ATTACHMENT PERSPECTIVES ON CLASSROOM RELATIONSHIPS: HELPING OURSELVES THROUGH HELPING OTHERS?

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Abstract

Aims: Recent research showing complex interactions between personality, experience, expectancies, values and career choice indicate that a prospective psychodynamic approach, via attachment theory, may yield important complementary motivational information. In this study, an unconscious need for a corrective emotional experience (CEE) driving the choice to teach was investigated. It was hypothesised that insecure attachment style predicts: (a) motivation to teach, (b) the search for CEE, and (c) anger at students and staff.

Method: Data were obtained from 514 (68.5%) pre-service and 236 (31.5%) experienced teachers, of whom 179 (23.9%) were principals and 464 (61.9%) were female (N=750). Each completed either the Experiences in Close Relationships questionnaire (ECR: Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) or a revised version for teachers (ECR-RT) based on Fraley and colleagues (2000) to compute attachment style. Pre-service teachers were also asked to report feelings of anger toward students and staff during practicum.

Results: Multiple and logistic regressions assessed the choice of Teaching Type, Gender, Age and Experience, in relation to Attachment (Anxiety and Avoidance) and Anger. A number of significant associations were discovered. MANOVA found significant differences in attachment style by Principal Type and Age Group. Pre-service teachers' reported the highest levels of both Anxiety and Avoidance, Principals the lowest. For Anger at Students, secondary teachers reported higher frequencies. Only secondary teachers reported Anger at Staff. The combined results provide partial support for the hypotheses.

Significance of the Research: If initial motivation to teach is predicted by an insecure attachment style, these teachers are vulnerable to student rejection. Adding psycho-education to pre-service courses would produce more resilience in teachers entering classrooms for the first time.

Keywords: Attachment, corrective emotional experience, teachers, motivation

Complex interactions between personality, experience, expectancies and values are revealed when choosing a teaching career (see, Watt, et al, 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2008). Some of these are consciously grappled with, while others remain largely hidden to the individual. This paper adds to the current literature on teaching as career choice by exploring initial motivation to teach using a prospective, psychodynamic approach. Attachment theory, including the concept of the corrective emotional experience, adds explanatory information to the current literature. Attachment, as a diagnostic tool, highlights a potential vulnerability for some individuals who may be choosing teaching more unconsciously than consciously. The aim of the paper is to present the issues as possibilities and stimulate scholarly discussion around these possibilities. The theory is briefly outlined below, followed by the current study.

Attachment theory

Attachment theory is one of the leading approaches to researching interpersonal relationships (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2011). Its scope has widened to include organisations and this has produced many interesting findings (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2011). The theory proposes a motivational system that guides relational behaviour. It incorporates mild genetic influences, but is essentially an experientially modifiable system that accounts for relatively stable

individual differences in the way people interact with one another (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Attachment has two sequential, theoretical models: childhood (uni-directional) and adult (bi-directional). In early childhood, an initial attachment style is formed as the child seeks care from significant others, who provide, or fail to provide, adequate care (Bowlby, 1969/82). The adult model differs only in that individuals develop to become both caregivers and care seekers, dependent on circumstances (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2011).

The vast literature on the adult model concerns romantic relationships. However the process of moving from the child to adult model begins much earlier (Howe, 2011; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). What remains unclear is how individuals make this move. During the course of normal development, there is a gradual displacement of parents as primary attachment figures (Weiss, 1982). The process ends with the formation of a romantic attachment bond to an adult, non-familial partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). But the transition is not clearly identified in the literature. Hrdy (2009) suggests the process of individuation is inexorably linked to identifying and maintaining allo attachments. Allo attachments are strong connections to people who could become primary caregivers if the child were to suffer the loss of a parent. She argues that humans tend to foster allo attachments throughout life as a kind of insurance policy. Some of the most important and formative allo attachments will be derived from relationships with teachers who provide the essential attachment ingredients of proximity and care (Kesner, 2000).

