

**Psychological Ownership and Insecure Adult Attachment**

By

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## ABSTRACT

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Psychological ownership (PO) pertains to individual feelings of being psychologically tied to and possessive of an object or a target. PO has been studied as a factor related to workplace outcomes—for example, a sense of PO in one’s organization is associated with work performance and job satisfaction. The motives for PO come from human fundamental needs: efficacy, self-identity, and belongingness. Other dimensions include accountability and territoriality. The study investigates the relationship between PO and insecure adult attachment dimensions: avoidance and anxiety. Avoidantly attached individuals tend to be self-reliant and autonomous, use work as a distraction, and are thus hypothesized to have more PO. Anxiously attached adults tend to have lower self-esteem than non-anxious individuals, prefer to work with others, have interpersonal concerns interfering with productivity, and are thus hypothesized to have lower levels of PO. Analyses were conducted on 288 full-time employees. Results revealed that anxiously attached individuals tend to have higher levels of overall PO. Both anxious and avoidant attachment positively relate to the territoriality subscale of PO. Anxious attachment is positively associated with the self-efficacy subscale whereas avoidant attachment is negatively associated. Avoidant attachment is negatively correlated with accountability and belongingness subscales. Ultimately, this study provides more information about the personality traits associated with PO, which is in turn associated with work performance and job satisfaction. The results can be used to implement interventions to improve the dynamic of the workplace.

*Keywords:* psychological ownership, attachment, workplace, personality

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## **Psychological Ownership and Insecure Adult Attachment**

Investigating the influences of individual behaviors and attitudes in the workplace can help people understand the individual as well as group dynamics, which can in turn help management scholars and people who work to improve the workplace and the well-being of employees and employers. One factor that has been the focus of the workplace is “psychological ownership,” which has been found to influence various outcomes in the workplace.

Psychological ownership pertains to an individual’s feeling of being psychologically tied to and possessive of an object or a target (Pierce et al., 2001). Scholars have concluded that motivations to have ownership of a target stem from fulfilling fundamental needs such as efficacy, self-identity, and belongingness (Avey et al., 2009; Dawkins et al., 2015; Olckers, 2011; Pierce et al., 2001; Pierce et al., 2003). These basic human needs are also included in research on adult attachment; individual differences in adult attachment (called “attachment styles”) influence how individuals perceive others and the world around them. Adult attachment seems to be related to workplace phenomena such as organizational behavior and organizational commitment (Scrima et al., 2015). In this study, I examine if adult attachment styles connect to the facets of psychological ownership in the workplace.

### **Psychological Ownership**

Psychological ownership has been examined regarding work attitudes and behaviors for decades. Conclusions include that facets for psychological ownership come from human fundamental needs: efficacy – the need to believe in one’s own competence; self-identity – the perception one holds of themselves; and belongingness – the need to be accepted by others or comfortable in and around places and people (Avey et al., 2009; Dawkins et al., 2015; Olckers, 2011; Pierce et al., 2001; Pierce et al., 2003). Ownership in general allows for an individual to

explore their environment. An individual needs to believe that they can control and potentially altering the environment around them – they need to feel they have the efficacy to do so. One's possessions tend to be expressions or extensions of the self and individual to themselves – ownership is a form of self-identity. Belongingness can be fulfilled by a sense of possession over an object or space; the control an individual has over something makes it belong to them. Having a place or territory to call 'home' is a basic human need and one's workplace can be an example. An individual may have their own office to call theirs. Feelings of psychological ownership encompass feelings of possession and control over something (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004), and efficacy and self-identity are enhanced by feelings of possession.

Other facets explored in psychological ownership include accountability and territoriality. Accountability within psychological ownership is referred to having a sense of responsibility to hold others and oneself accountable (Avey et al., 2009). Specifically, responsibility and the sense of burden sharing for an organization are associated with psychological ownership (Pierce et al., 2001). Furthermore, those with more feelings of psychological ownership tend to have higher expectations of others' dependability to account for their target of ownership (Avey et al., 2009). Thus, psychological ownership may encompass both perceptions of individual responsibility and others' responsibility for that individual's target.

