

**RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK QUESTIONNAIRE: A NEW MEASURE OF  
ATTACHMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

by

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Keiser University Graduate School

A Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Keiser University

December 2019

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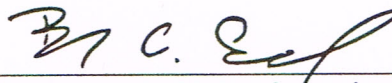
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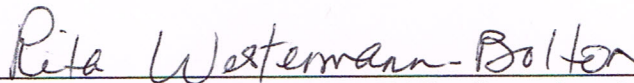
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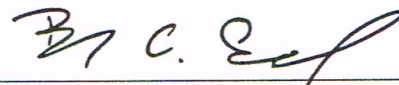
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## **Abstract**

This research was conducted to establish the psychometric properties of the Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) in Phases 1 and 2; in Phase 3, a correlational study of the relationship between organizational leaders' attachment style and emotional intelligence was completed. Participants in Phase 1 included attachment theory researchers, and Phases 2 and 3 each included a unique sample of adults who work in the United States and had any number of direct reports. Content validity was established with the subject matter experts in Phase 1. A factor analysis and correlational examination between the RWQ and Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) was completed with the Phase 2 sample to identify the best quality items for inclusion in the new measure and to establish convergent and discriminant validity of the RWQ. The RWQ and the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF) were used in Phase 3 with a convenience sample of organizational leaders to investigate if there is a relationship between secure attachment style and global trait emotional intelligence. Results of the Pearson correlation in Phase 3 indicated that there was a significant positive association between organizational leaders' secure attachment style and global trait EI. This research highlights the importance of selecting or developing organizational leaders to have a secure attachment style and global trait EI which research has indicated are important factors of a transformational leadership style.

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Brad, and my children, Jen and Matt. Their undying devotion, support, encouragement, and faith in me carried me to the finish line. I am grateful for their patience and understanding during this phase of my education and all the years they accommodated me as I needed “just a few more minutes” to read, write, or post. I am also grateful for my parents, Ron and Marty, and friends: Julie, Donna, Taunya, Bonnie, Eric, Jenny, Berta, Jack, Nelda, and so many others who listened, cheered me on, and shared my invitation for participants during my dissertation. It has truly taken a village to achieve this goal. I am grateful to God for putting these amazing people in my life and giving me the grace and strength to persevere.

## **Acknowledgments**

I am extremely grateful for the encouragement, guidance, and support from Dr. David W. Bracken. His continuous inspiration over the last 4 years has allowed me to develop and grow as an individual and scholar. Dr. Rita Westermann-Bolton has been my instructor and cheerleader at crucial points in my journey when I was questioning what was possible and doubting myself. Her enthusiasm and reassurance gave me the insight and energy to achieve my goals. I am thankful for Dr. Brian Esterling for his willingness to be on my committee and the time he spent reviewing my dissertation, proposal, and final defense. This research study would not have been possible without the generous participation of the individuals who completed my questionnaires for no reward. I am thankful that there are good people in the world who are willing to help another person achieve their dream.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

James MacGregor Burns (1978) described two types of leadership, transactional and transformational leadership, in his seminal research on political leaders. He defined leadership as “the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons, with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition, and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers” (p. 425). Burns also noted that leadership is “one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (Economy, 2018, para. 1).

Transformational leaders have been shown to have individualized consideration of their followers’ needs to be their mentor or coach, actively listen to subordinates’ distress and needs, give empathy and support; effectively communicate, respect, and honor followers’ achievements; and challenge direct reports to aspire to greater performance. They provide intellectual stimulation by challenging assumptions, stimulating creativity, cultivating independent thinking in followers, and they value learning. Effective leaders are inspirational motivators who are able to articulate a vision to inspire subordinates, they have high standards and challenge followers to rise up, remain optimistic about future goals, create meaning related to current tasks, and stimulate follower engagement by communicating a clear, defined, powerful, and appealing vision. Leaders with transformational skills also lead with idealized influence by modeling ethical behavior that increases pride, trust, and respect in and from followers (Kelloway & Barling, 2000).

How individuals become transformational leaders has been debated for decades. Is it nature or nurture? Must one be born with leadership skills, or do leadership skills

develop throughout one's life history and relationship experience? Kelloway and Barling (2000) argued leadership skills can be developed or improved through training and counseling or coaching. Baron and Morin's (2009) research indicated the coach-coachee relationship is what impacts change in the coachee's leadership skills through the coach's training and skills, the coachee's motivation to learn, the coachee's perception of their supervisor's support, and the number of sessions completed. Change occurs through the coaching relationship experience over time.

Humans are relational beings (Bowlby, 1977). From birth, people need one another to survive and thrive. Throughout the life span, there are several key relationships that impact one's development and function. The first relationship that tends to set the stage for an individual's future interpersonal function or attachment style is with one's parents; parents are attachment figures. How a caregiver interacts and responds to the needs of an infant establishes how one perceives themselves and others in the parent-child and future relationships.

Intimate partners may also be attachment figures that are vital to one's personal growth and emotional stability. Research has shown that individuals tend to respond to their romantic partner in the same way they related to their caregiver in childhood (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Close relationships outside the parental relationship (i.e., intimate partners, teachers, therapists, and organizational superiors) may positively or negatively impact one's attachment style, emotional well-being, and interpersonal function.

The relationship between superior and subordinate at work may be interpreted as a close relationship. Ainsworth (1989) found that affectional bonds evoke attachment themes. The superior-subordinate relationship contains affectional bonds that include:

leaders may provide a sense of security and place, a sense of worth or competence, and guidance or mentorship (Keller, 2003). The emotional-relational connections that develop at work between leaders and followers evolve into attachment needs of security, trust, safety, and support (Naaman, Pappas, Makinen, Zuccarini, & Johnson–Douglas, 2005).

To satisfy these basic needs, behavioral systems have developed (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). The attachment behavioral system is an innate motivational system that developed to insure one's survival and safety in infancy (Fraley & Roisman, 2015), and Bowlby (1977) noted this motivational system is functioning from birth to death. The attachment behavioral system is activated when a threat or strong uncertainty is perceived by an individual (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Cassidy (2018) noted that an individual's attachment system is activated when one perceives stress or danger; the location and behavior of one's attachment figure influences the deactivation of the attachment system.

Because work involves stress and perceived danger, the superior-subordinate relationship occupies a significant position in one's life that affects their well-being at work and away from work. When one's boss is seen as an attachment figure, the leader has power and influence over a workers' sense of security, emotional safety, trust, maintenance of a healthy psychological contract, organizational culture and climate, and group dynamics that affects whether workers perceive a secure attachment to their leader or insecure attachment (e.g., avoidant, anxious, or fearful attachment) with their leader (Paetzold, 2015). The relational dynamics may indicate whether a leader is effective or ineffective in their role.



In considering traits and features of effective leadership in modern work relationships, the attachment style of superior and subordinates is a foundational element of interpersonal and organizational function (Harms, 2011). Scientific studies have shown that cognitive intelligence and emotional intelligence (EI) are also essential for effective leadership. EI has been argued to be more important than IQ, but research does not support that conclusion (Antonakis, 2004). Data have indicated that transformational leadership is a preferred style of leadership, and IQ and EI are necessary factors for individuals to be considered transformational leaders. This type of leader provides individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence to their followers (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000). Barling et al. (2000) found that idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration are associated with EI.

Another important attribute of transformational leaders is the ability to regulate their emotions. Emotion regulation is considered a process that individuals use to modulate their emotions consciously and nonconsciously to respond appropriately to environmental demands. Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, and Schweizer (2010) stated that individuals use regulatory strategies to modify the magnitude or type of emotional experience or the emotion-eliciting event. In addition, Aldao et al. noted that theoretical models associate successful emotion regulation with positive health outcomes, improved relationships, and academic and work performance.

EI is a theory of emotion regulation based on one's ability to regulate their emotions according to a consistent and logical model of emotional functioning (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). EI may be defined as the capacity to recognize, construct, regulate, and

process emotional information in oneself and others accurately and proficiently. Mayer and Salovey (1995) stated there are differences between general intelligence and EI. General intelligence is measured by cognitive performance, and EI is measured by adaptation of emotional reactions. According to Mayer and Salovey, when a person has a belief that a particular emotion is inappropriate in a situation (e.g., anger), but continues to exhibit that emotion in situations, that person is emotionally unintelligent; either the belief is incorrect, or the person has missed an opportunity for self-regulation.

Other theories of emotion regulation include nonconscious or unconscious construction and regulation of emotion as a neurological function, an automatic response, or due to repression of an emotion. Low-level consciousness of emotion regulation (e.g., fleeting attention to emotions, shallow awareness, likely to be unrehearsed or not recalled), and higher consciousness theories involve reflective or meta-level attention to emotion, perceptions of self, and are likely to be recalled and reflect back on itself. Mayer and Salovey (1995) argued the issue with each of these theories is that emotion regulation is nonexistent or low or reflecting back on the emotion rather than how to regulate it. One must be able to modify an emotion before it is fully complete or experienced to regulate the emotion. EI is the ability to construct and regulate an emotion.

Secure attachment is also linked to emotional regulation. Shaver and Mikulincer (2014) explored the link between attachment to a primary attachment figure (e.g., a person who provides sufficient or insufficient protection, safety, care, and guidance concerning emotion and emotion regulation) and emotion regulation. Their argument was that the purpose of attachment is to provide a physical and emotional safe haven that

enables one to down-regulate negative emotions and increase positive affect that leads to learning and exploration. Shaver and Mikulincer noted that attachment style can change subtly or dramatically based on one's current context and recent relational experience and concluded that secure attachment is associated with cognitive appraisals and regulation efforts that support a balanced, open mind and lower levels of stress and emotional distress as well as constructive approaches to relationship maintenance.

In summary, one's attachment style and EI have been shown to be correlated with transformational leadership. Research is needed to determine if attachment style and EI are related in organizational leaders. If a relationship exists, it could support the hypothesis that secure attachment style and higher levels of EI are needed in organizational leaders to increase their effectiveness.

### **Background of the Study**

There are many empirical studies, professional articles, self-help books, and anecdotal observations about leadership that identify behaviors related to transformational leadership. Leadership development specialists Zenger and Folkman (2019) surveyed 300,000 business leaders and noted 10 skills they considered most important for success. They argued leaders must inspire and motivate others, display high integrity and honesty, solve problems and analyze issues, persevere to attain results, communicate effectively and often, build relationships, exhibit technical or professional expertise, provide a strategic vision, develop others, and be innovative (Zenger & Folkman, 2019).

Identifying traits and behaviors of transformational leaders is helpful for individuals to have insight into what has been empirically researched and correlated to

effective leadership. It would be more helpful to identify the motivational behavior system and personality traits that allow one to consistently perform effective leadership behaviors from a natural state of being (i.e., secure attachment and high EI) compared to inconsistently performing transformational leadership behaviors due to insecure attachment and lower EI. Attempting to be a transformational leader without understanding one's attachment style, EI, IQ, and professional experience potentially sets a person up for failure.

The traits and features of secure attachment, EI, and transformational leadership appear to overlap in many instances. The behavioral system that underlies successful leaders is poorly understood and difficult to measure because there are no valid or reliable tools available to measure one's attachment style in the workplace. Research is needed to establish the validity and reliability of a tool designed for use in organizations that measures attachment styles in the workplace. A measure of trait EI has been created, validated, and shown to be reliable in measuring lower level personality traits that influence an individual's level of EI (Petrides, 2009).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Current knowledge regarding attachment styles in the workplace and their relationship with EI is limited. Hamarta, Deniz, and Saltali (2009) examined the relationship in a student sample, but adults in the workplace have not been studied. Hamarta et al. used the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) to measure EI. The theory of EI was developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and is measured by two categories (i.e., trait EI and ability EI; Petrides & Furnham, 2001). The EQ-I measures ability EI. Petrides and Furnham (2001) noted that trait EI refers to behavioral tendencies

and self-perceived abilities, and ability EI is related to cognitive ability and personality dimensions that are mainly affective (e.g., extraversion and neuroticism).

Petrides and Furnham (2001) stated that trait EI includes empathy, assertiveness, social intelligence, and personal intelligence. Harms and Credé (2010) stated EI has been correlated with the transformational leadership style which has been linked to secure attachment style. The theoretical construct measured in the current research was trait EI, because ability EI has been significantly, positively correlated with secure attachment style in Turkish college students (Hamarta et al., 2009). For this research, it was appropriate to examine trait EI instead of ability EI, because measures of trait EI have tended to show higher validities than measures of ability EI (Harms and Credé, 2010).

The unit of analysis in the current research was similar to that used in research conducted by Hamarta et al. (2009), who were seeking to understand if attachment style predicted EI. They examined individual participants' attachment style and EI (i.e., intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood) and found a significant, positive correlation in their sample of Turkish college students (Hamarta et al., 2009). Individual organizational leaders who participated in the current research completed measures of attachment style and EI to determine if there is a correlation between secure attachment style and global trait EI in an adult American sample.

An issue with conducting attachment research in the workplace is a lack of appropriate measures that are valid and reliable and developed for organizational use. Many researchers adapt attachment assessments that were designed for adult, intimate relationships by changing terminology. Validity and reliability estimates are difficult to

determine, because they are generally not reported on the adapted measures. The Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) was developed as a measure designed for the workplace that identifies all four attachment styles and both dimensions of attachment security.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Research has suggested that building blocks (e.g., self-confidence, prosocial orientation, proactive optimistic orientation, openness, and high motivation to lead) of a leader's development begin in childhood (Popper & Mayselless, 2007). Development of leaders begins in infancy due to the influence of one's attachment style on their capacity to lead, and secure attachment style influences one's potential to lead (Popper & Amit, 2009). In the workplace, the leader-follower relationship is a category of an adult close relationship that is influenced by individual attachment styles (Popper, Mayselless, & Castelnovo, 2000).

The superior-subordinate relationship may be identified as an affectional bond that evokes attachment dynamics (Keller & Cacioppe, 2001). Followers may perceive their leader as an attachment figure; research indicated this affects leader motivation, function, and mental health as well as follower emotional and behavioral function (Davidovitz, Mikulincer, Shaver, Izsak, & Popper, 2007). Followers' attachment style impacts their preference of relational leadership behaviors (Boatwright, Lopez, Sauer, VanDerWege, & Huber, 2010). Attachment style affects how individuals perceive their own ability to lead, and peers tend to perceive individuals with secure attachment style as emerging leaders (Berson, Dan, & Yammarino, 2006). Attachment style is an important

precursor of interpersonal relationship quality and psychological well-being that affects organizational behavior (Harms, 2011).

Batool (2013) stated there is a significant positive relationship between effective leadership and EI. EI has been shown to underlie a leader's people or relationship skills (Caruso, Mayer, & Solovey, 2002). Effective leaders tend to display a transformational style that is positively correlated with EI (Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001). A significant, positive correlation between secure attachment style and EI abilities defined as intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood in Turkish college students was found by Hamarta et al. (2009). Research regarding attachment style and EI in American organizational leaders is minimal. The purpose of this study was to examine the psychometric properties of a new adult attachment measure and to determine if secure attachment style is significantly and positively correlated with EI in organizational leaders.

### **Rationale**

This study was conducted to establish the psychometric properties of the RWQ developed to measure attachment styles of individuals in the workplace and to examine whether an organizational leader's attachment style is correlated with EI. This correlational study had not been conducted before with an adult sample in an organizational setting. The results of this study could contribute to understanding the foundations of transformational leadership behaviors.

As noted in the introduction, leadership has seemed to be a phenomenon that defies full understanding. The constructs of attachment theory have recently become a possible variable of effective leadership that needs empirical examination to determine

how attachment influences leader behaviors and relational interactions (Harms & Credé, 2010). Because there is so little scientific research on attachment theory in the workplace, there are few held beliefs and conclusions to challenge. This study will be a significant contribution of new knowledge to the literature regarding correlations between secure attachment and EI and the development of a valid and reliable measure of workplace attachment styles.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

#### **Research Questions (RQs)**

RQ1: Do the psychometric properties of the Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) demonstrate satisfactory properties in the sample of working adults in the United States with direct reports?

RQ2: Does the Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) demonstrate predicted convergent validity with the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ)?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between an organizational leader's attachment style and emotional intelligence (EI)?

#### **Hypotheses**

To provide evidence of the psychometric properties of the RWQ, three phases of research examining construct validity were conducted. The first phase of developing construct validity involved a card-sorting exercise with published authors of empirical literature regarding attachment theory. Authors were selected based on extensive published research of adult attachment styles and articles focused on attachment in the workplace. An introductory email was sent that contained a Survey Monkey link to the



first version of the RWQ for the subject matter experts to evaluate each randomly organized item. Researchers were asked to read each item on the measure and select which attachment style the item described.

The second phase of developing the psychometric properties involved a convenience sample of self-selected participants through the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) system. MTurk comprises individuals who have been vetted by Amazon to perform a human intelligence task (HIT). The MTurk worker community remained completely anonymous throughout the data collection. The sample ( $N = 294$ ), completed the RWQ, the Relationship Style Questionnaire (RSQ) and the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) to examine the convergent and discriminant validity of the RWQ as well as to establish a baseline of external validity. It was predicted the RWQ would have a significant, positive correlation with the RSQ and convergent and discriminant validity would be established.

Another prediction of this study is that organizational leaders with secure attachment would be positively correlated with global trait EI, and insecure leaders would have a negative correlation with global trait EI. Kafetsios (2004) argued that insecure attachment in adults is related to emotional defensiveness, and insecure attachment blocks emotional messages and awareness of one's feelings and intentions in oneself and others. Using the Meyer Salovey and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), a measure of ability EI, and Bartholomew and Horowitz's Relationship Questionnaire, a measure of attachment styles, Kafetsios conducted a study with 239 participants aged 19–66 years. Little research had been done using Bartholomew's four attachment styles and two-dimensional model of attachment, and Kafetsios stated that studies using the three

styles model (e.g., secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment) have indicated attachment affects information processing and emotion. Kafetsios noted more research is needed using the two-dimensional, four attachment style model.

Mikulincer and Shaver (2018) cited studies to examine attachment and leadership (Davidovitz et al., 2007; Johnston, 2000; Popper, 2002). Findings indicated avoidant attachment was correlated with lower levels of socialized leadership (i.e., leadership focused on others) and higher levels of personalized leadership (i.e., leadership focused on self), anxiously attached leaders tend to use a personalized style of leadership, and insecure attachment in leaders increases narcissistic behaviors and less nurturing, other-focused leadership behaviors.

Insecure leaders tend to delegate authority, power, and responsibility less and create centralized authority organizations. Motives to lead are also impacted by leaders' attachment style. Attachment-anxious leaders were found to have self-enhancing, control-related, and self-reliance motives. Attachment avoidant leaders tend to have higher self-reliance and lower prosocial motives. Anxiously attached leaders tend to focus on their needs and have a dictatorial style where they belittle followers while doubting their own ability to lead effectively. Avoidant leaders tend to pursue leadership to increase their self-reliance, avoid depending on others, ignore developmental and supportive characteristics of the leadership role, and doubt their ability to deal with followers' emotional needs (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2018). Based on empirical research related to attachment and leadership, the following hypotheses were used in the current study:

H<sub>0</sub>1: The factor analysis of the data from the MTurk sample will not indicate three unique factors that demonstrate convergent validity with the RSQ.

H<sub>a</sub>1: The factor analysis of the data from the MTurk sample will indicate three unique factors that demonstrate convergent validity with the RSQ.