Most of the current attachment literature reporting school relationship research assumes the childhood attachment model, with teacher as caregiver and students as care seekers. The difficulty with this approach conceptually is that a child's attachment style, or inner working model, is largely formed and relatively stable by three years of age (Bowlby, 1969/82). Therefore the child is entering the transition to adult attachment well before school age using the established inner working model (IWM) or schema as a guide. The IWM is used to navigate the world of relationships: predicting, identifying and understanding others. This relies on mentalizing and reflective function1 (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2002; Fonagy & Target, 1997): the ability to understand both our own and others' individual intentions, goals and emotional states. As the child becomes aware that others' goals might differ or even prevent his/her own goals from being achieved s/he learns to modify her goals or manipulate others' behaviour to achieve them (Bowlby, 1982; Fonagy & Target, 1997). This can be done positively or negatively depending on previous experiences, context and situational factors. The child learns which ways of behaving are best suited to certain situations. For example, caring for others is likely to provide reciprocal benefits. And, caring requires intellectual engagement, reflective functioning and learning. It is consciously undertaken. However, the need to care can also be driven by attachment needs which are much less available for conscious processing. The combination of these two processes can be described as caring for others as a means of gaining care for oneself (Fonagy, 2002). The emerging consensus is that attachment and mentalizing are two distinct but interrelated systems, and reciprocal rather than uni-directional caregiving is evident in the three-year-old child: the adult attachment model (Cortina & Liotti, 2010).

By the time the child reaches school age they may be quite skilled at mentalization and used to caregiving as a way of functioning in the world. Teachers, as potential allo attachments for the child would benefit from this care. Students observing teachers receiving care from their classmates, see these relationship benefits of teaching. This may be the seed motivation to become a teacher: to gain care from others, a corrective emotional experience. There is some evidence for this claim. Riley (2009, 2011) reported teachers with ≥5 year's experience to be significantly more secure than pre-service teachers, tentatively suggesting from single time-point data that as teachers work closely with others, their unconscious internal working model (IWM) changes. One explanation for this finding is that teachers are receiving a corrective emotional experience from their work relationships.

The Corrective Emotional Experience

If an unconscious need to gain and give affection influences initial motivation to teach, the career choice might be considered a search for a corrective emotional experience (CEE) – at least for some teachers. This need is likely to come from and insecure attachment style, developed in early

[1] The terms are often used interchangeably with metacognition and Theory of Mind (Cortina & Liotti, 2010).

childhood (Bowlby, 1988). The concept of the corrective emotional experience is not new, dating back in one form or another to Freud and Ferenczi's many conversations at the beginning of the 20th Century and is said to have played some role in their controversial falling out (Hoffer, 1991). The term itself is credited to Alexander (Alexander & French, 1946). The concept is deeply embedded in the psychoanalytic tradition. In the 1960s a number of publications discussing the role and motivation of teachers from a psychoanalytic perspective were published, many under the auspices of the Tavistock Clinic: home to leaders of the psychoanalytic movement at the time, Anna Freud, and Melanie Klein. Tavistock included many other notable theorists, including John Bowlby who developed Attachment theory.

During the 1960s the psychoanalytic view of the teacher-student relationship also took hold briefly in the United States, culminating in the provocatively titled, From learning for love to love of learning: Essays on psychoanalysis and education (Ekstein & Motto, 1969). This book focussed on the students' rather than the teachers' experience. Around the same time the view of teachers as searching for corrective experiences also took hold. Dubbed "restituitional gratification" by Wright and Sherman (1963, p. 71), teachers' needs to receive care as a motivation to join the profession was taken seriously for a brief period.

Classroom Relationships: Teachers' Tools of Trade

A number of educational researchers have been drawn back to the centrality of the relationship between teachers and students in mapping and predicting student progress. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of teaching without reference to relationships. But assuming teachers are skilled at managing classroom relationships has remained largely untested until recently (see, Wubbles, 2011, Wubbles et al, in press). A recent search of the PsychInfo Database using the combined keywords teacher, student and relationship returned 2,276 peer-reviewed articles. A recent special issue of the Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology was devoted to the teacher-student relationship, classroom ecologies and the "invisible hand" of the teacher in shaping classroom ecology (Bierman, p. 297; Kindermann, 2011). Hattie (2009) recently conducted the largest meta analysis of studies into effects on student outcomes ever undertaken. He reported on 229 studies listing 1,450 effects on student learning outcomes. He reported the mean effect size of positive teacher-student relationships was 0.72, ranking it 12th in list of 138 influences. Relationships count in education. The question is how? Attachment theory can provide many possible answers.

