

I hate my workplace but I am very attached to it. Workplace attachment style: an exploratory approach

Journal:	<i>Personnel Review</i>
Manuscript ID	PR-05-2015-0128.R3
Manuscript Type:	Research Article
Keywords:	Personality, Person-environment fit (P-E fit)
Methodologies:	Quantitative

I hate my workplace but I am very attached to it.

Workplace attachment style: an exploratory approach

Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this study was to investigate whether different patterns of workplace attachment exist and to explore the relations between adult attachment styles and the level of workplace attachment.

Design/methodology/approach – Participants were 351 Italian employees who completed a questionnaire composed of the Workplace Attachment Scale and the Relationship Questionnaire. Data were analyzed using correspondence analysis.

Findings – The results showed that high scores on workplace attachment correlated significantly with secure attachment style, while low scores correlated with insecure attachment styles. These results shed light on different workplace attachment styles.

Research limitations/implications – The limitation in this study mostly concern the use of self-reporting instruments to measure the participants' attachment style, since they may be susceptible to distortions. However, the distribution of attachment styles in our sample is similar to the worldwide distribution, which supports our choice.

Practical implications – To the extent that it is possible to identify a specific workplace attachment style, it should also be possible to change some of the HR management practices inducing employees to develop a workplace secure attachment style.

Originality/value – Researchers tended to ignore the extension of the adult attachment behavioral system to examine core environmental relationships. The present study, applying Attachment Theory to workplace attachment, provides theoretical support that the bonds that an individuals form with workplace can be classified as attachment bonds.

Keywords – Place attachment, Attachment Theory, secure, avoidant, preoccupied, workplace attachment.

Paper type – Research paper.

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

2

I hate my workplace but I am very attached to it.

Workplace attachment style: an exploratory approach

Introduction

Recently, there has been an increase in interest of the application of Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) in work and organizational psychology, with scholars (i.e., Harms, 2011; Paetzold, 2015; Richards & Schat, 2011; Scrima et al., 2015) that have highlighted the role that attachment styles may play in describing and interpreting phenomena in the work environment. Conversely, although the relationship between Attachment Theory and place attachment (a key concept in environmental psychology: for a review, see Scannell & Gifford, 2010), have long been explored in the literature, and the Attachment Theory has widely utilized in the formulation of theories concerning affective bonds that individuals develop with their physical environment (Giuliani, 2003), only few studies have focused on the issue of place attachment style (Hidalgo, 2000; Scannell & Gifford, 2013), only one was performed in the organizational context (Scrima et al., 2014), and no studies to date have specifically focused on the issue of the possible associations of attachment to the workplace with specific styles of attachment. However, we believe that applying attachment theory to place attachment could provide important information for the development of human resource management (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012). Specifically, the existence of a specific employees' attachment style to the workplace, could induce Human Resources managers to promote activities aimed changing the style of attachment to the workplace, hopefully from an insecure style to secure one. In fact, although attachment styles are relatively stable over time, they are also susceptible to environmental influences (Konrath, Chopik, Hsing, & O'Brien, 2014), so the creation of supportive environments and organizational climates based on equity and trust could help to change the employees' attachment style. These practices, already proven effective to modify attachment styles among colleagues (Harms, 2011), may apply to change the workplace attachment

1
2
3 **styles.** Therefore, the aim of the present study is to extend this field of research by showing that
4 attachment styles can provide a better understanding of the process of workplace attachment.
5
6
7
8

9 10 **Conceptual background and theory**

11 *The concept of place attachment under the light of Attachment Theory*

12
13
14 For about twenty years, the concept of attachment has been at the heart of most environmental
15 psychology research on the links between individuals and the spaces to which they feel close
16 (Altman & Low, 1992; Giuliani, 2003; Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, & Hess, 2007;
17 Lewicka, 2011). Broadly speaking, place attachment is defined as an affective bond or link between
18 people and specific places (i.e. Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Lewicka, 2005; 2010). Based on the
19 Theory of Place Attachment proposed by Shumaker and Taylor (1983) and further developed by
20 Giuliani (1991) and Altman and Low (1992), it is defined as the affective component of the
21 relationship between a person and a place (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995; Fornara, Bonaiuto, &
22 Bonnes, 2009; Rioux & Pignault, 2013a).
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

34 The significance of attachment with respect to affective ties to environments and places has a
35 deeper psychological implication, as delineated in Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969), to the extent
36 that the main characteristic of the concept of attachment is the desire to maintain closeness to the
37 object of attachment; under this vein, the operational formulation of attachment theory, as it applies
38 to place behavior, points to its origin and meaning in response to the availability of close
39 relationships to people and, by extension, to the places of relational interaction. So, if we expand
40 the analysis of the dynamics of attachment behavior, it is possible to recognize its significance for
41 place attachment (Fried, 2000). If we include this specific property into the definition of place
42 attachment, it can be as follows: a positive affective bond between an individual and a specific
43 place, the main characteristic of which is the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness to
44 such a place (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). In this specification, it is crucial the concept of *internal*
45 *working model*: in fact, according to Bowlby (1969), the remainders of social exchanges and
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

4

1
2
3 encounters are stored as mental representations of person-environment transactions, which he called
4
5 *working models of self and other*; these representations shape the functioning of a person's
6
7 behavioral system and the way he or she behaves in particular social situations.
8

9
10 In their study of adult attachment style, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) suggested that
11
12 internal working models differ according to whether visions of the self and others are positive or
13
14 negative (figure 1). Consequently, these perceptions lead to four main patterns of attachment,
15
16 secure, preoccupied, dismissive and fearful. The secure attachment style is characterized by positive
17
18 images of both the self and the other. Secure individuals have a sense of worthiness and an
19
20 expectation that other people will be supportive, accepting, and available. Preoccupied individuals
21
22 have a negative image of self and a positive image of others. They view themselves as unworthy
23
24 and others as rejecting. The dismissive style is typified by a negative image of others and a positive
25
26 image of the self, indicating a sense of self-love combined with a negative disposition toward other
27
28 people. Finally, the fearful style is characterized by negative images of both the self and the others.
29
30 This category belongs to a very small percentage of the world population, often associated with
31
32 different psychopathological manifestations.
33
34
35

