

# Attachment at (Not to) Work: Applying Attachment Theory to Explain Individual Behavior in Organizations

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In this article, we report the results of 2 studies that were conducted to investigate whether adult attachment theory explains employee behavior at work. In the first study, we examined the structure of a measure of adult attachment and its relations with measures of trait affectivity and the Big Five. In the second study, we examined the relations between dimensions of attachment and emotion regulation behaviors, turnover intentions, and supervisory reports of counterproductive work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior. Results showed that anxiety and avoidance represent 2 higher order dimensions of attachment that predicted these criteria (except for counterproductive work behavior) after controlling for individual difference variables and organizational commitment. The implications of these results for the study of attachment at work are discussed.

*Keywords:* attachment theory, emotion regulation behaviors, turnover intention, organizational citizenship behavior

Organizational researchers frequently investigate situations in which interpersonal relationships play a significant role in determining how individuals, work units, and organizations function. To date, most research investigating the influence of individual attributes on individual behavior at work has focused on broad traits, such as affectivity and the Big Five. Despite the importance of these variables, consideration of individual characteristics that are more directly related to how people relate to other people offers the potential of enhancing our understanding of the nature of relationships and behavior at work. Individual attachment is one such characteristic. Attachment theory posits that individuals possess an innate tendency to seek proximity to others in times of need and that individuals develop different proximity-seeking strategies based on early experiences (Bowlby, 1973). Although attachment theory has received considerable research attention in developmental and social psychology, it has remained relatively understudied in industrial–organizational psychology and organizational behavior.

We suggest that the time has come to draw upon insights from attachment theory to understand phenomena in the workplace. To that end, we conducted two studies. In Study 1, we adapted and

validated an established measure of adult attachment in romantic relationships to assess individual attachment in a general, context-free manner (much the same as the way the Big Five personality traits are measured). In Study 2, we drew on attachment theory to develop and test hypotheses regarding relations between attachment and work-related behaviors, including support seeking, emotion regulation, organizational citizenship behavior, counterproductive work behavior, and turnover intentions.

## Attachment Theory

Founded in the work of John Bowlby (1969/1982, 1973, 1980, 1982), attachment theory posits that individuals are born with innate behaviors that function to attract and maintain proximity to attachment figures (supportive others) to protect against psychological or physical threats when the individuals are in distress (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). The availability and responsiveness of supportive others result in a sense of security, whereas the absence and unresponsiveness of others result in insecurity (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005).

Bowlby (1973) proposed that individual differences in attachment arise from early experiences of the availability and responsiveness of attachment figures. In adulthood, individuals possess a dominant attachment pattern that tends to remain relatively stable. This pattern, sometimes called a working model, represents personality features that influence cognitions, affective experience and regulation, proximity seeking, and other behaviors throughout the life span (Collins, Guichard, Ford, & Feeney, 2004; Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003).

## Conceptualizing Adult Attachment

The conceptualization of adult attachment has evolved over several decades of research (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998; Ross, McKim, & DiTommaso, 2006). Based on previous work on infant attachment (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978), attachment

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was originally conceptualized as a three- (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) or four-category typology (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). More recently, the focus shifted to a two-dimensional conceptualization consisting of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005), because research has shown that this more accurately represents the underlying structure of attachment (Fraley & Waller, 1998).

Anxiously attached individuals possess a negative view of the self, leading to hyperactivating strategies such as being overdependent on others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005) and hypervigilant to social and emotional cues from others (Fraley, Niedenthal, Marks, Brumbaugh, & Vicary, 2006). Avoidantly attached individuals view others as unavailable, unresponsive, or punishing (Bowlby, 1973; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005), leading to what has been referred to as deactivating strategies, such as denying the importance of relationships and avoiding emotional intimacy (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). Conversely, individuals with low levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance (referred to as securely attached) are more likely to view themselves as worthy (low anxiety) and others as trustworthy (low avoidance), leading to greater security, resiliency, and ability to manage adversity by drawing upon internal coping resources and support from others (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005).

### Attachment Theory in Organizational Research

Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) suggested that attachment style can influence individual functioning at work, a suggestion that is supported by several previous studies. In an early investigation of attachment in the workplace, Hazan and Shaver (1990) found that securely attached individuals had higher levels of overall work satisfaction (see also Krausz, Bizman, & Braslavsky, 2001) and were more confident that others evaluated them favorably. On the other hand, they found that anxious individuals expected to be undervalued by coworkers and avoidant individuals gave themselves lower self-ratings in terms of job performance and expected they would receive low performance ratings from coworkers. In another study, Hardy and Barkham (1994) found that among individuals treated for work-related stress, anxiously attached individuals possessed anxiety about relationships at work and job performance, and avoidantly attached individuals reported more conflict with coworkers, concerns about hours of work, and difficulties with relationships outside of work. Joplin, Nelson, and Quick (1999) reported that secure attachment was negatively related to social dysfunction and positively related to physical and psychological well-being and that insecure attachment generally showed opposite associations. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) reported that anxiety and avoidance were correlated with lower levels of organizational commitment, prosocial actions, and spontaneous productive behaviors and avoidance was correlated with intention to quit. More recently, Geller and Bamberger (2009) found that attachment predicts instrumental coworker helping behavior.

We suggest, building on this previous research, that individual attachment has the potential to explain individual functioning at work because it reflects how individuals view themselves and others, which in turn influences how they think about and behave toward others at work. Previous personality research in organiza-

tional settings has tended to focus on broad traits (e.g., the Big Five) that have been shown to be associated with variables such as performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991), job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002), leadership (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002), and counterproductive work behavior (Salgado, 2002). Compared to these traits, attachment style is a unique individual difference attribute that may add to our understanding of individual work behavior.

### Measuring Adult Attachment

Self-report measures of attachment are based on either a typological or a dimensional conceptualization of attachment. The former classifies individuals into one of three or four attachment types, often using single items (e.g., Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994), and was the measurement approach used in earlier studies of attachment in organizational settings (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1990). However, research by Fraley and Waller (1998) showed that adult attachment is more appropriately measured dimensionally rather than typologically because it is "a variable on which people vary in degree rather than in kind" (p. 108). Brennan et al. (1998) developed a measure consistent with this that assesses adult attachment to one's romantic partner along two continuous dimensions, anxiety and avoidance. This measure, called the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) Scale, has demonstrated evidence of internal consistency and test-retest reliability as well as construct- and criterion-related validity in the domain of romantic relationships, making it the best measure of adult attachment available (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002).

The reference to romantic relationships limits the ECR's applicability to work and other contexts. Nevertheless, the fundamental content of the items, when decoupled from the romantic partner referent, is appropriate for use in other settings. In a recent study of attachment in leader-follower relationships at work, Davidovitz, Mikulincer, Shaver, Izsak, and Popper (2007) changed the instructions so that respondents thought about their close relationships in general, although the reference to a "partner" was retained in the original items. For the present study, we deemed it important to replace references to "partner" with "others." We refer to the adapted scale as the Experience of Relationships Scale (ERS).

