ABSTRACT

Divine Attachment Styles and
Affective Organizational Commitment

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This study is the first to link the literatures of divine attachment and affective

organizational commitment (AC). Existing research overlooks divine attachment as a

"personal characteristic" relevant to affective commitment, and I argue that secure

attachment to God as an internal working model can function as a powerful "secure base"

from which to engage in positive workplace commitment behaviors. The Baylor Religion

Survey 2010 contains verified scales of divine attachment and affective commitment,

offering a unique opportunity to explore this association of divine attachment styles and

AC in a national random sample. Findings demonstrate significant associations between

AC and two attachment styles. Secure attachment to God is positively associated to AC,

while avoidant attachment to God is negatively associated. A relationship between

anxious God attachment and AC is not supported.

Divine Attachment Styles and
Affective Organizational Commitment

by

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Work is a primary expression of human creativity and character that grounds people with a sense of purpose and meaning, particularly when work and personal values align (Meyer and Allen 1991; Dawson 2005). Of the many workplace outcomes available for scholars to study, affective commitment (AC), a measure of emotional commitment to the workplace, has received a great deal of attention. Numerous studies have shown that variables such as personal values, job challenge, role clarity, goal clarity, and peer cohesion, among others, are associated with AC (Allen and Meyer 1990; Finegan 2000; Avolio et al. 2004; Duffy, Dik and Steger 2011). It should therefore be expected that characteristics or experiences which contribute to a more productive and committed employee would be of great interest to both scholars and practitioners alike. Indeed, scholars have devoted substantial efforts at making these relationships clear (Rhoades, Eisenberger and Armeli 2001; Verquer, Beehr and Wagner 2003; Duffy et al. 2011; Stazyk, Pandey and Wright 2011).

Research on affective commitment in recent decades has been remarkably productive; however, the role of religion or religious attachments in shaping AC has received little attention in this literature (Tracey 2012). This is surprising, given both that the interplay between religion and work has been at the heart of the sociological tradition from its earliest days (Weber 1905/2001) and that religion remains a highly salient source of motivation and direction for the majority of Americans (Froese and Bader 2007). There are a number of challenges inherent to researching religious/work interactions, and

many scholars feel a sort of fatigue about religion in general, but some recent studies of workplace spirituality keenly hint at some very interesting possibilities (Ashmos and Duchon 2000; Mitroff 2003; Duchon and Plowman 2005; Fry, Vitucci and Cedillo 2005; Rego and Cunha 2008). Not only have these scholars shown that organizations hospitable to spiritual practice tend to have positive work outcomes, but others have drawn explicit links between religion and organizational commitment. Among these findings are positive associations between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment (Rego and Cunha 2008), the Faith at Work scale and organizational commitment (Walker 2013), congregational beliefs on work attitudes and workplace-bridging religious capital (Park et al. 2014), and vocational calling and affective commitment (Neubert and Halbesleben forthcoming).

A second arena of scholarship related to work that has received little attention is attachment theory. After a clarion call from the seminal work of Hazan and Shaver (1990), which showed a correspondence of attachment styles between romantic partners and their work environments, only one study has looked at attachment and organizational commitment (Schusterschitz et al. 2011). Under Allen and Meyer's (1990) conceptualization of organizational commitment, attachment style could very well be considered a "personal characteristic," a concept they define as a salient personal feature which relates to commitment, performance and satisfaction in the workplace (Johnson and Chang 2006).

By using attachment to God as a predictor of affective commitment, this study integrates research on religion and attachment with the organizational commitment literature while at the same time filling a gap in the attachment literature. God attachment

has already been utilized to affirm salubrious relationships in both physical and mental health outcomes (Bradshaw, Ellison and Marcum 2010; Ellison et al. 2012), and here I offer evidence that attachment to God is associated with *organizational* outcomes. A growing body of literature suggests differences in attachment to God are associated not simply with spiritual matters but with attachments in the secular domain as well, of which the workplace is a prime context (see Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2013). This study is the first to apply God attachment to the workplace, and the findings reported here could have important implications for workplace management and future research in this area.

To address these issues, I begin by reviewing background literature on affective commitment, attachment theory, and attachment to God with an emphasis on making points of connection across these literatures. I then test two hypotheses using Wave 3 of the Baylor Religion Survey (BRS3), a 2010 nationwide probability sample of US adults. I conclude by discussing my findings in the context of God attachment and workplace outcomes, identifying areas for further investigation in these important fields.

CHAPTER TWO

Divine Attachments and Organizational Commitment

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is a measure of the emotional bond formed between a

person and an organization (Allen and Meyer 1990; Klein, Molloy and Cooper 2009). AC

itself is embedded in a large literature of organizational commitment which has emerged

from Allen and Meyer's (1990) landmark measure of organizational commitment.