36 INSERT FIGURE 1

37
38 Bartholomew and Shaver (1998) confirmed this comprehensive model of adult attachment
39
40 styles using the Relationship Questionnaire, the Peer Attachment Interview and the Family
41
42 Attachment Interview. Correspondence analysis showed that the styles identified by these different
43
44 methods converged in the same quadrants. Thus, while measures of adult attachment differ in terms
45
46 of domain (family, peer, or romantic relationships), method (interview, Q-sort, or self-report),
47
48 dimensionality (categories, prototype ratings, or dimensions), and categorization systems, they
49
50 converge to varying degrees, especially when reliability and statistical power are sufficiently high.
51
52 The results produced by attachment researchers are all compatible with the idea that emotional
53
54 relationships with place usually are positive, but they can include fear, hatred, and ambivalence
55
56 (Manzo 2005). Negative emotions and thoughts about places can coexist with positive bonds,
57
58
59
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

5

1
2
3 creating complex meanings of and ties to places, that so can be the site of security, continuity, and
4
5 identity as well as violence, shame, and alienation (Brown, Altman, Werner, 2012).
6

7 This is in line with the findings of Pietromonaco and Feldman Barrett (1997; 2000), who
8
9 investigated the link between internal working models and everyday social interactions. Their
10
11 results show that coexisting multiple attachment models correlate with interactions and contexts
12
13 relevant for attachment and are determined by intimacy and affectivity in interpersonal relationships
14
15 (Laurenceau, Pietromonaco & Feldman Barrett, 1998).
16

17
18
19
20
21 *The workplace attachment and the workplace attachment styles*
22

23 Workplace attachment is defined as the affective bond resulting from the dynamic interaction
24
25 between a person and his/her organizational environment (Rioux, 2006a) and is considered to be an
26
27 important aspect of the quality of work life. Several studies (e.g., Dinç, 2010) have shown that
28
29 when employees are able to customize their workplace, they are more attached to it, and this raises
30
31 the indices of the quality of work life such as job satisfaction, wellbeing and performance.
32

33
34 In line with the approach of Shumaker and Taylor (1983), workplace attachment is measured
35
36 using one-dimensional scales, either in their original form or adapted to the specific place or
37
38 population (Rioux & Mokoukolo, 2005; Velasco & Rioux, 2010). A large number of articles
39
40 provide information about the effects of attachment to the workplace as an antecedent variable of
41
42 organizational citizenship behaviors (Le Roy & Rioux, 2013) and job satisfaction (Rioux &
43
44 Pignault, 2013b), also correlated with affective commitment (Velasco & Rioux, 2010).
45

46
47 Rioux (2005) proposed the first application of a scale¹ measuring workplace attachment
48
49 among administrative staff. Subsequent use of this scale with hospital staff (Velasco & Rioux,
50
51 2010) and high school teachers (Rioux & Pignault, 2013a) showed that attachment to the workplace
52
53 is a predictor of job satisfaction, of organizational affective commitment and organizational
54
55 citizenship behaviours. Scrima (2014) found that the more employees are attached to their
56
57 citizenship behaviours. Scrima (2014) found that the more employees are attached to their
58

59
60

¹ This scale will become the Workplace Attachment Scale (EALT/WAS) in 2006

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

6

workplace, the higher their level of affective commitment. Researchers have also investigated place attachment in various contexts. This approach has helped understand and explain processes, behaviours, and, more generally, human-environment dynamics. However, this unidimensional view can only quantify place attachment; attachment theory suggests that processes, behaviours, and attachment dynamics are also influenced by the quality of attachment, in other words the possible cognitive / behavioural patterns provided by the Attachment Theory.

There are several theoretical justifications for linking attachment styles to the workplace (Paetzold, 2015). Hazan and Shaver (1990) suggested that employees work in a context in which people differ in behavioral strategies for proximity maintenance. They found that secure adults show a more positive attitude to their job, a positive evaluation of relationships in the workplace, and fewer work-related fears. The secure attachment style appears to prevent a negative interference between relational life and work. By contrast, preoccupied individuals are concerned with maintaining proximity to their co-workers and they fear rejection as a result of negative performance. This suggests that admiration and reassurance are the major forces directing the work behavior of preoccupied adults. This attachment style interferes with job performance. For their part, workers with a dismissive style use work to avoid social interactions; although they have average scores on job satisfaction, these individuals appear to be less satisfied than their secure colleagues.

Scrima et al. (2014) and Scrima (2014) found that affective organizational commitment in a sample of public and private employees was positively correlated with secure attachment in the workplace and negatively correlated with anxious and avoidant styles. Also, Scrima et al. (2015) found that adult attachment style, assessed by the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), was differently related to organizational commitment dimensions (Allen & Meyer, 1996): secure workers had a higher mean score for affective commitment than avoidant and preoccupied workers; normative commitment was higher in avoidant than in secure and preoccupied workers; continuance commitment was higher in preoccupied than in secure and avoidant workers. Thus,

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

7

1
2
3 symbolic attachment to the organization (organizational commitment), in terms of its degree of
4
5 importance in personal life, could be determined from adult attachment style.
6