H<sub>0</sub>2: The Relationships at Work Questionnaire will have no relationship, as predicted, with the RSQ.

H<sub>a</sub>2: The Relationships at Work Questionnaire will have a significantly positive correlation with the RSQ.

H<sub>0</sub>3: Participants with secure attachment will have no relationship with global trait EI.

H<sub>a</sub>3: Participants with secure attachment will have a significantly positive correlation with global trait EI.

H<sub>0</sub>3a: Participants with anxious or avoidant attachment will have no relationship with global trait EI.

H<sub>a</sub>3a: Participants with anxious or avoidant attachment will have a significantly negative correlation with global trait EI.

### **Nature of the Study**

This research was a quantitative, correlational study of the relationship between organizational leaders' attachment style and their trait EI. Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) argued that models of self and others (e.g., positive or negative self-perception and positive or negative other perception) influences attachment style (i.e., secure, anxious or preoccupied, avoidant or dismissing, and fearful). One's attachment style is adopted in response to life experiences with others and greatly impacts how individuals

perceive, respond to, and interact with others. The theoretical constructs that were measured in the current research included the individual attachment style of organizational leaders and its relationship to EI, because secure attachment style has been significantly, positively correlated with EI in Turkish college students (Hamarta et al., 2009).

In seeking to establish the psychometric properties of the RWQ, Clark and Watson (1995) stated it is critical to develop a measure on a theoretical base with clear constructs. Clark and Watson cited Cronbach and Meehl's (1955) formula of first identifying the theoretical concepts and relationships; second, developing a way to measure the constructs defined by the theory; and third, empirically studying the hypothesized relationships between the constructs and the exhibited observations to establish construct validity. Cronbach and Meehl noted by creating a measure based on theory, it is more likely to contribute to the psychological literature.

Using attachment theory, a card-sorting exercise was conducted first in the current study with subject matter experts that have published scientific literature about attachment. The experts were asked to read each item on the measure and determine with which construct the statement is associated to deduce which items accurately represent each attachment style (i.e., content validity). Cronbach and Meehl (1955) noted that construct validity must be examined to determine the quality of a measure, and Clark and Watson (1995) argued that construct validity may not be inferred from single events or observations.

After the card-sorting data were collected, the RWQ was used with a convenience sample of working adults through Amazon's MTurk. The RSQ was used to examine the

convergent validity of the new measure to determine a baseline for external validity. The RSQ was designed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) and was used in the current study to establish convergent validity, because it measures all four attachment styles and two dimensions of attachment insecurity (i.e., attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance). Some other attachment measures only assess three attachment styles (e.g., the Experiences in Close Relationships and Adult Attachment Questionnaire). Finally, the RWQ and the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF) were used with a sample of organizational leaders to assess external validity and examine the relationship between the variables of attachment style and global trait EI.

### **Significance of the Study**

This correlational study of organizational leaders' attachment style and EI will be significant to decrease some of the mystery surrounding relationship dynamics in the workplace. It may help answer the question of why some leaders are able to form healthy relationships and maintain them even in difficult situations. Understanding the subconscious flow of thought related to relational experiences that precedes behavior will inform leaders of how they can change their attachment style to improve their effectiveness. Results of this study may indicate how secure attachment influences important leadership traits (e.g., EI) that have been shown to improve leader effectiveness (Barling et al., 2000).

This empirical research may provide insight into the meaning of data from annual leadership surveys in which employees rank their perceptions of their leader's behavior and employees' engagement. Engagement surveys collect data without truly

understanding what the data means or why an employee may feel the way they do. As Boatwright et al. (2010) noted, employees' attachment style affects what they perceive about their leader and their preference for leadership style. A leader's attachment style impacts their behavior and perception about employees. Increasing awareness and understanding of one's attachment style and how it presents could improve leadership coaching outcomes and provide meaningful feedback from 360-degree evaluations.

The feedback from employee engagement and leadership surveys and 360-degree evaluations lays the groundwork for attachment in the workplace coaching and training. Leadership development specialists and coaches could use the findings of this research to explain attachment theory, EI, and how they impact one's leadership style and behavior. Understanding the benefits of developing secure attachment gives leaders tangible behaviors to pursue, value to the coach-coachee relationship, and predictable outcomes based on research of secure attachment, coaching, and transformational leadership (Baron & Morin, 2009; Popper & Mayseless, 2003, 2007; Popper et al., 2000).

### **Definition of Terms**

*Attachment Style:* Attachment style is defined as secure, anxious or preoccupied, avoidant or dismissing, and fearful attachment (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998; Hamarta et al., 2009).

*Emotional Intelligence (EI):* EI is defined as traits of adaptability, assertiveness, emotion expression, emotion management of others, emotion perception of self and others, emotion regulation, low impulsiveness, capable of maintaining relationships, self-esteem, self-motivation, social awareness, stress management, trait empathy, trait happiness, and trait optimism (Petrides, 2009)

## **Assumptions and Limitations**

Online data collection was used in this research, though it does have limitations. Rhodes, Bowie, and Hergenrather (2003) noted research through the World Wide Web creates ethical concerns related to sampling and sample representativeness, competition for attention of participants, and limitations due to literacy, disability, and the digital divide.

One ethical concern is related to feedback. By collecting data in the manner described, participants would not receive any feedback and only a general debriefing following the data collection. The University of Cambridge Psychometrics Centre (2018) that offers the RSQ online stated on their informed consent page that feedback provided from attachment style measures may be considered negative or distressing to some individuals. The Centre recommended if participants are uncomfortable with their participation, they may stop at any time, including not participating at all. Informed consent for this current research study addressed similar concerns to reduce ethical issues and insure participant welfare.

Unfortunately, there are limitations to the methodology of this research study. By collecting data from a convenience sample of leaders at one organization, there was no way to determine if a third variable might influence results (e.g., an organizational culture that hires or values a particular type of leader). Yet, using the Internet for data collection allows participants that may not be organizational leaders, have direct reports, or be American workers to complete the assessments intended to measure the attachment style and EI of business leaders in the United States. Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) noted

convenience sampling and purposive sampling are nonprobability sampling techniques that are subjective and may not be representative of a population.



## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Attachment theory has expanded over the decades from a theory of child behavior and emotional function to adult attachment and how it influences relationships throughout the life span. The workplace is the new frontier of attachment theory. Researchers are expanding their understanding of what impacts the leader-follower exchange and how one's attachment style influences interpersonal function at home and work.

The following literature review encompasses the history of attachment theory, definitions of each attachment style and the dimensions of attachment, empirical outcomes of adult attachment research and the attachment behavioral system, attachment in the workplace, how attachment presents in the workplace and in leadership, and the history and features of trait EI. The literature selected in this review supports the examination of the relationship between attachment style and trait EI in organizational leaders. It also supports the research questions and hypotheses of this study.

### **Theoretical Orientation for the Study**

Fraley and Shaver (2008) stated attachment theory was first developed by the British psychiatrist John Bowlby through his work with maladjusted and delinquent boys who experienced severe family dysfunction and disruption to the parent-child bond. These children had difficulty forming close emotional relationships with others that affected their behavior and interpersonal function in both the short term and long term. Bowlby (1977) argued that the parent-child relationship serves an important function in human development, and disruptions in this relationship have profound consequences.

While forming his theory, Bowlby integrated facets of evolutionary biology, ethology, developmental psychology, cognitive science, and control systems theory, according to Cassidy (2018). She stated Bowlby was not satisfied with the psychodynamic and social learning theorists' explanation of why a caregiver (e.g., the mother) was so important to a child. Attachment was not socially learned or satisfaction of the hunger drive, but a biologically based desire for proximity that developed through natural selection. Secure attachment offers evolutionary advantage through feeding, learning about the environment, self-regulation, and social interaction with a reliable, stable, and protective other. Cassidy noted Bowlby considered the protective other to be the mother or a mother-substitute, because he worked with and studied children.

From an evolutionary perspective, Hazan and Shaver (1994) argued that humans have a predisposed need to form close relationships for survival. The basic need for security is best met in social relationships. Naaman et al. (2005) stated emotional-relational connections (i.e., social relationships) evolve into attachment needs of security, trust, safety, and support. To satisfy these basic needs, behavioral systems have developed (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). The formation, maintenance, and termination of close relationships may be understood as a function of these behavioral systems. The social environments in which humans have adapted created individual differences in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in close relationships that form and maintain the mental models individuals construct from actual relationship experience.

The strength of attachment theory lies in its ability to explain scientific outcomes from other approaches and theories related to the processes and evolved tendencies that are used to explain infant-caregiver bonds. The generative power of attachment theory is

revealed through the ability to incorporate a wide range of empirical findings into attachment theory without noteworthy modification or addition. If additions do occur, they naturally follow the established principles of relationship functioning during infancy. Adults also tend to require maintenance of close proximity to someone who is a safe haven and secure base the same way infants exhibit these behaviors with a caregiving parent. Depending on the environment, that person may be an intimate partner at home or an organizational leader at work (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Fraley and Shaver (2008) stated attachment theory could be considered a grand theory as it is related to individual differences, personality organization and dynamics, and individual development and experience of emotions, relationships, love and loss, personality, nature and nurture, development, and psychological defense as studied in social psychology, developmental psychology, behavioral neuroscience, psychobiology, animal behavior, and clinical psychology. Keller (2003) argued that attachment theory could also be applied to industrial and organizational psychology leadership studies to better understand how implicit leadership theories develop and how the leader-member exchange is impacted by individual attachment styles.

The purpose of the attachment system is to ensure the safety and survival of an individual through the accessibility and attentiveness of a person the individual perceives as a reliable attachment figure to protect, provide, and maintain stability, so the individual may be social, explore, and have a sense of feeling cared for and secure (Fraley & Shaver, 2008). Mikulincer and Shaver (2018) noted the attachment figure also provides emotional support, encouragement, and help with emotion regulation during threatening situations, stressful times, or when experiencing pain. If the individual does not perceive

the accessibility and attentiveness of an attachment figure, they may experience despair and depression that shapes the individual's expectations of availability and accessibility of all significant others and their own self-worth. Insecure attachment styles develop from inaccessible or inattentive attachment figures (Fraley & Shaver, 2008).

### **Attachment Styles**

In 1950, Ainsworth joined Bowlby and his team to develop research that would bring structure and meaning to attachment theory. According to Bretherton (1992), Bowlby and Ainsworth believed strongly in the importance of a stable mother-figure to have a mutually warm, loving, and satisfying relationship with a child to guide, teach, manage, and organize the psychological and emotional development of the infant or child. The researchers found maternal deprivation or loss led to significant emotional, psychological, and behavioral differences in children (Bretherton, 1992).

Bretherton (1992) noted the basics of attachment theory were outlined by Bowlby (1958, 1959, 1960) in three papers and two unpublished papers presented to the British Psychoanalytic Society. The psychoanalytic community strongly objected to Bowlby's hypotheses due to his revision of Freud's theory. Upon moving to Uganda in 1953, Ainsworth conducted the first qualitative study of mother-child attachment from an ethological perspective. She also conducted a qualitative study of mother-infant behavior patterns in Baltimore in 1963. Her data helped Bowlby refine his theory and impressed upon him the importance of developing a theory of motivation and behavior control based on current science rather than Freud's outdated psychic energy model, according to Bretherton (1992).

Three patterns of attachment were identified by Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978): secure, avoidant, and anxious-ambivalent attachment. Ainsworth et al. found that mothers who were consistently responsive and sensitive to their infant's verbal, emotional, and behavioral signals had infants who were described as secure. These children were able to use their mother as a secure base for exploration of their environment, and the mothers were attentive to their child's changing needs. Mothers of anxious-ambivalent infants had inconsistent responses to their child's signals; sometimes they were unresponsive or unavailable and other times they were intrusive. This caused their infants to be preoccupied with their mother's availability and attention and reduced the child's exploratory behaviors. Infants with an avoidant style due to their mother's rejecting, deflecting, or rebuffing of the child's bid for closeness, especially close body contact, did not seek contact with their mothers at times when the attachment system would normally be activated. The child kept their focus on toys as a means to suppress attachment behaviors and avoid seeking connection with their mother.

Research has indicated that approximately half of individuals have secure attachment, and half have insecure attachment that is split between avoidant and anxious attachment with slightly more in the avoidant group (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997). Mikulincer, Burnbaum, Woddis, and Nachmias (2000) defined attachment style as the stable patterns of relational thoughts and behaviors based on an individual's attachment history, and Mikulincer, Shaver, Sapir-Lavid, and Avihou-Kanza (2009) described attachment style as a systematic pattern of relational expectations, emotions, and behaviors that develop from a specific attachment history.

Multiple attachments are normal in humans. Even infants form attachments to more than one person in the first year of life. Mothers are generally perceived as an attachment figure, but another who is responsive to emotions and interacts socially with an infant may become an attachment figure (e.g., fathers, older siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles). Cassidy (2018) stated that infants are more likely to securely attach to someone who has been sensitively responsive to the child (e.g., father, siblings, or day care provider).

### **Adult Attachment**

Three patterns of attachment were identified by Hazan and Shaver (1987) in adolescent and adult romantic and marital relationships. Research on adult attachment has also identified two dimensions of adult attachment: an internal model of self as positive or negative and an internal model of others as positive or negative. Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) identified a fourth type of adult attachment (i.e., fearful) based on the dimensional description of attachment styles.

Throughout the lifespan, humans react to perceived threats and danger by seeking closeness to an attachment figure that is believed to be mightier and wiser to provide support and protection to emotionally soothe oneself. Adults may seek proximity to an attachment figure in person, by remembering mental images, patterns, schemas, or specific memories of interactions with a human or nonhuman attachment figure (e.g., pets or spiritual beings), or by using self-soothing techniques learned from an attachment figure (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2018).

Mikulincer et al. (2000) noted individual attachment styles are related to differences in distress regulation. Adults with secure attachment have a history of

positive attachment experiences. They tend to cope with emotion-dysregulating experiences by asking for help from others, believing in their ability to manage stress, having a strong sense of self-efficacy, and trusting other people. Anxiously attached adults use strategies that hyperactivate the attachment system and problem-related cues, use clinging and controlling behaviors to minimize distance between themselves and their attachment figure, and overthink distress cues to ruminate on negative emotions. Avoidantly attached adults use distress regulation strategies designed to put emotional or physical distance between themselves and an attachment figure, divert attention from distressing situations, accentuate self-reliance, avoid seeking support, and use repressive mechanisms.

Long-term experiences with attachment figures result in predictable responses. Secure individuals tend to have a secure-base script that increases the likelihood of support-seeking behaviors when needed to regulate one's emotions (Mikulincer et al., 2009). Securely attached adults use their secure-base script to interpret and respond in most situations and interactions with others. Adults with secure attachment tend to express emotions in a healthy way, optimistically appraise potentially threatening situations, and use effective coping methods when stressed. They are less likely to experience mood disorders or other forms of psychopathology, more likely to enjoy stable and satisfying romantic and marital relationships, have higher self-worth, and they are more curious, creative, empathic, and compassionate toward people than insecurely attached people (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2018).

Insecurely attached adults have learned through repeated experience with attachment figures that the primary strategy of proximity-seeking to achieve emotion

regulation often fails, because the attachment figure is unavailable or unresponsive to their needs, which causes them to rely on alternative coping mechanisms since they are unable to directly and confidently seek proximity to their attachment figure. Avoidant adults tend to deactivate their attachment system through avoidance, they refuse to look for support, and they rely on themselves to regulate their emotions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2018). Mikulincer et al. (2009) noted adults with avoidant attachment tend to distrust their relationship partner's benevolence, and they seek to maintain autonomy and emotional distance from their partner.

Anxiously attached adults tend to regulate their emotions by expressing needs and fears, overstating their distress, and presenting themselves as susceptible to pain and injury (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2018). Mikulincer et al. (2009) noted those with anxious attachment worry that their partner will not be available or sufficiently responsive when needed.

### **Attachment Behavioral System**

An important concept in attachment theory is the attachment behavioral system, because it links ethological models of human development and modern theories of emotion regulation and personality (Fraley & Shaver, 2008). Fraley and Roisman (2015) noted the attachment behavioral system is an innate motivational system that developed to insure one's survival and safety in infancy. The attachment behavioral system is activated when a threat or strong uncertainty is perceived by an individual (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Cassidy (2018) noted that an individual's attachment system is activated when one perceives stress or danger; the location and behavior of one's attachment figure influences the deactivation of the attachment system.



When one is feeling unsafe, they seek to determine if their attachment figure is near enough, attentive, responsive, approving, and so forth. If the attachment figure is affirming in their response, feelings of security, love, and confidence are experienced and behaviors that include playfulness, less inhibition, smiling, are exploration-oriented, and encompass sociability are exhibited (i.e., secure attachment behavior patterns). If the attachment figure is negative in their response, feelings of fear and anxiety lead to visual checking and signaling to reestablish contact by calling or pleading with the attachment figure or moving toward the attachment figure and potentially clinging behaviors (i.e., anxious attachment behavior patterns), or feelings of defensiveness leads to maintenance of nearness and avoidance of close contact (i.e., avoidant attachment behavior patterns) (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

The organization of the attachment behavioral system includes cognitive perceptions or mental representations of the attachment figure, one's self, and their environment that are mainly based on experience. Experiences with attachment figures are repetitive and form scripts that create broader representations. According to Cassidy (2018), Bowlby described these representations as internal working models that allow one to anticipate the future and plan behavior to operate more efficiently. These models inform which attachment behavior to use in specific situations or with certain people. Cassidy noted these models are conscious processes that are based in reality and checked and revised to maintain their relevance.

The attachment behavioral system is a motivational system that is not focused on an object or person. It is the continual pursuit of an emotional state of security and safety (Cassidy, 2018). Bowlby (1979) described the operation of the attachment behavioral

system as being similar to physiological homeostasis in that blood pressure and body temperature are maintained within set limits. He argued that the behavioral control system is organized in the central nervous system, and it maintains set-limits of an organism's relation to its environment and the limits are maintained behaviorally rather than physiologically (Cassidy, 2018).

Emotions are strongly related to attachment, according to Bowlby (1979). Bowlby stated intense emotions occur during the establishment, maintenance, interruption, and repair of attachment relationships (Cassidy, 2018). Emotions serve as a regulatory mechanism to maintain the relationship between an individual and their attachment figure. How emotions are responded to, shared, discussed, and regulated creates individual differences in attachment security.

The role of the attachment figure is to help one learn to regulate their emotions, to model how secure interpersonal relationships function; to communicate how worthy, competent, and needed one is to the attachment figure; and to provide a sense of security, place, and guidance in what may be a kinship relationship (Keller & Cacioppe, 2001). Keller and Cacioppe (2001) argued that the superior-subordinate relationship in the workplace meets criteria for a leader to be an attachment figure, because leaders provide a sense of worth or competence and guidance to subordinates. When an organizational leader is perceived to be an attachment figure by their followers, attachment styles influence how the individuals relate to one another and their work behavior.

### **Attachment and Work**

Intimate relationships and work relationships are not exclusive, as research has tended to represent (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). People in relationships in both these

domains need a safe haven or an available protector or supporter to maintain security and allow exploratory behaviors that increases prosperity, well-being, and survival.