Affective commitment measures the degree to which employees stay in their jobs because

want to, not because they need to or ought to. It is this "want to" that gathers our

attention. Affectively committed individuals stay in an organization because they feel as

if their workplace is their family. They form strong emotional bonds with their co-

workers, they feel respected and included, and the organization itself is felt to be

"someone" to whom they are connected (Rhoades et al. 2001).

Research has revealed a great deal about employees' AC, suggesting that it may

be influenced by such variables as perceived organizational support, organizational

rewards, procedural justice, and supervisor support (Eisenberger, Fasolo and Davis-

LaMastro 1990; Wayne, Shore and Liden 1997; Rhoades et al. 2001; Rhoades and

Eisenberger 2002). Affective commitment has also been linked to lower absenteeism and

conflict, lower turnover rates, and higher performance and productivity (Mowday, Steers

and Porter 1979; Balu 1986; Pierce and Dunham 1987; Mathieu and Zajac 1990; Bartlett

2001; Watson and Papamarcos 2002).

Both the work experiences and the personal characteristics of employees have been evaluated in past research, but the lion's share has been devoted to how work experiences from current and previous jobs relate to affective commitment. This has been because many researchers have concluded that personal characteristics such as age, race/ethnicity, and sex just are not highly associated with affective commitment (e.g. Mottaz 1987). Consistent with this view, Meyer et al. (2002) have suggested that from a management perspective, even though differences in individual predisposition towards affective commitment might factor into to the recruiting process, it is more effective to manage employees' work experiences after hire. In other words, work experiences trump personal characteristics.

Several scholars, however, have suggested that individual differences *should* be taken into account and that some personal characteristics do in fact significantly relate to work outcomes (Ingersoll et al. 2002; Johnson and Chang 2006). In the first and only study of attachment style based on the Allen/Meyer commitment scales, Schusterschitz et al. (2011) argue that attachment should be considered a relevant personal characteristic. Indeed, their results show significant associations between commitment and attachment; in doing so they break ground for the continued study of attachment style and organizational commitment. It should be noted that even though Allen and Meyer (1990) initially found little to connect personal characteristics and organizational commitment, they did anticipate the possibility for this kind of innovation when they wrote: "In the future it may be possible to identify 'commitment profiles' that differentiate employees who are likely to remain with the organization" (15). Attachment style may be just the kind of relevant characteristic useful for developing this type of profile.

Attachment Theory

Since Bowlby's (1969, 1973, 1980) breakthrough work on evolutionary

attachment mechanisms, the theory has been tremendously useful in predicting how

childhood attachments might influence the nature and substance of bonds formed later in

life. Typically viewed as an evolutionary-ethological theory, attachment theory stresses

the infant survival function of establishing close proximity to a primary caretaker.

Viewed from a social perspective, Bowlby's theory can be seen as a kind of infant

socialization that translates the infant/caregiver relationship into patterns of expectation

and recognition housed in what Bowlby (1973) called *internal working models* (IWMs).

IWMs are a complex of neurological, biological, emotional, and social events that are

used to form expectations of what an individual may or may not expect from attachment

partners (Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2013).

Children who form *secure* attachments to a protective figure are able to use that

loving attachment to explore their surroundings, knowing there is a safe place to return

to. From this "secure base" or "haven of safety" the young child feels confident to

explore and experiment (Ainsworth 1978). Children without secure, consistent caregiving

develop *avoidant* or *anxious* attachment styles. When caregivers are inconsistent with the

support they provide, Bowlby's theory posits that the mutability between available and

preoccupied results in an anxious attachment in which the child does not know what to

expect. Such children desire to attach, and in fact do at times, but they are uncertain of

when it will be possible. Thus they vacillate between proximity seeking and dismissive

behavior. Caregivers who are consistently cold, unreliable, and distant provide no secure

base and so children learn to expect very little from their attachment figure, which results

in avoidant (insecure) attachment. These attachment styles take the form of internal working models that set expectations and boundaries of what is relationally possible.

Researchers and practitioners have been able to utilize the attachment principle in an array of theoretically and practically useful insights. The attachment paradigm has shed light on relationship dynamics across a wide spectrum that has included, among others, children and their caregivers (Ainsworth 1978), adult romantic partnerships (Hazan and Shaver 1987; Kirkpatrick and Davis 1994; Mikulincer and Shaver 2007), attachment experiences in love and work (Hazan and Shaver 1990; Hardy and Barkham 1994), and symbolic relational bonds between people and God (Kirkpatrick 1995, 2002). This last relationship—between religious believers and God—is a particular sub-field of attachment theory with a burgeoning research agenda that I expand here.