7 Paraphrasing Bartholomew and Horowitz's model of adult attachment (1991), individuals
8
9 with secure place attachment see the environment as a resource for people and vice versa.
10
11 Individuals with preoccupied place attachment feel anxious in their relationships with a specific
12
13 place, demonstrate a high level of dependence on it, and invest a significant amount of energy in
14
15 their relationships with it. Dismissive place attachment is characterized by social avoidance; these
16
17 individuals escape from a close relationship with the place and they are consequently counter-
18
19 dependent in their relationships. Finally, individuals with a fearful place attachment style are
20
21 socially avoidant because they are fearful of their own vulnerability in relation to the place. They
22
23 anticipate that the place will be hurtful and believe that they do not deserve to be treated well due to
24
25 their perceived personal shortcomings (Figure 2).
26
27
28

29
30 INSERT FIGURE 2
31

32 Following this reasoning, and in consideration of research evidence cited above, it is possible
33
34 arguing a correspondence between the styles of attachment and attachment to the workplace. So, the
35
36 aim of the present study was twofold: first, to identify the possible existence of work attachment
37
38 style; second, to explore the relations between adult attachment styles and level of workplace
39
40 attachment.
41
42
43
44

45 **Method**

46 47 48 *Sample and procedure*

49
50 Employees were recruited through personal and business contacts; letters explaining the study
51
52 and the requirements for inclusion were sent to 400 workers; 12.25% refused to participate. The
53
54 finale sample consisted of 351 employees in a large public-sector organization in Italy. The
55
56 participants ($N = 351$; 58% men, 42% women) had an age range of 18 to 60 years ($M = 43.0$, $SD =$
57
58
59
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

8

1
2
3 9.7) and organizational tenure of 1 to 30 years ($M = 17.5$; $SD = 5.3$), and 21% were temporary
4
5 workers. A survey in paper format was individually administered in the workplace during scheduled
6
7 work time, as part of a larger survey designed to investigate behaviour in organizations. To
8
9 guarantee anonymity, employees were asked to put the completed questionnaire in a dedicated
10
11 mailbox.
12

13 14 15 16 17 *Instruments*

18
19 To assess workplace attachment, we used the Work Attachment Scale (EALT/WAS)
20
21 validated by Rioux (2006a). This is a one-dimensional scale consisting of seven items (i.e. “This
22
23 workplace is part of myself”), with a five-point Likert response scale.
24

25
26 To assess adult attachment style, we used the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) developed by
27
28 Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). This scale is a prototypical instrument with five items. The first
29
30 describes a typological behaviour pattern of the four adult attachment styles and participants are
31
32 asked to choose the one that fits them best. They are then asked to rate their degree of
33
34 correspondence to each description in the other four items on a five-point Likert scale.
35
36

37 38 39 *Statistical analysis*

40
41 Correspondence Analysis (CA) is a statistical technique used primarily by social scientists
42
43 and behavioural researchers to explore the relations among multivariate categorical variables (de
44
45 Leeuw, 2005; Hoffman & Franke, 1986). CA is used less frequently in psychological research than
46
47 in other areas, but could be suitably applied to various psychological research questions (Doey &
48
49 Kurta, 2011). In fact, psychological researchers would be at a disadvantage if they were not aware
50
51 of the many benefits of CA, especially the graphical representation this statistical technique
52
53 provides, which facilitates the visualization of the associations between the rows and columns of a
54
55 table, and an inertia index that can be interpreted as explained variance of the model. The spatial
56
57 proximity of the categories can be read as an indicator of the association between them. More
58
59
60

1
2
3 specifically, close categories within the bi-dimensional space indicate a high probability of their
4
5 association in the examined sample (Meulman & Heiser, 2001). This procedure also allows the
6
7 relationships between variables to be explored, without assuming only linear trends between them,
8
9 making each level independent of the other categories. In attachment theory, different authors have
10
11 already used correspondence analysis. For example, van IJzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg
12
13 (2010) used multiple correspondence analysis to examine the invariance between adult attachment
14
15 classifications and gender, age, culture, and socioeconomic status, using studies conducted with the
16
17 AAI. Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn (2009), using the same analysis technique,
18
19 examined deviations from a normative pattern of North American non-clinical mothers.
20
21
22
23

24 25 **Results**

26 27 28 29 *Validity and temporal stability of measures*

30
31 First, we verified the factor structure of the EALT/WAS. Principal Component analysis
32
33 confirmed a one-factor structure with explained variance of 59% and Cronbach's Alpha of .88.
34
35 Items saturated in the first component with a component weight range between .411 and .883.
36
37

38
39 Temporal stability was examined by re-administering the questionnaires three months later.
40
41 For the first item of the Relationship Questionnaire identifying the self-attributed attachment style,
42
43 we obtained a Kendall tau rank correlation coefficient of .84 ($p < .001$). With regard to average
44
45 scores on the Workplace Attachment Scale at T1 and T2, we obtained a Pearson's correlation of .78
46
47 ($p < .001$).
48
49

50 51 52 *Descriptive statistics*

53
54 In our sample, 54% indicated a secure attachment style, 30% a dismissive attachment style,
55
56 12% preoccupied, and only 4% a fearful attachment style. To investigate this proportion in relation
57
58 to worldwide distribution, we performed a X^2 test. A meta-analysis by Van IJzendoorn and
59
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

10

1
2
3 Bakermans-Kranenburg (1996) examined 33 attachment style studies based on the Adult
4 Attachment Interview and concluded that the worldwide frequency of the three main attachment
5 styles was as follows: 58% secure, 24% avoidant/dismissive, and 18% anxious/preoccupied.
6
7
8
9
10 Eliminating the fearful attachment style, in the present study, weighted percentages of these three
11 categories were: 56% secure, 32% dismissive, and 12% preoccupied. Table 1 shows that there are
12 no significant differences between our sample and those in the meta-analysis in terms of
13
14 percentages.
15
16