Attachment theory may be used to build a generative theoretical framework of adult relationships, at home and at work, to organize data, make predictions, and guide future research (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Hazan and Shaver (1990) argued that work stimulates attachment dynamics. Similar to infant and child attachment with a caregiver, adults have relational needs in love and work that promote or hinder healthy function. Attachment needs must be met for people to have a secure base or felt relational security that empowers exploration behaviors of their environment. How one approaches their work and coworkers is influenced by their attachment style. Hazan and Shaver noted that one's work provides substantial opportunities for exploration and mastery.

Research by Hazan and Shaver (1990) indicated that securely attached individuals tend to have a secure orientation to work (e.g., high ratings of work success, lower performance fears and worries, less concern about coworker evaluation, and work habits that do not negatively impact health or relationships). Anxiously attached individuals have been associated with an anxious orientation to work (e.g., prefer to work with others rather than alone, over-obligate themselves due to pleasing people, often feel underappreciated, fantasize about success and admiration, are less content with the level of recognition they receive at work, have lower satisfaction with coworkers, higher work-related anxiety, tend to allow work to interfere with friendships, and experience fear of failure and loss of esteem (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Individuals with avoidant attachment have been associated with an avoidant orientation to work (e.g., use work to keep busy

and avoid uncomfortable interpersonal relationships. Those with avoidant attachment also are reluctant to stop working, finish projects, or take vacation; they use work to avoid anxiety due to unmet attachment needs, and compulsively work through vacations, have higher dissatisfaction with coworkers, undervalue their work performance, experience anxious feelings when not working, and allow work to negatively impact health and relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). In addition, Hazan and Shaver found that secure attachment was associated with higher levels of physical and psychological health, and study participants with insecure attachment styles reported more loneliness, depression, anxiety, and irritability, as well as more colds and flu.

Traits of the four attachment styles that have been found in the work place include:

- Secure attachment: Workers have a positive model of self and others; they are comfortable with intimacy and autonomy; they tend to have low levels of overreliance and avoidance; they often see others as available and receptive and see themselves as capable of being loved (Boatwright et al., 2010).
- Avoidant attachment: Workers have a positive model of self and a negative model of others; they are predisposed to avoid close interpersonal relationships; they value their independence rather than closeness in relationships; they are highly self-reliant and reject their attachment needs; they tend to repress their physiological stimulation and deny feelings of vulnerability; they appear to distance themselves from others when experiencing stress (Boatwright et al., 2010).

- Anxious attachment: Workers have a negative model of self and a positive model of others; they are overly dependent on others; they tend to become anxious when relationship closeness and support are absent; tend to remember negative career development histories; they often have low levels of trust and relationship satisfaction; they present poor constructive, collaborative communication skills and unstable emotional states; they tend to be prone to stress, they are easily overwhelmed by negative emotions, and rely others to manage their emotional arousal (Boatwright et al., 2010).
- Fearful attachment: Workers have a negative model of self and others; they often avoid close relationships to protect themselves; they tend to be afraid of rejection; appear to be overly sensitive to criticism; they are inclined to see themselves as unlovable people (Boatwright et al., 2010).

### **Attachment Style and Organizational Leadership**

Because there are distinct differences in leaders, much research has been completed to identify the primary features of good leadership to improve productivity, organizational culture, and the well-being of leaders and followers. Individual differences are made up of psychological or biological characteristics that are measurable, vary between individuals, have temporal and situational stability; and predict attitudes, decisions, behaviors, and results. Unfortunately, past research indicated that no differences existed in individuals that would affect leader outcomes, which stunted the investigation of how leadership traits develop (Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004). New research has indicated that up to 80% of differences in leadership ratings are due to systematic person-level effects (Antonakis, Day, & Schyns, 2012).

In the early 1900s, it was assumed that a leader is a person bestowed with extraordinary qualities that are the source of their influence. Attempts were made to uncover the qualities and traits, but contradictory results made it impossible to clearly define individual features of good leadership. The failure of traits research paved the way for situationally-based investigations, which led to contingency models used to examine the interaction between leadership style and situational variables (Popper, 2000).

Modern researchers argued that leadership is perceived by followers; it is not determined by leaders or how researchers define it. This research paradigm led to leaders falling into two leadership categories: instrumental-transactional leadership and charismatic-transformational leadership. A transactional leader is one who upholds give-and-take dynamics in the context of a set of given expectations. This type of leader fulfills the followers' instrumental expectations by maintaining a close link between effort and reward and is found in many work settings. A charismatic or transformational leader is defined by the emotional bonds that exist between leaders and followers. Due to the emotional bond, followers choose to submit to their leader's wishes not because of logic, but because of the charismatic leader's personal power to guide others. Charismatic leadership does not distinguish between good or evil; charismatic leaders can gain followers that will blindly follow destructive values or serve a beneficial cause (Popper, 2000).

Popper (2000) identified two types of charismatic leaders: socialized charismatic leaders and personalized charismatic leaders. A socialized charismatic leader is one who uses their power to serve others, will align themselves with their followers' needs and goals, maintains open communication, relies on moral standards, tends to serve shared

interests without putting themselves first, empowers others, and cares about followers' feelings and rights. A personalized charismatic leader is one who uses their power for personal gain only, endorses their own vision, participates in one-way communication, relies on convenient moral standards to achieve their personal goals, has strong power needs; has authoritarian, self-serving behavior; exploits others, and disregards others' rights and feelings. Popper (2000) noted empirical research has been focused on leaders' actions and their impact on others, but an explanation is missing regarding the internal methods, motivation, or personality differences that create leadership patterns.

### **Attachment Style Influences Leadership Patterns**

One's leadership patterns are a manifestation of an individual's potential and motivation. According to Popper (2000), leaders need potential, personal resources, and a strong desire to be a leader. One aspect of leadership potential is a leader's attachment style. Securely attached people are able to explore, rely on themselves and others, and ask for help if needed. Ambivalent or anxiously attached individuals tend to have separation anxiety and be clingy with unresolved anger which may be perceived as an attempt to bring about attention from an inattentive, inconsistent attachment figure. Those with avoidant attachment expect to be rejected and may attempt to eliminate their emotional needs through self-sufficiency, minimizing attachment behaviors and feelings, and devaluing the importance of attachment. They may exhibit aggressive or antisocial behaviors toward others.

People with fearful and anxious attachment are less likely to become leaders, because they are not able to convey a sense of control or authority which followers are seeking in order to maintain their own sense of safety and care. Research has shown that

individuals with secure or avoidant attachment styles are more likely to become leaders due to their ability to project a sense of strength and security (Popper, 2000). Events in childhood, and later in significant relationships, may contribute to a view of the world where safety is achieved through dominance or a view that power is not for domination but is a process of empowering others. Individuals who are seen as anxious or ambivalent are rated as non-leaders. An important variable in determining followers' preference of group leaders is the amount of self-efficacy attributed to the leader. Popper (2000) noted self-efficacy was found to be more significant than a leader's intelligence or dominance.

Popper (2000) argued that one's attachment style influences their self-perception and perception of others and that socialized, charismatic leaders tend to have a secure attachment style. Their leadership pattern is defined by healthy self-esteem, positive regard for self and others, interest in others, a willingness to participate in interpersonal relationships, and an adequate level of self-efficacy, competence, and comfort in close relationships. In contrast, personalized charismatic leaders tend to have an avoidant attachment style. They generally do not have an interest in others, are reluctant to maintain intimate, ongoing relationships, may have traits of narcissism or antisocial personality disorder, tend to focus on leading to improve their self-interests, but they may be effective leading groups that do not require close relationships. Individuals with an anxious ambivalent attachment style are more likely to be dependent on others, have low self-efficacy in perceiving their own leadership, and are less likely to become leaders. Differences in leadership motivation determine whether leaders are seeking to have followers fill their needs or seeking to meet follower's needs.



Followers' attachment style influences the type of leader they want to work with. Boatwright et al. (2010) found workers with secure attachment style are comfortable working with others in a friendly manner, they are able to ask their leader for support or clarification, they are able to receive constructive feedback; leaders may need to be more conscientious when leading others with insecure attachment styles. Individuals with avoidant attachment style who make fewer requests from their leader and tend to perceive lower support from supervisors may need a leader who clearly communicates expectations, does not require many collaborative or team projects, communicates through e-mail or text rather than face-to-face meetings that require more relational connection, and seeks to understand the avoidantly attached worker's perspective (e.g., coworkers may be perceived as disruptive, there may be no interest in projects that do not affect them, and they require less personal interactions).

Anxiously attached workers tend to prefer leaders who are approachable, create supportive and collaborative relationships, give personal support, lead through consensus, create emotional safety in the workplace, facilitate mutual trust, include anxiously attached workers in important leadership decisions, and understand that workers who feel disconnected or less emotional security or attachment to their leader may cause disruptive or passive protests in the work team. Fearfully attached workers prefer leaders who are perceptive to signs they are distressed or have an issue to discuss because the worker may not be assertive in communicating a problem when a leader could reject them, feedback must be presented thoughtfully and sensitively to allow fearfully attached workers to protect themselves, and leaders should reward assertive behavior to reduce attachment related negative behavior. The ability of leaders to adapt to followers' attachment styles

and meet their relational needs is important to increase leader effectiveness, responsiveness, interpersonal flexibility, and to create healthy work environments, according to Boatwright et al. (2010).

### **Attachment Style and Transformational Leadership**

To explain the process that occurs when charismatic leaders cause transformational effects on followers, Popper and Mayseless (2003) argued that charismatic leaders motivate followers by creating personal commitment and communicating the value of effort and goal accomplishment through symbolic interaction much like a parent influences a child toward prosocial behavior. In the 1930s, Freud first linked the role of leader to the role of a father (Popper & Mayseless, 2003). Other researchers have argued that leaders, like parents, are figures whose role is to guide, direct, take charge of, and care for others less powerful and whose fate is dependent on them (Bretherton, 1992; Hansbrough, 2012; Keller, 2003; Keller & Cacioppe, 2001; Popper & Mayseless, 2003).

Transformational leaders have been identified as individuals who empower followers, motivate them to work on higher goals, elevate followers' maturity and ideals, promote achievement, invest in their self-actualization, and have concern for the well-being of others, the organization, and society (Popper & Mayseless, 2003). Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Kohlberg's theory of moral development, Burns (1978) identified transformational leader's ability to motivate followers to achieve self-actualization and morality to help followers achieve justice, equality, and prosocial behaviors by "raising the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, thus it has a transforming effect on both" (Popper & Mayseless, 2003, p. 44).

Because transformational leaders do not gain strength from weak or dependent followers, they tend to increase follower's autonomy, independence, self-efficacy, confidence, competence, self-esteem, self-management, creativity, and risk-taking through empowerment. Maysless (2010) noted that transformational leaders have vision, are inspirational, have consideration for individuals and group members, provide intellectual inspiration; and have prosocial and empowering management styles, high leadership effectiveness, and positive outcomes for followers. Popper and Maysless (2003) noted that good parents and transformational leaders have similar goals in promoting trust, keeping an achievement orientation, and modeling desired behaviors.

Transformational leaders, like good parents, may be characterized as a safe haven and a secure base. Followers may form attachment relationships with leaders for protection, to improve daily functioning, provide a sense of security, create stability to take risks, and be creative which leads to learning and growth. Leaders who have an avoidant attachment style tend to create insecurity in followers, which prevents learning and growth. Leaders who are perceived as a secure base offer a sense of protection in everyday situations. Popper and Maysless (2003) noted that protection as a safe haven in times of crisis should not be regressive and harmful to allow followers to regain self-reliance, personal power, autonomy, and self-actualization. The need for security and protection from people who are believed to be stronger and more knowledgeable does not diminish with age or maturity. Even though leaders are flawed and fallible, they are often perceived as a safe haven and secure base due to followers' attachment needs (Maysless, 2010).

Popper et al. (2000) noted that transformational leaders motivate followers to perform at higher levels, give greater effort, and have more commitment than do other types of leader. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was designed to measure transformational leadership by detecting a leader's idealized influence, including both the leader's behavior and followers' perception of influence. The MLQ also measures inspirational motivation or how leaders inspire and motivate followers through enthusiasm, optimism, visionary leadership, and commitment to shared goals. In addition, the MLQ measures individualized consideration, which is a leader's consistent effort to be an individualized coach, mentor, and developer; and intellectual stimulation, defined as a leader's ability to stimulate innovation, creativity, and problem solving. What the MLQ is used to discern is transformational leadership skills of a securely attached leader.

A leader's attachment style greatly influences their ability to become a transformational leader due to their perceptions of self and others. Secure adults have a positive model of self and others. Anxious ambivalent adults have a negative model of self, but a positive model of others. Avoidant adults have a positive sense of self and a negative perception of others. Fearful adults have a negative sense of self and others (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

Bowlby (1988) believed that attachment styles are consistent throughout life, but changes may occur at any time, both negatively and positively, through caregiving by an attachment figure, an individual's ability to reflect and examine contradictions in internal models, through initiating and experiencing new relationships, or through corrective experiences with a supportive, sensitive other who may be an intimate partner, friend,

therapist, or coach. Popper and Maysless (2003) argued that transformational leaders may act as an attachment figure for their followers and provide corrective experiences by initiating change or maintaining and strengthening a change that was started in another context.

Harms (2011) noted that research regarding attachment style and workplace behaviors is limited and argued that it might be due to overcoming theoretical boundaries, possible assessment issues due to trait models of leadership concepts, and disdain for psychodynamic models in empirical literature. Additionally, Harms noted that researching attachment theory in the workplace may enhance models of leadership, performance, and employee engagement.

Empirical research of attachment at work was informally searched by Harms (2011), and he found that of 19 introductory textbooks in organizational behavior and human resource management, none had any mention of attachment theory, but an overwhelming emphasis on the five-factor model (FFM or the Big Five) of personality was included. Even though several studies link attachment and the Big Five, research has shown that attachment styles create significantly higher predictive power above the five personality traits, particularly when relationship outcomes are being studied (Nofle & Shaver, 2006; Roisman et al., 2007). Also, correlations between the Big Five traits and attachment styles are commonly small or insignificant.

### **Attachment Style Research in the Workplace**

An issue in conducting attachment theory research in the workplace is there are few measures specifically designed to assess attachment style, behavioral system-induced behavior, and attachment-related behavior for the workplace. In attachment theory in the

workplace research, Boatwright et al. (2010) used Bartholomew and Horowitz's Relationship Questionnaire, Hazan and Shaver (1987, 1990) used items from the Love-Experience Scales, Hamarta et al. (2009) used Griffin and Bartholomew's (1994) RSQ, Popper and Amit (2009) used Bartholomew and Shaver's (1998) Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), Popper et al. (2000) used Griffin and Bartholomew's (1994) RSQ, and Davidovitz et al. (2007) used Brennan, Clark, and Shaver's (1998) Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) measure in organizational studies. Each of these instruments were designed to measure intimate partner attachment traits; they were not designed for organizational use.

Paetzold (2015) noted that measuring attachment in the workplace is an issue that continues to be unresolved. Measures created for use in the workplace are minimal. The Adult Attachment in the Workplace measure developed by Neustadt, Chamorro-Premuzic, and Furnham (2006) was cited, but Paetzold argued that the measure is difficult to interpret because avoidant and insecure attachment are assessed together and identified as insecure attachment without definition of what the results mean in the workplace. The Self-Reliance Inventory (SRI; Quick, Joplin, Nelson, & Quick, 1992) is also used in organizational settings, but it only measures three types of attachment styles, including interdependence or secure attachment; counterdependence or avoidant-dismissing attachment; and overdependence or anxious-preoccupied attachment. Paetzold stated the SRI has been validated, but the scale may not be comparable with scales focusing on two-dimensional scales (e.g., avoidance and anxiety with security representing a low score in both dimensions). A measure is needed for use in organizations that measures attachment-related behaviors and beliefs in the workplace

and encompasses both dimensions (i.e., avoidant and anxious) and all four attachment styles.

## **Emotional Intelligence**

### **What is Emotion?**

In seeking to define emotion, often theorists begin with a list of types of emotion (Cabanac, 2002). Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981) found there were 92 different definitions of emotion in the scientific literature, which makes defining emotion challenging. As noted by Kleinginna and Kleinginna, emotion tends to be commonly understood, except by psychologists. Emotion research is complex and can be analyzed from many perspectives, which makes developing a complete understanding or theory of emotion extremely difficult.

### **Feeling Theories**

Moors (2009) noted that emotion theories are organized around emotion causation, and they differ in what process is involved in causing emotion. In addition, Moors noted that James' theory of emotion, also called a feeling theory, is based on somatic responses to stimuli. One experiences a stimulus, the body responds to the stimulus, and feelings related to the bodily response cause an emotional experience which one would call an emotion.

Considering emotion as a somatic response or feeling involves motor and visceral components. According to Cabanac (2002), humans experience a state of physiological arousal and cognition appropriate to their state of arousal, and he argued that emotion is a mental state that includes somatic signals. Cabanac noted that natural selection operates on consciousness according to evolutionary psychology, consciousness evolved from

sensation, and consciousness should display a four-dimensional structure of sensation (e.g., duration, quality, intensity, and pleasure or displeasure = mental experience); therefore, emotion is any mental experience with high intensity and high pleasure or displeasure content.

### **Appraisal Theories**

Appraisal theories of emotion attribute emotion first to an unconscious cognition. An appraisal refers to the cognitive process involved in emotion expression. Cognition comes before an emotional episode, after the stimuli and prior to a body response; consequently, the cognitive component determines which stimuli lead to an emotion or not, which emotion should be produced, and the intensity that should be expressed. Feeling and appraisal theories of emotion are in direct contrast to one another (Moors, 2009).

Moors, Ellsworth, Scherer, and Frijda (2013) stated that appraisal theory has gained more support as a scientifically supported theory of emotion than have feeling theories. Moors et al. noted that researchers have been able to develop concrete predictions and test them empirically. Appraisal theories are defined as processes versus states in feeling theories. According to Moors et al., appraisal theories are based on components of an emotional episode which includes an appraisal component (e.g., perceptions of an environment and the human-environment interaction), a motivational component (e.g., tendency for action readiness), a somatic component (e.g., physiological responses), a motor component (e.g., expressive behavior), and a feeling component (e.g., subjective feelings or experiences). The emotional process repeats endlessly. Changes in



components may lead to changes in physiological and behavioral responses, which may lead to changes in appraisal.

Emotion is a psychological process that serves a purpose for humans. Baumeister, Vohs, DeWall, and Zhang (2007) argued if emotion were not necessary, the process would have been extinguished over time in humans. The common-sense argument that emotion causes behavior is inadequate, according to Baumeister et al., and they stated emotion is a feedback system that allows humans to anticipate emotional outcomes and behave accordingly. Additionally, Baumeister et al. noted that emotions do sometimes directly affect behavior, but these behavioral responses can have negative outcomes. Learning how to regulate emotions is essential to improving one's emotional and behavioral function.

### **Emotion Regulation**

Emotion regulation is considered a process that individuals use to modulate their emotions consciously and nonconsciously to respond appropriately to environmental demands. Aldao et al. (2010) stated that individuals use regulatory strategies to modify the magnitude or type of emotional experience or the emotion-eliciting event. As Aldao et al. noted, theoretical models associate successful emotion regulation with positive health outcomes, improved relationships, academic, and work performance.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a theory of emotion regulation based on one's ability to regulate one's emotions according to a consistent and logical model of emotional functioning (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). EI may be defined as the capacity to recognize, construct, regulate, and process emotional information in oneself and others accurately and proficiently. Mayer and Salovey (1995) stated there are differences

between general intelligence and EI. General intelligence is measured by cognitive performance, and EI is measured by adaptation of emotional reactions. They argued when a person has a belief that a particular emotion is inappropriate in a situation (i.e., anger) but continues to exhibit that emotion in situations, that person is emotionally unintelligent; either the belief is incorrect, or the person has missed an opportunity for self-regulation (Mayer & Salovey, 1995).