Divine Attachment

Scientists studying how people conceive of their relationship with God have revealed insights showing the relevance of attachment to God for a variety of psychosocial applications. Salutary associations with secure attachment to God have been shown vis-à-vis life satisfaction, psychological distress, depression and psychological well-being, and on the opposite coin, positive associations have been reported between anxious attachment to God and distress and neuroticism (Kirkpatrick and Shaver 1992; Kirkpatrick, Shillito and Kellas 1999; Bradshaw et al. 2010; Ellison et al. 2012;). When times of crisis come, believers reach out to God for help and guidance (Ellison and Taylor 1996; Pargament 1997), and like infants with their mothers, believing adults engage in proximity-seeking behaviors with the divine such as prayer and religious ritual, trusting that God is available and dependent to act as a haven of safety and a secure base.

But what does "attachment to God" mean over and against the IWMs formed through parental attachment, and why can God be considered a symbolic object of attachment? Hoff (2005) notes that as children develop the capacity for symbolic thinking they often develop unseen companions. The ability to form companions of this kind means that from an early age children—and then the adults they become—have the ability to incorporate religious and cultural teachings about God into what for many is a very real symbolic relationship. Whereas children are discouraged from continuing to play with imaginary friends as they mature, in particular contexts adults are encouraged to cultivate an ongoing symbolic relationship with God. The Christian faith contains strong parental images of God as Father, and other world religions see God as benevolent towards followers as well as participatory in human affairs. Through prayer, ritual, and other religious practices, people are able to develop a view of God as an ultimate attachment figure (Kirkpatrick 2005).

In Rowatt and Kirkpatrick's (2002) key study evaluating differences between divine attachment and more general adult attachment, they found that divine attachment is not perfectly reflective of general attachment but rather a discrete measure. Attachment theory suggests that internal working models should be relatively stable and shared among a variety of attachment domains (i.e. parental, romantic, divine, work), yet Rowatt and Kirkpatrick argue attachment to God should be considered a unique measure and not a proxy for adult attachment. They report partial correlations between adult and divine attachment ranging from .12 to .29, and their study resulted in a new measure of attachment to God that has since become standard within the literature.

Correspondence and Compensation

Why is attachment to God a discrete measure rather than a proxy for adult attachment? This question is addressed in the literature by two key hypotheses which seek to identify the mechanisms linking parental attachment, adult attachment and attachment to God: the *correspondence* and *compensation* hypotheses. The correspondence hypothesis suggests attachment to God will be similar to attachments formed in early life since internal working models are stable throughout the life course; the compensation hypothesis, on the other hand, suggests loving relationships with God are formed as a compensation for non-ideal early childhood attachments. Attachment to God *derives* from early secure attachments in the former, while in the latter attachment to God *compensates* for early insecure attachments. Both have garnered empirical support in the past two decades (Kirkpatrick 1992; Granqvist 1998; Granqvist and Hagekull 1999; Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2013).

These hypotheses, which articulate contrary relationships between early childhood and divine attachment domains, should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. The empirical evidence suggests the correspondence hypothesis is observed when a warm attachment is evidenced in the parent-child relationship. The compensation hypothesis applies more consistently in cases of poor parental attachment. While compensating attachments can and do occur in other attachment domains (such as romantic attachments), scholars have found God can function as an "ideal" attachment compensator (Kirkpatrick 1998). Modifications to IWMs are readily observed in those with insecure childhood attachments when they find a source of security (i.e. perfect

love) in God, illustrated by higher rates of religious conversion among those who experienced parental insensitivity (Kirkpatrick and Shaver 1990; Pirutinsky 2009).

Yet why does attachment to God remain a discrete measure from adult attachment? I theorize that precisely because God is immaterial and subject to ideation, people form images of God to suit their needs, and when circumstances change, images of God can change (Aten et al. 2008). Hence, a symbolic relationship with God is qualitatively different than a "real" relationship with a parent or a romantic partner. Parents and romantic partners must be faced in all of their temporal and material reality, yet God remains immaterial. Painful experiences in human relationships threaten the security of attachment; disappointment with God is harder to pin down. This is not to suggest God does not disappoint people. Whole books have been written on how to deal with disappointment with God. But it is possible that disappointment with God is *different* than disappointment with people. Theology can be adjusted and circumstances and events can be reinterpreted to create ad hoc explanations for disappointment with God; the concrete actions of people may require more straightforward rationalization.

Hypotheses

Attachment to God is a discrete measure of attachment, unique from adult attachment (Rowatt and Kirkpatrick 2002). Furthermore, God has been shown to be an "ultimate" attachment figure (Kirkpatrick 1998). Given these findings, attachment to God serves as a unique and useful independent variable. It makes conceptual sense that how people feel about God—and how they think he feels about them—would affect their attitudes. Because attachment to God is a unique domain for secure attachments to form (as suggested by the compensation hypothesis), I expect it to have distinct relevance for

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other types of emotional attachments, namely emotional attachments formed at work.

With these and prior theoretical positions in mind, then, the following hypotheses can be

tested:

> H_1: Secure attachment to God will be positively associated with AC.[1]

> H_2: Anxious attachment to God will be negatively associated with AC.