In their development of the ECR, Brennan et al. (1998) factor analyzed a large pool of items that resulted in the two-factor solution consisting of anxiety and avoidance, which were correlated at  $r = .11$ . Each of these was represented by three subdimensions that exhibited the strongest factor loadings with each of the two higher order attachment dimensions and, according to attachment theory, represent the most important elements of each of these constructs. Attachment anxiety, which reflects an individual's negative view of self (i.e., that one is unworthy of responsiveness from others), was represented by fear of rejection, jealousy or fear of abandonment, and preoccupation with relationships. Attachment avoidance, which reflects an individual's negative view of others (i.e., that others cannot be trusted to be responsive when needed), was represented by discomfort with closeness, self-reliance, and avoidance of intimacy. We believe, based on the above, that the structure of attachment is best reflected by a hierarchical model, consisting of anxiety and avoidance as two independent (but correlated) second-order factors. Each of the two is reflected by three first-order factors representing the aforemen-

tioned subdimensions, which are in turn reflected by the individual items.

The construct validity of the ERS is also investigated by correlating attachment anxiety and avoidance with other traits, such as positive and negative affectivity and the Big Five personality dimensions. As we outline below, the attachment dimensions share conceptual space with some of these individual differences; however, these relations were expected to be of a magnitude that suggests a sufficient degree of independence to demonstrate discriminant validity.

Trait negative affectivity involves a general predisposition to view and experience life negatively. Conversely, positive affectivity involves a generally positive predisposition (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Because attachment anxiety and avoidance involve negative views of the self and others, we expected them to be positively correlated with negative affectivity and inversely correlated with positive affectivity.

*Hypothesis 1:* Attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance will be negatively related to trait positive affectivity and positively related to trait negative affectivity.

We also assessed the construct validity of the ERS dimensions via their correlation with the dimensions of the Big Five personality factors. We expected, consistent with attachment theory, that because attachment anxiety and avoidance are characterized by a lack of security, they would be negatively related to Emotional Stability. Attachment anxiety was expected to have a higher negative correlation with Emotional Stability than attachment avoidance, because Neuroticism (the inverse of Emotional Stability) and attachment anxiety are particularly characterized by negative emotionality. We also expected that attachment avoidance would be negatively related to Extraversion and Agreeableness. Avoidant individuals have a negative view of others and are likely to suppress emotions, leading to the deactivation of behaviors that would involve interaction with others. Similarly, the negative view of others is also likely to inhibit trust and altruism, important elements of Agreeableness. No relationship was expected between the attachment dimensions and Conscientiousness and Openness. Initial empirical support for these hypothesized relations comes from a study by Nofhle and Shaver (2006), although they focused on romantic relationships.

*Hypothesis 2:* Attachment anxiety (*H2a*) and attachment avoidance (*H2b*) will be negatively related to Emotional Stability. The negative correlation will be greater for anxiety than for avoidance (*H2c*).

*Hypothesis 3:* Attachment avoidance will be negatively related to Extraversion (*H3a*) and Agreeableness (*H3b*).

We also examined whether the attachment dimensions predict (beyond demographic and other personality variables, such as the Big Five and trait affectivity) relevant work-related attitudinal and behavioral criteria, such as surface acting (emotional labor involving suppression of the behavioral expression of felt emotions), instrumental and emotional support seeking, counterproductive work behavior (CWB), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and turnover intentions. We focused on these behaviors because

they potentially reflect avoidant individuals' disengagement from work and people at work and anxious individuals' negative reactions to unmet attachment needs and ineffectual efforts at proximity seeking.

According to attachment theory, the avoidant individual tries to minimize problems, deny the importance of closeness to others, and prevent negative emotional experiences that may result in real or perceived feelings of rejection, loss, or vulnerability (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988; Mikulincer et al., 2003; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). This may manifest in actively avoiding the display of emotions in front of other people at work. We therefore expected that attachment avoidance would predict a tendency to surface act, a form of emotion regulation that people engage in at work when they suppress the behavioral display of emotions that they are experiencing (Grandey, 2000, 2003; Zapf & Holz, 2006). Gross and John (2003) found that attachment avoidance was significantly related to suppression of emotion in close relationships.

*Hypothesis 4:* Attachment avoidance will predict the use of surface acting (suppression), controlling for the Big Five, trait affectivity, and organizational commitment.

Instrumental support seeking involves efforts to obtain practical help with work tasks in the form of information, advice, or assistance, and emotional support refers to efforts to obtain sympathy, moral support, or understanding (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Challenges at work will activate the attachment system, leading the anxious person to engage in support-seeking behaviors as a way of experiencing proximity to others. However, evidence from research on attachment in romantic relationships suggests that the fear of rejection associated with attachment anxiety may counteract this tendency to seek support (Florian, Mikulincer & Bucholtz, 1995; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). We believe, on balance, that the nature and context of work relationships compared to romantic relationships make fear of rejection unlikely to constrain support seeking in organizational settings. First, relationships between peers in organizational contexts are usually of lower intensity than romantic relationships, which would reduce the perceived consequences of rejection that may impede support seeking in close relationships. Second, task interdependence is a reality in many organizations, making requests for assistance and support from one's peers or supervisor commonplace, even expected. As a result, it is unlikely that one's support seeking would be rebuffed, increasing the probability that those with attachment anxiety will engage in support-seeking behavior as a means of obtaining proximity to others.

In contrast, attachment avoidance was expected to be negatively associated with support-seeking behavior. Those with attachment avoidance tend to mistrust others, doubt that seeking support will relieve distress, and be self-reliant (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005, 2007). A negative association with support-seeking behavior results.

*Hypothesis 5:* Attachment anxiety will be positively related to the use of instrumental (*H5a*) and emotional (*H5b*) support-seeking behaviors, and attachment avoidance will be negatively related to the use of instrumental (*H5c*) and emotional (*H5d*) support-seeking behaviors, controlling for the Big Five, trait affectivity, and organizational commitment.

Even though anxiously attached individuals are likely to engage in support-seeking behavior, this does not ensure that they are able to elicit the support they want. In fact, they tend to experience frustration because their proximity-seeking efforts are often ineffective (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). As a result, they experience higher levels of ineffectively regulated negative emotion, which is an antecedent of CWB (Spector & Fox, 2005), such as withdrawal from work or hostility toward other people (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Previous research has shown that negative emotional dispositions—such as neuroticism (Jockin, Arvey, & McGue, 2001) and negative affectivity (Penney & Spector, 2005)—are related to CWB. Viewing these findings through the lens of attachment theory, we suggest that the negative emotionality that characterizes anxiously attached individuals and the frustration arising from unmet attachment needs will predispose them to engage in CWB. Moreover, some anxiously attached individuals may engage in CWB in order to elicit the attention of others, particularly in times of distress. As a result, attachment anxiety was expected to positively predict CWB. Conversely, because avoidant individuals prefer to avoid interactions with others and most forms of CWB involve interactions with other people (albeit negative interactions), avoidance was expected to negatively predict CWB. Although CWB can be directed at individuals (CWB-I) or the organization (CWB-O), we had no theoretical basis for expecting differential relations between attachment and CWB-I and CWB-O. We therefore focused on overall CWB.

*Hypothesis 6:* Attachment anxiety will be positively related to CWB, and attachment avoidance will be negatively related to CWB, controlling for the Big Five, trait affectivity, and organizational commitment.