Other theories of emotion regulation include: nonconscious or unconscious construction and regulation of emotion as a neurological function, an automatic response, or due to repression of an emotion. Low-level consciousness of emotion regulation (e.g., fleeting attention to emotions; shallow awareness, likely to be unrehearsed or not recalled), and higher consciousness theories involve reflective or meta-level attention to emotion, perceptions of self, and are likely to be recalled and reflect back on itself. Mayer and Salovey (1995) argued the issue with each of these theories is that emotion regulation is nonexistent or low or reflecting back on the emotion rather than on how to regulate it. One must be able to modify an emotion before it is fully complete or experienced to regulate the emotion. EI is the ability to construct and regulate an emotion.

### **Theory of EI**

The theory of EI was developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). EI is measured by two categories: trait EI and ability EI (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). According to Petrides and Furnham (2001), trait EI refers to behavioral tendencies and self-perceived abilities, and ability EI is related to cognitive ability and personality dimensions that are mainly

affective (e.g., extraversion and neuroticism). Trait EI includes empathy, assertiveness, social intelligence, and personal intelligence (Petrides & Furnham, 2001).

Trait EI is believed to lie outside defined classifications of cognitive ability and is conceptualized as personality traits that lie in the lower levels of one's personality hierarchy (Petrides, Pérez-González, & Furnham, 2007). Rumination, life satisfaction, coping, depression and dysfunctional attitudes, use of self-monitoring (e.g., ability to modify self-presentation and sensitivity to emotional expression), and personality disorders relationship to trait EI were examined by Petrides et al. (2007). After all variance for the Big Five had been partialled out, trait EI was correlated with lower scores on rumination, greater levels of life satisfaction, higher use of adaptive coping styles (i.e., rationality and detachment), and lower use of maladaptive coping styles (i.e., avoidance and emotionality; Petrides et al., 2007). Petrides et al. also reported a negative relationship to depression and dysfunctional attitudes, and a positive relationship to self-monitoring, negatively associated with physical and hostile aggression, and negatively associated with paranoid, schizoid, schizotypal, borderline, dependent, and avoidant personality disorders (PDs) as defined by the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases* (10th rev., ICD-10; World Health Organization [WHO], 1992) and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th ed., DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association, 1994) criteria. Antisocial and obsessive-compulsive PDs were not statistically significant, and histrionic PD was not supported. Petrides et al. noted individuals high in trait EI believe they have awareness of their feelings and are able to regulate them, can regulate their emotions and resist depressive thoughts that may contribute to disorders when experiencing stress, can observe and control emotional

reactions, and regulate their emotions and expressions of emotion. Petrides et al. (2007) stated that trait EI may have a role in diagnosing personality disorders, as low trait EI scores may predispose individuals to psychopathology.

### **Variables Relationship and Research Gap**

Research has found building blocks (e.g., self-confidence, prosocial orientation, proactive optimistic orientation, openness, and high motivation to lead) of a leader's development begin in childhood (Popper & Maysel, 2007). Development of leaders begins in infancy due to the influence of one's attachment style on their capacity to lead, and secure attachment style influences one's potential to lead (Popper & Amit, 2009). In the workplace, the leader-follower relationship is a category of an adult close relationship that is influenced by individual attachment styles (Popper et al., 2000).

The superior-subordinate relationship may be identified as an affectional bond that evokes attachment dynamics (Keller & Cacioppe, 2001). Followers may perceive their leader as an attachment figure, and research indicates that this affects leader motivation, function, and mental health as well as follower emotional and behavioral function (Davidovitz et al., 2007). Followers' attachment style affects their preference of relational leadership behaviors (Boatwright et al., 2010). Attachment style affects how individuals perceive their own ability to lead, and peers tend to perceive individuals with secure attachment style as emerging leaders (Berson et al., 2006). Attachment style is an important precursor of interpersonal relationship quality and psychological well-being that affects organizational behavior (Harms, 2011).

Batool (2013) stated there is a significant positive relationship between effective leadership and EI. In addition, EI has been shown to underlie a leader's people or

relationship skills (Caruso et al., 2002). Effective leaders tend to display a transformational style that is positively correlated with EI (Palmer et al., 2001). A significant, positive correlation between secure attachment style and EI abilities defined as intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood in Turkish college students was found by Hamarta, Deniz, and Saltali (2009). Research regarding attachment style and EI in American organizational leaders is minimal. The purpose of this present study was to determine whether secure attachment style is significantly correlated with global trait EI in organizational leaders.

Research has been conducted to examine how followers' attachment style affects the leader-member exchange (Maslyn, Schyns, & Farmer, 2017), but research is needed to gain insight into how a leader's attachment style is correlated with EI. This current research is important, because understanding what influences EI could link the concepts of attachment, EI, transformational leadership style, and a positive leader member exchange (Harms & Credé, 2010). Giving leaders insight into the impact of their attachment style on how they relate to subordinates, how others perceive them through the lens of attachment, and how they perceive themselves could improve leadership coaching and self-awareness that increases a leader's interpersonal effectiveness and personal well-being (Lopez & Ramos, 2016).

EI has been correlated with the transformational leadership style, which also has been linked to secure attachment style (Harms & Credé, 2010). The theoretical construct that was measured in the current research was trait EI, because the ability EI has been significantly, positively correlated with secure attachment style in Turkish college students (Hamarta et al., 2009). For this present research, it was appropriate to examine

trait EI instead of ability EI, because measures of trait EI have tended to show higher validities than measures of ability EI (Harms & Credé, 2010).

### **Summary**

The mystery surrounding how leaders develop and the qualities that contribute to a healthy, effective leadership style is decreasing by understanding how leaders' attachment style and trait EI impact their emotions, cognitions, and behavior. This literature review has highlighted studies that demonstrate the importance of both variables, and the current study was designed to measure attachment style and global trait EI to gain insight into their relationship. It was expected there would be a positive relationship between secure attachment and global trait EI and a negative relationship between insecure attachment and global trait EI.

## **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY**

The primary focus of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational leaders' attachment style and global trait EI. Due to a lack of appropriate measures to assess attachment styles in the workplace, a new measure was developed. The RWQ was used to assess the three attachment styles and two dimensions of insecure attachment. The new measure and the TEIQue-SF were used with a sample of organizational leaders to statistically analyze if attachment style and global trait EI are related. This research joins the growing pool of knowledge regarding attachment in the workplace and its relationship to trait EI to potentially improve leadership effectiveness and the leader-follower exchange. Prior research on leaders' secure attachment style and EI have revealed both constructs greatly impact how individuals lead, perceive themselves and others, and respond to followers.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate if leaders' attachment style is related to global trait EI. The results of this study provided a new measurement tool for use in the workplace that has demonstrated validity and reliability. The findings of this research will be helpful to executive coaches, individuals conducting 360-degree feedback, and those who specialize in leadership development to help leaders increase their self-awareness and other-awareness, understand their own behavior better, and determine how their behavior affects their followers. If the hypothesis that secure attachment and global trait EI are correlated, leaders and coaches will have tangible behaviors to pursue, relational behavior traits that may be practiced and incorporated into their leadership

style, and a description of what secure attachment is so it may be developed to increase leaders' trait EI.

Leaders, their followers, and their organizations will benefit from this study. With the knowledge to identify and measure secure attachment, leaders will be able to communicate their talent and skill related to secure attachment and trait EI when pursuing leadership positions, hiring managers will be able to understand what characteristics are vital to the effectiveness of leaders, and training could be developed to teach attachment theory in the workplace. When leaders, followers, and organizations become aware of the interpersonal dynamics that affect all relationships, they will be able to plan and respond better to the needs of a group. As noted earlier, employee engagement and leadership surveys are administered at many organizations annually, but what the data mean or how to use them is unclear. The results of this study could give meaning to the data, and increase awareness of the needs of a leader or group (e.g., reassigning a leader to a group with a better fit based on their attachment style and trait EI and understanding how followers' attachment style influences how they respond to feedback surveys).

## **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

### **Research Questions (RQs)**

RQ1: Do the psychometric properties of the Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) demonstrate satisfactory properties in the sample of working adults in the United States with direct reports?

RQ2: Does the Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) demonstrate predicted convergent validity with the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ)?



RQ3: Is there a relationship between an organizational leader's attachment style and emotional intelligence (EI)?

### **Hypotheses**

Hypotheses related to the factor analysis of the RWQ were that the dimensions of the measure will sufficiently hold together, and Cronbach's alpha will be greater than .8. It was hypothesized that the factor analysis would also demonstrate that the constructs are sufficiently independent. It was expected that the 34 variables in the measure would produce three factors. The MTurk sample completed the RWQ, the RSQ, and the TEIQue-SF. It was hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant correlation with the RSQ to establish convergent validity.

Hypotheses of this study associated with RQ3 were that organizational leaders with secure attachment would be positively correlated with global trait EI, and insecure leaders would have a negative correlation with global trait EI. Based on empirical research related to attachment and leadership, the following hypotheses were asserted:

H<sub>0</sub>1: The factor analysis of the data from the MTurk sample will not indicate three unique factors that demonstrate convergent validity with the RSQ.

H<sub>a</sub>1: The factor analysis of the data from the MTurk sample will indicate three unique factors that demonstrate convergent validity with the RSQ.

H<sub>0</sub>2: The Relationships at Work Questionnaire will have no relationship, as predicted, with the RSQ.

H<sub>a</sub>2: The Relationships at Work Questionnaire will have a significantly positive correlation with the RSQ.

H<sub>03</sub>: Participants with secure attachment will have no relationship with global trait EI.

H<sub>a3</sub>: Participants with secure attachment will have a significantly positive correlation with global trait EI.

H<sub>03a</sub>: Participants with anxious or avoidant attachment will have no relationship with global trait EI.

H<sub>a3a</sub>: Participants with anxious or avoidant attachment will have a significantly negative correlation with global trait EI.

### **Research Design**

The research design of this study was a quantitative, correlational design. This researcher examined the relationship between two important constructs of organizational leaders (i.e., attachment style and global trait EI). The choice of research design was important to identify factors of leadership that contribute to effectiveness and are changeable. In order to do that, the psychometric properties needed to be established for the RWQ to appropriately measure attachment styles in the workplace.

Phase 1 of this study was conducted with subject matter experts that reviewed the RWQ and sorted the measure's items according to the attachment style they represent. Published empirical researchers were used to establish content validity and interrater reliability. The results of Phase 1 were used to determine the items contained in the RWQ that were used in Phases 2 and 3 of this study.

Phase 2 comprised a convenience sample of 294 participants from the Amazon MTurk group that completes HITs and received \$1.00 as payment. Participants self-selected participation by voluntarily completing surveys and questionnaires through the

MTurk portal, and their data were collected with a brief demographic questionnaire, the RWQ, the RSQ, and the TEIQue-SF. Their data were collected online similar to the sample of organizational leaders in Phase 3.

For Phase 3, a sample of organizational leaders were invited to participate in the study through an email that contained an introduction to the study and a Survey Monkey link to the demographic questionnaire, the RWQ, and the TEIQue-SF. Data were collected from Survey Monkey, and all data were managed solely by this researcher. No personal or identifying data were collected from participants in Phases 1, 2, or 3 of the study.

### **Sampling Design Phase 2**

#### **Setting**

Phase 2 included 300 participants self-selected through the AWS MTurk. Participants completed the questionnaires in their location. Additionally, participation was limited to individuals living and working in the United States, who were over age 18, and held leadership positions with any number of direct reports.

#### **Population**

Phase 2 involved an online sample recruited through the MTurk service from AWS. The researcher purchased 300 HITs from MTurk, and the RWQ, RSQ, and TEIQue-SF were completed by the MTurk sample to conduct a factor analysis of the RWQ and to begin determination of the convergent validity of the measure.

#### **Sample**

The number of participants in the MTurk sample was determined based on the number of items in the RWQ for a factor analysis. Meyers, Gamst, and Guarino (2016)

advised that a 25-item measure should be analyzed with a 250-participant sample and a 90-item measure should be analyzed with a 400-participant sample. Based on these recommendations, a 300-participant sample was used for the factor analysis.

### **Recruitment**

MTurk has specific guidelines that must be followed. No identifiable information may be gathered from participants. The number of participants needed for research may be purchased as HITs, and participants are paid to complete the HITs. To ensure the appropriateness of the sample, parameters may be selected to be confident participants meet criteria needed to produce valid and reliable results.

### **Sampling Design Phase 3**

#### **Setting**

The organizational leader sample was invited to participate through an email request that was sent to this researcher's personal and professional network. Posts on LinkedIn and Facebook were used to recruit from this researcher's network.

#### **Population**

A sample of 125 organizational leaders were used for this phase of the study. Participants were required to be organizational leaders who were over age 18, working in the United States, and who had any number of direct reports. A Survey Monkey link that contained a demographic form, the RWQ, and the TEIQue-SF was emailed to recruited participants, and individuals in this researcher's network were asked to share the link to the survey on their social media pages to reach additional organizational leaders.

## **Sample**

The organizational sample was determined based on the number of participants that responded to the questionnaires. The sample contained participants from retail, technology, and higher education. Individuals who responded received no reward or compensation for participating.

## **Recruitment**

Participants were recruited by email and social media (i.e., LinkedIn and Facebook) from this researcher's personal and professional network. An email was sent to potential respondents that included a cover letter and a link to Survey Monkey that contained a brief introduction to the study, informed consent, demographic questions, and the RWQ and TEIQue-SF. The participants self-selected based on their leadership role in American organizations as adults with any number of direct reports.

## **Measures**

### **Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ)**

The RWQ was developed and psychometric properties established in this study to measure attachment styles in the workplace as a new assessment designed specifically for use in organizations. An original pool of 54 items was created based on Griffin and Bartholomew's (1994) RSQ and the research of Berson et al. (2006), Boatwright et al. (2010), Hazan and Shaver (1990), Maslyn et al. (2017); Popper and Amit (2009); Popper and Mayseless (2007). The RWQ's items consist of statements that have been used to assess four attachment styles and two dimensions of attachment security in intimate relationship research (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). After the 54 items were submitted for a card-sorting exercise with attachment researchers who are subject matter experts, it

was expected there would be fewer items on the RWQ, and these items would be used to establish construct validity of the measure. A 5-point Likert scale format was used by participants to respond to the measures' items: 1 = *Not at all like me*; 2 = *Usually not like me*; 3 = *Somewhat like me*; 4 = *Often like me*; 5 = *Very much like me*; and *I choose not to answer*.

### **Relationships Scales Questionnaire (RSQ)**

The RSQ is a 30-item questionnaire with three items reverse-scored (i.e., Items 6, 9, and 28), using the same response scale as the RWQ. The RSQ measures four attachment styles and two dimensions of insecure attachment. Mikulincer and Shaver (2018) noted the dimensions of attachment should be computed with a factor analysis specifying a two-factor solution. Ravitz, Maunder, Hunter, Sthankiya, and Lancee (2010) stated the RSQ included the following scales: secure, avoidance, ambivalence, closeness, anxiety, and dependency. The  $\alpha$  for the secure scale was .50, and the other scales ranged from  $\alpha = .69 - .82$ . Confirmatory factor analysis revealed the dimensions of avoidance ( $\alpha = .86$ ) and anxiety ( $\alpha = .84$ ) were the best fitting model. Fearful ( $\alpha = .79$ ) and dismissing ( $\alpha = .64$ ) had the highest Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values, and low reliabilities were found for secure ( $\alpha = .32$ ) and preoccupied/fearful ( $\alpha = .46$ ). The reliability of the attachment dimension of "model of others" was acceptable ( $\alpha = .68$ ), and "model of self" was low ( $\alpha = .50$ ).

### **Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF)**

The measurement tool used to assess trait EI was the TEIQue-SF (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). This measure contains 30 items in a self-report format to measure how one perceives their emotional abilities or global trait EI. Each item is rated by participants on a 7-point Likert-type scale, on which 1 = *completely disagree* and 7 =

*completely agree*. Global trait EI is measured as a continuous variable with higher scores indicating higher trait EI based on reverse-scoring 15 items, summing responses, and dividing the sum by the number of items.

The TEIQue-SF is based on the TEIQue (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). This measure included 153 items scored on a 7-point Likert scale with the same anchors, 15 facets in four factors on the long form of the TEIQue used to measure global trait EI. Of the facets, 13 have corresponding factors: emotionality = trait empathy, emotion perception, emotion expression, and relationships; sociability = emotion management, assertiveness, and social awareness; well-being = self-esteem, trait optimism, and trait happiness; and self-control = emotion regulation, low impulsiveness, and stress management. The facets of adaptability and self-motivation are not keyed to any factor, but contribute to the global EI score. The instrument was designed to be factor-analyzed at the factor level rather than at the item level to prevent misleading or hard-to-interpret results.

The TEIQue was normed on a sample of 1,721 individuals (female = 912, male = 764, unreported = 61; Petrides, 2009). Petrides (2009) noted that the measure has satisfactory internal consistency of all 20 variables for both men and women. The mean age of the sample was 29.65 years (SD = 11.94 years; range 15.7–77 years). Participants were White UK origin (58%), White European (19.2%), Indian (6.6%), African and Caribbean (5.7%) East Asian (5.1%), and Other (5.4%). The education level of participants included middle school certificates (14%), high school diploma (30.8%), college degree (29.5%), post-graduate degrees (3.3% = MBA and 1.4% = Ph.D.), and other (6.8%).

The psychometric properties of the TEIQue in a French-speaking population were globally normally distributed and reliable; the four-factor structure used with the UK sample replicated with the French sample; the scores were gender dependent, but not age dependent (Mikolajczak, Luminet, Leroy, & Roy, 2007). There was evidence of convergent and discriminant validity with TEIQue scores being independent from nonverbal reasoning, but positively related to optimism, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness, and inversely related to neuroticism and alexithymia. There was evidence of criterion validity with TEIQue scores predicting anxiety, depression, and social support and future state affectivity and emotional reactivity in neutral and stressful situations. The TEIQue scores were vulnerable to socially desirable responding, but the measure had incremental validity to predict emotional reactivity above social desirability, alexithymia, and the FFM of personality (Mikolajczak et al., 2007).

The TEIQue was reported to consistently explain incremental variance in diverse areas of functioning beyond higher-order personality dimensions and other emotion-related variables (Andrei, Siegling, Aloe, Baldaro, & Petrides, 2016). In an Italian sample, results confirmed the four-factor structure and reliability of the Italian TEIQue (I-TEIQue); the I-TEIQue and Bar-On's EQ-I were significantly correlated, but the MSCEIT was not significantly correlated; and overlap with aspects of personality was found with a moderately positive correlation with the Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ), but Di Fabio, Saklofske, and Tremblay (2016) stated trait EI is a distinct construct.

All forms of the TEIQue are available free of charge for scientific and academic research. A donation is requested of £29 for use of the TEIQue-SF. Permission to use the TEIQue is not required for research. The assessment is scored through Petrides'



London Psychometric Laboratory website, and scoring is free (Petrides & London Psychometric Lab, 2019).