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[1] Conversely, avoidant attachment will negatively associate with AC since it forms the opposite end of the security measure.

CHAPTER THREE

The Study Design

Baylor Religion Survey (2010)

The Baylor Religion Survey Wave 3 (BRS3) is a nationwide probability sample of U.S. adults which was completed in 2010 by the Gallup Organization (Bader, Mencken and Froese 2007). This third wave of the BRS contains modules on attachment to God, religion and work that present the opportunity to draw connections between God attachment and affective commitment. Random digit dialing was used to make contact with 7,000 adults who were asked to participate in the survey, of which approximately 2,500 agreed. 1,714 respondents actually returned the survey which resulted in a response rate of 24.49%, a similar response rate in the first two iterations of the BRS. Skip patterns built into the survey instrument reduced the number of relevant respondents for this analysis in two significant ways: first, only respondents indicating they believed in God or a higher power were asked to complete the attachment to God items, and second, only those respondents indicating they were employed full-time, part-time, or worked as a volunteer were asked to complete the AC items. Skip patterns—along with missing values amongst covariates—resulted in the loss of 1033 cases, reducing the sample to 681. PROC MI with MCMC was used in SAS 9.3 to impute missing values for covariates in 203 cases, resulting in a final N of 884. The results reported here are based on five imputed data sets. Missing values were not imputed for the dependent or key independent variables, as this was conceptually undesirable. Regression analyses were applied to all

models with and without imputation, and differences in results were negligible in all cases.

Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

While Allen and Meyer's (1990) three component measure of organizational commitment contains scales for affective, normative and continuance commitment, the BRS3 survey instrument contains only items for AC. AC was first developed as an 8-item scale and later revised into a 6-item scale (Meyer, Allen and Smith 1993). In a meta-analysis of 144 affective commitment studies from 1985-2000, Meyer et al. (2002) report slightly different results between the 8-item and 6-item scales, but differences are minimal and do not affect interpretation. BRS3 includes four of these items, all of which appear on both the 8-item and 6-item scales. This more succinct 4-item scale loads together with a satisfactory $\alpha = .80$. Each item uses a four-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (0) to "strongly agree" (3). They are: (a) "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own," (b) "I do not feel a strong sense of 'belonging' to my organization" (reverse coded), (c) "I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to my organization" (reverse coded), and (d) "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me." The four items were summed after appropriate reverse coding to create the AC measurement utilized in this study.

Independent Variable: Attachment to God

Strategies for measuring attachment have changed over time, with measures and typologies exhibiting a variety of approaches. Early research utilized the theoretical constructs of attachment as "secure," "avoidant," and "anxious-ambivalent" developed by

Ainsworth (1978), which were in turn used by Hazan and Shaver (1987) to develop a single-item categorical description of each attachment style. Respondents simply read three paragraphs and chose which one best described them. This methodology, however, lacked sophistication and was subject to a variety of response biases. Innovations have since been made to improve and normalize both general attachment and God attachment measures. Rowatt and Kirkpatrick (2002) are responsible for this innovation in the study of God attachment, following a growing consensus that self-reported attachment styles align as either an orthogonal measure of security/avoidance or anxiety (Sanford 1997; Fraley, Waller and Brennan 2000). They developed a multi-item scale to tap these two dimensions, resulting in a two-measure system that incorporates three theoretical orientations: "secure/avoidant" and "anxious."

BRS3 includes Rowatt and Kirkpatrick's (2002) nine-item multidimensional measure. Secure/avoidant attachment ($\alpha = .91$) was tapped by summing respondent's agreement to six items with answers ranging from "strongly disagree" (0) to "strongly agree" (3): (a) "I have a warm relationship with God," (b) "God knows when I need support," (c) "I feel that God is generally responsive to me," (d) "God seems impersonal to me" (reverse coded), (e) "God seems to have little or no interest in my personal problems" (reverse coded) and (f) "God seems to have little or no interest in my personal affairs" (reverse coded). Anxious attachment ($\alpha = .79$) is drawn from the sum of three items, also coded 0-3: (a) "God sometimes seems responsive to my needs, but sometimes not," (b) "God's reactions to me seem to be inconsistent" and (c) "God sometimes seems very warm and other times very cold to me." Table 1 summarizes survey items used to construct key index variables.