Anger

Anger is central feature of attachment. For the purposes of this study, anger is conceptualised as an "in-relation-to" phenomenon, as opposed to a "thing-to-be-managed" (Roffman, 2004, p. 161). According to Roffman, anger always dynamically indicates relationship difficulties. It is not an individual "problem". It appears between people rather than welling up inside an individual who must then "manage" it. Attachment theory explains common forms of aggressive teacher responses to student misbehaviour as *separation protest* (Bowlby, 1969/82). Separation protest follows activation of the attachment behavioural system, triggered by *separation anxiety*, when the perceived distance between teacher and students becomes too great for the teacher to bear. This is an unconscious process aimed at restoring the connection by "protesting", sometimes aggressively, to the person perceived to have caused the increase in separation anxiety. Cross cultural studies using teacher self-report measures of aggression has provided support for this explanation (Riley, Lewis & Wang 2012; Romi, Lewis, Roach & Riley, 2011).

The Current Study

This project investigated the role that attachment style and the search for a corrective emotional experience, plays in the unconscious motivation to choose teaching as a career. The aim was to explore the extent to which relationship factors precede motivation to become a teacher. Samples of pre-service primary and secondary school teachers were compared with two groups of practicing teachers: those with at least five years' experience and school principals. The following hypotheses were investigated.

1. *Pre-service teachers unconsciously seek corrective emotional experiences (CEE) through career choice.*
2. *The search for a CEE is predicted by an insecure attachment style.*
3. *Insecure attachment produces relationship difficulties between pre-service teachers, students and/or staff during teaching practicum, expressed as anger toward one or both groups.*

Method

Data were obtained from 514 (68.5%) pre-service and 236 (31.5%) experienced teachers, of which 464 (61.9%) were female and 261 (33.8%) male (N=750). Of the experienced teachers, 179 (23.9%) were either recently appointed school principals (within three months of their first appointment: n=110 [14.7%]) or experienced school principals (n=69; 9.2%). The cut-off criterion for experienced teachers was five or more years in the teaching service (*M*=24.24 years; *SD*=10.0) as this is the time point when attrition from the profession appears to stabilize at lower levels (Centre for Innovative Thought, 2006). There were 310 (41.3%) primary and 334 (44.5%) secondary teachers. A further 22 (2.9%) teachers had dual elementary and secondary qualifications and 84 (11.2%; almost entirely made up of principals) did not report their teaching type. Most participants' first language was English, with only 53 (7.1%) reporting non-English speaking backgrounds. However, a significant proportion of the sample (n=197; 26.3%) chose not to report their first language. Age was recorded in 5-year groupings, with 53.4% of participants aged between 20-29.

Instruments

Two instruments were used to indicate teachers' attachment style. The Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR: Brennan, et al., 1998) was completed by 316 (42.1%) participants, and 434 (57.9%) completed the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R: Fraley, et al., 2000), further revised for teachers by the author (ECR-RT). Each instrument consists of two 18 item, orthogonal subscales: Anxiety and Avoidance. The pre-service teachers were also asked to detail the frequency of angry feelings directed at students and/or staff during the practicum experience, as a proxy measure for excitation of the attachment behavioural system in situ.

Results

Each scale had good internal consistency (ECR Anxiety, $\alpha = .86$; Avoidance, $\alpha = .79$: ECR-RT, Anxiety, $\alpha = .90$; Avoidance, $\alpha = .88$). The distribution of the subscales of both instruments was assessed for normality of responses. These were found acceptable. The shape of each distribution was very similar. However, the ECR showed significantly higher mean scores than the ECR-RT on both Anxiety (ECR: $M = 59.51$, $SD = 17.23$; ECR-RT: $M = 48.74$, $SD = 17.38$; $t\ (315) = 61.351$, $p < .001$) and Avoidance (ECR: $M = 70.38$, $SD = 13.93$; ECR-RT: $M = 53.00$, $SD = 16.26$; $t\ (315) = 89.836$, $p < .001$). Therefore each of the scales was converted to *z* scores for analysis (see Table 1).

Pearson product-moment correlations revealed a number of significant positive and negative relationships between the IVs (see Table 2). The most interesting of these was the moderate correlation of the Anxiety and Avoidance subscales for both instruments (ECR, $r = .317$, $p < .001$; ECR-RT, $r = .413$, $p < .001$). These subscales are described as conceptually as statistically orthogonal in the literature (Fraley, et al., 2000), and should have been so here. This finding suggests that many of the sample reported insecure attachment of the fearful type (Brennan, et al., 1998).

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Table 1: Participant Demographics for the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) and Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised for Teachers (ECR-RT) Questionnaires.