### **Data Collection**

Based on an exhaustive search of the literature, this researcher found that a reliable and valid measure of attachment styles in the workplace does not exist. Most workplace research has been conducted using measures designed for adult, intimate relationships and reworded to accommodate relationships at work without reporting the psychometric properties of the altered measures. The RWQ was validated in three phases. Phase 1 involved a card-sorting exercise with attachment theory experts. The RWQ was sent to researchers who specialize in empirical attachment studies. The experts were asked to read each statement and select which attachment type the statement represented.

Phase 2 of establishing the psychometric properties of the RWQ involved a convenience sample of working adults who completed the RWQ, the RSQ (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994), and the TEIQue-SF (Petrides & Furnham, 2003) to establish convergent validity. The RSQ is an adult attachment measure that assesses the four attachment styles and two dimensions of adult attachment. A post was uploaded to the MTurk community that contained an invitation to participate and a Survey Monkey link that contained five demographic questions, the RWQ, RSQ, and TEIQue-SF to allow participants to remain anonymous and take the surveys in the same style as the organizational leaders did in the final phase.

Phase 3 was conducted to answer the third research question of this study. A sample of adults working in American corporations were invited to participate in this

phase of the research. An email was sent to individuals that contained a cover letter and a link to the Survey Monkey site that included demographic questions, the RWQ, and the TEIQue-SF. The rationale for gathering demographic data such as gender and age was to compare results of the current research to previous studies that included examination of these variables to support internal validity of this current research (Mikolajczak et al., 2007).

Participants provided informed consent prior to completing demographic information or the measures. They were informed that they may stop participating at any time, that their information would remain confidential, and no identifying information would be collected in relation to their participation in this study. The link to the Survey Monkey portal was imbedded in the email, so participants did not need to search for links to the measures. No IP addresses were captured by Survey Monkey, and participants were informed that no follow-up would be provided, but they could contact the Keiser University IRB Director or this researcher at the email address provided in the cover letter with questions or concerns.

### **Internal and External Validity**

Construct validity is defined in the APA Standards as “the degree to which the individual possesses some hypothetical trait or quality [construct] presumed to be reflected in the test performance” (Sartori & Pasini, 2007, p. 369). A measure should be designed to assess the theoretical construct it is designed or used to measure, according to Sartori and Pasini (2007). Also, convergent validity is based on a measure having a high correlation with tests measuring the same (i.e., positive correlation) or opposite (i.e., negative correlation) constructs and consistently predicts an individual’s behavior in a

specific situation. Sartori and Pasini noted validity is made up of content, construct, and convergent validity to prevent basing the overall validity of a measure on a test that may not be properly correlated to the construct being measured.

Drost (2011) noted that external validity of a measure is the generalizability between persons, settings, and times. It is important to determine whether external validity is based on a clearly determined target population or generalized across populations. External validity in this study was based on examining the correlation between attachment styles and EI in organizational leaders with direct reports who are knowledge workers in American corporations. The results of this study may not generalize to leaders in labor or manufacturing settings, although Davidovitz et al.'s (2007) research indicated attachment style is a factor in military leadership.

#### **Storage and Protection of Data**

No identifying information was collected from the MTurk sample or the organizational leaders. Survey data were collected through the Survey Monkey website, but no IP addresses were collected from participants. SPSS was used on this researcher's personal laptop to analyze the data. Unique coding was used to enter the data into SPSS rather than names or other identifying information of participants. Survey Monkey created a unique, random Respondent ID number for each participant.

The names and email addresses of the researchers who participated in the card-sorting exercise will not be made public. The responses to the Survey Monkey questionnaire were analyzed to determine the content validity of the items on the RWQ. The results of the card-sorting exercise determined the number of items for each attachment style that were included in the version used with the MTurk sample, and the

final version of the RWQ was based on the outcome of the factor analysis of the MTurk data.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis included an examination of the psychometric properties of the RWQ instrument and the relationship between the RWQ and global trait EI in organizational leaders in American corporations. The data collected from the MTurk sample in Phase 2 included participants' gender, age range, highest level of education, years of leadership experience, and number of direct reports, as well as scores from the RWQ, RSQ, and TEIQue-SF for RQs 1 and 2. The data collected from the organizational leaders' sample in Phase 3 included participants' gender, age range, highest level of education, years of leadership experience, number of direct reports, and data collected from the RWQ and TEIQue-SF for RQ3.

### **Organizing Raw Data**

All raw data in this study were digital. No paper measures were used, and all participants responded online to the questionnaires and demographic questions through Survey Monkey. Collected data were uploaded into SPSS on this researcher's personal computer from Excel spreadsheets downloaded from Survey Monkey.

### **Preparation of Data for Analysis**

To prepare for the data analysis from the MTurk sample, participants' data were downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet and saved as raw data. Additional spreadsheets were created by this researcher to eliminate incomplete data, and "I choose not to answer" responses were coded for SPSS to understand there were missing data. No research assistants were used to collect or post data into SPSS.

The data from the organizational leader sample were downloaded from Survey Monkey into an Excel spreadsheet and saved as raw data on this researcher's personal laptop. Additional spreadsheets were created to eliminate incomplete participant data, to score the RWQ and TEIQue-SF, and compile the data for uploading into SPSS. No research assistants were used with this sample to collect or post data into SPSS.

### **Managing and Processing Data**

Data from the MTurk sample and the organizational sample were managed separately. The purpose of conducting a two-phase study was to establish the psychometric properties of the RWQ prior to using it with an organizational sample. Each set of data had demographic information as well as the data collected from the measures, but the Phase 3 sample did not contain data from the RSQ.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The data from Phase 2 were used to conduct a factor analysis in SPSS of the RWQ. Phase 2 data were also used to determine if there was a positive, statistically significant relationship between the RWQ and RSQ. Statistical analyses in Phase 3 were conducted in SPSS to determine if a relationship exists between leaders' attachment style and global trait EI from the data collected from the RWQ and TEIQue-SF.

### **Expected Findings**

The purpose of the factor analysis was to make the relationships between the variables (i.e., items on the RWQ) easier to see. It was hypothesized that the results of the factor analysis would show that the items in the RWQ hold together well, identify the best quality items to be included in the questionnaire, and produce clear results to

increase confidence in the measure. It was also hypothesized that using a 300-person sample in the factor analysis would produce stable results.

Hypothesis 2 of this study predicted the RWQ would have a positively significant correlation with the RSQ. Items included in the RWQ are based on attachment theory, the research of Berson et al. (2006); Boatwright et al. (2010); Hazan and Shaver (1990); Maslyn et al. (2017); Popper and Amit (2009); Popper and Mayselless (2007), and the RSQ. To establish the psychometric properties of the RWQ, it was vital that this hypothesis be significantly, positively correlated. If there was an insignificant correlation or a negative correlation between the measures, more data would be needed to understand what constructs are not being appropriately measured. It would not be appropriate to validate the RWQ with the TEIQue-SF, because one's attachment style is a unique construct from trait EI.

Hypothesis 3 was related to RQ3 and the primary investigation of this study. It was hypothesized that organizational leaders with secure attachment would be positively, significantly correlated with global trait EI. The construct of secure attachment has been shown to be related to transformational leadership and EI, but research has only been completed with a student sample in Turkey and not with American business leaders. The outcome of this study was expected to produce a positive and significant correlation between secure attachment and global trait EI. It was also expected that individuals with anxious or avoidant attachment would have a significantly negative relationship with global trait EI.

## **Ethical Considerations**

By gathering data through Survey Monkey with complete anonymity potential ethical concerns were limited. Rhodes et al. (2003) noted that research through the world wide web might create ethical concerns related to sampling and sample representativeness, competition for attention of participants, and limitations due to literacy, disability, and the digital divide. Pen-and-paper data collection could have eliminated many of these concerns in the present study, but time, cost, and access to organizational participants might have limited the number of viable contributors.

One ethical concern in the present study was related to feedback. By collecting data in the manner described, participants received minimal feedback and no debriefing following the data collection. The RSQ is offered online through the University of Cambridge Psychometrics Centre (2018) website. The informed consent page on that website noted that feedback provided from the measure may be considered negative or distressing to some individuals. The Centre's website recommended that if participants are uncomfortable with their participation, they may stop at any time; including not participating at all. Informed consent for this current research study addressed similar concerns to reduce ethical issues and insure participant welfare.

## **Limitations**

Unfortunately, there are limitations to the methodology of this research study. Using the Internet for a general data collection of leaders (e.g., not organizationally specific) allowed participants that may not be organizational leaders, have direct reports, or be American workers to complete the assessments intended to measure the relationship of attachment style and EI of business leaders in the United States. According to Etikan

et al. (2016), convenience sampling and purposive sampling are nonprobability sampling techniques that are subjective and may not be representative of a population.

Another limitation was using self-report data. Socially desirable responses to make participants look good might have been an issue in this study. Perinelli and Gremigni (2016) noted participants' impression management to improve social desirability and self-deception could impact responses on self-report measures.



## **CHAPTER 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

To examine the hypotheses and research questions of this study, three phases of research were conducted. First, a card-sorting exercise with published empirical researchers of attachment was conducted to analyze the content validity of the RWQ. Second, a factor analysis of the results from a sample of adults who work in the United States with any number of direct reports indicated three distinct factors and a correlation between the RWQ and RSQ. Third, a study was conducted with organizational leaders to see if there is a relationship between their attachment style and global trait EI. The card-sorting exercise is reported as Phase 1. A review of Phase 2 that establishes the psychometric properties of the RWQ is described, and the results of Phase 3 with organizational research participants follows.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The primary research question of this study was to determine if there was a positive, significant correlation between organizational leaders with secure attachment style and global trait EI. To identify organizational leaders' attachment style in the workplace, a new measure was developed based on attachment theory; the RSQ, which is a classic intimate relationship attachment measure; and the published research of Berson et al. (2006), Boatwright et al. (2010), Hazan and Shaver (1990), Maslyn et al. (2017), Popper and Amit (2009), and Popper and Mayselless (2007). The RWQ was created and refined through two phases of research with two difference samples of adults who work in the United States and have any number of direct reports as well as a card-sorting exercise with published attachment researchers.

## **RQ 1**

RQ1: Do the psychometric properties of the Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) demonstrate satisfactory properties in the sample of working adults in the US with direct reports?

H<sub>0</sub>1: The factor analysis of the data from the MTurk sample will not indicate three unique factors that demonstrate convergent validity with the RSQ.

H<sub>a</sub>1: The factor analysis of the data from the MTurk sample will indicate three unique factors that demonstrate convergent validity with the RSQ.

## **RQ 2**

RQ2: Does the Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) demonstrate predicted convergent validity with the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ)?

H<sub>0</sub>2: The Relationships at Work Questionnaire will have no relationship, as predicted, with the RSQ.

H<sub>a</sub>2: The Relationships at Work Questionnaire will have a significantly positive correlation with the RSQ.

## **RQ 3**

RQ3: Is there a relationship between an organizational leader's attachment style and emotional intelligence (EI)?

H<sub>0</sub>3: Participants with secure attachment will have no relationship with global trait EI.

H<sub>a</sub>3: Participants with secure attachment will have a significantly positive correlation with global trait EI.

H<sub>0</sub>3a: Participants with anxious or avoidant attachment will have no relationship with global trait EI.

H<sub>a</sub>3a: Participants with anxious or avoidant attachment will have a significantly negative correlation with global trait EI.

### **Description of the Sample**

#### **Phase 1 Sample**

An email request to participate in a card sorting exercise was sent to 18 published empirical researchers of attachment. The email included an invitation to participate and a link to Survey Monkey that contained the Relationships at Work Card-Sorting electronic form. Subject matter experts were asked to read the item and select which attachment style the item was referring to. Four individuals agreed to participate, and two anonymous experts completed the card-sorting exercise.

#### **Phase 2 Sample**

Based on the recommendations of Meyers et al. (2016) for a factor analysis of a measure with 34 items, the number of participants needed was set at 300 individuals. During Phase 2 of this research, 300 HITs were purchased from AWS MTurk. The MTurk service allows researchers to set parameters and limit access to HITs to meet research participant criteria. Only adult MTurk workers in the United States were able to see the invitation to participate in this research. Informed consent noted participation criteria was that participants be over 18 years old, work in the United States, and have direct reports. Participants were paid \$1 to complete the survey that contained informed consent, five demographic questions, 34 items from the RWQ, 30 items from the RSQ, and 30 items from the TEIQue-SF.

The HIT was posted to the live portal of MTurk, and in less than 4 hours, 354 participants had agreed to participate in the research. They met criteria for participation, but 49 individuals skipped the rest of the items. Once 300 individuals responded to all the items on the Survey Monkey link, data collection was complete. This researcher was able to review the anonymous data and authorize the dollar payment for each participant. One participant had selected the response “I choose not to answer” on every item, so their data were eliminated from the sample. Because participants were anonymous, there was no way to decline the HIT with MTurk to gain another participant. The data were eliminated for 10 individuals who selected “I choose not to answer” on more than 10% of the items. Data from 294 participants were used to conduct the factor analysis and correlational analysis between the RWQ and RSQ.

Demographics of the MTurk sample included 52.04% males and 47.28% females. Two participants chose not to answer (0.68%). The MTurk sample included fairly accomplished, mature leaders with 55.10% of the sample aged 35 or older, and 63.61% of the sample had an undergraduate or graduate degree. One participant chose not to answer the education demographic item. The MTurk participants with 5–9 years of experience were 18.37% of the sample, and 17.37% of the sample had 10 or more years of leadership experience. Participants with five or more direct reports comprised 35.37% of the MTurk sample. Figures 1 through 5 depict the demographic details.

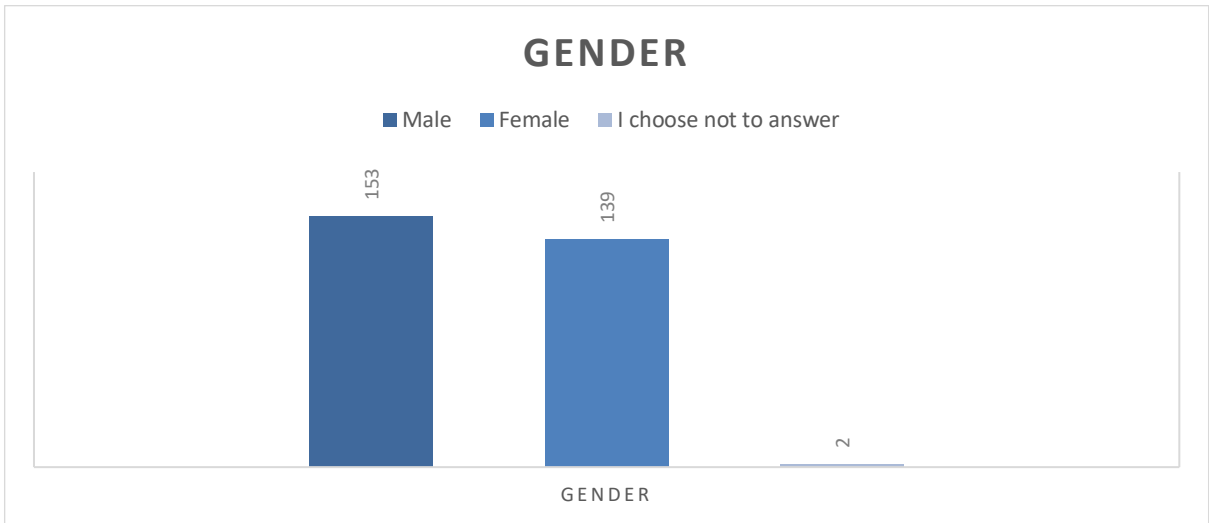


Figure 1. Gender of MTurk sample.

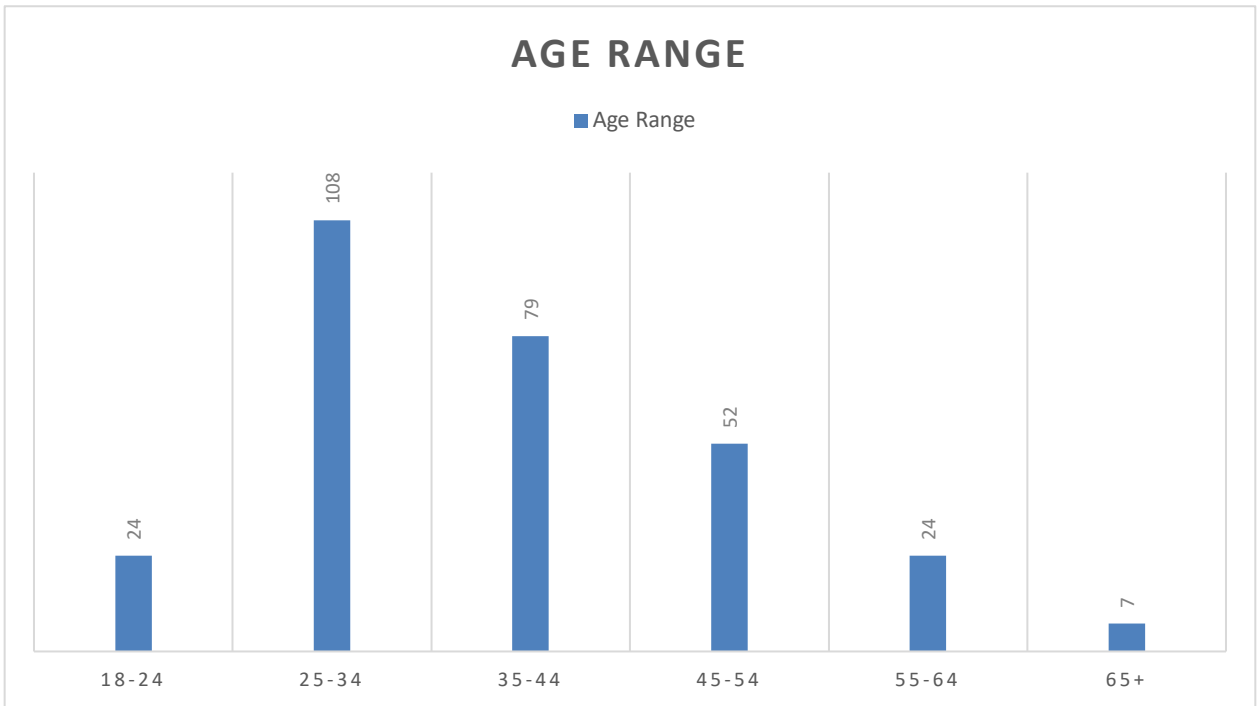


Figure 2. Age range of MTurk sample.