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Table 1

Items Utilized for Key Index Variables

Index Variables	Survey Items	α
Affective commitment:	-I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own -I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization (R) -I do not feel "emotionally attached" to my organization (R) -This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me	.80
Secure/avoidant: attachment	-I have a warm relationship with God -God knows when I need support -I feel that God is generally responsive to me -God seems impersonal to me (R) -God seems to have little or no interest in my personal problems (R) -God seems to have little or no interest in my personal affairs (R)	.91
Anxious attachment:	-God sometimes seems responsive to my needs, but sometimes not -God's reactions to me seem to be inconsistent -God sometimes seems very warm and other times very cold to me	.79

Note: (R) reverse coded

Religion, Workplace and Other Controls

Analyses control for a number of standard demographic variables as well as work and religion variables that could potentially confound the relationship between divine attachment and AC. Standard control variables included in the analysis are: age (in years); sex (female=1, male=0), race/ethnicity (white=1, all others=0), marital status (1=married, 0=all others), education (1=8th grade or less, 2=9th-12th grade with no diploma, 3=high school graduate, 4=some college, 5=trade/technical/vocational training, 6=college graduate, 7=postgraduate work/degree), and income (1=$10,000 or less, 2=$10,001=$20,000, 3=$20,001=$35,000, 4=$35,001-$50,000, 5=$50,001-$100,000, 6=$100,001-$150,000, 7=$150,001 or more).

Three religious control variables are included to help isolate the effects of attachment to God from other aspects of religious life: religious service attendance, frequency of prayer outside religious services, and biblical literalism. Attendance is a 9

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point scale with response options 0="never," 1="less than once a year," 2="once or twice a year," 3="several times a year," 4="once a month," 5="2-3 times a month," 6="about weekly," 7="weekly," and 8="several times a week." Frequency of prayer is a 6 point scale with response options 0="never," 1="only on certain occasions," 2="once a week or less," 3="a few times a week," 4="once a day," and 5="several times a day." Biblical literalism is a five item measure transformed to a binary variable (literalist=1) that taps conservative religious ideologies. In order to be coded as a literalist, respondents must have chosen "The Bible means exactly what it says. It should be taken literally, word-for-word, on all subjects." Any other response was coded 0.

Two personality variables, anxiety and happiness, were included in order to control for individual personality/disposition and provide separation from the attachment styles. The composite measure of general anxiety controls for a potential relationship between general anxiety and anxious attachment to God, and happiness controls for a general positive outlook that may associate with secure divine attachment. Seven items used for general anxiety ($\alpha = .89$) have responses that range from "never" (0) and "very often" (5). Items read "Over the past month, how often have you": (a) "Become anxious doing things because people were watching," (b) "Thought too much about things that would not bother other people," (c) "Feared that you might do something to embarrass yourself in a social situation," (d) "Endured intense anxiety in social or performance situations," (e) "Felt that people were taking advantage of you," (f) "Worried too much about different things" and (g) "Felt like you were being watch or talked about by others." While happiness is not a true personality trait per se, it was included since no other positive personality measure is available on BRS3. The happiness item reads, "In

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general, how happy are you with your life as a whole these days?" and ranges from "very unhappy" (1) to "very happy" (4).

Two workplace controls are included: hours worked and company size. Ideally these would control for antecedents of AC, however BRS3 does not contain measures of antecedents such as organizational dependability, role clarity, equity, peer cohesion, personal importance, or participation (Allen and Meyer 1990). However, there is a theoretical association between available measures and established antecedents, particularly company size. Smaller companies might be less hierarchical, have easier and more personal access to managers, and promote greater pride and participation than a large company owned and managed from a distance. Smaller companies may also provide greater opportunity for informal and personal relationships which may promote participation and affective bonding. Company size is a 4 item scale with 1=1-49, 2=50-499, 3=500-1,999, and 4=2,000 or more. Hours are reported in actual hours worked the previous week.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Descriptive Statistics

A summary of descriptive statistics for measures used in this study is found in Table 2. The mean score for the dependent variable shows AC has an average of 7.18 out of 12. Secure/avoidant attachment to God has a mean of 13.03 out of 18 while anxious attachment has a mean of 2.98 out of 9, revealing that the respondents in BRS 2010 overall show a relatively high level of attachment to God with relatively low levels of anxiety. This is not unexpected, as the great majority of Americans believe in God and God is almost unanimously portrayed in the gamut of American religion as a being who is worthy of trust. Feelings of insecurity or anxiety may be related to lack of affiliation with a religious community or personal disappointments with God.

The average age of respondents in the survey is 50.63, suggesting a slightly older population. 51% are female, 84% are white, and 69% are married. Respondents attend church on average slightly more than once per month, they pray outside of religious services slightly over once a week, and 18% are biblical literalists. Respondents average between a high school diploma and college degree, and the size of the company for which they work averages over the 500 employee mark. While not a perfect approximation of the US general population, controlling for these variables should serve to prevent bias in regression models.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

Measures	M	SD	Range
Age	50.63	14.09	18-108
Female	.51	.49	0-1
White	.84	.37	0-1
Married	.69	.46	0-1
Education	4.98	1.56	1-7
Income	4.69	1.46	1-7
Religious Attendance	4.06	2.88	0-8
Bible Literalism	.18	.38	0-1
Prayer	3.08	1.76	0-5
Anxious	5.38	4.93	0-28
Happy	3.41	.67	0-4
Company Size	2.17	1.23	1-4
Hours	38.6	15.83	0-99
Affective Commitment	7.18	2.62	0-12
Secure/Avoidant Attachment to God	13.03	4.33	0-18
Anxious Attachment to God	2.98	2.08	0-9
N	884		

Bivariate Correlations

Bivariate correlations between selected variables are reported in Table 3.