OCB involves discretionary behaviors that contribute to the effective functioning of the organization but are not part of a formal job description and are not recognized directly by formal reward systems (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). It includes behaviors directed at individuals (OCB-I) and those directed at the organization (OCB-O; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990; Williams & Anderson, 1991). OCB-I and OCB-O are representations of an individual's generalized likelihood of engaging in OCB, but there is evidence that different psychological processes are involved, depending on the target and nature of the behavior (McNeely & Meglino, 1994).

Anxiously attached individuals tend to be preoccupied with relationships and with meeting their job requirements (Hardy & Barkham, 1994; Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). These preoccupations absorb their discretionary time and effort, resulting in limited capacity or motivation to engage in discretionary behaviors that are beneficial to the organization (i.e., OCB-O). For example, attending nonmandatory meetings (an example of the *civic virtue* dimension of OCB-O) is an activity that would detract from their own task performance and interfere with their proximity seeking (Geller & Bamberger, 2009). Moreover, the frustration and negative emotion that arise from unmet proximity needs would result in verbal expression of negative emotion that may manifest in complaints about the organization (the inverse of the *sportsmanship* dimension of OCB-O). Therefore, we expected a negative association between anxiety and OCB-O.

The relation between attachment anxiety and OCB-I is likely a function of competing forces. On one hand, OCB-I may represent a means of proximity seeking, suggesting a positive association. However, the preoccupation with relationships, jealousy, and fear of rejection that characterize anxious individuals results in a focus on the self (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Mikulincer et al., 2003), compromising their ability to consider the concerns of others (*courtesy*) or identify and engage in behaviors that are helpful to others (*altruism*). On balance, therefore, even though OCB-I could be a means of attaining the proximity of others, the lack of social and emotional adeptness of anxiously attached individuals is more likely to undermine such behaviors. As a result, attachment anxiety is likely to be associated with lower levels of OCB-I. This is consistent with research by Geller and Bamberger (2009), who found that individuals with attachment anxiety were less likely to provide instrumental help to coworkers.

Attachment-avoidant individuals tend to possess negative attitudes toward others and the organization, prefer to disengage from interdependent activities, and use work to avoid social interaction (Hardy & Barkham, 1994; Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). These characteristics will inhibit their opportunity and desire to engage in the OCB-I behaviors of *altruism* and *courtesy*, which require an awareness of social cues and interaction with others. In addition, these behaviors also require a social context for their initiation and execution that is likely unavailable to the avoidant individuals. This reasoning is consistent with the negative association between avoidance and helping that has been observed in nonwork contexts (Geller & Bamberger, 2009; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Regarding OCB-O, avoidant individuals use work behaviors to avoid social contact (Hardy & Barkham, 1994), and their focus on their own task performance and detachment from others will inhibit extrarole behavior involving interactions with others, such as attending social functions or meetings (*civic virtue*) or even complaining to others (*unsportsmanship*).

*Hypothesis 7:* Attachment anxiety will be negatively related to OCB-O (H7a) and OCB-I (H7b), and attachment avoidance will be negatively related to OCB-I (H7c) and OCB-O (H7d), controlling for the Big Five, trait affectivity, and organizational commitment.

Research on turnover has found that people are less likely to quit their jobs if they are connected to the “social web” of the organization. This connection to others in the organization reflects the concept of job embeddedness (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001). Mitchell et al. found that individuals will have higher levels of job embeddedness, and will therefore be more likely to remain in that organization (Lee, Mitchell, Sablinski, Burton, & Holtom, 2004; Maertz & Griffeth, 2004), when (a) they have more connections with other people at work; (b) their personal values and traits are congruent with their job; and (c) they would lose these connections if they left the organization. The first of these—the connections with others—is most relevant to attachment.

Attachment anxiety and avoidance impair an individual's ability to form affective bonds with others in group contexts (Rom & Mikulincer, 2003) and thereby reduce the individual's potential to become embedded in the organization. The tendency of anxiously attached individuals to engage in hyperactivation is related to



higher levels of negative emotions and difficulty establishing positive interpersonal relationships at work (Hardy & Barkham, 1994). For avoidant individuals, deactivation of the attachment system is intended to inhibit close connections with others (Mikulincer et al., 2003), resulting in lower identification with the organization and its members. Therefore, the potential to develop meaningful relationships with others at work—that is, to become embedded in one's organization—is compromised for both anxiously and avoidantly attached individuals. Because embeddedness reduces the likelihood of turnover (Maertz & Griffeth, 2004), in the absence of the protection provided by embeddedness, such individuals will be more likely to entertain thoughts of leaving the organization. This is consistent with research by Zimmerman (2008), who found that insecure personality traits (e.g., Neuroticism) are associated with fewer positive relationships and work and higher turnover intentions.

*Hypothesis 8:* Attachment anxiety (H8a) and attachment avoidance (H8b) will be positively related to turnover intention, controlling for the Big Five, trait affectivity, and organizational commitment.

## Study 1

Our purpose in Study 1 was to adapt and validate a measure of adult attachment in romantic relationships to assess individual attachment in a general, context-free manner.

## Method

**Participants.** A convenience sample was drawn from the general population via three methods of data collection. The first involved a "snowball" sampling method. Potential participants were personal contacts who were initially contacted via e-mail by the researchers and asked to forward a link to the online survey to others who might be interested in participating. This yielded complete surveys from 96 participants. The second involved collecting data from patrons of a university's cafeteria and retail space (including university visitors, students, faculty, and staff) who were given a hard copy of the survey or a link to an online version of the same survey. This yielded 62 completed surveys. Ten cases that were missing a substantial amount of data or whose employment status was ambiguous were not included. The third involved a field study in which the ERS was used to assess attachment with a sample of 156 health care workers. All three of these samples completed the measure of attachment, whereas only the first two samples completed all personality measures. Therefore, the entire sample (314) was used to test the structure of attachment using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), whereas the subsample of 158 was used to test the nomological validity of attachment with other theoretically related constructs.

In the larger sample, the majority of participants were female (80%) and age ranged from 18 to 64 years (the median age range was 40–44 years). Most (73%) were graduates of college or university, and all were employed, with 75% working full-time. For the subsample used to test the other hypothesized relations among attachment, trait affectivity, the Big Five, and the attitudinal and behavioral criteria, the majority of participants were female (70%) and age ranged from 18 to 63 years (with a median age

range of 35–39 years). Approximately 70% of participants were graduates of college or university programs. All participants were employed, with 80% working full time and the others working part time. These participants worked in a variety of settings, including education, training, and library occupations (15%); health practitioners and technical occupations (9.6%); life science, physical science, and social science occupations (13.3%); and office and administrative support occupations (8.4%). Twenty-one people (12.7%) did not provide an occupational category.

## Measures.

**Attachment.** We used the ERS, an adapted version of Brennan et al.'s (1998) measure in which we replaced references to romantic partners in the items with "other people" or "others." The 36-item scale measures the two dimensions of attachment: anxiety (18 items) and avoidance (18 items). Sample items are "I worry a fair amount about losing my connections with others" (anxiety) and "I don't feel comfortable opening up to other people" (avoidance). Responses were provided on a 7-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.<sup>1</sup>

**Affectivity.** Positive and negative affectivity were measured with the Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (Watson et al., 1988). Each dimension of affectivity is assessed with 10 words that describe either positive emotions (i.e., "excited," "strong") or negative emotions (i.e., "afraid," "hostile"). Responses reflect how individuals generally feel (range = *not at all* to *very much*) on a 5-point Likert scale.

