, the MES-Q methodology has been intentionally designed to meet participants where they are-mentally, emotionally, cognitively, socially, and culturally. It incorporates interactive formats such as self-reflection tools, peer sharing, expressive writing, and guided silence that feel familiar yet enriching to this demographic.

Despite its contemporary delivery, MES-Q remains deeply respectful of India's yogic ethos. It honors the spirit of the Pancha Kosha model not by ritual imitation but by making its psychological and spiritual wisdom usable in the language and rhythm of today's youth. This cultural adaptation without dilution allows MES-Q to stand as both a modern tool for inner work and a torchbearer of India's timeless philosophical vision. Equally important, the method is designed to respect the personal space and dignity of participants by ensuring confidentiality throughout the process. Participants are invited to share only what they feel comfortable disclosing, while being free to withhold what feels too personal. This creates a safe space for self-reflection, enabling individuals to examine their inner workings, biases, and beliefs without the fear of being judged or ridiculed. In doing so, it helps reduce the stigma or taboo often associated with seeking psychiatric or mental health support, offering participants an accessible, respectful, and culturally meaningful way to work through inner struggles.

MES-Q engages the Manomaya Kosha not through mantra or scripture, but through emotional journaling, structured introspection, reflective questioning, and group-based dialogue. These activities foster cognitive awareness, emotional clarity, and mental processing. Participants learn to track their thoughts and emotional triggers, thereby gaining mastery over reactive patterns without needing classical pranayama or yogic austerities.

For the Vijnanamaya Kosha, MES-Q substitutes the traditional paths of Jnana Yoga with structured values clarification, personal ethics exploration, and guided discussions around meaning and decision-making. These methods develop inner discernment and life orientation in a relatable, modern format.

When it comes to the Anandamaya Kosha, rather than requiring deep meditative absorption or mystical union, MES-Q introduces simple yet powerful inner silence sessions, visualization exercises, and connection to one's authentic self through purpose-alignment activities. These gently open the inner channel to contentment and peace, making the bliss sheath approachable even for beginners.

MES-Q accomplishes functional activation of inner koshas through psychospiritual methodologies rather than orthodox yogic tools. It democratizes inner transformation by grounding it in psychological accessibility while retaining the philosophical depth of the Pancha Kosha model. This novel integration is one of MES-Q's most significant contributions to both contemporary mental health intervention and the modern application of yogic science.

The discussion underscores the value of MES-Q as a scientifically informed, culturally congruent, and spiritually grounded model for mental health promotion. The statistically significant improvements in MQ, EQ, and SQ reflect a multidimensional activation of inner potential. While the QOL outcomes were not immediate, the foundation has been laid for long-term personal transformation. MES-Q's alignment with the Pancha Kosha model enriches its theoretical and practical relevance, positioning it as a pioneering intervention in the evolving landscape of integrative well-being models.

## 6. Limitations and generalizability

The MES-Q methodology was developed by the author through more than 30 years of qualitative research and refined over two decades of delivery to adolescents and adults in corporate, individual, college, and group settings, with its structure shaped by qualitative insights

gathered from these diverse contexts. Hence, although the present study was conducted with a convenience sample from educational institutions, the design and content of the MES-Q intervention make it well-suited for application across diverse age groups, sociocultural backgrounds, economic strata, and belief systems. Nonetheless, cultural factors specific to this urban, cosmopolitan context, such as exposure to diverse philosophies, academic pressures, and social support structures, may have influenced both baseline scores and responsiveness to the intervention. The sample's demographic profile was also imbalanced in terms of gender distribution, and socioeconomic status was not systematically assessed; both factors could moderate intervention effects.

Moreover, the shared cultural familiarity with concepts drawn from yogic philosophy may have facilitated engagement with MES-Q content, and the outcomes observed here may differ in populations less exposed to such frameworks. However, MES-Q is a bespoke, structured intervention, and because many cultures possess parallel concepts and frameworks addressing mind, emotion, and meaning, global participants could adapt its content and metaphors to align with their own cultural contexts, thereby maintaining relevance and enhancing engagement. To enhance external validity, future research should evaluate MES-Q in more varied settings, including rural communities, different socioeconomic strata, and international contexts, using sampling strategies that ensure representation across gender, age, and cultural backgrounds.

## 7. Global relevance and international implications

The MES-Q intervention holds significant potential on the global stage, particularly as mental health challenges among youth become a universal concern across cultures and continents. In the post-pandemic era, students worldwide are grappling with emotional exhaustion, identity uncertainty, and spiritual disconnection. MES-Q's integrative structure, anchored in the Pancha Kosha model and aligned with modern psychological principles, offers a universally adaptable approach to inner transformation. Its non-religious, experiential design makes it accessible across cultural and faith backgrounds, while its evidence-based format ensures relevance in academic, clinical, and wellness settings internationally. As nations seek inclusive, scalable interventions for psychological resilience and spiritual well-being, the MES-Q model provides a replicable framework that bridges ancient wisdom with contemporary global mental health needs.