Affective commitment is positively correlated with all variables except anxious

attachment, general anxiety, hours worked, and # of workers in firm. As expected, high

correlations exist between secure attachment to God and religious controls, with prayer

correlating at r = .68, church attendance correlating at r = .53 and biblical literalist

correlating at r = .32 (VIF scores in regression analyses suggest that multicollinearity is

not a problem). While these correlations are high, what could be considered surprising is

that they are not higher. Even the most personal and emotional of these variables, prayer,

leaves a gap in correlation between secure attachment to God and frequency of prayer,

lending support to the uniqueness of divine attachment style from childhood attachment

style. Just because a person prays and attends religious services frequently does not mean she feels connected to God. Her religious practice could be rote or ritualistic, or it could be hampered by insecure parental attachments.

Anxious attachers are particularly interesting to note in these simple correlations. The relationships between anxious attachment to God and prayer, literal bible reading, happiness, and religious attendance are all negatively. However, anxious God attachment positively correlates with general anxiety, suggesting that anxious attachment to God may spill over to a person's level of general anxiety or vice versa. How might we expect anxious attachers to relate to AC? Since they, by definition, alternate between attachment and avoidance, they may at times show a positive correlation to AC and at times negative. But clearly the overall pattern is one of avoidance, not security. The presence of uncertainty appears to be associated with a negative direction, suggesting that anxious attachers more often than not are hampered by their anxiety and find it challenging to securely attach.

Table 3
Bivariate Correlations of Selected Variables

Key Measures	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
(1) AC	—								
(2) Secure God	.22	—							
(3) Anxious God	-.13	-.39	—						
(4) Church attendance	.18	.53	-.19	—					
(5) Literalist	.09	.32	-.18	.32	—				
(6) Prayer	.18	.68	-.21	.56	.30	—			
(7) Anxiety	-.16	-.10	.23	-.13	-.01	-.05	—		
(8) Happy	.23	.20	-.24	.19	.10	.15	-.43	—	
(9) Hours worked/wk	-.00	-.13	.04	-.11	-.09	-.15	-.01	-.06	—
(10) Company size	-.22	-.03	.06	-.08	-.10	-.07	-.02	.02	.25

Note: Correlations ≥ .03 are significant at least to the .05 level.

Multivariate Analyses

Six models are reported in Table 4 from OLS regression results on the imputed data, three for secure/avoidant attachment to God and three for anxious. Given that attachment styles are theoretically mutually exclusive (though all three might be in play to a small degree) anxious and secure attachment variables were not included in the same models. Supplemental analyses that did include secure/avoidant and anxious attachment in the same models showed a strong effect from secure attachment that mitigated the influence of anxious attachment. Recall that avoidant attachment styles are the inverse of secure attachment styles, and so interpretation of avoidant measures are the inverse of secure measures (Rowatt and Kirkpatrick 2002).

Stepwise regression was utilized to arrive at full models. Base models include standard controls and religion variables (1 and 4), secondary models add personality controls (2 and 5), and full models insert work variables (3 and 6). Interestingly for secure attachers, not one of the religion controls (prayer, attendance, and literalism) is associated with AC, yet secure attachment to God is. This difference of association between secure attachment, religion controls and AC, despite the high correlation between secure divine attachment and religion controls, is compelling. Secure attachment to God appears to be linked uniquely to AC in a way not replicated in religious behavior and belief, supporting hypothesis 1. Secure attachment to God is positively associated with AC across all models while avoidant attachment to God is inversely related to secure divine attachment. Hypothesis 2 receives support in the initial model yet washes out as additional controls are added. Anxious divine attachment is not associated with AC in

this sample. This finding is not entirely surprising given that anxious attachers have the desire to attach but find it more difficult to do so than those more securely attached.

An unexpected but interesting finding emerges across all anxious attachment models. Here the frequency of prayer remains positively associated with affective commitment whereas prayer is washed out from baseline models (unreported) by the secure attachment variable. Prayer, as a proximity seeking behavior, is positively associated to AC for anxious attachers to God, and though they may have difficulty connecting emotionally at work, their anxiety does not overcome the positive benefits of prayer established in baseline models. Could this data suggest that prayer functions differently for anxious attachers than for secure, that anxious attachers turn to prayer as a strategy for forming more secure relationships?