17
18
19 INSERT TABLE 1

20
21 Scores on the Workplace Attachment Scale ranged between 1 and 5 ($M = 3.25$; $SD = .95$)
22 with indices of Skewness and Kurtosis $-.346$ and $-.374$ respectively. To categorize this measure we
23 used percentiles. Results are shown in Table 2.
24
25
26

27
28 INSERT TABLE 2

29
30
31 Finally, we calculated parametric and non-parametric correlations among variables. Table 3
32 shows a relatively weak relation between attachment style and workplace attachment (Kendall's
33 Tau = $.215$, $p < .01$). Interestingly, adult attachment style was not correlated with sex ($p = .514$),
34 age ($p = .221$), organizational tenure ($p = .742$) or professional status ($p = .619$). This result
35 suggests that no other variable could influence our model.
36
37
38
39
40
41

42
43 INSERT TABLE 3

44
45
46
47 *Exploratory analysis*

48
49 To examine relations between adult attachment style and workplace attachment, we
50 performed Correspondence Analysis. Only two categorical variables were taken into account. To
51 evaluate adult attachment style, we used the first item of the Relationship Questionnaire
52 (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991) (a self-identification index of adult attachment style: Secure,
53 Dismissive, Preoccupied, Fearful) and the average score of the EALT/WAS evaluating the level of
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

11

workplace attachment, rated on a 5-point scale (from 1 = no attachment to 5 = very strong attachment).

Table 4 summarizes the results of the model. First, we can observe that the linear correlation ($r = .215$; $p < .05$) between variables is significant but very weak. This model is confirmed by the X^2 test ($p < .001$) indicating significant relations among categories.

INSERT TABLE 4

Figure 3 shows the joint correspondence analysis map. This model explains 39.9% of variance. According to Meulman and Heiser (2001), the joint map explains relations between categories. Level 5 of workplace attachment (WAS) is close to the dismissive and fearful attachment style. Secure attachment is close to level 4 of workplace attachment and very far from level 5. Level 2 of workplace attachment is close to preoccupied attachment, and finally Level 1 is close to fearful attachment.

INSERT FIGURE 3

Finally, it's possible to read the joint correspondence analysis map with the norms suggest by Bartholomew and Horowitz's model (1991). The first quadrant is characterized by positive feelings of the self and the workplace. In this quadrant we can observe a secure attachment style and a medium level (4 and 3) of WA. The second quadrant is characterized by a positive feeling of Self and negative WA, corresponding to a dismissive style. The third quadrant comprises negative thoughts of self and the workplace, corresponding to fearful attachment and WA levels 1 and 5. Finally, in the fourth quadrant we can observe negative thoughts of self (preoccupied attachment) and positive thoughts of the workplace (a low level (2) of workplace attachment).

INSERT FIGURE 4

Discussion

The EALT/WAS presented a one-dimensional structure, in line with the results of a study of French employees (for a summary, see Scrima, 2015). Its psychometric qualities were very similar

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

12

1
2
3 to those found with samples from Rumania (Pavalache-Ilie & Rioux, 2014), Gabon (Bakita Ella,
4
5 2012), Italy and the UK (Scrima et al., 2014).
6

7
8 In particular, the correspondence analysis of attachment styles and categories of workplace
9 attachment performed in our study revealed close relationships between these two modalities. More
10 specifically, individuals with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles show low and very low
11 workplace attachment respectively, while those with a secure attachment style show a relatively
12 high level of workplace attachment, and those with a dismissive style a very high level. These
13 results are in line with research on workplace attachment, which found notably that high workplace
14 attachment among French public sector workers was correlated significantly with high spatial
15 wellbeing and few requests to move, while a very high level of workplace attachment correlated
16 with moderate spatial wellbeing and frequent requests to move. By contrast, a low level of
17 workplace attachment was correlated significantly with low spatial wellbeing and almost no
18 requests to move (Rioux, 2006b).
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

31
32 By highlighting the relations between adult attachment style and workplace attachment, our
33 study proposes a workplace attachment model based on the attachment styles defined by
34 Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). While we believe that this model can provide a valuable
35 heuristic method, our work has all the limitations of an initial exploration, and further studies
36 defining more precisely the construct validity of the model are essential. In particular, the model
37 should be compared in greater detail with those derived from environmental psychology (for an
38 overview, see Lewicka, 2011). Empirical studies with variables that have been demonstrated to
39 have close links with workplace attachment (organizational commitment, intention to leave the
40 organization, comfort at work, etc.) should also be conducted to establish the construct validity of
41 the model. Also, future research should focus on developing multi-dimensional measurement tools
42 that can tap the different workplace attachment styles, and, by means of longitudinal models,
43 evaluating their different impact on various psychosocial and organizational variables.
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Limitations

In addition to the limitations discussed above, a potential bias in this study concerns the use of self-reporting instruments to measure the participants' attachment style, since they may be susceptible to conscious and unconscious distortions (e.g., Bifulco, 2002); consequently, the results of this study should be treated with caution.

We decided to use the RQ scale to measure the participants' attachment style because this tool is short and easy to use. The distribution of attachment styles in our sample is similar to the worldwide distribution, which supports our choice. However, certain researchers recommend the use of other tools that show higher construct validity, and it would thus be interesting to compare our results with those obtained with these tools. Another limitation is the reduction of a Likert scale in order to carry out a categorical correspondence analysis, with the inherent disadvantage that much information could be lost.

Implications for research and practice

Despite these limitations, the exploratory approach of this study raises interesting issues from both a theoretical and an applied perspective.