IV	*Anxiety*					*Avoidance*				
		ECR		*ECR-RT*			*ECR*		*ECR-RT*	
	N	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Age										
20-24	83	61.64	14.71	53.80	18.51	174	75.08	7.19	56.16	17.51
25-34	158	60.36	18.65	52.05	18.94	58	72.47	12.11	55.53	17.94
≥35	69	54.97	16.36	42.18	13.01	159	61.36	17.87	48.67	12.63
Gender										
Female	207	60.64	17.05	47.90	17.77	252	71.40	13.84	51.75	17.09
Male	102	57.63	17.37	50.43	16.92	153	68.84	14.63	54.68	14.54
Experience										
Pre Service	261	61.31	17.04	52.32	18.37	253	75.18	7.30	55.94	17.76
In Service	55	50.95	15.69	43.41	14.26	170	47.56	15.26	48.62	12.55
Teaching Type										
Primary	203	58.26	16.87	42.82	14.13	145	70.27	13.99	49.82	14.35
Secondary	107	61.87	17.91	52.04	18.57	238	71.40	13.15	55.35	17.37
Other	6	59.67	15.82	46.36	14.21	14	55.67	18.99	45.79	11.45
Principal										
1st Time	24	52.83	15.22	41.16	13.22	80	46.29	15.21	47.14	11.81
Experienced	1	[a]	[a]	41.19	11.20	63	[a]	[a]	47.44	11.93

[a] No members of this group completed this questionnaire.

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Table 2: Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for the Independent and Dependent Variables.

										Attachment Subscale (Instrument)		
	Age	*Gender*	*Teaching Type*		*Experience*		*Anger*		*Anxiety*	*Avoidance*	*Anxiety*	*Avoidance*
			Principal	*Prim/Sec*	*Pre/In-Service*	*Years*	*Students*	*Staff*	*(ECR)*		*(ECR-RT)*	
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	11	12
1		0.06	-.712***	-.219***	.811***	.328***	0.047	0.004	-.159**	-.424***	-.321***	-.249***
2			-0.062	-0.009	.116**	0.032	-0.082	-0.056	-0.083	-0.087	0.07	0.088
3				.118**	-.777***	b	b	b	.114*	.493***	.290**	.237**
4					-.117**	b	0.03	b	0.09	-0.029	.211**	.102*
5						b	b	b	-.228***	-.753***	-.252***	-.221***
6							.195*	0.161	b	b	-0.038	-0.035
7								.431***	b	b	.153*	-0.03
8									b	b	0.15	0.058
9										.317***	b	b
10											b	b
11												.413***

* p <.05, ** p <.01, *** p <.001, b cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

Multiple regression analysis was used to assess the choice of Teaching Type (primary vs secondary), Gender, Age, Experience (pre-service vs in-service) and Leadership (principals vs teachers) to predict levels of Anxiety and Avoidance. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. Inspection of the Mahalanobis distance revealed one outlier (21.14) above the critical value (20.515, p <.001).

Anxiety

Total variance in Anxiety was 27.8%, F (5,664) = 11.085, p <.001. Age contributed statistically significant unique variance (β = -.147, p =.028), as did Teacher type (β = -.092, p =.023. Inspection of the means revealed Anxiety scores decreased with age and that primary teachers reported lower levels than secondary teachers (see Tables 3, and 4).

Avoidance

Total variance in Avoidance was 41.0%, F (5,664) = 26.778, p<.001. Only Experience contributed statistically significant unique variance (β = -.493, p <.001; see Table 3, and 4).