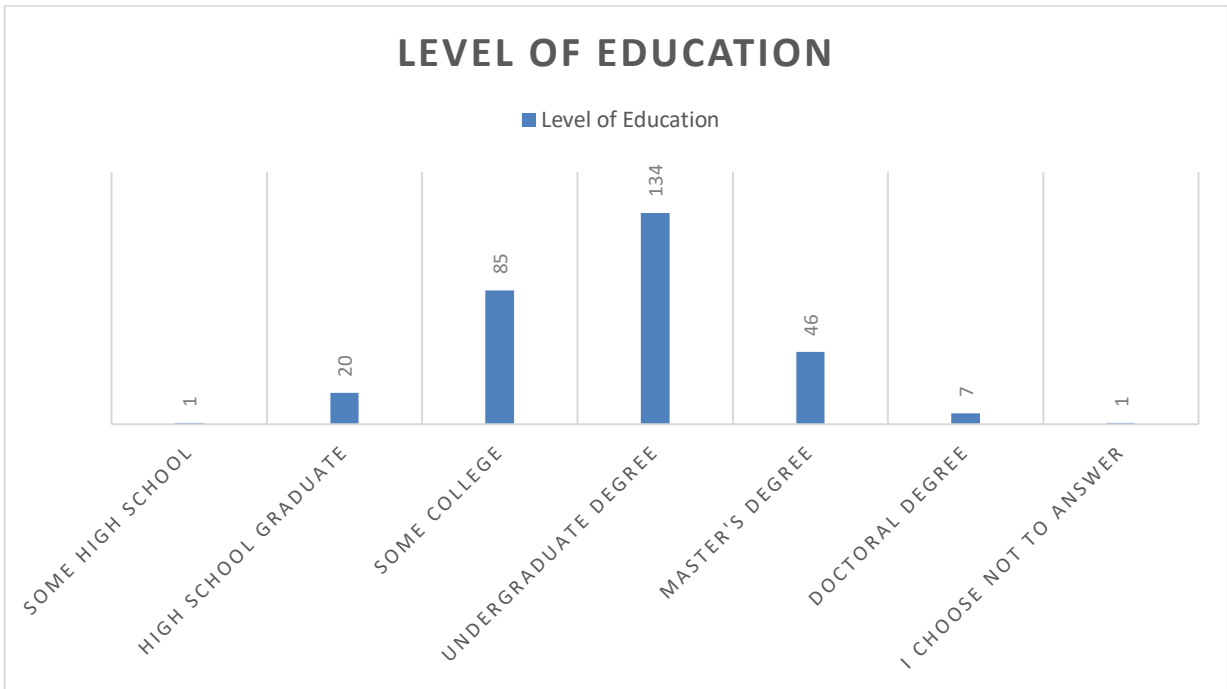
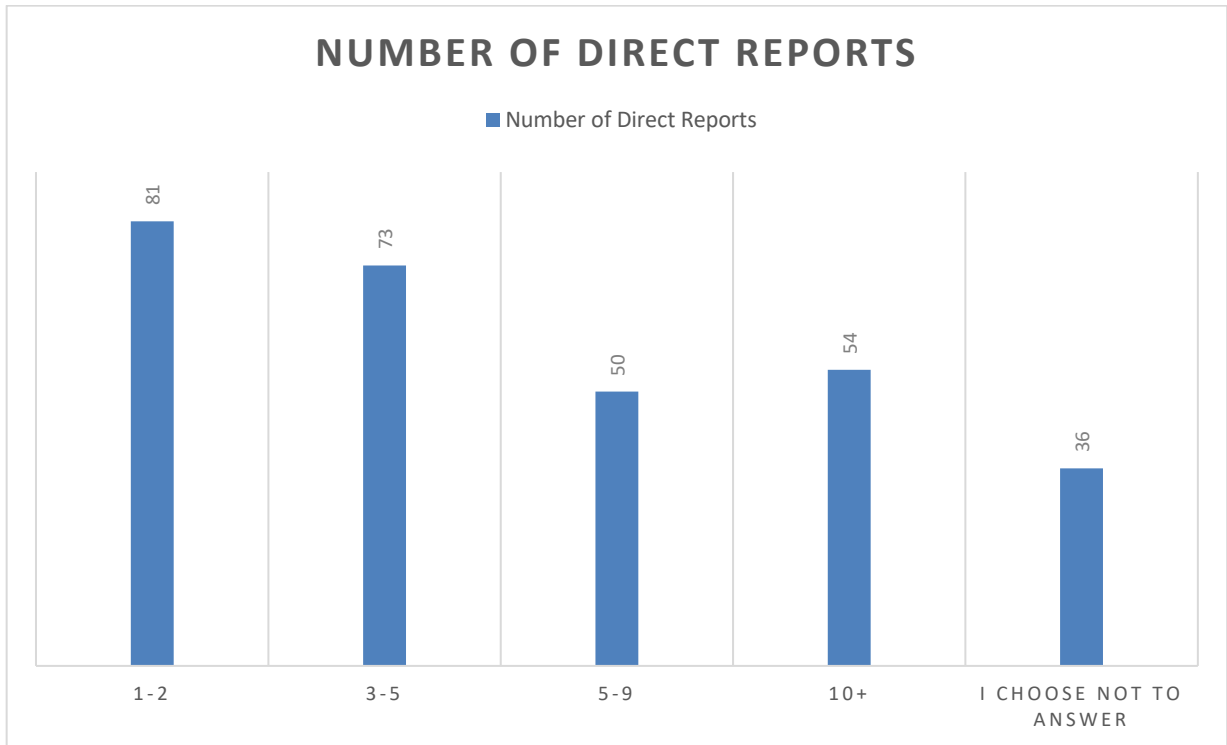


Figure 3. Level of education attained of the MTurk sample.



Figure 4. Years of leadership experience of the MTurk sample.



*Figure 5.* Number of direct reports of the MTurk sample.

### **Phase 3 Sample**

The Phase 3 sample of organizational leaders was a convenience sample of individuals who were personally recruited to participate in this study through email and social media. An emailed invitation to participate was sent to organizational leaders in this researcher's personal and professional network. Potential participants were asked to forward the email or share the link to Survey Monkey on their social media pages. This resulted in 124 individuals agreeing that they met participation criteria and were willing to voluntarily participate for no reward or compensation. One potential participant did not meet participation criteria. From the gross sample, 14 individuals did not complete all the items in the questionnaires, and their data were eliminated from the sample. Two participants' attachment style could not be determined due to a tie score between two

attachment styles on the RWQ, so their data were not included in the correlational study of attachment style and trait EI. Data were collected from 109 participants.

Demographics of the sample of organizational leaders included 49.54% males and 50.46% females. Participants included a mature sample of leaders with 83.49% of participants aged 34 years or older, with over half of the sample aged 45 years or older (56.75%). This sample was highly educated; 90.17% of participants have a college degree, and 44.17% of participants have a graduate degree. Participants with 10 or more years of leadership experience made up 51.38% of the sample; 63.36% of the sample had five or more direct reports, with 29.38% having 10 or more direct reports. This sample comprised highly accomplished and experienced, mature organizational leaders. Figures 6 through 10 depict these demographic details.

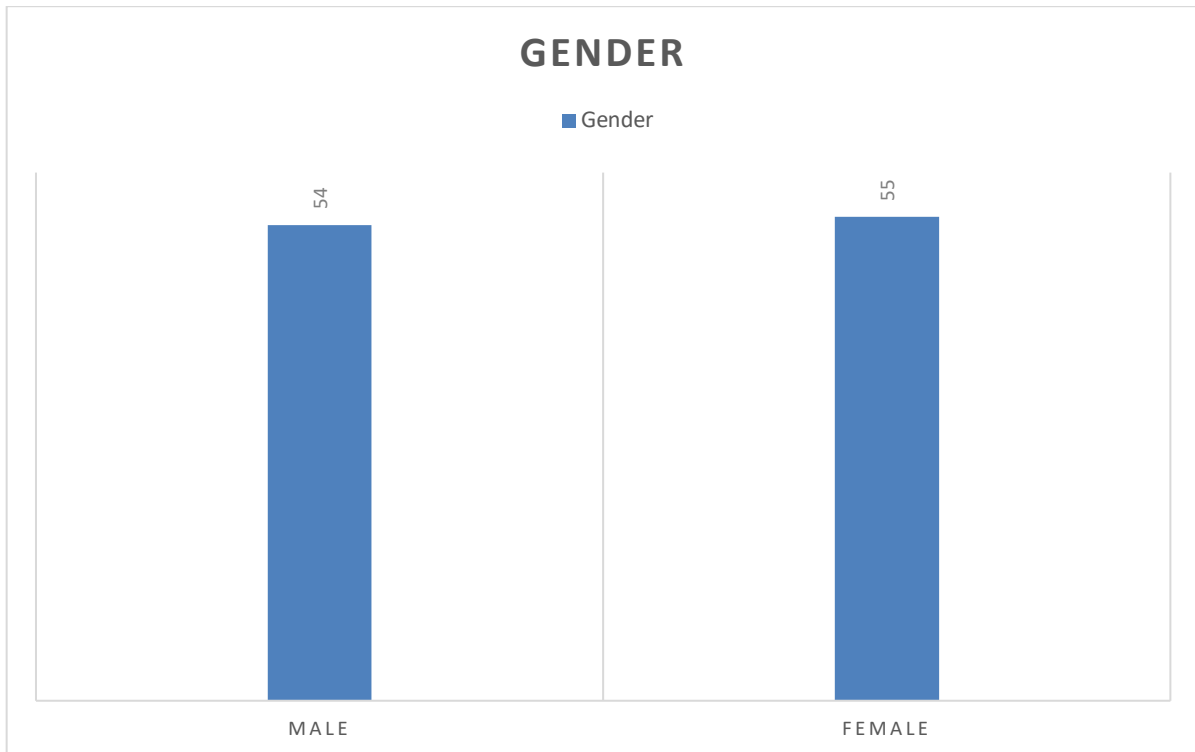
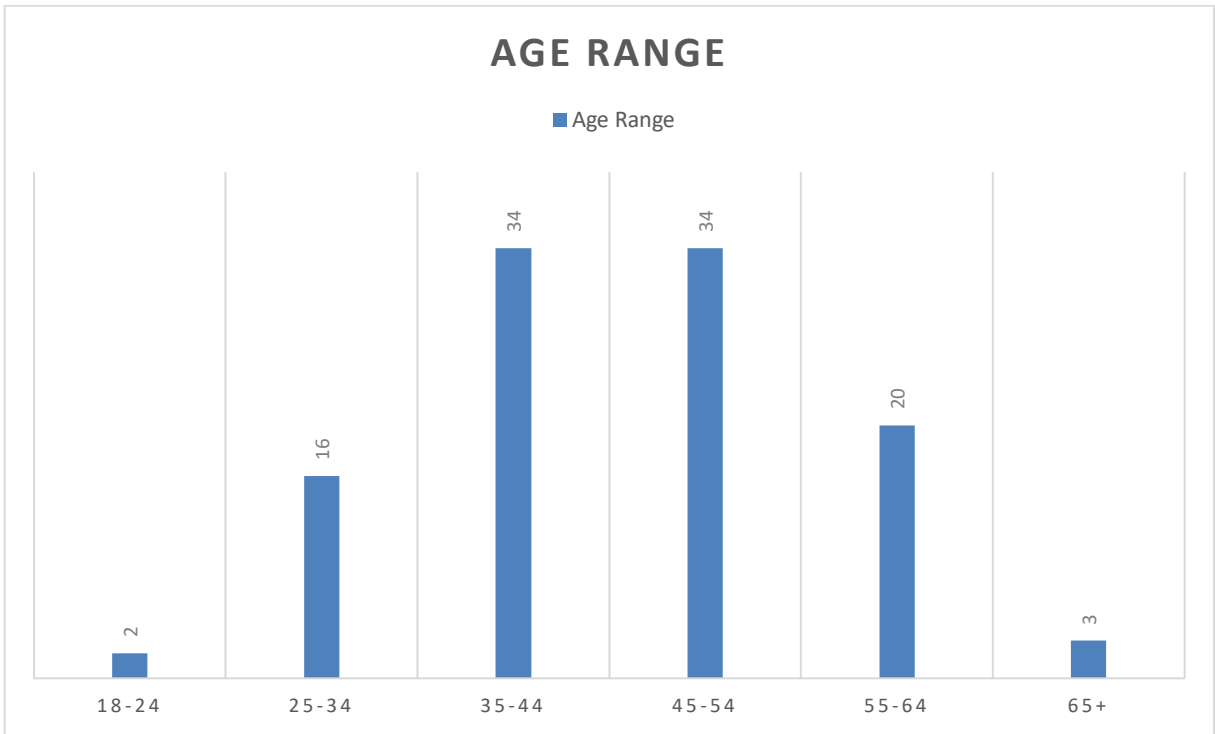
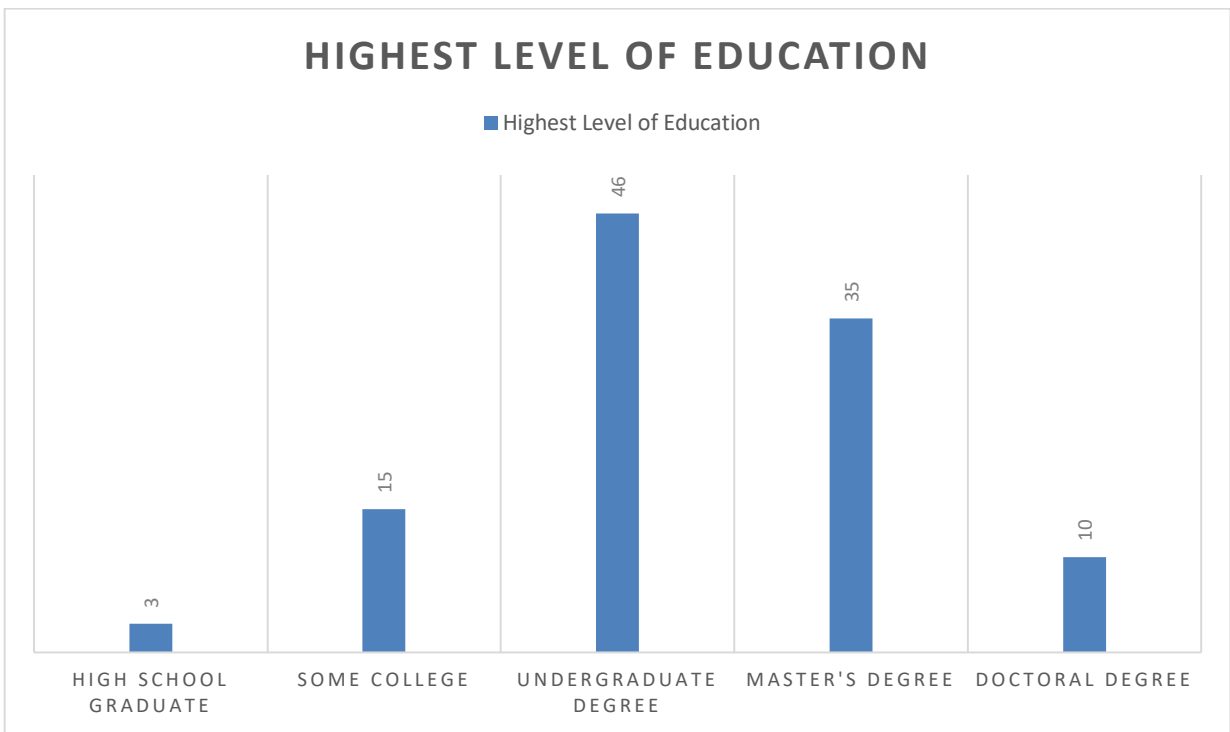


Figure 6. Gender of organizational leaders sample.





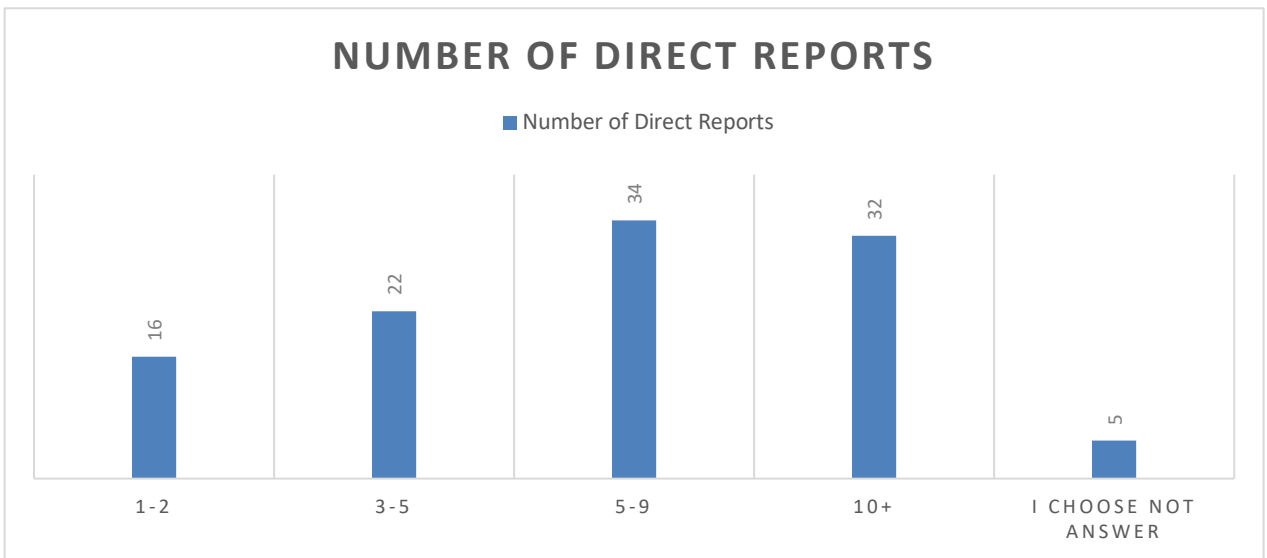
*Figure 7.* Age range of participants in the organizational leaders sample.



*Figure 8.* Highest level of education in the organizational leaders sample.



*Figure 9.* Years of leadership experience in the organizational leaders sample.



*Figure 10.* Participants' number of direct reports in the organizational leaders sample.

## Summary of the Results

### Phase 1 Results

Dr. Phillip Shaver, a renowned expert on adult attachment, emailed this researcher and noted that previous research (e.g., Fraley & Waller, 1998) indicated attachment should be measured as a continuous variable and not on a categorical measure. In further emails, he discussed with this researcher that fearful attachment is difficult, if not impossible, to measure because it is a combination of anxious attachment and avoidant attachment (P. Shaver, personal communication, August 15, 2019). Therefore, 11 fearful attachment items were eliminated as well as nine items that this researcher and the two experts did not agree on. One item was retained (“I have a hard time taking vacations or time away from work”) because two of the three raters agreed, and adult attachment literature had identified this behavior as an avoidant trait. It was determined the outcome of the factor analysis would indicate which items validly measured each attachment style. The items that had clear and consistent construct validity were retained in Phase 2. Table 1 shows the card-sorting exercise results.