**Big Five personality traits (Study 1).** The 50-item measure of personality from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) was used to assess Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Extraversion, and Openness (Goldberg, 1990, 1999). Goldberg et al. (2006) reported that the dimensions of the IPIP have an average correlation of .94 with the corresponding dimensions of the Revised NEO Personality Inventory after correcting for unreliability. The items are answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Sample items include "I accept people as they are" (Agreeableness), "I am always prepared" (Conscientiousness), "I seldom feel blue" (Emotional Stability), "I am the life of the party" (Extraversion), and "I have a vivid imagination" (Openness).

## Results

**CFA.** Consistent with the foundations of attachment theory and the work of Brennan et al. (1998), a CFA model consisting of two second-order factors (anxiety and avoidance) was specified. Each was defined by three first-order factors (preoccupation with relationships, fear of rejection, and jealousy reflecting anxiety; avoidance of intimacy, discomfort with closeness, and self-reliance reflecting avoidance) that are in turn defined by the individual items. Two versions of this model were specified, one with and one without correlated second-order factors. The model in which these factors are correlated is presented in Figure 1. We compared this hierarchical model with a nonhierarchical, two-factor oblique model consisting of anxiety and avoidance, each directly defined by 18 items; a unidimensional model with all items loading on a single attachment factor; and a six-factor

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the measure can be obtained from the first author.

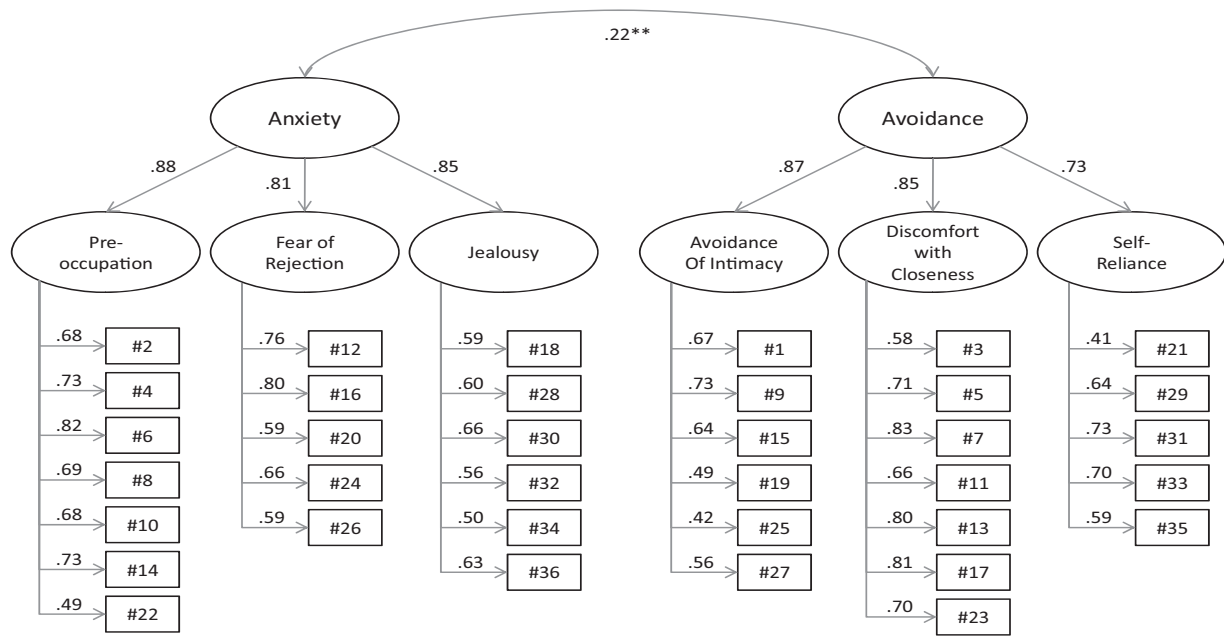


Figure 1. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the hierarchical model of attachment ( $N = 286$ ). Item numbers are shown in boxes. All coefficients are standardized. Unless otherwise noted, all coefficients are significant at  $p < .001$ . Preoccupation = preoccupation with relationships; jealousy = jealousy reflecting anxiety; self-reliance = self-reliance reflecting avoidance. \*\*  $p < .01$ .

oblique model consisting of the six first-order factors of the hierarchical model.

Of the models tested, the hierarchical model with the two correlated second-order factors exhibited slightly better fit,  $\chi^2(587) = 1480.63, p < .001$ , root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .084, comparative fit index (CFI) = .93, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = .92, than the uncorrelated hierarchical model,  $\chi^2(588) = 1,528.38, p < .001$ , RMSEA = .083, CFI = .93, TLI = .92,  $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 47.75, p < .001$ . The parameter representing the intercorrelation between the anxiety and avoidance factors was also significant ( $r = .22, p < .01$ ), confirming this model's superiority. This model also exhibited better fit than the two-factor model,  $\chi^2(593) = 1,912.54, p < .001$ , RMSEA = .11, CFI = .90, TLI = .89, and

the one-factor model,  $\chi^2(594) = 3,137.82, p < .001$ , RMSEA = .20, CFI = .80, TLI = .79. The six-factor model exhibited marginally better fit than the hierarchical model,  $\chi^2(579) = 1,395.73, p < .001$ , RMSEA = .077, CFI = .94, TLI = .93, but included several nonsignificant paths representing interfactor correlations. Given the similar fit between these models, we chose to favor the hierarchical model, because its representation of the lower order factors is more parsimonious and its representation of anxiety and avoidance as two higher order factors is more consistent with attachment theory.

**Evidence of construct validity.** Provided in Table 1 are the means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix of the individual difference variables that were correlated with the ERS dimensions to assess construct validity.

Table 1  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study 1

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. ERS, anxiety	3.15	1.04	(.91)								
2. ERS, avoidance	3.39	0.88	.16*	(.90)							
3. Positive affectivity	3.48	0.65	-.02	-.15	(.88)						
4. Negative affectivity	1.74	0.50	.33***	.18*	.03	(.82)					
5. Extraversion	3.42	0.79	.08	-.32***	.20*	-.12	(.86)				
6. Agreeableness	4.07	0.61	-.06	-.20*	.10	-.11	.20*	(.87)			
7. Conscientiousness	3.74	0.70	-.12	-.08	.24**	-.14	.06	.34***	(.81)		
8. Emotional Stability	3.30	0.84	-.47***	-.24**	.10	-.50***	.05	.22*	.24**	(.82)	
9. Openness	3.85	0.53	-.08	.03	.02	-.09	.18*	.29**	.13	.14	(.70)

Note. Pairwise deletion used for missing data ( $N = 153-158$ ). Parenthetical values are alphas (reliability coefficients). ERS = Experience of Relationships Scale.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

As expected, in Study 1 attachment anxiety and avoidance exhibited significant positive association with trait negative affectivity ( $r = .33, p < .01$  and  $r = .18, p < .05$ , respectively). Although we expected opposite sign relations to emerge with trait positive affectivity, neither avoidance ( $r = -.15, p > .05$ ) nor anxiety ( $r = -.02, p > .05$ ) emerged as a significant correlate. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 received partial support. These correlations suggest that individual differences in attachment anxiety and avoidance share variance with trait negative affectivity but are distinct constructs.