In addition, territoriality has been presented as a preventative psychological ownership facet, in that individuals feel ownership over a target they also are territorial about (Avey et al., 2009). Territorial behavior can include not wanting to share resources, work belongings, projects, etc. The preventative nature of this facet stems from the distress one feels with external influences infringing on objects of ownership; one with higher levels of territoriality may be motivated to prevent others from violating their targets of ownership (Avey et al., 2009).

Territoriality can create and perpetuate obsession over a target, which may in turn lead to decreases in job performance. These various facets such as efficacy, self-identity, belongingness, accountability, and territoriality are important to consider when examining psychological ownership.

Psychological ownership is correlated with many different outcomes of interest. Psychological ownership not only relates to employees' organizational commitment (Han et al., 2010; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004; VandeWalle et al., 1995), job satisfaction (Mayhew et al., 2007; Peng & Pierce, 2015), and work self-esteem (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004), but also work engagement (Ramos et al., 2014) and intention to stay (Zhu et al., 2013). Those with more psychological ownership tend to have greater organizational commitment, greater job satisfaction, higher work self-esteem, and more work engagement. When employees experience ownership of their job, they are more likely to evaluate and make positive judgments about their occupations and work situations. Additionally, psychological ownership also positively relates to career satisfaction and negatively relates to burnout (Kaur et al., 2013; Pierce & Jussila, 2011). Moreover, researchers have presented the positive relationship between accountability – one of the proposed facets of psychological ownership – and extra-role behaviors such as organizational commitment behaviors, stewardship behavior, voice behavior, and helping behavior (Bernhard & O'Driscoll, 2011; Park et al., 2013; Ramos et al., 2014; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004; Zhu et al., 2013).

Previous research has also investigated phenomena that seem to affect psychological ownership. Employee autonomy and people's need to be 'at home' seems to predict organization-based psychological ownership (Mayhew et al., 2007; Pierce et al., 2009). Autonomy encompasses the idea of independence, self-rule, and self-efficacy. The more

independent one is, the more autonomous one feels, and this predicts more feelings of psychological ownership. The need to be at home is like the facet of belongingness – the need to be accepted and comfortable with others. The more comfortable employees feel the more feelings of psychological ownership they report. This adheres to the research presenting efficacy and belongingness as two basic human motivations for psychological ownership.

Furthermore, employees' spiritual and emotional intelligence seems to predict employees' job-based psychological ownership (Kaur et al., 2013). Kaur et al. (2013) studied nurses in Malaysia and found that those with higher levels of spiritual intelligence tend to have higher levels of psychological ownership. They argued that spiritual intelligence encompassed personal control and transcendental awareness which enables intimate contact between the self and an object. Similar patterns emerge with emotional intelligence in which managing emotion and others' emotions is essential. This enabled the nurses to have more control over their jobs (Kaur et al., 2013).

Although research has provided information that links psychological ownership and behaviors, work attitudes, and other outcomes, apart from the examples mentioned above, little research has been conducted examining how dispositional antecedents affect levels of psychological ownership. To address this gap, I investigate a possible predictor of psychological ownership: adult attachment style.

### **Attachment Style**

Psychoanalyst John Bowlby (1969) introduced the theory of attachment, which explains how and why infants become emotionally attached to their primary caregiver and distressed when separated from them. When infants are near their primary caregiver, they tend to be interested in exploring their surroundings; this is referred to as using the primary caregiver as a

secure base from which exploration occurs (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). The formation and quality of an infant attachment bond depend on the primary caregiver's sensitivity and responsiveness (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The styles of attachment include secure (child feels confident and protected by the parent or caretaker), avoidant (child tries to suppress attachment, possibly because of a dismissive or rejecting parent or caretaker), and anxious-ambivalent (clingy and insecure, associated with having an unpredictable parent or caretaker) (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Infant attachment styles are mostly stable throughout childhood and are theorized to be a predictor of personality and social life (Berlin & Cassidy, 2008; Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994). They exist across the lifespan due to the cognitive continuation of the "inner working models of self and others" (Bowlby, 1982). Thus, attachment can explain not just infant-caregiver relations but also adult relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Main et al., 1985; Weiss, 1987).