Table 3: Anxiety and Avoidance z Scores Reported by Age, Gender and Experience

Age	*Gender*	*Experience*	*Attachment*				*N*
			Anxiety (z)		*Avoidance (z)*		
			M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
20-24	Female	Pre-Service	0.17	0.99	0.20	0.93	174
	Male	Pre-Service	0.42	1.03	0.32	0.95	79
		Total	***0.25***	***1.01***	***0.24***	***0.94***	***253***
25-34	Female	Pre-Service	0.13	1.09	0.30	0.79	120
		In-Service	0.35	1.15	-0.50	1.33	16
		Total	*0.16*	*1.09*	*0.21*	*0.90*	*136*
	Male	Pre-Service	0.08	1.06	0.35	0.57	60
		In-Service	-0.26	0.98	-1.07	1.53	15
		Total	*0.02*	*1.05*	*0.06*	*1.01*	*75*
	Total	Pre-Service	0.11	1.08	0.32	0.72	180
		In-Service	0.06	1.10	-0.78	1.43	31
		Total	***0.11***	***1.08***	***0.16***	***0.94***	***211***
≥35	Female	Pre-Service	0.21	0.90	0.51	0.69	26
		In-Service	-0.48	0.78	-0.71	0.96	107
		Total	*-0.34*	*0.85*	*-0.47*	*1.03*	*133*
	Male	Pre-Service	-0.16	0.84	0.18	0.60	16
		In-Service	-0.38	0.75	-0.35	0.90	79
		Total	*-0.34*	*0.77*	*-0.26*	*0.88*	*95*
	Total	Pre-Service	0.07	0.88	0.38	0.67	42
		In-Service	-0.44	0.77	-0.55	0.95	186
		Total	***-0.34***	***0.81***	***-0.38***	***0.97***	***228***
Total	Female	Pre-Service	0.16	1.02	0.26	0.86	320
		In-Service	-0.37	0.88	-0.68	1.01	123
		Total	*0.01*	*1.01*	*0.00*	*1.00*	*443*
	Male	Pre-Service	0.23	1.04	0.32	0.79	155
		In-Service	-0.36	0.79	-0.46	1.05	94
		Total	*0.01*	*0.99*	*0.02*	*0.97*	*249*
	Total	Pre-Service	0.18	1.02	0.28	0.84	475
		In-Service	-0.37	0.84	-0.59	1.03	217
		Total	***0.01***	***1.00***	***0.01***	***0.99***	***692***

Table 4: Multiple Regression for Levels of Attachment Anxiety and Avoidance Reported by Age, Gender, Experience, Leadership and Teaching Type

Variable	*Coefficients*			*t*	*p*	*95% C.I. for B*		*Correlations*		
	B	*S.E.*	*β*			*Lower*	*Upper*	*Zero Order*	*Partial*	*Part*
Anxiety										
(Constant)	0.252	0.375		0.672	0.502	-0.485	0.989			
Age	-0.064	0.029	-0.147	-2.195	0.028*	-0.122	-0.007	-0.257	-0.085	-0.082
Gender	0.048	0.078	0.023	0.607	0.544	-0.106	0.201	0.006	0.024	0.023
Experience	-0.128	0.159	-0.059	-0.806	0.420	-0.439	0.183	-0.234	-0.031	-0.030
Principal	0.055	0.084	0.040	0.651	0.515	-0.110	0.220	0.220	0.025	0.024
Teaching Type	-0.185	0.081	-0.092	-2.283	0.023*	-0.344	-0.026	-0.178	-0.088	-0.085
Avoidance										
(Constant)	1.045	0.356		2.931	0.003	0.345	1.745			
Age	0.048	0.028	0.110	1.731	0.084	-0.006	0.103	-0.290	0.067	0.061
Gender	0.133	0.074	0.064	1.791	0.074	-0.013	0.279	0.013	0.069	0.063
Experience	-1.059	0.151	-0.493	-7.037	<.001**	-1.355	-0.764	-0.400	-0.263	-0.249
Principal	0.007	0.080	0.005	0.094	0.925	-0.149	0.164	0.306	0.004	0.003
Teaching Type	-0.002	0.077	-0.001	-0.021	0.983	-0.152	0.149	-0.104	-0.001	-0.001

*p <.05, ** p <.001

Anger

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess levels of Anxiety and Avoidance on the likelihood that pre-service teachers would become angry with students and fellow teachers during their eight weeks of practicum experience, after controlling for choice of Teaching Type (primary vs secondary), Gender and Age, entered at Step 1. Avoidance and Anxiety were added at Step 2 and Step 3 respectively. Total variance in Anger at Students explained by the model was 4.9%, F (1,180) = 7.186, p = .008. The only statistically significant unique contribution was Anxiety R^2 change = .038, F change (1,180) 7.186, p =.008 (β =.223, p =.008). A high proportion missing data for these items suggests that the results should be read with caution. For Anger at Staff, Teacher Type had to be removed from the model as no primary teachers reported anger with teachers during the practicum. The final model was not significant F (1,123) = 2.690, p =.104. Anger at Students predicted 43.1% of the variance in Anger at Staff, F (1,136) = 30.990, p <.001. Counts for each group appear in Table 5, correlations in Table 1.