Table 4

Predictors of Affective Commitment, Baylor Religion Survey 2010

Predictors	Secure Attachment						Anxious Attachment					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
Secure Att. God[a]	0.09***	0.03	0.08**	0.03	0.09**	0.03						
Anxious Att. God							-0.10*	0.04	-0.04	0.04	-0.02	0.04
Church Attendance	0.06	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.08*	0.04	0.07†	0.04	0.06	0.03
Bible Literalist	0.08	0.24	0.03	0.24	-0.04	0.24	0.10	0.24	0.07	0.24	0.02	0.23
Prayer frequency	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.19**	0.06	0.18**	0.06	0.18**	0.06
Anxiety			-0.03†	0.02	-0.03†	0.02			-0.03†	0.02	-0.03†	0.02
Happiness			0.57***	0.14	0.62***	0.14			0.59***	0.14	0.64***	0.14
Hrs. worked/week					0.01*	0.01					0.01*	0.01
# Workers in firm					-0.55***	0.07					-0.54***	0.07
Intercept	3.71***	0.58	2.90***	0.78	3.26***	0.81	4.87***	0.58	3.64***	0.78	3.96***	0.82
R^2	0.08		0.11		0.17		0.07		0.10		0.16	

Notes: N=884; Models include controls for age, sex, income, race, marital status, and education with no significant changes to variables of interest.

[a]The inverse of secure is avoidant and can be interpreted as such.

†p <.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001, two-tailed tests.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

This study was undertaken to extend research on God attachment to include the field of organizational affective commitment (AC). God attachment has already proven useful as an extension of attachment literature generally (Kirkpatrick 1992, 2002, 2005; Granqvist 1998; Granqvist and Hagekull 1999, 2003; Bradshaw et al. 2010; Ellison et al. 2012) and it may also demonstrate utility in a deeper understanding of how and why people form affective bonds in their places of employment. Results of the analyses performed here suggest that the internal working models which theoretically form the attachment mechanism in early childhood are very likely to extend to adult attachments, including emotional commitments at work.

The support of hypothesis 1 is consistent across all secure models: secure attachment to God is a consistent positive predictor of AC. This consistency between secure attachment to God and AC is expected given previous studies supporting the correspondence hypothesis. Warm attachments to parents can transfer to warm attachments to God, and here warm attachments to God relate to warm affective attachments at work. This finding underlines previous studies which suggest attachment styles, particularly secure, are likely to be consistent across relationships and resistant to change over time (Hazan and Shaver 1994; Bretherton and Munholland 1998; Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2013). Internal working models developed as children form patterns and expectations of acceptance and belonging that are likely to extend beyond the parental attachment figure to shape the individual's relationship to God, the workplace, and a variety of other attachment domains as well. People who have a secure and confident relationship with God, people who are able to affirm that God is near to them and

ready to help when they are in need—in other words people with a divine, symbolic caretaker—appear also to approach their working lives with emotional commitment.

The results of this study are consistent with Hazan and Shaver (1990) who found a positive link between romantic attachment and work attachment. Findings here are quite the opposite, however, of Schusterschitz et al. (2011) who suggest secure attachment *negatively* predicts affective commitment. Using Grau's (1999) Two Dimensions of Attachment Insecurity, Schusterschitz et al. (2011) report that secure employees show low affective commitment. They theorize that secure attachers place a high priority on personal and family relationships outside of work and therefore do not "need" workplace relationships as a source of attachment. This argument takes its cue from role conflict theory which suggests conflicting loyalty to family and work make it likely secure attachers will invest in their family life at the expense of their working life (Greenhaus and Beutel 1985).

I would argue to the contrary that secure attachers form affectional bonds in the workplace precisely because they treat work relationships as close personal relationships. Secure attachers want meaningful relationships with their co-workers and treat the organization in a personal way, so much so that their workplace *is* their "family." This conclusion is fully in accord with research showing employees tend to ascribe human characteristics to the workplace by conflating individual and organizational relationships (Rhoades et al. 2001). Schusterschitz et al. (2011) may have arrived at contrary results for any number of reasons, the most significant of which could be sample size and composition. The 110 participants in their study were enrolled in a professional degree program at a management center, had an average age of 31.6, and were 68% male. The sample is notably young, male and highly educated. Even more troubling, despite their argument that secure attachers place a higher emphasis on family life than work life, Schusterschitz et al. (2011) did not control for family variables of any kind such as marital status

or number of children. Researchers involved in this exploratory study were well aware of its limits, and while the study has value since it is the first to apply verified scales of attachment to affective commitment, much more scholarship is necessary.

This study finds a negative relationship between divine attachment and AC in the base model, a relationship which then washes out in subsequent models. Hypothesis 2 expected that anxious attachment to God would have a negative relationship to AC. This is based on the perspective that anxious attachers feel a tug-o-war of emotional attachment and loss not only with God, but also in other significant relationships, including places of employment. The attachment literature describes anxious attachers as people who have an incredibly high desire to commit and connect, but don't feel like their expectations will ever be met. They are therefore at one and the same time both highly insecure and highly desirous of security (Hazan and Shaver 1994).