Some scholars suggest that adult romantic relationships may reflect an attachment process (Weisse, 1987; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Shaver and Hazan (1987) theorized the connection between attachment styles and adult romantic love and found that attachment styles in romantic relationships bear similarities to those in infancy and they influence the mental models of self and social connections (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Empirical support for adult attachment styles' association with relationship characteristics has since been found repeatedly (Levy & Davis, 1988; Feeney et al., 1990). Securely attached adults tend to have positive attitudes toward their relationships whereas avoidantly and anxiously attached individuals tend to have more negative attitudes. For example, in relationships, avoidantly attached individuals tend to mistrust others and anxiously attached individuals tend to lack independence but have a strong desire to deeply commit (Levy & Davis, 1988; Feeney & Noller, 1990). Furthermore, avoidance is associated with discomfort with intimacy; these individuals have a tendency to pull away when



others are getting close and try to deal with problems and distress privately (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Wardecker et al., 2016). Attachment anxiety is associated with fear of abandonment, rejection sensitivity, low self-esteem, resentment at partners for being unavailable, jealousy, and clinginess (Cambell & Marshall, 2011; Cassidy & Shaver, 2008; Davis et al., 2003; Feeney & Noller, 1990).

Attachment is not just an interpersonal construct, because the status of the attachment system influences other activities, including play and, in adolescence and adulthood, work. Adult attachment styles have been proposed to influence behavior and attitudes in the workplace (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Scrima et al., 2017; Leenders et al., 2019). Hazan and Shaver (1990) argued that work is like what Bowlby calls “exploration.” Specifically, they propose that adult attachment relates to work activity like how infant attachment relates to exploration (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). If an individual’s attachment concerns are not satisfied, they may become distracted from work, leaving them unable to finish tasks. In other words, insecure attachment styles can interfere with job performance (Scrima et al., 2017). For example, avoidantly attached individuals tend to have lower self-efficacy and more negative attitudes pertaining to job search (Leenders et al., 2019). Furthermore, anxiously attached adults tend to prefer to work with others and get distracted easily making it harder to complete job tasks (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). On the other hand, securely attached individuals are not concerned with unmet attachment needs so they may experience fewer work-related fears or worries. These individuals have an attachment style that prevents negative interference between life and work (Scrima et al., 2017). For example, securely attached individuals tend to report a more secure orientation to work, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and better job performance (Hazan &

Shaver, 1990; Neustadt et al., 2011).

### **The Present Study**

I propose that attachment styles connect to the dimensions of psychological ownership. Avoidantly attached individuals tend to emphasize self-reliance. They tend to be less agreeable than securely attached individuals and have higher levels of neuroticism (Shaver & Brennan, 1992). This suggests that they should have a higher sense of self-efficacy (feelings that they are competent), accountability (responsible for their work), and territoriality (feelings of their space and work as theirs) which are facets of psychological ownership. Therefore, I hypothesize that avoidance will be associated with greater psychological ownership due to their higher standing on these three facets. Furthermore, anxiously attached individuals tend to be dependent on others, have lower self-esteem, and have interpersonal concerns interfering with productivity (Hazan & Shaver, 1990) and higher levels of neuroticism (Shaver & Brennan, 1992). This suggests that they are likely to be low on the self-efficacy, accountability (productivity concerns), and territoriality (prefer to work with others) facets of psychological ownership and hence have lower ownership overall.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The sample includes 200 full-time working adults that were recruited via Prolific. Participants completed a survey study comprising various measures. Of the participants, 42% identified themselves as female, 53.6% as male, and 3.9% as non-binary. One participant preferred not to say. Furthermore, 81.6% of the sample identified as straight, 11.1% as bisexual, 4.8% as gay, and 1.4% as queer. One individual identified as asexual, and another did not disclose. The mean age was 34.8 ( $SD = 9.6$ ). The sample included 73.9% white participants,

8.2% Hispanic/Latino, 6.8% Asian, 6.3% Black or African American, 1.4% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 3.4% other. Example occupations listed by participants were engineer, construction worker, consultant, accountant, sales, etc. Participants that completed the study were compensated with \$1.50.