From a theoretical point of view, this study confirms our hypothesis of a workplace attachment style in keeping with an adult attachment style. In particular, the findings of this study support the idea that workplace is an affective place that could be more accurately conceptualized in complex and multi-dimensional terms, rather than a single bipolar evaluative dimension, ranging from positive to negative. From this point of view, the workplace could constitute a secondary object of attachment, a transitional object as defined by Winnicott (1953). Although an amount of scientific investigations of attachment to place are been conducted, researchers tended to ignore the extension of the adult attachment behavioral system to examine core environmental relationships. The present study, applying Attachment Theory to workplace attachment, provides theoretical support that the bonds that an individual form with workplace can be classified as attachment

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

14

1
2
3 bonds. Also, our results provide evidence of the hypothesized associations between adult and
4
5 workplace attachment styles, illustrating attachment style differences in the experience of
6
7 workplaces.
8

9
10 From an applied perspective, the present study adds new knowledge in the use of attachment
11 theory in management practice. In fact, knowing the intensity of workplace attachment could help
12 deduce employees' attachment styles in relation to the workplace, and could thus provide a useful
13 indicator for human resource (HR) managers, who are responsible for employees' comfort at work,
14 career development and mobility. To the extent that it is possible to identify a specific workplace
15 attachment style, it should also be possible to change some of the HR management practices
16 inducing employees to develop a workplace secure attachment style. Since Attachment Theory
17 provides detailed propositions about the attachment system and how it is activated and regulated,
18 this could help in understanding concerns in psychosocial risks such as workplace stress and
19 burnout. For example, very strong attachment to the workplace could indicate a high level of
20 anxiety about losing this workplace, such that any socio-spatial change, reorganization or move
21 could give rise to fear of losing the place and/or its spatial markers. HR managers should thus be
22 vigilant and set up support procedures for these workers to prevent them developing strategies to
23 resist change. People with low workplace attachment are those who have a dismissive attachment
24 style. They show little desire to appropriate, mark or personalize their workspace. They appear very
25 autonomous in their work, even opportunistic, and one can assume that they use strategies to de-
26 activate their attachment system in order to minimize their sense of vulnerability and to protect
27 themselves emotionally. They are more likely to leave the firm, and HR managers who wish to
28 develop their loyalty should grant them personalized rather than collective benefits. They are often
29 willing to take on teleworking, and procedures to supervise their professional activity are essential
30 to ensure that they maintain contact with the organization. Employees who show a fearful
31 workplace attachment style probably suffer most in the organization. They have very weak
32 attachment to their workplace, showing high levels of anxiety and avoidance towards it. They feel
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

15

1
2
3 that they do not belong and often set up failure strategies when the firm tries to meet their demands
4
5 for recognition, notably in relation to the space they are given. In the medium or long term, the
6
7 organization tends to gradually ignore their complaints, while their suffering at work is real. In this
8
9 case, HR managers should promote the interpersonal trust that could, in turn, enhance
10
11 organizational trust, allowing in employees the possibility to develop a sense of security in
12
13 workplace, giving the opportunity to recognize and appreciate the comfort and stability afforded by
14
15 organization.
16
17
18
19
20

21 **Conclusion**

22
23 This article has explored the relationship between employees' adult attachment style and
24
25 workplace attachment. While it's possible to notice an increase in attention of scholars to the
26
27 attachment theory and workplace attachment explaining different organizational phenomena such as
28
29 organizational commitment, leadership, wellbeing and performance, to date no research considered
30
31 the possibility that in addition to being attached to the workplace, employees can develop a secure,
32
33 avoidant or anxious attachment, towards the place in which they work everyday. The results of this
34
35 study show that medium-high scores of workplace attachment match with secure attachment styles,
36
37 while medium-low scores of workplace attachment match with avoidant attachment styles. In
38
39 conclusion, despite taking into account the limitations mentioned above, our results suggest new
40
41 approaches for HR managers. The strong link between workplace attachment and adult attachment
42
43 style should suggest to HR practitioners the possibility to activate a virtuous cycle via
44
45 organizational development practices aimed at improving employee attitude toward their
46
47 established workplace. These practices, therefore, are of potential importance for influencing the
48
49 sense of belonging to the work environments and this, in turn, may influence employees' health and
50
51 wellbeing.
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

References

- Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M. C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of a Strange Situation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1996). Affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization: An examination of construct validity. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 49, 252-276.
- Altman, I., & Low, S. M. (1992). *Place attachment*. New York: Plenum.
- Austin, D.M., & Baba, Y. (1990). Social Determinants of Neighborhood Attachment. *Sociological Spectrum*, 10, 59-78.
- Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J., & van IJzendoorn, M. H. (2009). The first 10,000 Adult Attachment Interviews: Distributions of adult attachment representations in clinical and non-clinical groups. *Attachment and Human Development*, 11(3), 223-263.
- Bakita Ella, M. (2012). *Les liens entre les valeurs et les comportements éthiques. Le cas du Gabon* [The links between values and ethical behavior. The case of Gabon]. Doctoral dissertation, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre, 3 December 2012.
- Bartholomew, K., & Horowitz, L. M. (1991). Attachment styles among young adults: a test of a four-category model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61(2), 226.
- Bartholomew, K., & Shaver, P. R. (1998). Methods of assessing adult attachment: Do they converge? In J. A. Simpson & W. S. Rholes (Eds.), *Attachment theory and close Relationships* (pp. 25-45). New York: Guilford.
- Bifulco, A. (2002). Attachment style measurement: A clinical and epidemiological perspective. *Attachment & Human Development*, 4, 180-188.
- Bonnes, M., & Secchiaroli, G. (1995). *Environmental psychology. A psychological introduction*. London, UK: Sage.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss* (3 voll). New York, NY: Basic Books.