Construct validity of the ERS was also assessed by examining the relations between the ERS dimensions and the Big Five personality factors. As hypothesized, anxiety and avoidance were negatively related to Emotional Stability (Hypothesis 2a and 2b), with anxiety exhibiting a stronger correlation ( $r = -.47, p < .01$ ) than avoidance ( $r = -.24, p < .05$ ), based on Williams' (1959) formula for comparing nonindependent correlations,  $t(152) = -2.46, p < .01$ . In addition, the avoidance subscale had significant negative relations with Extraversion ( $r = -.32, p < .01$ ;  $H3a$ ) and Agreeableness ( $r = -.20, p < .05$ ;  $H3b$ ).<sup>2</sup>

## Study 2

We conducted a second study to test a series of theory-driven hypotheses regarding relations among the dimensions of attachment and work-related behaviors including surface acting, support seeking, CWB, OCB, and turnover intentions.

## Method

**Participants.** Study 2 participants were recruited through the StudyResponse project (Stanton & Weiss, 2002), a nonprofit service that facilitates online research by enlisting panelists to participate in studies. For this study, the panelists were asked to participate if they were currently employed and their supervisor would be willing to enroll in StudyResponse and participate in the survey. We received complete data from a total of 146 matched dyads.

Participants' average age was 37.5 years old (range = 21 to 65 years), and the gender distribution was 50.3% men and 49.7% women. Of participants, 12% had a high school education, 16% were attending college or university, 43% had graduated from college or undergraduate university programs, and 27% had graduate degrees or were attending graduate school (2 participants did not answer the question). Participants were all employed and worked an average of 41 hr per week, with 80% working more than 35 hr per week. The sample included individuals from various sectors, including manufacturing (28.1%), technology (9.8%), banking (8.5%), retail (8.5%), health care (7.8%), government and public service (5.9%), construction (5.2%), travel and transportation (4.6%), education (4.6%), and hospitality and food services (3.3%).

### Measures.

**Attachment.** The measure was the same as that used in Study 1.

**Affectivity.** The measure was the same as that used in Study 1.

**Big Five personality traits.** In Study 2, we used a 20-item Mini-IPIP scale (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006), which exhibits similar validity and slightly lower internal consistency than the longer version of the IPIP (Donnellan et al., 2006).

**Organizational commitment.** Meyer, Allen, and Smith's (1993) six-item scale was used to assess affective organizational commitment. This was included as a control variable to emphasize the distinction between attachment as an individual trait and affective commitment, which may be seen as reflecting an individual's attachment to the organization. A sample item is "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization." Responses were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

**Surface acting.** Surface acting (suppression) was measured with a four-item scale (Gross & John, 2003; e.g., "I control my emotions by not expressing them"). Responses were provided on a 7-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

**Support seeking.** Support seeking was measured with items reflecting the instrumental and emotional support-seeking dimensions of the COPE scale (Carver et al., 1989). The instructions ask participants to "consider the following items and indicate what you usually do when under a lot of stress at work." In addition to the COPE items, an additional item ("I try to get emotional support from a coworker") was added to the emotional support-seeking scale, resulting in a total of five items assessing emotional support seeking and four items assessing instrumental support seeking. Responses were provided on a 7-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

**CWB.** CWB was measured with 10 items from Bennett and Robinson's (2000) measure, which includes five items for CWB-I (e.g., "made fun of someone at work") and five items for CWB-O ("came in late to work without permission"). Supervisors were asked to identify the number of times (ranging from *never* to *daily*) the participant engaged in each behavior in the past year. The scale consisted of the items that had the highest factor loadings on each of the interpersonal and organizational CWB dimensions in Bennett and Robinson's original article.

**OCB.** OCB was measured by supervisory ratings of 15 items drawn from the 24-item Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Three items were selected for each OCB dimension (altruism, civic virtue, conscientiousness, courtesy, and sportsmanship) based on the magnitudes of their factor loadings in the Podsakoff et al. (1990) study. Sample items include "Always finds fault with what the organization is doing," "Attends meetings that are not mandatory, but are considered important," and "Takes steps to try to prevent problems with other workers." Responses were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. OCB-I was calculated with the items related to altruism and courtesy, and OCB-O was calculated with the items for civic virtue, conscientiousness, and sportsmanship.

**Turnover intention.** Turnover intention was assessed with three items from Bozeman and Perrewé's (2001) measure. A sample item is "I will probably look for a new job in the future." Responses were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

<sup>2</sup> Additional item-level CFAs were conducted to establish the independence of the dimensions of attachment from related constructs (i.e., negative affectivity, Emotional Stability, emotional support seeking, and surface acting). Results of these analyses indicated that these variables are independent but correlated. Additional details about these analyses are available from the first author upon request.

Table 2  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study 2

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	36.96	9.14	(na)									
2. Gender <sup>a</sup>	0.49	0.50	.06	(na)								
3. Anxiety	3.50	1.25	-.20	-.19	(.95)							
4. Avoidance	3.68	0.87	.10	.05	.27	(.87)						
5. Positive affectivity	3.52	0.84	.11	-.09	-.15	-.29	(.93)					
6. Negative affectivity	1.90	0.84	-.20	-.05	.59	.28	-.18	(.94)				
7. Extraversion	3.18	0.80	-.05	-.06	-.16	-.42	.45	-.19	(.64)			
8. Agreeableness	3.77	0.79	.15	.20	-.24	-.39	.20	-.35	.41	(.70)		
9. Conscientiousness	3.75	0.81	.08	.08	-.33	-.27	.11	-.40	.20	.45	(.69)	
10. Emotional Stability	3.28	0.79	.15	-.07	-.46	-.28	.18	-.42	.28	.22	.22	(.56)
11. Openness	3.71	0.83	.05	.10	-.36	-.19	.08	-.46	.11	.35	.43	.27
12. Organizational commitment	4.63	1.30	.18	-.03	-.35	-.37	.41	-.39	.20	.25	.19	.29
13. Surface acting	4.33	1.15	.01	-.28	.30	.33	.05	.25	-.11	-.24	-.11	-.19
14. Instrumental support seeking	2.79	0.77	-.09	-.06	.18	-.32	.45	.05	.35	.22	.05	.04
15. Emotional support seeking	2.61	0.77	-.18	-.10	.30	-.43	.41	.18	.42	.24	.04	-.09
16. Turnover intention	3.44	1.44	-.21	-.01	.39	.27	-.27	.42	-.17	-.25	-.13	-.16
17. CWB <sup>b</sup>	2.05	1.42	-.25	-.22	.33	.09	-.08	.57	-.06	-.28	-.19	-.17
18. OCB-I <sup>b</sup>	5.75	0.98	.15	.16	-.30	-.13	.28	-.39	.16	.36	.24	.21
19. OCB-O <sup>b</sup>	5.33	0.94	.29	.19	-.46	-.16	.20	-.49	.16	.35	.29	.27
20. Preoccupation <sup>c</sup>	3.61	1.35	-.13	-.06	.81	.29	-.11	-.47	-.15	-.16	-.18	-.31
21. Fear of rejection <sup>c</sup>	3.19	1.42	-.20	-.27	.86	.17	-.03	.54	-.06	-.30	-.38	-.36
22. Jealousy <sup>c</sup>	3.60	1.41	-.23	-.18	.88	.11	-.09	.58	-.08	-.19	-.29	-.45
23. Avoidance of intimacy <sup>d</sup>	3.84	0.99	.17	.17	-.07	.75	-.31	.06	-.34	-.28	-.10	-.06
24. Discomfort with closeness <sup>d</sup>	3.45	1.27	-.09	-.09	.61	.72	-.20	.51	-.28	-.38	-.37	-.40
25. Self-reliance <sup>d</sup>	3.81	1.06	.10	.11	-.21	.66	-.16	-.07	-.26	-.26	.01	.01

Note. Pairwise deletion used for missing data ( $N = 147-152$ ). Parenthetical values are alphas (reliability coefficients). na = not available; CWB = counterproductive work behaviors; OCB-I = organizational citizenship behaviors directed at individuals; OCB-O = organizational citizenship behaviors directed at the organization.