## Materials and Procedure

Participants completed a Qualtrics survey comprising the following measures. Measures were presented in a randomized order.

**Adult Attachment Style.** To measure individuals on avoidance and anxiety subscales of attachment, I used the 12-item Experiences in Close Relationships-Short (ECR-S) Questionnaire<sup>1</sup>. Participants rate answers to questions using a 7-point Likert scale anchored with *I strongly disagree* and *I strongly agree* (Wei et al., 2007). The short version has the same psychometric properties as the longer version created by Brennan and colleagues (1998). An example of an avoidance item is “I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance” ( $\alpha = .85$ ). An example of an anxiety item includes “I don’t worry about being abandoned” ( $\alpha = .83$ ). After reversing scores on items, higher numbers indicate more avoidance and anxiety tendencies.

**Psychological Ownership.** Avey’s and colleagues’ (2009) 16-item Psychological Ownership Questionnaire (POQ) was used. Participants rate answers to questions using a 6-point scale anchored with *strongly agree* and *strongly disagree*. The promotive dimensions of psychological ownership such as self-efficacy, belongingness, self-identity, and accountability are measured with three items each ( $\alpha = .92$ ). An example of self-efficacy is “I am confident in

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<sup>1</sup> The original conceptualization of attachment style is a categorical phenomenon, however, recent research displays and measures it as a function of two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance, where secure attachment is represented by low standings on both dimensions. Therefore, it is possible to be both anxious or avoidant, higher on one dimension and lower on the other, or any other mixture.

my ability to contribute to my organization's success" ( $\alpha = .90$ ). An example of an item relating to belongingness is "I am totally comfortable being in his organization" ( $\alpha = .92$ ). Self-identity items statements such as "I feel this organization's success is my success" ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

Accountability items included statements like "I would not hesitate to tell my organization if I saw something that was done wrong" ( $\alpha = .88$ ). Territoriality is a preventative dimension of psychological ownership including four items. An example territoriality item is "I feel I need to protect my ideas from being used by others in my organization" ( $\alpha = .79$ ). Mean scores were reversed because higher scores suggest lower levels of psychological ownership in the original questionnaire.

**Organizational Commitment.** Related to psychological ownership is organizational commitment. The 15-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1978) was used. Participants respond to statements using a 7-point Likert scale anchored with strongly agree and strongly disagree. An example item includes "I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization" ( $\alpha = .94$ ). Higher scores indicate more organizational commitment.

**Job Satisfaction.** Participants were asked about the amount of time they have spent at their current job. They also reported their satisfaction with their current job and position using a 7-point Likert scale anchored with extremely dissatisfied and extremely satisfied. Higher satisfaction scores relate to more feelings of satisfaction.

**Personality.** In order to control for certain personality traits that have been revealed to associate with attachment styles, participants' extraversion and neuroticism were measured and utilized as covariates in the analyses. I used 8 items measuring extraversion and neuroticism from the Big Five Inventory (BFI) created by John and Srivastava (1999). Participants answered with a 7-point Likert scale anchored with strongly agree and strongly disagree. An example item

measuring extraversion is “I see myself as someone who is talkative” ( $\alpha = .84$ ); an example neuroticism item includes “I see myself as someone who worries a lot” ( $\alpha = .81$ ). After reverse-coded items are treated, higher scores indicate more extraversion and neuroticism tendencies.

### Results

Table 1 displays Pearson correlation coefficients. Because previous research (e.g., Shaver & Brennan, 1992) has shown that the Big 5 traits of neuroticism and extraversion are related to attachment anxiety and avoidance, respectively, they should be controlled for. Thus, I conducted regression analyses with both Big 5 traits as covariates to investigate the unique contributions of the attachment variables to psychological ownership (see Tables 2-7). Unexpectedly, anxiety attachment was associated with overall psychological ownership, in the opposite direction than hypothesized: people higher in anxiety reported more ownership. Also contrary to the hypotheses, avoidance was not associated with overall psychological ownership.