Table 1

*Card Sort Exercise Results*

Item	AV	Response 1	Response 2
I feel good about myself at work	Secure	Secure	Secure
When I think about my career history, I feel bad about how things have gone	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I believe my coworkers can be trusted	Secure	Secure	Secure
I prefer working independently	Avoidant	Avoidant	Avoidant
I feel better about myself than I do about my coworkers	Avoidant	Avoidant	Avoidant
I believe my coworkers like me	Secure	Secure	Secure
I believe my coworkers are better or more talented than me at work	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I have a hard time taking vacations or time away from work	Avoidant	Anxious	Avoidant
I get upset easily at work	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I believe my coworkers defend and protect me at work	Secure	Secure	Secure
My coworkers cannot be trusted	Avoidant	Avoidant	Avoidant
If I feel like my coworkers do not like me, I get anxious	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I depend on my coworkers to feel alright	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I do not seek friendship at work	Avoidant	Avoidant	Avoidant
I am comfortable working with others on projects	Secure	Secure	Secure
I do not avoid interacting with my coworkers	Secure	Secure	Secure
I often feel stressed at work which makes me anxious, angry, or sad	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
When I feel stressed at work, I prefer to be alone	Avoidant	Avoidant	Avoidant
I tend to avoid having close relationships at work	Avoidant	Avoidant	Avoidant
I have a hard time managing my emotions at work	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I feel emotionally secure with my coworkers	Secure	Secure	Secure
I tend to let work interfere with my friendships	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I am uncomfortable getting close to people at work	Avoidant	Avoidant	Avoidant
I can ask for help or support from my coworkers	Secure	Secure	Secure
I do not let anyone see me upset or emotional at work	Avoidant	Avoidant	Avoidant
I need my coworkers to help calm me down when things do not go well	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I feel that relationships with my coworkers are not close enough	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I do not worry about being abandoned or betrayed by coworkers	Secure	Secure	Secure
I have negative thoughts and feelings about myself at work	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I do not get enough recognition at work	Anxious	Anxious	Anxious
I trust my coworkers	Secure	Secure	Secure
I do not like to ask for help or support from my coworkers	Avoidant	Avoidant	Avoidant
I view my coworkers positively	Secure	Secure	Secure
I feel my coworkers are available to me	Secure	Secure	Secure

## Phase 2 Results

RQs 1 and 2 were focused on establishing the psychometric properties of the RWQ. RQ 1 was as follows: Do the psychometric properties of the Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) demonstrate satisfactory properties in the sample of adults in a business setting? The null hypothesis— $H_0$ : The factor analysis of the data from the MTurk sample will not indicate three unique factors that demonstrate convergent validity with the RSQ—has been rejected because the factor analysis identified three unique factors with satisfactory loading (i.e., greater than 0.60).

To test the construct validity of the RWQ, a principal-components factor analysis with an orthogonal solution (varimax rotation) using eigenvalue-one procedure was performed on the item responses from the MTurk sample of 294 participants. The scree test identified three significant factors. Items with negative loadings or lower than 0.60 were removed, which reduced the items in the measure to 15 total (i.e., six items measured secure attachment, five items measured anxious attachment, and four items measured avoidant attachment). Only items that loaded positively and above 0.60 in any of the three factors in the pattern matrix were selected, as these loadings represent the distinct relationship between the factor and the item. Table 2 includes details of the factor analysis. The Appendix contains the final version of the RWQ used in Phase 3 of this research.

Table 2

*Factor Analysis Results of the Phase 2 Sample*

Rotated component matrix <sup>a</sup>			
	Component		
	1	2	3
I trust my coworkers.	.872	-.055	-.181
I feel my coworkers are available to me.	.860	-.107	-.083
I view my coworkers positively.	.832	-.201	-.094
I believe my coworkers can be trusted.	.816	-.054	-.283
I believe my coworkers defend and protect me at work.	.793	.025	-.165
I can ask for help or support from my coworkers.	.772	-.117	-.098
I have a hard time managing my emotions at work.	-.093	.847	.064
I often feel stressed at work which makes me anxious, angry, or sad.	-.162	.827	.097
I get upset easily at work.	-.149	.809	.074
I have negative thoughts and feelings about myself at work.	-.172	.784	.096
I believe my coworkers are better or more talented than me at work.	.139	.754	-.026
I do not let anyone see me upset or emotional at work.	.035	-.131	.780
I tend to avoid having close relationships at work.	-.455	.302	.689
I do not seek friendship at work.	-.436	.155	.656
I am uncomfortable getting close to people at work.	-.462	.383	.624

*Note.* Extraction method: Principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

<sup>a</sup> Rotation converged in four iterations.

The three factors clearly identified in the factor analysis are related to the RSQ. Factor 1 of the RWQ identified the secure attachment items contained in the measure. The six items held together well and were loaded well above the 0.60 cutoff. Factor 2 identified the five anxious attachment items on the RWQ. The anxious attachment factor was strongly loaded and also held together well. Factor 3 identified the avoidant

attachment items on the RWQ; the four items were loaded above 0.60. The three-factor solution accounted for 69.92% of the total variance.

A correlational analysis of RQ2—Does the Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) demonstrate predicted convergent and discriminant validity with the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ)?—was conducted. Positive, significant correlations at the 0.01 and 0.05 level included secure attachment on the RWQ and RSQ, anxious attachment on the RWQ and RSQ, and avoidant attachment on the RWQ and RSQ with significant, negative correlations between secure and insecure attachment styles on both measures. Therefore, the null hypothesis—H<sub>0</sub>2: The Relationships at Work Questionnaire (RWQ) will have no relationship with the RSQ—has been rejected.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics of the Correlational Analysis of the RWQ and RSQ*

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
RSQ Secure	3.4571	.84385	294
RWQ Secure	3.9168	.80767	294
RSQ Anxious	2.5247	.78381	294
RWQ Anxious	2.1890	.82999	294
RSQ Avoidant	3.3844	.62999	294
RWQ Avoidant	2.6667	.72467	294

Table 4

*Correlation Matrix of the RWQ and RSQ*

		<b>Correlations</b>					
		RSQ Secure	RWQ Secure	RSQ Anxious	RWQ Anxious	RSQ Avoidant	RWQ Avoidant
RSQ Secure	Pearson Correlation	1	.657**	-.288**	-.374**	-.364**	-.500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	294	294	294	294	294	294
RWQ Secure	Pearson Correlation	.657**	1	-.121*	-.296**	-.273**	-.618**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.039	.000	.000	.000
	N	294	294	294	294	294	294
RSQ Anxious	Pearson Correlation	-.288**	-.121*	1	.548**	.160**	.117*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.039		.000	.006	.046
	N	294	294	294	294	294	294
RWQ Anxious	Pearson Correlation	-.374**	-.296**	.548**	1	.182**	.481**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.002	.000
	N	294	294	294	294	294	294
RSQ Avoidant	Pearson Correlation	-.364**	-.273**	.160**	.182**	1	.488**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.006	.002		.000
	N	294	294	294	294	294	294
RWQ Avoidant	Pearson Correlation	-.500**	-.618**	.117*	.481**	.488**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.046	.000	.000	
	N	294	294	294	294	294	294

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Phase 3 Results**

In response to RQ3 that explored whether organizational leaders' attachment style is related to global trait EI, the data indicated there is a positive, significant relationship between leaders with a secure attachment style and global trait EI at the 0.01 level (see Table 5).



Table 5

*Correlation Between Secure Attachment and Global Trait EI*

		Secure_Attachment	Total_Global EI
Secure_Attachment	Pearson Correlation	1	.300**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	94	94
Total_GlobalEI	Pearson Correlation	.300**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	94	94

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The first null hypothesis for RQ3—H<sub>03</sub>: Participants with secure attachment will have no relationship with global trait EI—has been rejected due to the positive, statistically significant results between the variables of secure attachment and global trait EI. The second null hypothesis for RQ3—H<sub>03a</sub>: Participants with anxious or avoidant attachment will have no relationship with global trait EI—could not be addressed, because the sample size was too small to conduct an appropriate correlational analysis between the variables of anxious or avoidant attachment and global trait EI (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Correlation Matrix of Secure, Anxious, and Avoidant Attachment With Global Trait EI*

		<b>Correlations</b>					
		Secure Attachment	SecureGlobal EI	Anxious Attachment	Anxious Global EI	Avoidant Attachment	Avoidant Global EI
Secure Attachment	Pearson Correlation	1	.300**	-.460	.443	-.308	.325
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003	.540	.557	.357	.330
	N	94	94	4	4	11	11
SecureGlobal EI	Pearson Correlation	.300**	1	.196	-.498	.236	.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003		.804	.502	.485	.879
	N	94	94	4	4	11	11
Anxious Attachment	Pearson Correlation	-.460	.196	1	.361	-.505	.545
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.540	.804		.639	.495	.455
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4
Anxious Global EI	Pearson Correlation	.443	-.498	.361	1	-.953*	.073
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.557	.502	.639		.047	.927
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4
Avoidant Attachment	Pearson Correlation	-.308	.236	-.505	-.953*	1	-.250
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.357	.485	.495	.047		.458
	N	11	11	4	4	11	11
Avoidant Global EI	Pearson Correlation	.325	.052	.545	.073	-.250	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.330	.879	.455	.927	.458	
	N	11	11	4	4	11	11

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to examine the variables of secure and insecure attachment with global trait EI. There was a significant difference in scores for secure attachment ( $M = 5.80$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ) and insecure attachment (i.e., anxious and avoidant attachment styles;  $M = 5.24$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) conditions;  $t(107) = 2.96$ ,  $p = 0.004$  (see Tables 7 and 8).

Table 7

*Group Statistics of Sample 3*

<b>Group Statistics</b>					
	Attachment_Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total Global EI	s	94	5.7981	.65499	.06756
	i	15	5.2400	.82276	.21243

Table 8

*Independent Samples t Test of Attachment Type and Global Trait EI*

<b>Independent Samples Test</b>										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Total Global EI	Equal variances assumed	1.336	.250	2.955	107	.004	.55809	.18887	.18367	.93250
	Equal variances not assumed			2.504	16.949	.023	.55809	.22292	.08766	1.02851

**Details of Analysis and Results**

The purpose of this research was to create a new measure of attachment styles in the workplace and to see how it performed with a sample of organizational leaders who work in the United States and have direct reports in a correlational study with trait EI. Each phase of this research provided the foundation for the next, and the version of the RWQ that was used with the organizational sample had been psychometrically tested to show its validity and reliability.

**Phase 1**

Previous researchers had examined attachment in the workplace and specific traits were identified. Boatwright et al. (2010) based their argument on the work of Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) that there are two dimensions (i.e., secure and

insecure) and four styles of attachment (i.e., secure, anxious, avoidant, and fearful). This view of attachment was the basis of the initial version of the RWQ. Items related to each of the four attachment styles were developed, and the 54-item measure was tested with attachment experts who had published empirical articles on the topic. Of the four experts who agreed to participate at the informed consent stage, only two completed the exercise.

In Phase 1 of establishing the psychometric properties of the RWQ, what began as a simple quantitative study of subject matter experts' views of the items contained in the RWQ evolved into a qualitative study that established the first leg of the triangulation of research supporting the validity and reliability of the measure. An email was sent to published empirical researchers who were asked to select which attachment style each item reflected (i.e., secure, anxious, avoidant, or fearful attachment) on a questionnaire created in Survey Monkey. Dr. Phillip Shaver responded right away, explaining that prior research had indicated attachment should be measured as a continuous variable with two dimensions (i.e., secure and insecure). His email response started a string of communication about studying attachment and included a referral to Dr. Fernando Molero, a colleague of Dr. Shaver's, who studies attachment in the workplace. Dr. Molero confirmed that he has also examined attachment as a continuous variable with two dimensions. The qualitative data collected in this phase established how the RWQ would measure attachment as a continuous variable, and why items related to fearful attachment should be removed.

Fearful attachment is a debated topic. Prior researchers have argued that in a two-dimensional model of attachment, attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety create four categories. Individuals low in attachment avoidance and anxiety are considered

securely attached. Those high in attachment avoidance and low in attachment anxiety are believed to have avoidant attachment, and individuals with high attachment anxiety and low avoidance are considered anxiously attached. A person with high attachment avoidance and anxiety is believed to have fearful or disorganized attachment (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). Shaver argued it is inappropriate to measure attachment categorically, and prior research has confirmed that. He also noted it is extremely difficult to measure fearful attachment as items related to fearful attachment may be perceived as items related to anxious or avoidant attachment characteristics, which reduces a measures construct validity.

The data collection of Phase 1 supported Shavers' comments. One anonymous respondent did not select fearful attachment for any items on the RWQ. The other anonymous participant selected two attachment styles for the items originally coded as fearful attachment items contained in the draft measure (e.g., fearful and avoidant or anxious). Therefore, 11 items related to fearful attachment were removed from the measure, as well as nine items that the subject matter experts were not aligned on. The RWQ that was used in Phase 2 contained 34 items related to secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment and were measured as continuous variables for the factor analysis.

## **Phase 2**

In Phase 2 of this study, 34 items remained on the RWQ. A Survey Monkey questionnaire was created that contained five demographic questions, the 34-item RWQ, the 30-item RSQ, and the 30-item TEIQue-SF for 100 items in total. A sample of 300 participants was purchased through the AWS MTurk system. This researcher was able to set participation parameters that limited viewing and access to MTurk workers in the

United States only. Participation criteria required that individuals must be adults, work in the United States, and have any number of direct reports.

Participants were recruited via a post on Amazon's MTurk online crowdsourcing website. A HIT was created in the sandbox of Amazon's TurkPrime that allows academic research data collection. The HIT was launched from the sandbox to the MTurk site after Keiser University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the study. Participants self-selected by choosing the post in the MTurk site. In all, 354 individuals agreed to the informed consent, but only 294 participants' data was complete and useful. MTurk workers who performed the HIT were paid a set amount for completing the tasks. For this study, participants were paid \$1 to provide data for all 100 items in the Survey Monkey link and go back to the MTurk site and post the code "2019" to indicate their full participation. The code was selected to maintain anonymity while participants completed the questionnaires. No identifying information was collected from the sample.

Once the post was live on the MTurk site, data collection ended in just under 4 hours. The required number of participants was achieved when the 300th person posted their completion code in the MTurk system. At the conclusion of the data collection through MTurk, the data were reviewed in Survey Monkey, and payment was authorized for all 300 participants. Survey Monkey assigned a random respondent ID number for each participant, and their data were downloaded onto an Excel spreadsheet in two formats—numerical and actual answer—and saved to this researcher's personal laptop. Missing data were coded, and the RWQ scores for the factor analysis were loaded into SPSS.

**Factor analysis.** The initial factor analysis of the 34-items on the RWQ indicated five factors. A review of the factor scores indicated two avoidant attachment items had loaded separately on Factors 4 and 5. To retain the strength of the factor analysis, it was determined that each item would be removed from the RWQ, and any items that loaded less than .60 would also be removed. At the conclusion of the factor analysis, 15 items (i.e., six secure attachment, five anxious, and four avoidant attachment) held together well, and the three factors could clearly be labeled according to the attachment type they represented. This analysis provided the answer for RQ1, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Correlations.** The MTurk sample data for the RWQ was scored, and participants' attachment style was determined. Participants' data from the RSQ was also scored, and all scores for each scale were loaded into SPSS for a correlational analysis of the RWQ and RSQ. The six scales, RSQ Secure, RWQ Secure, RSQ Anxious, RWQ Anxious, RSQ Avoidant, and RWQ Avoidant, contained all 294 data points. The correlational analysis indicated the secure, anxious, and avoidant scales of the two measures were positively, significantly related at the .01 level. As predicted, the RWQ secure scale was significantly, negatively correlated with the RSQ anxious scale at the .05 level and RSQ avoidant scales at the .01 level, and the RSQ secure scale was significantly, negatively correlated at the .01 level for the RWQ anxious and avoidant scales. The results of this statistical analysis answered RQ2, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

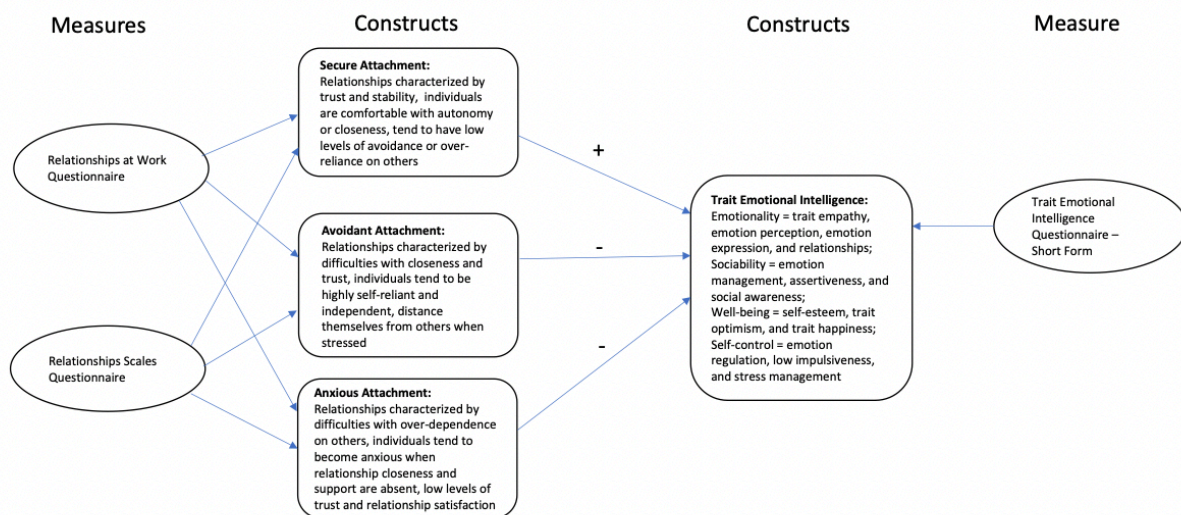


Figure 11. Prediction of constructs with measures.

**Scale reliability.** The secure attachment subscale of the RWQ consisted of 12 items ( $\alpha = .91$ ), the anxious subscale consisted of 12 items ( $\alpha = .90$ ), and the avoidant subscale consisted of 11 items ( $\alpha = .83$ ). The secure attachment subscale of the RSQ consisted of five items ( $\alpha = .65$ ), the anxious attachment subscale consisted of four items ( $\alpha = .45$ ), the avoidant subscale consisted of five items ( $\alpha = .28$ ), and the fearful subscale consisted of four items ( $\alpha = .84$ ). The reliability of the TEIQue-SF was calculated by the Psychometric Lab with reliability of the dimension of well-being reported as ( $\alpha = .88$ ), self-control ( $\alpha = .78$ ), emotionality ( $\alpha = .76$ ), and sociability ( $\alpha = .71$ ) with global trait EI reliability reported as ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

### Phase 3

A Survey Monkey questionnaire was created that contained the same five demographic questions used in Phase 2, the final 15-item version of the RWQ, and the 30-item TEIQue-SF for 51 items in total. An email invitation to participate in the final



phase of research was written that explained the purpose of the study, provided contact information for this researcher to potential participants, described how anonymity would be maintained, and included the Survey Monkey link to the measures. The email was sent to a convenience sample of adults that are part of this researcher's personal and professional network who worked in the United States and had direct reports. A post was created on LinkedIn and Facebook, and first-level connections were invited to participate and share the link to reach other professionals who would be willing to voluntarily participate. A second email was sent and posts were made 1 week after the initial invitation. A third social media push was made before the final weekend of data collection. After 2 weeks, data collection was closed, and 125 people had looked at the Survey Monkey link; 124 agreed to the informed consent and one did not meet participation criteria.

At the completion of the data collection, the responses were downloaded from Survey Monkey onto an Excel spreadsheet in numerical and actual answer format and stored on this researcher's personal laptop. Survey Monkey had assigned a random response ID to each participant, and their data were coded for two individual participants who had selected "I choose not to answer" on two items on the TEIQue-SF. According to the scoring page on the website of Petrides and the London Psychometric Lab (2019) that owns the TEIQue in all its formats, data must range between 1 and 7 for scoring, and any missing data should be coded with the number 4. The two items were coded, and the scores were loaded onto an Excel scoring sheet provided by the Psychometric Lab. Scores for the TEIQue-SF were calculated, and another Excel sheet was produced from the site that contained four dimensional scores of trait EI (i.e., well-being, self-control,

emotionality, and sociability) and a global trait EI score for each participant as well as alphas for each dimension and global trait EI for this sample.