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

17

- 1
2
3 Brown, B. B., Altman, I., & Werner, C. M. (2012). Place attachment. In S. J. Smith (Ed.),
4
5 *International encyclopedia of housing and home* (pp. 183-188). San Diego: Elsevier.
6
7 De Leeuw, E. D. (2005). To mix or not to mix data collection modes in surveys. *Journal of Official*
8
9 *Statistics-Stockholm-*, 21(2), 233.
10
11 Dinç, P. (2010). Spatial and behavioral variables that affect “emotional attachment” of users: A
12
13 multi-dimensional approach for private offices. *Gazi University Journal of Science*, 20(2), 41-
14
15 50.
16
17 Doey, L., & Kurta, J. (2011). Correspondence analysis applied to psychological research. *Tutorials*
18
19 *in Quantitative Methods for Psychology*, 7(1), 5-14.
20
21
22 Fornara, F., Bonaiuto, M., & Bonnes, M. (2009). Cross-validation of abbreviated perceived
23
24 residential environment quality (PREQ) and neighborhood attachment (NA) indicators.
25
26 *Environment and Behavior*, 42, 171-196.
27
28
29 Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (2008). Attachment theory and its place in contemporary personality
30
31 theory and research. In: O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of*
32
33 *personality: Theory and research* (pp. 518-541). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
34
35
36 Freeman, H., & Brown, B. B. (2001). Primary attachment to parents and peers during adolescence:
37
38 Differences by attachment style. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 30(6), 653-674.
39
40
41 Fried, M. (2000). Continuities and discontinuities of place. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*,
42
43 20, 193-205.
44
45
46 Giuliani, M. V. (1991). Towards an analysis of mental representations of attachment to the home.
47
48 *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 8(2), 133-146.
49
50
51 Giuliani, M. V. (2003). Theory of attachment and place attachment. In M. Bonnes, T. Lee, & M.
52
53 Bonaiuto (Eds.), *Psychological theories for environmental issues* (pp. 137-170). Aldershot:
54
55 Ashgate.
56
57 Hamilton, C. E. (2000). Continuity and discontinuity of attachment from infancy through
58
59 adolescence. *Child Development*, 71(3), 690-694.
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

18

- 1
2
3 Harms, P. D. (2011). Adult attachment styles in the workplace. *Human Resource Management*
4
5 *Review*, 21(4), 285-296.
6
7 Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. R. (1990). Love and work: an attachment theoretical perspective. *Journal*
8
9 *of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39(2), 270-280.
10
11 Hernández, B., Hidalgo, M. C., & Ruiz, C. (2013). Theoretical and methodological aspects of
12
13 research on place attachment. In L. C. Manzo & P. Devine-Wright (Eds.), *Place attachment:*
14
15 *Advances in theory, methods and applications* (pp. 125-137). London: Routledge.
16
17 Hidalgo, M. C. (2000). Estilos de apego al lugar [Place attachment styles]. *Medio Ambiente y*
18
19 *Comportamiento Humano*, 1, 57-73.
20
21 Hildalgo, M. C., & Hernández, B. (2001). Place attachment: Conceptual and empirical questions.
22
23 *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21, 273-281.
24
25 Hoffman, D. L., & Franke, G. R. (1986). Correspondence analysis: graphical representation of
26
27 categorical data in marketing research. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 213-227.
28
29 Hom, P. W., Mitchell, T. R., Lee, T. W., & Griffeth, R. W. (2012). Reviewing employee turnover:
30
31 focusing on proximal withdrawal states and an expanded criterion. *Psychological Bulletin*,
32
33 138(5), 831-858.
34
35 Joplin, J. R., Nelson, D. L., & Quick, J. C. (1999). Attachment behavior and health: Relationships at
36
37 work and home. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20(6), 783-796.
38
39 Konrath, S. H., Chopik, W. J., Hsing, C. K., & O'Brien, E. (2014). Changes in adult attachment
40
41 styles in American college students over time: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Social*
42
43 *Psychology Review*, 18(4), 326-348.
44
45 Laurenceau, J-P., Feldman Barrett, L., & Pietromonaco, P. R. (1998). Intimacy as an interpersonal
46
47 process: The importance of self-disclosure, partner disclosure, and perceived partner
48
49 responsiveness in interpersonal exchanges. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*,
50
51 74(5), 1238-1251.
52
53 Le Roy, J., & Rioux, L. (2013). The mediating role of workplace attachment in the relationship
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 between organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. *International*
4
5 *Review of Social Psychology* 25(3-4), 211-233.

6
7 Lewicka, M. (2005). Ways to make people active: The role of place attachment, cultural capital,
8
9 and neighborhood ties. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25(4), 381-395.

10
11 Lewicka, M. (2010). What makes neighborhood different from home and city? Effects of place
12
13 scale on place attachment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30(1), 35-51.

14
15 Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years? *Journal of*
16
17 *Environmental Psychology*, 31(3), 207-230.

18
19 Manzo, L. C. (2005). For better or worse: Exploring multiple dimensions of place meaning. *Journal*
20
21 *of Environmental Psychology*, 25, 67-86.

22
23 Mesch, G. S., & Manor, O. (1998). Social ties, environmental perception, and local attachment.
24
25 *Environment and Behavior*, 30, 504-519.

26
27 Meulman, J. J., & Heiser, W. J. (2001). *SPSS Categories 11.0*. Chicago: SPSS.

28
29 Neustadt, E., Chamorro-Premuzic, T., & Furnham, A. (2011). Attachment at work and
30
31 performance. *Attachment and Human Development*, 13(5), 471-488.

32
33 Paetzold, R. L. (2015). Attachment theory in organizational settings. In J. A. Simpson, & W. S.
34
35 Rholes (Eds.), *Attachment theory and research: New directions and emerging themes* (pp.
36
37 261-286). New York, NY: Guilford.

38
39 Pavalache-Ilie, M., & Rioux, L. (2014). Résilience organisationnelle et attachement au lieu de
40
41 travail [Organizational resilience and attachment to the workplace]. In M. Tomita & S. Cace
42
43 (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Second World Congress on Resilience: From Person to Society*
44
45 (pp. 817-822): Timisoara, Romania: Medimond.