Regression analyses were also conducted on each subscale of psychological ownership. As expected, individuals higher in attachment avoidance tended to be more territorial over their work and their job. Inconsistent with the hypotheses, people higher in attachment anxiety also tended to be more territorial over their work and job. Opposite of the hypothesis, individuals higher in attachment anxiety tended to have more self-efficacy, whereas those with attachment avoidance tended to have lower levels of self-efficacy. Inconsistent with hypotheses, people with attachment avoidance tended to have lower accountability. The same tendency pattern existed for the belongingness subscale such that these individuals also had lower levels of belongingness. The self-identity facet of psychological ownership was not significantly associated with attachment.

Table 1. Zero-ordered correlations between insecure attachment and work behaviors/attitudes.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Psychological ownership	-									
2. Anxiety attachment	-.07	-								
3. Avoidant attachment	-.22**	.39**	-							
4. Organizational commitment	.73**	-.26**	-.26**	-						
5. Job satisfaction	.66**	-.16*	-.29**	.79**	-					
6. PO territoriality	.23**	.26**	.30**	.20**	-.14*	-				
7. PO self-efficacy	.72**	-.14	-.39**	.60**	.60**	-.22**	-			
8. PO accountability	.68**	-.09	-.26**	.38**	.31**	-.02	.53**	-		
9. PO belongingness	.83**	-.20**	-.33**	.83**	.77**	-.18*	.68**	.45**	-	
10. PO self-identity	.82**	-.09	-.12	.78**	.65**	.01	.51**	.34**	.78**	-

Notes: \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; PO: Psychological Ownership

Table 2. Effects of insecure attachment and personality on overall psychological ownership.

	$\beta$	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
intercept		.26	< .001
Attachment anxiety	.18	.04	.011
Attachment avoidance	-.11	.05	.112
Extraversion	.29	.04	< .001
Neuroticism	-.32	.04	< .001

Table 3. Effects of insecure attachment and personality on the territoriality subscale of psychological ownership.

	$\beta$	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
intercept		.38	< .001
Attachment anxiety	.15	.06	.049
Attachment avoidance	.20	.07	.007
Extraversion	-.15	.05	.039
Neuroticism	-.01	.06	.887

Table 4. Effects of insecure attachment and personality on the self-efficacy subscale of psychological ownership.

	$\beta$	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
intercept		.31	< .001
Attachment anxiety	.18	.05	.005
Attachment avoidance	-.28	.06	< .001
Extraversion	.26	.04	< .001
Neuroticism	-.35	.05	< .001

Table 5. Effects of insecure attachment and personality on the accountability subscale of psychological ownership.

	$\beta$	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
intercept		.42	< .001
Attachment anxiety	.11	.07	.151
Attachment avoidance	-.18	.08	.012
Extraversion	.25	.06	< .001
Neuroticism	-.16	.06	.040

Table 6. Effects of insecure attachment and personality on the belongingness subscale of psychological ownership.

	$\beta$	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
intercept		.41	< .001
Attachment anxiety	.06	.06	.379
Attachment avoidance	-.18	.08	.006
Extraversion	.32	.06	< .001
Neuroticism	-.28	.06	< .001

Table 7. Effects of insecure attachment and personality on the self-identity subscale of psychological ownership.

	$\beta$	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
intercept		.49	< .001
Attachment anxiety	.10	.08	.183
Attachment avoidance	.01	.09	.879
Extraversion	.29	.07	< .001
Neuroticism	-.26	.07	< .001

Consistent with previous research, those with higher levels of psychological ownership tend to also have higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Further supporting previous findings, those higher in attachment avoidance tend to have lower levels of job satisfaction. However, inconsistent with previous research, attachment anxiety did not predict job satisfaction in this study. Moreover, insecure attachment did not predict organizational commitment in my study whereas previous research has suggested a link.