<sup>a</sup> For gender, male = 0; female = 1. <sup>b</sup> Supervisor rated. <sup>c</sup> Attachment anxiety first-order factor. <sup>d</sup> Attachment avoidance first-order factor.

.16 ≤  $r$  ≤ .21 =  $p$  < .05. .22 ≤  $r$  ≤ .26 =  $p$  < .01.  $r$  ≥ .27 =  $p$  < .001.

## Results

In Study 2 we sought to assess the relations between the attachment dimensions and surface acting, emotional and instrumental support seeking, CWB, OCB, and turnover intention. Means, standard deviations, and correlations are provided in Table 2. In addition to examining the zero-order correlations, we provided a more conservative test of the hypothesized relations by using hierarchical regressions in which we controlled for age, gender, affectivity, the Big Five, and organizational commitment (in Step 1)<sup>3</sup> and the attachment dimension that was not the subject of the hypothesis (in Step 2). The focal dimension was included in Step 3. To provide a more complete picture of the relative importance of the attachment dimensions vis-à-vis the other predictors in explaining the behavioral criteria, we also used relative weights analysis (Johnson, 2000). This is a procedure that accounts for intercorrelation among predictors by using orthogonally transformed variables that are maximally related to the original predictors to predict the criteria. This allows for more accurate determination of the variance explained by each predictor (Johnson & LeBreton, 2004).

The results of the hierarchical regression analyses involving attachment anxiety and avoidance are provided in Table 3, and a summary of the relative weights analyses is provided in Table 4. In support of Hypothesis 4, after controlling for age, gender, the Big Five and affectivity, organizational commitment, and attachment anxiety ( $\beta = .11, p > .05$ ), attachment avoidance significantly

predicted surface acting ( $\beta = .29, \Delta R^2 = .05$ ),  $F(1, 134) = 9.65, p < .01$ . Relative weights analysis showed that avoidance was the strongest predictor in the model, with  $R^2 = .07$ , accounting for 25.4% of the total variance explained.

Attachment anxiety uniquely predicted instrumental support seeking ( $\beta = .39, \Delta R^2 = .08$ ),  $F(1, 134) = 16.93, p < .001$ , and emotional support seeking ( $\beta = .39, \Delta R^2 = .08$ ),  $F(1, 134) = 24.51, p < .001$ , beyond the control variables. Relative weights analysis showed that attachment anxiety explained  $R^2 = .06$  and .09 for instrumental and emotional support seeking, respectively. Therefore, Hypotheses 5a and b were supported.

Avoidance predicted instrumental support seeking ( $\beta = -.24, \Delta R^2 = .04$ ),  $F(1, 134) = 8.08, p < .001$ , beyond the control variables. Relative weights analysis showed that avoidance accounted for 14.9% of the total variance explained ( $R^2 = .05$ ). The results of these analyses support Hypothesis 5c. Attachment avoidance also uniquely predicted emotional support seeking ( $\beta = -.38, \Delta R^2 = .09$ ),  $F(1, 134) = 28.21, p < .001$ , with relative weights analysis showing that it was the strongest predictor, accounting for 23.1% of the total variance explained ( $R^2 = .13$ ). These findings support Hypothesis 5d.

<sup>3</sup> We considered education level for inclusion in Step 1; however, it did not exhibit any significant zero-order correlations with the criterion variables.



11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
(.64)														
.16	(.87)													
-.19	-.19	(.78)												
.01	.17	.15	(.89)											
-.08	.11	.06	.69	(.86)										
-.11	-.66	.29	.12	.11	(.70)									
-.35	-.21	.15	.10	.18	.27	(.95)								
.28	.31	-.00	.09	.00	-.36	-.35	(.95)							
.32	.34	-.11	.02	-.18	-.36	-.55	.72	(.79)						
-.22	-.28	.19	.19	.19	.34	.23	-.20	-.29	(.86)					
-.35	-.29	.32	.25	.36	.34	.39	-.33	-.48	.63	(.82)				
-.29	-.33	.24	.23	.40	.37	.30	-.27	-.44	.74	.80	(.76)			
.02	-.31	.15	-.38	-.55	.20	-.06	-.08	.03	.16	-.13	-.11	(.76)		
-.33	-.33	.39	-.02	.01	.30	.27	-.20	-.34	.56	.57	.55	.33	(.89)	
.13	-.16	.09	-.40	-.56	.04	-.09	-.02	.04	-.02	-.21	-.26	.69	.17	(.74)

Although attachment anxiety was significantly correlated with CWB ( $r = .33, p < .001$ ), it did not uniquely predict CWB when the control variables were included in the analysis. The association between attachment avoidance and CWB ( $r = .09$ ) was not significant. Taken together, these results do not support Hypothesis 6.

We also tested whether the dimensions of attachment were negatively related to OCB-O. The result of the regression analysis (see Table 3) indicates that attachment anxiety explained additional variance in OCB-O ( $\beta = -.19, \Delta R^2 = .02$ ),  $F(1, 134) = 3.84, p = .05$ , after controlling for age and gender, personality, organizational commitment, and attachment avoidance. Relative weights analysis revealed that anxiety explained 6.9% of the variance in OCB-O (18.5% of the total variance explained), making it the second strongest predictor in the model, next to negative affectivity. Although there was a negative correlation between avoidance and OCB-O ( $r = -.16, p < .05$ ), this effect was no longer significant when the control variables were included in the analysis ( $\beta = .08, p > .05$ ). In addition, anxiety was related to OCB-I ( $r = -.30, p < .001$ ), but avoidance was not ( $r = -.13, p > .05$ ), and neither was significant when the control variables were included in the analysis. These results provide support for Hypothesis 7a but not for Hypotheses 7b, 7c, or 7d.

As shown in Table 3, anxiety predicted turnover intentions ( $\beta = .20, \Delta R^2 = .02$ ),  $F(1, 134) = 5.46, p < .05$ , after controlling for age, gender, personality, organizational commitment, and attachment avoidance. Relative weights analysis showed that anxiety explained 6% of the variance in turnover intentions (11.8% of the

total variance explained). These findings support Hypothesis 8a. Although avoidance was significantly related to turnover intention ( $r = .27, p < .001$ ), the association was not significant when the controls were included. Therefore, Hypothesis 8b was not supported.

## Discussion

There were three interrelated objectives in this paper: to provide an overview of attachment theory and its potential for explaining individual behavior in organizations; to validate a context-independent measure of attachment; and to investigate whether attachment explains relevant work-related criteria beyond what is explained by demographic variables and other established personality traits, such as affectivity and the Big Five.