46
47 Pietromonaco, P. R., & Barrett, L. F. (1997). Working models of attachment and daily social
48
49 interactions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(6), 1409-1423.

50
51 Pietromonaco, P. R., & Barrett, L. F. (2000). The internal working models concept: What do we
52
53 really know about the self in relation to others? *Review of General Psychology*, 4(2), 155-175.
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

20

- 1
2
3 Rioux, L. (2005). Approche psychosociale de l'attachement aux lieux de travail [Psychosocial
4 approach to workplace attachment: a study carried out among hospital staff]. *Working paper,*
5 *Université d'Orléans, Orléans, France.* (No. 2005-2)
6
7
8
9
10 Rioux, L. (2006a). Construction d'une échelle d'attachement au lieu de travail: une démarche
11 exploratoire [Construction of a scale of attachment to the workplace: an exploratory
12 approach]. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du*
13 *comportement, 38(4), 325.*
14
15
16
17
18 Rioux, L. (2006b). *Workplace attachment as a predictor of application for transfer.* Poster session
19 presented at the 26th International Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP), Athens, Greece.
20
21
22
23 Rioux, L., & Mokoukolo, R. (2005). Attachement au quartier et adolescence. Etude comparative
24 dans deux banlieues à forte diversité culturelle [Neighborhood attachment and adolescence. A
25 comparative study carried out in two neighbourhoods presenting a great cultural diversity],
26 *Bulletin de Psychologie, 57(6), 611-620.*
27
28
29
30
31
32 Rioux, L., & Pignault, A. (2013a). Workplace attachment and meaning of work in a French
33 secondary school, *The Spanish Journal of Psychology 16*, E23, 1-14.
34
35
36
37 Rioux, L., & Pignault, A. (2013b). Workplace attachment, workspace appropriation, and job
38 satisfaction/Apego al lugar de trabajo, apropiación del lugar de trabajo, y satisfacción laboral.
39 *Psycology: Revista Bilingüe de Psicología Ambiental - Bilingual Journal of Environmental*
40 *Psychology, 4(1), 39-65.*
41
42
43
44
45 Ronen, S., & Mikulincer, M. (2012). Predicting employees' satisfaction and burnout from managers'
46 attachment and caregiving orientations. *European Journal of Work and Organizational*
47 *Psychology, 21(6), 828-849.*
48
49
50
51
52 Ronen, S., & Mikulincer, M. (2009). Attachment orientations and job burnout: The mediating roles
53 of team cohesion and organizational fairness. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships,*
54 *26, 549- 567.*
55
56
57
58
59
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

21

1
2
3 Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework.
4
5 *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 30*, 1-10.

6
7 Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2013). Comparing the theories of interpersonal and place attachment.
8
9 *Place attachment. Advances in theory, methods and applications, 2*.

10
11 Scharfe, E., & Bartholomew, K. I. M. (1994). Reliability and stability of adult attachment patterns.
12
13 *Personal relationships, 1*(1), 23-43.

14
15 Scrima, F. (2014). Comprendre l'attachement au travail pour agir sur le confort au travail
16
17 [Understanding workplace attachment to act on comfort in the workplace]. *Psychologie du*
18
19 *Travail et des Organisations, 20*(3), 295-310.

20
21 Scrima, F. (2015). The convergent-discriminant validity of the workplace attachment scale. *Journal*
22
23 *of Environmental Psychology, 43*, 24-29.

24
25 Scrima, F., Di Stefano, G., Guarnaccia, C., & Lorito, L. (2015). The impact of adult attachment
26
27 style on organizational commitment and adult attachment in the workplace. *Personality and*
28
29 *Individual Differences, 86*, 432-437.

30
31 Scrima, F., Rioux, L., & Lorito, L. (2014). Three-factor structure of adult attachment in the
32
33 workplace: comparison of British, French, and Italian samples. *Psychological Reports,*
34
35 *115*(2), 327-342.

36
37 Shumaker, S. A., & Taylor, R. B. (1983). Toward a clarification of people-place relationships: a
38
39 model of attachment to place. *Environmental Psychology: Directions and Perspectives, 2*, 19-
40
41 25.

42
43 Simmons, B. L., Nelson, D. L., & Quick, J. C. (2003). Health for the hopeful: A study of
44
45 attachment behavior in home health care nurses. *International Journal of Stress Management,*
46
47 *10*(4), 361-375.

48
49 Simpson, J. A., Collins, W. A., Tran, S., & Haydon, K. C. (2007). Attachment and the experience
50
51 and expression of emotions in romantic relationships: a developmental perspective. *Journal of*
52
53 *Personality and Social Psychology, 92*(2), 355-367.
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

22

1
2
3 van IJzendoorn, M. H., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (1996). Attachment representations in
4
5 mothers, fathers, adolescents, and clinical groups: a meta-analytic search for normative data.

6
7 *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 64*, 8-21.

8
9
10 van IJzendoorn, M. H., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (2010). Invariance of adult attachment
11
12 across gender, age, culture, and socioeconomic status? *Journal of Social and Personal*
13
14 *relationships, 27*(2), 200-208.

15
16 Velasco, L., & Rioux, L. (2010). Enfoque psicosocial del“ apego al lugar de trabajo”. Estudio
17
18 realizado con personal hospitalario [Psychosocial approach to workplace attachment: A study
19
20 carried out among hospital staff]. *Estudios de Psicología, 31*(3), 309-323.

21
22
23 Weinfield, N. S., Sroufe, L. A., & Egeland, B. (2000). Attachment from infancy to early adulthood
24
25 in a high risk sample: Continuity, discontinuity, and their correlates. *Child Development,*
26
27 *71*(3), 695-702.

28
29
30 Winnicott D.W. (1953). Transitional objects and transitional phenomena. *International Journal of*
31
32 *Psycho-Analysis, 34*, 89-97.