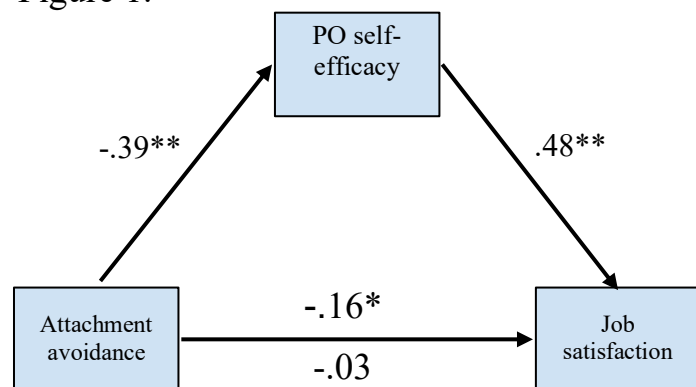
It is important to note the unique findings involving the two Big 5 personality traits.

Extraversion and neuroticism are better than attachment in predicting overall psychological ownership and most subscales. Extraversion was more influential than attachment avoidance for the accountability, belongingness, and self-identity subscale. Moreover, neuroticism was more influential than attachment anxiety for each subscale except territoriality. Furthermore, when investigating the specific subscales of psychological ownership, attachment avoidance is a better predictor than extraversion of territoriality ( $\beta = .20$  versus  $\beta = -.15$  respectively) and self-efficacy ( $\beta = -.28$  versus  $\beta = .26$  respectively).

### Exploratory Mediation Analysis

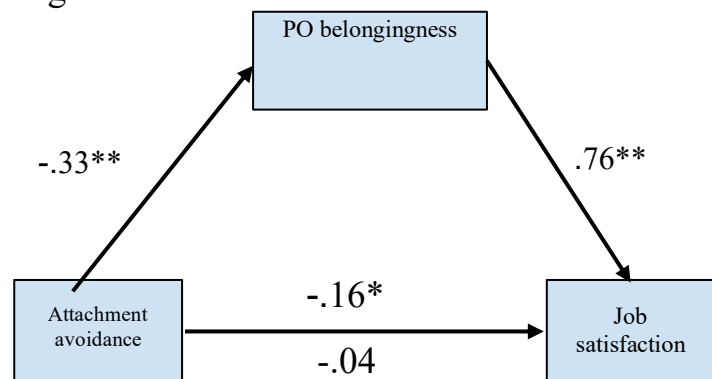
In order to specifically investigate which subscales account for the association between attachment avoidance and job satisfaction, exploratory mediation analyses following the Baron and Kenny (1986) method were conducted. Self-efficacy and belongingness were revealed to be separate mediating variables in this relationship (see Figures 1 and 2). Investigating the effect of both of the facets on job satisfaction suggested belongingness was the only mediating variable ( $\beta = .58$ ). Thus, the process through which attachment avoidance

Figure 1.



Notes.  $^{**}$  is  $p < .001$ ;  $^{*}$  is  $p < .05$

Figure 2.



Notes.  $^{**}$  is  $p < .001$ ;  $^{*}$  is  $p < .05$



and job satisfaction relate is the belongingness facet of psychological ownership. Belongingness seems to buffer the negative association between attachment avoidance and job satisfaction due to its positive association with job satisfaction. Perhaps, an individual with high levels of attachment avoidance and a greater sense of belongingness may have higher levels of satisfaction with their occupation.