Consistent with our hypotheses derived from attachment theory, the factor structure and psychometric properties of the ERS and its relations with other individual difference variables demonstrated the validity of our adapted measure. These results also reinforce the idea that attachment patterns are applicable not only to caregiving and romantic relationships but also to relationships in other social contexts, such as work organizations. Taken together, the validity evidence for the ERS extends the latest developments in the measurement of attachment into nonromantic contexts such as work organizations, where previous research was limited by the use of categorical rather than dimensional measures of attachment.

Table 3  
Results From Hierarchical Regression Analysis Study 2

Predictor	Variables predicted by avoidance			Variables predicted by anxiety			
	Surface acting	Instrumental support seeking	Emotional support seeking	Instrumental support seeking	Emotional support seeking	OCB-O	Turnover intentions
<b>Step 1</b>							
Age	-.09	-.14	-.20*	-.14	-.20*	.17*	-.12
Gender	-.25**	.04	-.10	-.04	-.10	.14	-.01
Positive affectivity	.17	.39***	.34***	.39***	.34***	.05	.03
Negative affectivity	.12	.15	.28***	.14	.28***	-.30***	.28***
Extraversion	-.06	.15*	.26**	.15	.26**	.00	.05
Agreeableness	-.14	.15	.22**	.15	.22**	.10	-.07
Conscientiousness	.08	-.02	.04	-.02	.04	.03	-.07
Emotional Stability	-.12	.03	-.12	-.03	-.12	.03	.14
Openness	-.05	-.02	-.08	-.02	-.08	.08	.08
Organizational commitment	-.16	.06	.05	.06	.04	.12	-.58***
R <sup>2</sup> for Step 1	.20***	.29***	.43***	.29***	.43***	.35***	.51***
<b>Step 2</b>							
Age	.10	-.12	-.18**	-.10	-.13	.15*	-.12
Gender	-.22**	.03	.03	-.03	-.07	.14	-.01
Positive affectivity	.17	.37***	.32***	.37***	.31***	.06	-.03
Negative affectivity	.05	.00	.15	.16	.30***	-.31***	.28***
Extraversion	-.05	.16	.28***	.11	.20*	.01	.04
Agreeableness	-.15	.12	.19*	.11	.16*	.11	-.07
Conscientiousness	.10	-.00	.06	-.04	.01	.03	.08
Emotional Stability	-.08	.06	.04	-.05	-.15*	.03	.14
Openness	-.04	.00	-.06	-.02	-.07	.07	.08
Organizational commitment	-.13	.11	.04	.02	-.03	.14	-.58***
Attachment anxiety	.16	.35***	.33***				
Attachment avoidance				-.19*	-.33***	.05	.02
ΔR <sup>2</sup> for Step 2	.01	.06***	.06***	.02*	.08***	.00	.00
<b>Step 3</b>							
Age	-.03	-.07	-.10	-.07	-.10	-.14	-.10
Gender	-.25**	.06	.01	.06	.01	.10	.04
Positive affectivity	.20*	.35***	.28***	.35***	.28***	.08	.02
Negative affectivity	.05	.00	.15	.00	.15	-.23**	.20*
Extraversion	.00	.12	.20**	.12	.20**	.01	.04
Agreeableness	-.09	.07	.11	.06	.11	.14	-.09
Conscientiousness	.12	-.01	.04	-.01	.04	.02	.09
Emotional Stability	.06	.04	-.07	.04	-.07	.01	.18
Openness	-.06	.01	-.05	.01	-.05	.06	.09
Organizational commitment	-.08	.06	.02	.06	.02	.12	-.56***
Attachment anxiety	.11	.39***	.39***	.39***	.39***	-.19*	.20*
Attachment avoidance	.29**	-.24***	-.38***	-.24**	-.38***	.08	.00
ΔR <sup>2</sup> for Step 3	.05***	.04**	.09***	.08**	.08***	.02*	.02*

Note. All values are betas unless otherwise indicated. OCB-O = organizational citizenship behaviors directed at the organization.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

The two dimensions of attachment were more highly correlated in our research ( $r = .16$  and  $.27$  in Studies 1 and 2, respectively) than in the Brennan et al. (1998) study ( $r = .11$ ) in which the original measure was developed. Our results were similar to what Davidovitz et al. (2007) observed in their study of 545 military members ( $r = .23$ ). These differences may be related to sampling, but they also raise the question of whether contextual or relationship-specific factors influence attachment patterns.

In addition to the evidence for the validity of our attachment measure, the most significant theoretical contributions of this study relate to the evidence we found that attachment anxiety and avoidance explain variance in individual behaviors at work after controlling for a variety of individual difference variables and organizational commitment. Attachment anxiety was uniquely associated with fewer citizenship behaviors directed at the orga-

nization, higher levels of both instrumental and emotional support seeking, and increased intentions to quit. Attachment avoidance was associated with lower levels of instrumental and emotional support seeking and greater use of surface acting as a means of regulating emotional displays. These results extend attachment theory by showing that the two dimensions of attachment are unique individual difference attributes that have the potential to enhance our understanding of individual behavior at work, particularly behaviors that reflect how workers regulate their emotions (e.g., surface acting, support seeking) or behaviors that are influenced by worker emotion (e.g., OCB, turnover intentions).

Attachment theory centers on explaining how individuals marshal internal and social resources to respond to the demands and adversity they experience. Because work and work contexts place a wide range of demands on workers including performance ex-

Table 4  
 Summary of Raw Relative Weights and Relative Weights as a Percentage of  $R^2$  Based on Regression Analyses

Variable	Raw relative weights ( $R^2$ )							Relative weights as % of $R^2$						
	SA	ISS	ESS	CWB	OCB-I	OCB-O	TI	SA	ISS	ESS	CWB	OCB-I	OCB-O	TI
Age	.00	.01	.02	.03	.00	.04	.02	1.0	1.7	3.3	8.0	1.7	10.9	3.5
Gender	.07	.00	.00	.03	.02	.02	.00	25.2	0.4	0.8	7.9	6.0	5.4	0.2
Extraversion	.00	.05	.09	.00	.01	.00	.01	2.0	14.1	15.9	0.4	2.1	1.4	1.2
Agreeableness	.02	.02	.03	.02	.05	.04	.02	7.1	6.4	6.4	6.1	19.5	10.0	3.5
Conscientiousness	.00	.00	.01	.01	.01	.02	.00	1.1	0.8	1.1	2.1	4.3	4.8	0.8
Emotional Stability	.01	.00	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01	4.8	1.3	3.0	2.0	3.1	3.9	1.7
Openness	.01	.00	.01	.05	.02	.03	.00	3.4	0.6	1.3	12.5	8.1	7.7	0.9
Negative affectivity	.02	.01	.04	.20	.05	.08	.06	6.6	2.9	6.5	48.9	19.3	22.9	12.9
Positive affectivity	.02	.13	.11	.00	.04	.01	.02	6.7	37.2	19.6	0.3	14.5	3.3	4.5
Commitment	.01	.02	.01	.01	.04	.04	.28	5.6	4.5	2.5	3.1	12.5	10.2	55.0
Anxiety	.03	.06	.09	.03	.02	.07	.06	11.2	15.2	16.5	7.8	7.4	18.5	11.8
Avoidance	.07	.05	.13	.00	.00	.00	.02	25.4	14.9	23.1	0.8	1.6	1.2	4.1
Total $R^2$	.27	.36	.55	.41	.28	.37	.51							

Note. SA = surface acting; ISS = instrumental support seeking; ESS = emotional support seeking; CWB = counterproductive work behaviors; OCB-I = organizational citizenship behavior directed at individuals; OCB-O = organizational citizenship behaviors directed at the organization; TI = turnover intentions.