Table 5: Pre-Service Teachers Self Reported Anger at Students and Staff During 8-Week Practicum

Teaching Type	*Response*				*Total*
	Never	*Rarely*	*Sometimes*	*Frequently*	
Anger at Students					
Primary	8	24	10	0	42
Secondary	34	78	42	4	158
Anger at Staff					
Primary	0	0	0	0	0
Secondary	55	48	36	1	141

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Who chooses primary and secondary teaching?

Direct logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of attachment style on the likelihood that pre-service teachers would choose primary over secondary teaching. The model contained five independent variables (Anxiety, Avoidance, Gender, Age, and Anger toward Students on practicum rounds). The full model was significant, χ^2 (5, N = 179) = 64.357, p <.001, indicating that the model was able to distinguish between 30.2% (Cox & Snell R^2) and 45.8% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in choosing primary over secondary teaching, and correctly identified 88.3% of cases. Only Age made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model (Wald = 34.408, p =.001, OR = 10.93; see Table 6). Inspection of the age profiles of the pre-service teachers revealed many older members in the primary cohort (see, Figure 1).

Table 6: Logistic Regression Predicting Likelihood of Choosing Primary Over Secondary Teaching

						Odds	95% C.I.for OR	
Variable	*B*	*S.E.*	*Wald*	*df*	*p*	*Ratio*	*Lower*	*Upper*
Anxiety	0.09	0.232	0.152	1	0.697	1.095	0.695	1.724
Avoidance	-0.147	0.226	0.421	1	0.516	0.864	0.555	1.345
Anger	-0.476	0.322	2.186	1	0.139	0.621	0.331	1.168
Age	2.391	0.408	34.408	1	<.001	10.928	4.915	24.296
Gender	-0.144	0.484	0.088	1	0.767	0.866	0.336	2.236
Constant	-3.506	1.07	10.729	1	0.001	0.03		

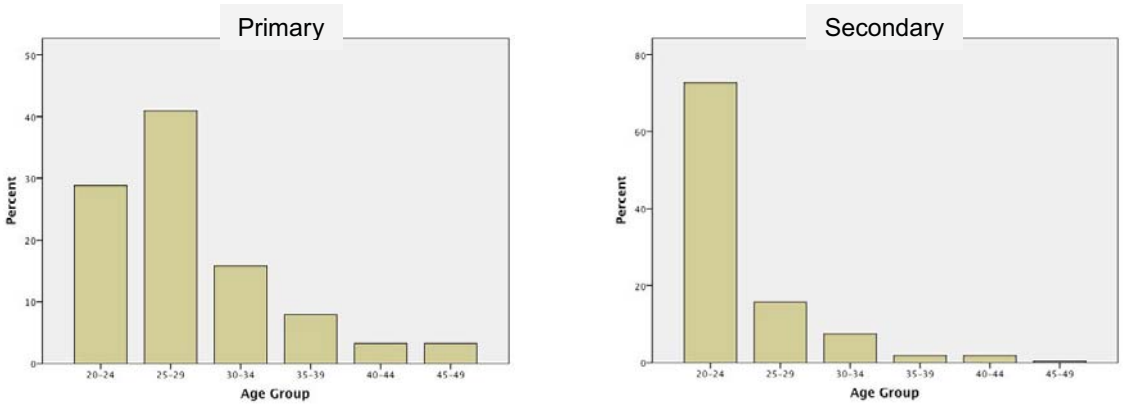

Figure 1. Age Profiles of Pre-Service Teachers by Type (Primary Secondary)

A five-way, between-groups MANOVA simultaneously considered two dependent variables (Anxiety and Avoidance z scores) to explore potential differences in attachment style by Teacher Type (Primary/Secondary), Experience (Pre-/In-service), Leadership (1st Time/Experienced principals), Age (3 levels) and Gender. Preliminary assumption testing checked for missing values, normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, cell sizes, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicolinearity. Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices was violated, F (66, 4248) = 1.823, p <.001, as was Levene's test of equality of error variances for both dependent variables: Anxiety F (27, 640) = 2.402, p <.001; Avoidance F (27, 640) = 2.031, p = .002. This was explained by the significant variation in cell sizes ranging from 15 (male in-service teachers aged between 25-34) and 186 (female pre-service teachers aged between 20-24). These discrepancies are reflective of the general demographic profile of teachers. Tabachnick and Fidell, (2007) advise that in such cases Pillai's trace should be used to determined the significance of multivariate effects and a more conservative alpha level (p <.025) should be adopted for inference tests. This also constituted a Bonferroni adjustment for two DVs. There was a statistically significant difference