### **Discussion**

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between psychological ownership and insecure adult attachment styles. Opposite of the hypothesis, individuals with more attachment anxiety had higher levels of psychological ownership. Hazan and Shaver (1990) found attachment anxiety involves depending on other people, lower self-esteem, and relationship concerns that interfere with work performance. Thus, I expected that these individuals would have lower levels of self-efficacy, and lower levels of territoriality because they like to work with others because one of their motivations may stem from seeking admiration from others (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). This was not the case in this study which may be because regression analyses revealed that individuals high in attachment anxiety actually display more self-efficacy. However, zero-order correlations revealed a negative association between anxiety and self-efficacy, so it is possible that there exists collinearity between anxiety and neuroticism and attachment avoidance causing the direction of the association to flip. Unfortunately, attachment avoidance did not predict psychological ownership in this study, revealing the possibility that attachment anxiety may have a stronger association with psychological ownership. However, attachment avoidance was trending towards a significant relationship with psychological ownership in a negative direction meaning that individuals with this attachment type may have exhibited lower levels of psychological ownership. Future researchers may find

this trend to be significant with a slightly larger sample. It was expected that people with higher attachment avoidance would display higher levels of psychological ownership due to their tendency to emphasize self-reliance, be less agreeable and thus more territorial over their work and job and feel competent and thus accountable (Shaver & Brennan, 1992). Previous research suggests these individuals may use work as a distraction and to avoid interacting with others (Hazan & Shaver, 1990), which this study did not seem to support. However, attachment-avoidant individuals were revealed to have lower levels of self-efficacy and lower accountability dimensions of psychological ownership.

When investigating through regression analyses, differences emerge across the different dimensions of psychological ownership. Interestingly, attachment avoidance became significantly related to certain subscales of psychological ownership. For example, consistent with the hypotheses, individuals with more attachment avoidance were more territorial over their work and job. Individuals with more attachment avoidance had lower levels of belongingness. This conclusion supports previous research explaining that such individuals try to avoid interaction with other people. Perhaps, they want to use work as a distraction, but only by working alone.

Importantly, personality traits were controlled for in the analyses. Extraversion and neuroticism are nominally better predictors of psychological ownership relative to attachment. Yet, attachment avoidance explained more of the variance in the territoriality subscale of psychological ownership. Thus, attachment avoidance is the larger predictor of territorial behavior than personality (extraversion and neuroticism). While not all research in attachment

control for the Big 5, they seem to be important factors.

### **Limitations**

One notable limitation includes the restrictive sample population. I recruited individuals only in the United States. This country has certain values on jobs and success, so investigating similar ideas in different countries with different societal ideas surrounding the workplace would be interesting. The United States tends to emphasize success comes from having or creating wealth, whereas other countries may not involve as many hours working every week. Perhaps, individuals have lower levels of psychological ownership in a slower lifestyle environment. Furthermore, it is a possibility there exists method variance within this study. An individual who responds more negatively on questionnaires may have generalized their negative attitudes across all measures. It is possible the response tendencies of individuals high in attachment avoidance may alone explain the results.

### **Future Research**

More research is needed in this field of psychological ownership. Especially in the United States, there exists a lack of research in this area. It would be useful to conduct longitudinal studies in order to investigate more directly a causal relationship as opposed to the cross-sectional correlations reported in this study. Researching over a longer period allows the observation of the sequence of effects attachment may have on psychological ownership in the workplace. Thus, covariation and temporal precedence could be better detected.

Another avenue for future research is to investigate the darker side of psychological ownership. There may be more negative aspects to psychological ownership other than territoriality. There are positive outcomes associated with psychological ownership, but limited research suggests there exist negative outcomes. For example, territoriality has been investigated

and viewed as a preventative tendency of psychological ownership. Examining more preventative aspects of psychological ownership would be important in terms of prevention in the workplace.

Ultimately, attachment seems to connect to psychological ownership and thus, this study provides more information about the influences of work performance and job satisfaction which can be used to implement interventions to improve the dynamic of the workplace. Literature in this field would be useful for application to the workplace such as interventions or implementation of training programs. Interventions aimed at improving productivity and performance should utilize information about potential risk factors, such as attachment style or lack of psychological ownership. Training programs could focus on increasing social support within the workplace which may help more employees feel like they truly belong in their workplace environment. Other risk factors for performance or well-being in the workplace should be targeted within these interventions and training programs. Thus, future research should take attachment as well as other potential risk factors into consideration when investigating psychological ownership and other workplace attitudes and behaviors.

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