While the expected result was that anxious attachment to God would result in a negative relationship to AC, the fact that a significant relationship exists in model 4 is somewhat revealing. Recall the compensation hypothesis, which states that insecure attachers may alter internal working models over time, promoting more secure and committed relationships. Three specific findings may lend support to this hypothesis: 1) frequency of prayer remains a significant positive predictor of AC across all anxious models,[1] 2) general happiness in life seems to ameliorate the negative effects of anxious attachment, and 3) the number of hours worked is a positive predictor of AC in the full model. Taken together these seem to support the claims of the compensation hypothesis—positive experiences and attachments may help a person overcome the negative effects of insecurity. There is no claim on causality here, just the

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[1] The difference on this measure between secure and anxious models could be explained by the high correlation between prayer and secure attachment to God.

observation that positive associations—help through prayer, positive life outlook, and stable work—may play a role in higher affective commitment. Perhaps circumstances that promote positive life view and stable employment helps compensate for feelings of anxiety.

In addition to its contribution to the God attachment literature, this study provides evidence supporting the utility of personal characteristics in the organizational commitment literature. A small number of studies have utilized personal characteristics in relation to organizational commitment (e.g. Ingersoll et al. 2002), but the general consensus (e.g. Meyer et al. 2002) is work experiences rather than personal characteristics are more useful as predictors of AC. This conclusion is understandable, given that variables used as measures of personal characteristics has been limited to basic demographic items such as age, race/ethnicity and sex. The data I present here, as well as that of Schusterschitz et al. (2011), builds the case that attachment style can be classified as a salient personal characteristic and should be useful in developing worker commitment profiles (Allen and Meyer 1990). This perspective is simpatico with Johnson and Chang (2006) who posit that personal characteristics can be capitalized upon by HR professionals to develop specific work experiences that may further enhance organizational commitment.

Limitations and Future Research

Like all studies this one is characterized by a number of limitations. One concern is the cross-sectional nature of the Baylor Religion Survey, which leaves the causal order unclear between attachment to God and AC. Despite this limitation, it is theoretically plausible that attachment to God comes prior to affective commitment at work since attachment to God forms at a young age and goes through modifications prior to formal entry in the workplace. This is not to discount the possibility of a dialectal relationship between the two, for certainly a rewarding

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and positive work life should in turn affect one's view of God. It is no stretch of the imagination to suggest that a secure work attachment—and a secure source of income—would influence perception of God and his blessing. People of faith go through both times of confidence and times of crisis, and God's "providence" in giving a means of sustenance through meaningful work could be interpreted as evidence of his care; conversely, inability to gain sufficient employment or sudden loss of work might be interpreted as God's abandonment or failure to care. Despite the possibility of this dialectical relationship, however, this paper assumes that attachment to God chronologically precedes workplace commitments.

By extending the previous limitation it is possible to point out that uncertainty in causal relationships among attachment domains goes beyond God and work to include parental and romantic attachments as well. Further study is greatly needed to ascertain more precisely how the attachment domains interact; if such relationships could be clearly demonstrated the clarity of attachment research would improve considerably. While internal working models are likely to be relatively consistent across domains, enough research has shown that positive experiences in one domain lends itself to change in another. These changes may be situational and resistant to nomothetic interpretations, but perhaps, for example, it might be possible to demonstrate that different stages in the life course lend themselves to greater influence from particular attachments. Thus in early life parental attachments would be highly influential while in the teen years and 20's romantic attachments might be more influential. Alternatively, situational contexts may reveal greater degrees of influence from a particular domain. For example, high church attenders might exhibit greater influence from the God attachment domain while low church attenders might exhibit greater influence from the romantic attachment domain. If this were true it might be possible to speak of "dominant domain" which exerts a greater degree of influence depending on the individual.

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Conclusion

      This study provides data that makes a unique contribution to the literatures on God attachment and organizational commitment. I have shown that secure attachment to God is positively associated with affective commitment even after religion, personality and work controls are taken into consideration; conversely, avoidant attachment to God is negatively associated with affective commitment. Anxious attachment to God, while negatively related to affective commitment in initial models, washes out with the addition of positive life-outcome variables such as happiness and full-time work. Taken together, these findings suggest a meaningful relationship between an individual's emotional attachment to the divine and emotional commitments formed in the workplace. God attachment has already been linked meaningfully to measures of health and well-being (e.g. Bradshaw et al. 2010, Ellison et al. 2014); this study suggest that attachment to God can be utilized not just at the individual level but also with organizational level variables. If future research bears these findings out, awareness of attachment styles could prove a useful resource for HR professionals and others whose responsibility it is to manage the experiences and outcomes of their employees.

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