between the Principals on the combined dependent variables, F (4, 1280) = 4.519, p<.001; Pillai's trace = 0.17, partial η^2 = .014. There was also a significant interaction term: Gender X Age Group, F (4, 1280) = 3.499, p =.008; Pillai's trace = 0.022, partial η^2 = .011. One univariate test on each was significant, albeit with a small effect size: Leadership (Avoidance: F (2, 640) =8.746, p = .001; partial η^2 = .026). No significant differences were found for Gender, while a number were found for Age Group suggesting that this was the more important IV in the interaction. Pairwise comparisons appear in Table 7.

Table 7: Pairwise Comparisons of Attachment Style (Anxiety and Avoidance Scores) by Principal Type and Age Group Differences.

Variable	*Group*		*M*	*Std.*	*p*	*95% C. I.*	
	1	*2*	*(Diff)*	*Error*		*Lower*	*Upper*
Principal							
Anxiety	1st Time	Experienced	-.140	0.269	0.603	-0.669	0.389
		Not Principal	-.412*	0.177	0.020	-0.761	-0.064
	Experienced	1st Time	.140	0.269	0.603	-0.389	0.669
		Not Principal	-.273	0.24	0.256	-0.743	0.198
	Not Principal	1st Time	.412	0.177	0.02	0.064	0.761
		Experienced	.273	0.24	0.256	-0.198	0.743
Avoidance	1st Time	Experienced	-.602	0.26	0.021	-1.113	-0.091
		Not Principal	-.714*	0.171	<.001	-1.051	-0.378
	Experienced	1st Time	.602*	0.26	0.021	0.091	1.113
		Not Principal	-.112	0.231	0.627	-0.567	0.342
	Not Principal	1st Time	.714*	0.171	<.001	0.378	1.051
		Experienced	.112	0.231	0.627	-0.342	0.567
Age							
Anxiety	20-24	25-34	.458	0.214	0.033	0.038	0.878
		≥35	.551*	0.131	<.001	0.294	0.809
	25-34	20-24	-.458	0.214	0.033	-0.878	-0.038
		≥35	.093	0.222	0.675	-0.343	0.53
	≥35	20-24	-.551*	0.131	<.001	-0.809	-0.294
		25-34	-.093	0.222	0.675	-0.530	0.343
Avoidance	20-24	25-34	.617*	0.207	0.003	0.211	1.022
		≥35	.691*	0.127	<.001	0.442	0.94
	25-34	20-24	-.617*	0.207	0.003	-1.022	-0.211
		≥35	.074	0.215	0.73	-0.348	0.496
	≥35	20-24	-.691*	0.127	<.001	-0.94	-0.442
		25-34	-.074	0.215	0.73	-0.496	0.348

* Bonferrroni adjusted significant mean (z) difference p <.025. Mean scores for each group appear in Table 1.

Discussion

The findings from this study show primary and secondary teachers reporting different levels of attachment Anxiety and Avoidance during pre-service education. Pre-service teachers report significantly higher levels of both subscales than their experienced colleagues. These findings are similar to an earlier study that only used the ECR (Riley, 2009) and provides validation for the ECR-RT. While Age appears to lower both Anxiety and Avoidance, it does so only as a result of

Experience. The interaction between Age, Anxiety and Gender suggests that levels of Anxiety are affected by Experience more than either Age or Gender. The moderate correlation of both subscales for each of the two instruments (ECR, r = .317, p<.001; ECR-RT, r = .413, p<.001) is further validation of the ECR-RT scale, but more importantly indicates that teachers may not be representative of the population as a whole as the two subscales are not correlated in any other studies and the dimensions are conceptually orthogonal (Fraley, et al, 2000). This finding suggests that teachers tend toward insecure attachment of the fearful type (Fraley, et al, 2000). This is more pronounced at the pre-service level independent of age. This has implications for the way research with teachers should be both conducted and interpreted, as teachers in this study do not show the same distribution of attachment styles found in the general population. Replication studies are needed to investigate this further.