Expectations, interpersonal stressors, role stressors, politics, and work/nonwork conflict (for a review, see Barling, Kelloway, & Frone, 2005), attachment theory is relevant for understanding how people behave at work. Although we do not explicitly measure workplace stress in this study, our results show that attachment avoidance relates to behaviors that reflect how people cope with stressors and regulate emotions (i.e., higher surface acting and lower support seeking) and attachment anxiety relates to higher support seeking and also to variables that reflect "strains," such as intentions to quit one's job (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007) and reduced citizenship behavior (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003). This also suggests the need for future research to more explicitly investigate how attachment and exposure to various work-related stressors jointly influence emotional, attitudinal, behavioral, and health-related reactions to these stressors.

Although the zero-order correlation between attachment anxiety and CWB was significant, the regression results (controlling for demographic variables, personality, and affective commitment) were not. We found that negative affectivity accounted for a large percentage of variance in CWB, thereby reducing the incremental contribution of attachment. It is likely that this measure of negative affectivity contains both trait and state affect. Future research should try to disentangle these in order to explore whether state affect (discrete emotions) may mediate relations between attachment anxiety and CWB.

Taken together, our results are generally consistent with attachment theory in that avoidant individuals tend to be self-reliant and to disengage from affiliation with others by suppressing negative emotions and not seeking support to deal with work difficulties, whereas anxious individuals tend to display dysfunctional interaction patterns by being less likely to display prosocial behavior and more likely to think about quitting their job. The unique relations between the dimensions of attachment and the criterion variables found in this study demonstrate that the hyperactivation of the attachment system that characterizes anxiety and the deactivation of the attachment system that characterizes avoidance have unique influences on individual behavior at work.

One finding that was not consistent with previous research on attachment in close relationships was that attachment anxiety was positively related to support seeking at work. A negative association has previously been observed in research on attachment in close interpersonal relationships (e.g., Florian et al., 1995), where fear of rejection has been suggested as the reason that anxious individuals tend not to seek support. The positive association we observed suggests that the relationship context may influence the working models and behavioral manifestations of attachment. In particular, the perceived risk and fear of being rejected for seeking support from one's supervisor or peers for work-related challenges would likely be low. As a result, anxiously attached individuals are more likely to seek support at work than in romantic and family contexts.

## Practical Implications

Two potential practical implications arise from this research. First, whereas it is often assumed that anyone experiencing adversity would desire and benefit from support, our results suggest that this is not true. That attachment anxiety was positively correlated and avoidance was negatively correlated with support seeking highlights the possibility that support may be desirable and helpful for some but not others. Thus, organizations must be aware that not all individuals will actively seek support, and for some individuals (who are high in avoidance), social support interventions may actually be counterproductive. Providing multiple types of support (e.g., informational, instrumental, emotional) and ensuring that accessing them is voluntary may help to prevent unintended negative consequences.

Second, that anxiously attached individuals tend to engage in fewer functional behaviors directed at the organization (OCB-O) suggests that their preoccupation with unmet needs for affiliation and support may interfere with their ability to function optimally at work. To the extent that organizations can implement practices that encourage positive relationships between organization members, it

may contribute to the meeting of affiliative needs and increase the work effectiveness of anxiously attached individuals.

### Recommendations for Future Research

As it has been established that attachment is associated with individual work behaviors, future research is needed to investigate mediators and moderators of the relations between attachment and work behaviors. State emotions and responses to work events may help to explain the association between attachment and behaviors. Experience sampling methodologies may be beneficial in tracking how attachment influences such proximal responses. In addition, research could explore contextual features of the work environment (e.g., work interdependence; time spent interacting with others) that may moderate the effects of attachment on performance and other behaviors.

We also suggest that future research be conducted to validate a shorter version of the ERS. Although it demonstrates favorable psychometric properties, the length of the instrument (36 items) may be a barrier to its wider use. Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, and Vogel (2007) validated a 12-item version of the ECR in which the referent is a romantic partner. However, the best subset of items for a general measure of attachment may not be the same subset of items used for measuring romantic attachment. Therefore, we suggest that a similar validation process be undertaken to develop a shorter version of the ERS.

### Limitations

Where appropriate, we used collateral (i.e., supervisor) reports of the dependent variables in our research (i.e., CWB, OCB). For some variables, however, self-reports were deemed most appropriate, although such measures introduce concerns that relations may be inflated by mono-source bias. We sought to reduce such concerns by collecting data anonymously and using varied response options to create psychological separation between the variables in the study (as suggested by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). We also controlled for numerous variables, the effect of which would be to undermine incremental prediction if relationships were inflated by method variance. That many of the predictor–criterion relationships held after including these control variables mitigates concerns with mono-source bias, but such concerns cannot be entirely negated.

In both studies, the relations between attachment and organizational criteria were based on relatively small samples of workers ( $N = 158$  and  $N = 146$ , respectively). Although there was sufficient power to detect meaningful relations, there remains a need to replicate these results with larger and more demographically and occupationally diverse samples of workers.

Finally, for some variables (e.g., Big Five, organizational commitment, OCB, CWB) we used shortened versions of scales due to concerns about survey length, participant fatigue, and the potential for nonresponse. Where possible, we used scales that had been used in previous research. Nevertheless, the use of shortened scales is not ideal, as the trade-offs of doing so may include reduced reliability and validity.

### Conclusion

The results of this research demonstrate that attachment theory has the potential to enhance our understanding of individual be-

havior in organizational settings, where interpersonal relationships and interactions are essential to individual functioning. In particular, the results suggest that attachment anxiety and avoidance each uniquely predict behaviors that involve how individuals regulate their emotions at work (e.g., support seeking, surface acting) and behaviors that reflect ineffectively regulated emotions (e.g., intentions to quit; reduced OCB). In summary, this research illustrates the potential applicability of attachment in the workplace and highlights the need for further research to understand the specific processes that explain and influence how attachment influences people's behavior at work.

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### Correction to Halbesleben (2006)

In the article "Sources of Social Support and Burnout: A Meta-Analytic Test of the Conservation of Resources Model" by Jonathon R. B. Halbesleben (*Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2006, Vol. 91, No. 5, pp. 1134–1145), there were errors in transcribing the  $\rho$  values from Table 2 to the results section. In the second paragraph of page 1138, the second and third sentences should read "In the present study, work-related support was more strongly related to exhaustion ( $\rho = -.26$ ) than depersonalization ( $\rho = -.23$ ) and personal accomplishment ( $\rho = .24$ ;  $F(2, 111) = 24.13, p > .01$ ). On the other hand, non-work support was more strongly related to depersonalization ( $\rho = -.16$ ) and personal accomplishment ( $\rho = .19$ ) than exhaustion ( $\rho = -.12$ ;  $F(2, 38) = 3.83, p > .05$ )." The values in Table 2 are correct and the substantive conclusions have not changed.

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