Personnel Review

33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

RUNNING HEAD: Workplace Attachment Style

23

1
2
3 Figure 1 - Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) - a comprehensive, four-category model of adult
4 attachment.
5
6
7

8 THOUGHTS OF SELF

9 Positive Negative

10

11 THOUGHTS OF OTHERS

12 Positive

Secure Attachment	Preoccupied Attachment
Dismissive Attachment	Fearful/Disorganized Attachment

13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22

23
24 Figure 2 -A hypothesized four-category model of place attachment.
25
26

27 THOUGHTS OF SELF

28 Positive Negative

29

30 THOUGHTS OF PLACES

31 Positive

Secure Place Attachment	Preoccupied Place Attachment
Dismissive Place Attachment	Fearful/Disorganized Place Attachment

32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 3 – Joint correspondence map

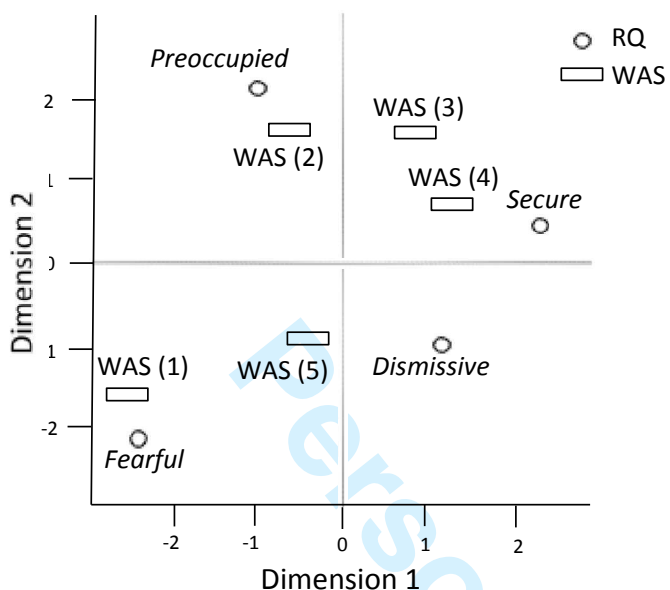
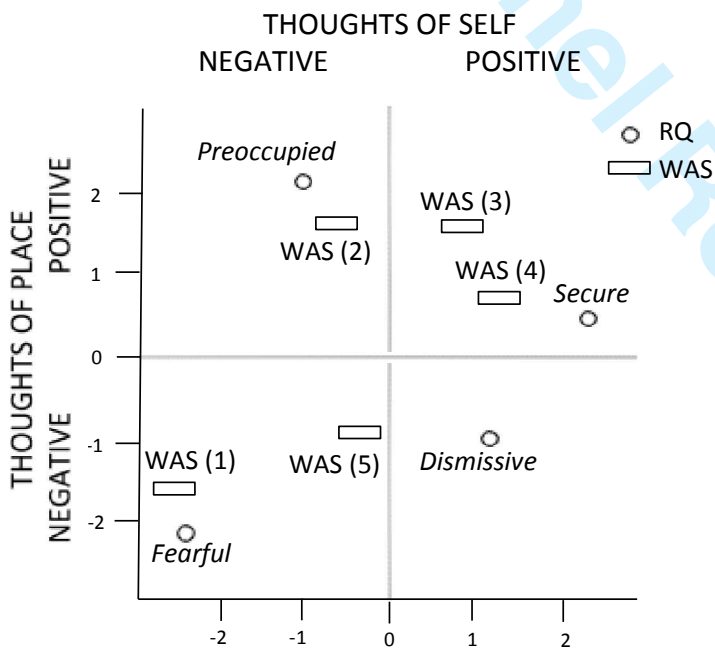


Figure 4 – Joint correspondence map and Bartholomew and Horowitz’s model



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Table 1 – Comparison of attachment styles of our sample with those in other studies

	Secure %	Dismissive %	Preoccupied %	X ²	p
Van IJzendoorn et al. (1996)	58	24	18		
Our sample	56	32	12	5.07	.08

Table 2 – Workplace Attachment categorization results

Percentile	Score Range	Score attribution	Label
20	> 1.000 < 2.428	1	Very Low
40	> 2.429 < 3.141	2	Low
60	> 3.142 < 3.570	3	Medium
80	> 3.571 < 4.141	4	High
100	> 4.142 < 5.000	5	Very High

Table 3 – Parametric and non-parametric correlations between variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Workplace Attachment*	1					
Adult Attachment Style*	0.22 ^{oo}	1				
Age	0.18 ^o	0.01	1			
Organizational Tenure	0.14 ^{oo}	0.01	0.82 ^{oo}	1		
Sex*	0.13 ^o	-0.07	0.14 ^{oo}	-0.02	1	
Sector*	-0.01	0.01	-0.38 ^{oo}	-0.31 ^{oo}	-0.21 ^{oo}	1
Contract*	0.05	-0.03	0.14 ^{oo}	0.16 ^{oo}	-0.03	-0.07

Note: N = 351; For Age and Organizational tenure Pearson's r was calculated; *For Adult Attachment, Workplace Attachment, Sex (1 = Male; 2 = Female), Sector (1 = Public; 2 = Private) and Contract (1 = Temporary; 2 = Permanent) Kendal's Tau was calculated. ^o = p < .05; ^{oo} p < .01

Table 4 – Summary of correspondence analysis results

Dimension	Singular Value	Inertia	X ²	Sig	Proportion		Confidence	
					Accounted for	Cumulative	SD	r
1	0.38	0.24			0.70	0.70	0.05	0.22
2	0.11	0.16			0.28	0.98	0.06	
3	0.01	0.01	52.72	0.001	0.02	1		
Total		0.40			1			