**Correlations.** The scores for each participant's responses to the RWQ items were sorted by type (i.e., secure, anxious, and avoidant items were grouped together) and averaged. Scores for each type were compared, and each participant's attachment style was determined by their highest score. There were 94 securely attached participants, four anxiously attached participants, and 11 avoidantly attached participants. The scores for the three types of participants were uploaded into SPSS with their global trait EI scores, and a correlational statistical analysis was conducted. Results indicated a positively, significant relationship between secure attachment and global trait EI. The outcome answered RQ3, and the null hypothesis regarding secure attachment and global trait EI was rejected. The null hypothesis regarding the insecure attachment types was accepted, because the sample size was too small to produce meaningful results.

**Scale reliability.** The secure attachment subscale of the RWQ consisted of six items ( $\alpha = .80$ ), the anxious subscale consisted of five items ( $\alpha = .68$ ), and the avoidant subscale consisted of four items ( $\alpha = .72$ ). The reliability of the TEIQue-SF was calculated by the Psychometric Lab with reliability of the dimension of well-being reported as ( $\alpha = .84$ ), self-control ( $\alpha = .68$ ), emotionality ( $\alpha = .77$ ), and sociability ( $\alpha = .63$ ) with global trait EI reliability reported as ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

### **Conclusion**

The research questions of this study were definitively answered using the data provided by participants of both phases of research and the subject matter experts in Phase 1. The null hypotheses regarding the psychometric properties of the RWQ and the

positive, significant correlation of organizational leaders with secure attachment and global trait EI were rejected. The null hypothesis of a significant, negative correlation between anxious or avoidant attachment and global trait EI was accepted because the sample size of insecurely attached leaders was too small. All the participants in Phases 2 and 3 were adults, who worked in the United States, and had direct reports; and Phase 1 participants were highly qualified subject matter experts, which makes the findings of this research an important contribution to the literature.

## **CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Three research questions were examined in the development of the RWQ. To provide an answer for each question, three phases of research were conducted to analyze the measure and see how it performed with a sample of organizational leaders. Results indicated the RWQ has good psychometric properties to measure attachment in the workplace. This chapter contains a summary and discussion of the results, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and the conclusion of the study.

### **Summary of the Results**

The strength of this research to establish the psychometric properties of the RWQ and examination of organizational leaders' attachment style and trait EI is that it is based on data alone. A scientifically sound plan was used to establish the psychometric properties, predictive convergent validity, and scale reliability of the RWQ. Throughout each phase of the study, only reliable, consistent results were used to support the next phase of research. Items that exposed a weakness or inconsistency were eliminated. A triangulation of supporting validity and reliability served to examine the measure from all sides and revealed sound psychometric qualities. The outcome of each phase of research thoroughly answered all three research questions.

#### **Phase 1**

Data from Phase 1 greatly helped refine the RWQ, so only items with content validity were included. The subject matter experts also helped decrease the number of items contained in the measure to reduce the chance of research participants becoming fatigued by a tool that contained too many items. The qualitative data received from

Shaver and Molero supplemented the quantitative data and further strengthened the validity and reliability.

## **Phase 2**

The factor analysis in Phase 2 continued the refining process by identifying and grouping items that held together well into their respective attachment type. The factor loading was strong at 0.60 or higher, and the scale reliability of the RWQ was found to be highly reliable. Cronbach's alpha for secure attachment was .91, anxious attachment .90, and avoidant attachment .83. Reliability was higher for the RWQ than the RSQ. Cronbach's alpha for the TEIQue-SF global trait EI was .93. The validity and reliability of the RWQ and TEIQue-SF indicated the measures were ready for use with the organizational sample.

## **Phase 3**

Data from the organizational sample in Phase 3 were collected over a 2-week period. Participants were recruited from a variety of organizations including retail, technology, and higher education. Results indicated the majority of the sample had secure attachment that positively, significantly correlated with global trait EI. Only 15 participants had an insecure attachment style, and no analysis of their data could be conducted due to the small sample size. Internal consistency was moderate to good. The RWQ was found to be moderately reliable with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .68 to .80, and the TEIQue-SF global trait EI reliability was good at .89.

## **Sample Characteristics**

Both samples used in this research were nonstudent, working adults in the United States. The value of this data is exceptional, because it came from real-world experience

rather than potential or limited experience from a college student sample. The ability to generalize the results of this study to other groups of mature, adult leaders who work in the United States supports the external validity of this research.

### **Phase 2 Sample**

The Phase 2 sample self-selected their participation by choosing the HIT from the MTurk portal. Participants averaged just over 16 minutes to complete the survey of 95 items and five demographic items. The sample was split almost 50-50 between men and women. They had a fairly normal distribution of age range with the majority of participants aged 25–34. Participants' highest level of education was normally distributed with 45% of the sample having a college degree. Years of leadership experience and number of direct report categories were evenly split with approximately 20–30% of participants in each grouping. Overall, Phase 2 participants were slightly younger and less experienced than the Phase 3 sample.

### **Phase 3 Sample**

Participants of the Phase 3 sample were also split 50-50 between male and female. Age ranges and level of highest education were normally distributed with 58.7% of participants between the ages of 35–54, and 45 of 109 participants had earned a graduate degree. Years of experience and number of direct reports was highly skewed with 56 of 109 participants having 10 or more years of leadership experience, and 32 participants had 10 or more direct reports. This sample comprised highly experienced leaders which was an invaluable resource for this study.

## **Research Questions**

Overall, all three research questions were successfully addressed and all but one of the null hypotheses were rejected based on the responses of these exceptional samples. The null hypothesis regarding insecure attachment styles and global trait EI was neither accepted nor rejected due to the small sample size. The primary research question of the relationship between secure attachment and global trait EI was found to be positively significant at the 0.01 level.

## **Discussion of the Results**

The results of this research contribute to the scientific literature regarding attachment in the workplace, trait EI, and important leadership qualities. Organizational leadership research, like adult intimate relationship, tends to fragment concepts rather than examine how variables are correlated. This has led to many concepts being explored with little idea how to connect the results to support growth and development in organizational leadership.

Transformational leadership has been scientifically shown to be an effective leadership style. The traits and characteristics of transformational leadership have been identified, but for some, implementing the leadership style has not been effective. Organizations use 360-degree feedback and executive coaching in an attempt to raise awareness and train leaders to achieve a transformational style, yet some leaders continue to struggle and not understand why. An insecure attachment style may be a strong contributor to poor leadership function.

Attachment research has shown the quality of early attachment affects individuals throughout their life. Attachment becomes an internal working model that creates a

complex schema of images, beliefs, and attitudes towards attachment relationships through neural development in the neo-cortex that regulates social relationships and emotion. Attachment has been shown to be reliably measured and is independent of one's class, culture, or IQ. Individuals with insecure attachment have vulnerabilities, not psychopathology, and interventions that improve EI and management of negative feelings could help move one toward developing secure attachment or at least reduce the distress insecurely attached individuals feel in relational situations (Adshead, 2010). The positive significant correlation between secure attachment and global trait EI in this research highlights the importance of resolving attachment injuries to improve EI and leadership function. The outcome of this research ties together variables that have been shown to contribute to outstanding leadership.

Attachment and trait EI are distinct variables, because attachment has been found to be an internal working model that is separate from personality. Trait EI is defined as a collection of emotional self-perceptions that dwell in the lower levels of personality hierarchies. Attachment styles and personality traits have been shown to be predictive of leadership-related constructs, yet few studies of attachment and trait EI exist, especially with an adult sample in the United States.

Hamarta et al. (2009) examined attachment styles as a predictor of ability EI with college students in Turkey and found a significant positive relationship between secure attachment and all the subscales of EI abilities of intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood. Neustadt, Chamorro-Premuzic, and Furnham (2011) conducted research with managers in the hospitality industry in the United Kingdom to examine attachment orientation at work and personality, self-esteem,



trait EI, and work performance. Neustadt et al. (2011) adapted an adult intimate relationship measure for their workplace study of attachment and found secure attachment was positively related to self-esteem, trait EI, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and job performance.

Davidovitz et al. (2007) examined leaders as attachment figures and how a leader's attachment style predicted leadership motives and followers' performance and mental health in three studies with the Israeli military. The results indicated leaders' attachment anxiety was related to more self-serving motives, poorer leadership qualities, and lower instrumental function in followers. Leaders' attachment avoidance was negatively related with prosocial motives to lead, failure to act as a security provider for followers, and poor socioemotional function and mental health in their followers. Secure attachment is vital to perceptions of a leader's motives and effectiveness, followers' well-being and function, and organizational success.

### **Discussion of the Conclusions**

All people have an attachment style and a personality. An important consideration regarding attachment and personality is that a person takes both with them everywhere they go, including work. Research often presents humans as having two selves: a personal and a professional presence. People may have different functions in their personal and professional lives and feel as though they have different identities at work and at home, but attachment and personality remain fairly consistent in both worlds.

Examining adult attachment in the workplace is important because one's attachment style influences how they generate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Adshead (2010) noted that securely attached individuals are able to coherently reflect on

their life experience. They are not anxious or defensive when acknowledging their periods of distress or weakness, they value their connection and dependence on others, and they speak positively about caregiving and care-receiving experiences. Individuals with insecure attachment (e.g., avoidant and anxious attachment) have been found to have impaired stress management skills and subtle deficits in care-giving sensitivity. Anxious and avoidantly attached individuals tend to approach attachment experiences less positively. They perceive attachment relationships as stressful, they tend to dismiss or avoid negative emotion and experience or they are preoccupied with their emotional needs, and both styles have difficulty coping with negative feelings. Avoidant individuals repress feelings, while anxious individuals become overwhelmed by their feelings.

### **Attachment in the Workplace**

It was suggested by Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) that an individual's attachment style can influence one's function at work. According to Richards and Schat (2011), workers with secure attachment have higher levels of work satisfaction and feel they are perceived favorably by coworkers. Anxious individuals expect to be unappreciated by coworkers and had work stress and anxiety about relationships and job performance. Avoidant workers deny the importance of relationships, evaluate themselves with lower job performance ratings, expect to receive lower performance ratings from coworkers, have more conflict with coworkers, have concerns about hours of work, and experience difficult relationships outside the workplace.

Richards and Schat (2011) argued that individual attachment may potentially explain one's function at work separate from personality traits, such as affectivity and the

Big Five. Individual attachment styles reflect how one views oneself and others, and attachment subconsciously influences how a person thinks about and behaves toward others at work. Richards and Schat's study of attachment in the workplace indicated that attachment anxiety was associated with fewer prosocial behaviors toward the organization, higher levels of instrumental and emotional support-seeking, and higher intention to quit; while attachment avoidance was associated with lower instrumental and emotional support-seeking and more surface-acting to control emotional displays.

Attachment theory is based on how individuals use internal and social resources to respond to emotional and social demands and adversity. People experience a wide range of demands in the workplace that include performance expectations, relational stressors, pressure from their role, politics, and conflict inside and outside of work. Anxiously attached individuals tend to demonstrate hyperactivation of the attachment system, and avoidantly attached individuals tend to demonstrate deactivation of the attachment system to cope with stressful demands that uniquely influences behavior in the workplace (Richards & Schat, 2011).

### **Training, Development, and Coaching**

Research has shown that one's attachment style is changeable. With repeated priming toward secure attachment, an individual's mental representations, based on their past experience with attachment figures, can be moved from an insecure attachment style (Gillath, Selcuk, & Shaver, 2008). The priming gradually creates a new mental network of relatively stable anticipations and concerns.

Leadership coaching has been shown to be an effective method of training and developing leaders. Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker, and Fernandes (2008) found that

executive change occurs in a leader's ability to manage people and relate to managers, as well as a leader's engagement, productivity, and goal setting and prioritization skills. Leaders who seek to move toward a secure attachment style need to select a coach with secure attachment and EI. Kombarakaran et al. noted that coaching is most effective when a coach is able to model the behaviors a leader wants to develop.

Furnham (2009) highlighted the importance of training in EI at work. It has long been argued whether EI or IQ predicts leadership success. According to Furnham, a lack of EI and social skills causes a leader to be rigid, with poor self-control, poor social skills, and weak bond-building ability which can cause a leader to derail and fail. These cases of failed and derailed leaders account for the IQ versus EI argument. These leaders tend to be intellectually and technically savvy, but socially deficient. In examining the evidence of training programs, Furnham noted that much of the literature on EI is aimed at stress reduction.

In considering ways to prime for secure attachment, stress reduction would be an important factor. Adshead (2010) noted that a feature of attachment theory is emotion regulation and how individuals may develop dysfunctional arousal and affective responses to stress. Priming for stress management, emotion regulation, and security would appear to increase EI (Furnham, 2009) and promote secure attachment (Gillath et al. 2008).

Enhancing a sense of secure attachment is important for the development of unwavering self-esteem, practical coping strategies, maintenance of mental health, and the formation of satisfying relationships, according to attachment theory and Mikulincer and Shaver (2017). Mikulincer and Shaver (2017) argued responsive and supportive

leaders and cohesive groups alter an individuals' attachment orientation and psychological function which affirms Bowlby's assertion that insecure attachment is changeable.

### **Limitations**

More research is needed to address limitations in this study. First, the data were self-reported by participants. Self-reported data are often used in attachment theory research, as only participants may disclose their perceptions of self and others. Unfortunately, lack of self-awareness and self-deception may impact the quality and accuracy of responses (Fisher & Katz, 2000). However, Joinson (1999) noted research participants have been found to be more honest, have less social anxiety, and exhibit less social desirability bias in anonymous Internet research than in non-anonymous pen-and-paper research. Participants' anonymity was maintained in this current research by collecting data online in an anonymous survey.

Second, using a convenience sample of individuals in this researcher's personal and professional network in Phase 3 may have produced a sample of individuals who had a secure attachment style and were more willing to voluntarily participate. It would be expected that individuals with anxious or avoidant attachment would be less likely to voluntarily participate due to fear or mistrust. It is difficult to determine if a random sample would have included more insecurely attached individuals due to their tendency to avoid or resist participating in relationally based activities.

Third, items associated with avoidant attachment did not load as a single factor in the initial principal component analysis. Four items loaded from 0.57 to 0.75, but they broke off onto three additional factors. These items were eliminated from the final

version of the RWQ, which reduced the number of items that measured avoidant attachment to four compared to five that measured anxious attachment and six that measured secure attachment. Having more items in the measure that assessed avoidant attachment may have produced a sample more aligned with attachment population norms.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This research was a foundational study of attachment in the workplace. More attachment in the workplace research is needed in several areas. For instance, the organizational sample in Phase 3 of this study was made up of mostly securely attached individuals. Almost 87% of participants scored in the securely attached range. While it could be expected that mature organizational leaders would have a more secure attachment style, which may have contributed to their leadership success and longevity as leaders, general population data of attachment styles have suggested that 58% of people have secure attachment, 23% have avoidant attachment, and 19% have anxious attachment (Adshead, 2010). These population statistics have been stable since attachment theory was first established. Research with a larger sample of adults working in the United States with direct reports may provide a more representative sample of the general population.

Also, Phase 1 of this study with the subject matter experts highlighted the difficulty in measuring fearful attachment, as it is a blend of avoidant and anxious attachment, and measuring the variable is difficult. Recent attachment research has been focused on measuring attachment as two continuous dimensions of anxiety and avoidance with individuals scoring low on both were identified as having more secure attachment (Brennan et al., 1998). Personal communication with two experts indicated items related

to fearful attachment should not be included in the version of the RWQ that would be used in Phases 2 and 3 of this study. Other items were removed due to lack of agreement between subject matter experts.

Empirical research of fearful attachment (Boatwright et al., 2010), also referred to as unresolved trauma or loss attachment (Levy, Ellison, Scott, & Bernecker, 2011) and disorganized attachment (Hunter & Maunder, 2001; Paetzold, Rholes, & Kohn, 2015) has identified distinct traits, characteristics, and behaviors of individuals with fearful or disorganized attachment style. These include a negative perception of self and others, avoidance of intimate relationships with others, fear of rejection, oversensitivity to criticism, and a tendency to see oneself as unlovable. The ability to measure fearful attachment is challenging. It is important to be able to measure fearful or disorganized attachment, because when individuals who have this attachment style are stressed, their behavior becomes more extreme.

Paetzold et al. (2015) argued secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment are organized attachment styles that provide coherent working models that are adaptive to individual relationships with one's attachment figure. Their fourth attachment type is defined as disorganized or Type D, because disorganized strategies used with one's attachment figure result in fearful, conflicted, disorganized, apprehensive, and disoriented responses or other odd behaviors. Brennan and Shaver (1998) argued that fearful or disorganized attachment is an individual adaptation that was not measured in most adult attachment measures, and their research indicated individuals with fearful attachment are more likely to have one or more diagnosable personality disorders.

In the workplace, it would be expected that leaders with fearful or disorganized attachment negatively impact the individuals that work in their organizations due to their lack of trust, anger, hostility, and troubled behavior (Paetzold et al., 2015). The ability to measure fearful attachment in the workplace is needed to understand the approach-avoidance behaviors that are consistent with fearful attachment. More research is needed to gain insight into whether fearful or disorganized attachment is an attachment style or possibly if individuals with insecure attachment have a personality disorder or have experienced trauma that is affecting their behavior and social functioning.

### **Conclusion**

This research has contributed to the classic question of whether leaders are born or made. It appears that both contribute to outstanding leadership. Humans are born with a personality, and at birth they begin forming their attachment style. Attachment is the invisible dynamic of effective leadership that has not been studied enough as a means of improving one's leadership ability.

This study highlighted the strong relationship between secure attachment and global trait EI. Individuals who maintain trust and integrity, respect their followers, inspire motivation; challenge followers to grow, learn, and develop; and treat followers with compassion, appreciation, and are responsive to their needs are known as transformational leaders. These are also characteristics of individuals with secure attachment as well as leaders with EI. Secure attachment, EI, and transformational leadership have all been shown to critically affect organizational outcomes and attitudes. Scientific research has shown that individuals can be trained and changed to become outstanding, transformational, emotionally intelligent, securely attached leaders.



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## APPENDIX. RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK QUESTIONNAIRE (RWQ)

### Relationships at Work Questionnaire

#### Instructions:

Please select the appropriate answer to the demographic questions, and then read each statement and select the answer that best describes how you see yourself in relation to your closest coworkers and your degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Do not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

\* 1. I believe my coworkers can be trusted.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	I choose not to answer
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 2. I believe my coworkers are better or more talented than me at work.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	I choose not to answer
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 3. I get upset easily at work.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	I choose not to answer
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 4. I believe my coworkers defend and protect me at work.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	I choose not to answer
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 5. I do not seek friendship at work.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	I choose not to answer
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 6. I often feel stressed at work which makes me anxious, angry, or sad.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	I choose not to answer
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 7. I tend to avoid having close relationships at work.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	I choose not to answer
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 8. I have a hard time managing my emotions at work.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	<i>I choose not to answer</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 9. I am uncomfortable getting close to people at work.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	<i>I choose not to answer</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 10. I can ask for help or support from my coworkers.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	<i>I choose not to answer</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 11. I do not let anyone see me upset or emotional at work.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	<i>I choose not to answer</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 12. I have negative thoughts and feelings about myself at work.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	<i>I choose not to answer</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 13. I trust my coworkers.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	<i>I choose not to answer</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 14. I view my coworkers positively.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	<i>I choose not to answer</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 15. I feel my coworkers are available to me.

Not at all like me	Usually not like me	Somewhat like me	Often like me	Very much like me	<i>I choose not to answer</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>