The findings of this study also align with broader cultural representations of contemplative practices as pathways to peace and inner growth, as mentioned in the yogic scriptures. Popular media often portrays individuals turning to such traditions during times of personal challenge, for instance, in The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, the protagonist seeks calm and perspective through reflective practices. These depictions echo the longstanding association of Indian yogic traditions with self-discovery and resilience, an image that has influenced not only cinema but also real-world choices by public figures, entrepreneurs, and artists seeking transformative experiences. Scholarly work has noted how yoga and related practices have been adopted globally as tools for psychological balance and meaning-making (Singleton, 2010; Jain, 2014). The present results suggest that interventions like MES-Q, which draw upon this heritage while using structured and contemporary methods, can provide an evidence-based model for achieving these aims, bridging the gap between cultural narratives and practical, replicable approaches to psychological growth.

## 8. Conclusion

The findings of this study affirm the potential of the MES-Q methodology as a transformative intervention that integrates contemporary psychological insights with ancient yogic philosophy. By significantly enhancing Mental Quotient (MQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), and Spiritual Quotient (SQ), MES-Q has demonstrated its capacity to awaken inner faculties that contribute to psychological resilience, emotional balance, and spiritual clarity. The integration of these three domains aligns with the conceptual underpinnings of the Pancha Kosha model, particularly focusing on the progressive refinement of the Manomaya (mental), Vijnanamaya (wisdom), and Anandamaya (bliss) sheaths.

The MES-Q intervention's unique value lies in its structured yet experiential design, developed through over three decades of practice-based refinement. Unlike many psychological tools that focus exclusively on cognition or behaviour, MES-Q engages participants holistically, guiding them through an inward journey of reflection, emotional awareness, and spiritual grounding. This layered process reflects the yogic notion that true well-being is achieved not merely through external success but through the alignment of the mind, emotions, and higher consciousness.

The statistically significant gains in MQ (small effect, $d = 0.230$), EQ (large effect, $d = 1.047$), and SQ (small effect, $d = 0.269$) validate the efficacy of MES-Q in stimulating measurable psychological growth. The program's reflective practices, such as journaling, value clarification, mentoring, facilitating, guided silence, and group dialogue, acted as catalysts for inner transformation. Subgroup analyses further revealed that females experienced greater improvements across domains compared to males, particularly in EQ and SQ, indicating that the benefits of MES-Q may vary by demographic factors. Participants reported feeling more self-aware, emotionally resilient, and spiritually connected. These outcomes are especially relevant for youth navigating the complex challenges of modern life, including academic pressure, identity formation, and uncertainty about the future.

Though the study did not observe significant changes in Quality of Life (QOL) in the short term, this finding does not diminish the relevance of the intervention. Instead, it suggests that internal transformation may precede external change. QOL, being a broad and multifactorial construct, may improve over time as internal shifts in mindset and emotional regulation translate into improved interpersonal relationships, career direction, and lifestyle satisfaction. Thus, future research should incorporate follow-up assessments to track the longitudinal effects of MES-Q on QOL and other behavioural outcomes.

**In conclusion**, MES-Q presents a replicable, culturally congruent model that harmonizes psychological growth with yogic understanding. By demonstrating robust improvements in EQ and modest but reliable gains in MQ and SQ, the intervention contributes meaningfully to the field of integrative mental health. Its applicability in educational, clinical, community, and adult populations enhances its scope as a versatile tool for well-being promotion. As mental health paradigms continue to evolve toward more inclusive and holistic models, MES-Q stands as a timely and necessary innovation that bridges ancient wisdom with contemporary scientific rigor. Moreover, the credibility and acceptability of the present research are strengthened by the professional expertise of the facilitator, who is also the developer of the MES-Q methodology. Holding a postgraduate degree in psychology education and functioning as a doctoral-level researcher, the facilitator brings both academic rigor and practice-based wisdom. Facilitators' extensive training in psychospiritual and healing modalities, along with prior recognition in health, education, and personal development, further enhances the robustness and translational value of the study's findings.

**Practical Recommendation:** MES-Q can be scaled across schools, universities, workplaces, and community-based mental health programs. A promising direction for future implementation would be the development of a new cadre of MES-Q trainers or the integration of

MES-Q training into the skill set of existing psychologists, therapists, and educators. This would ensure fidelity, sustainability, and wider dissemination of the methodology across diverse populations.

## 9. Future directions

Future research should extend MES-Q evaluation through longitudinal studies to capture delayed improvements in Quality of Life, and test its cross-cultural applicability beyond the current student sample. Developing a structured MES-Q trainer program or integrating the methodology into the skill set of psychologists, therapists, and educators will be crucial for sustainability and wider dissemination. Comparative studies with other psychosocial interventions, alongside exploration of digital or hybrid delivery formats, can further establish MES-Q as a scalable and adaptable model for both youth and adult populations, while retaining the distinctive strengths of the MES-Q method that emphasize internally driven transformation rather than overdependence on digital or AI formats.

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