The results provide support for the first hypothesis that some teachers may be unconsciously seeking corrective emotional experiences via their career choice. The second hypothesis that the search is predicted by an insecure attachment style was also supported. However, the degree to which attachment style is involved is not yet certain, as it is impossible to entirely extract it from the many other variables involved in such a complex choice as a career. It appears that both the progression of time (Age) and the experience of teaching impacts teachers' attachment style. However this cannot be concluded from single time point data reported in this study. Experience seems a much stronger predictor of attachment security for teachers than the progression of age, as the older pre-service teachers were not distinguishable from their younger peers on either Anxiety or Avoidance. Longitudinal studies would be able to address this issue.

While the experienced teachers reported higher levels of security, it is also interesting to note that principals reported significantly greater security than experienced teachers, whether newly appointed or experienced. A principal's experience is different to that of a teacher yet no difference in attachment style was found for experienced or newly appointed principals. This suggests that the corrective emotional experience may be a continuous progression throughout a career. However, principals' lower scores may reflect longer experience as teachers. Alternatively, those who go on to become principals begin with significantly greater relationship security. Newly appointed principals tend to be younger, therefore age cannot be completely discounted as a contributing factor. Longitudinal follow-up studies are required to address this issue.

If, as it appears from these data, some people do choose teaching unconsciously to receive a corrective emotional experience, and that this motivation is predicted by an insecure attachment style of the fearful type, it follows a vulnerability to student rejection exists and these people would be more likely to react inappropriately when it occurs. This is supported by the self-reported data showing high numbers of pre-service teachers who became angry with students whilst on practicum. This affords students a great deal of relational power over a vulnerable teacher. In a class containing children who may not want a close relationship with the teacher, who may not even want teachers in the room, the rejecting child is a potential trigger for anger in the teacher who unconsciously holds a need to be "cared for" by students. Interestingly only secondary teachers reported feelings of anger at other staff members during the practicum. This finding suggests that secondary teachers are more likely to eventually confront their colleagues if angry feelings persist, as anger is an energising emotion (Roffman, 2004). This can have the potential for both positive and negative staffroom relationships, depending on how the confrontation is managed. This finding suggests that primary teachers are less willing to risk the loss of support from a colleague by challenging them, so repress angry feelings about them. In either case for both groups the under-reporting is likely to be the case. However, anger among teachers is an issue that needs to be addressed at both the pre- and in-service level. Given the large amount of missing data reported in this study, qualitative research may yield better information.

The data presented here may help to explain the high numbers of early career teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of service (Centre for Innovative Thought, 2006; Galman, 2009; Geoffrey & Dowling, 2008). Are new teachers leaving the profession because their unconscious needs for corrective emotional experiences are not being met? If on the one hand no change to their internal working model (IWM) is possible through teaching, insecurely attached teachers motivated to find corrective experiences will leave. On the other hand, those who can modify the IWM through teaching will find the job very rewarding, become more secure and report similar results to the

experienced teachers in this study. These results taken together suggests that the internal working model (IWM), a largely unconscious attachment mechanism, either changes in teachers as a result of their classroom experience or predicts early exit from the profession. What is now more supported is that the IWM does have a significant influence over initial career choice. Only longitudinal studies beginning in pre-service education and following new teachers for at least the first five years will be able to address this question.

Attrition and the potential for aggression are best addressed through psycho-education. Teachers who remain vulnerable to separation anxiety within the classroom are more likely to exhibit unconscious separation protest (aggressive) behaviours, during times of stress. When that teacher is tired and/or stressed, separation anxiety is likely to result in aggressive protest behaviours directed at the students who are perceived to be rejecting the teacher's unconscious needs. Pre-service and on-going education that included learning about self and others, relational vulnerabilities, mentalization, reflective function and emotional regulation strategies would produce more resilient teachers. A teacher who better understands his or her own motives for joining the teaching force would be less vulnerable to the rejecting student.

These results also suggest that allowing teachers, psychologists and school leaders to undertake some collaborative work to share a common language for discussing many of the emotional aspects of the school experience may be fruitful in-service education. This offers the prospect of more efficacious collaborations between these professionals for student benefit.

Limitations

Attempting to operationalize unconscious motivation is a difficult task. The tools chosen for attempting to measure the construct, attachment and anger may not be the most appropriate or even actual proxies for unconscious motivation. The difficulty is how to determine whether this is the case. Psychodynamic interpretations and advances in neuroscience offer possibilities for reviewing teacher-student relationships in new ways. My hope in preparing this paper was to present the issues in a way that offers possibilities for other researchers to engage with and stimulate scholarly discussion around these possibilities.

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