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ATTACHMENT STYLE AS A PREDICTOR OF JOB SATISFACTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL COMPARISON

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Keywords:
attachment style;
job satisfaction;
social comparison.

Abstract. The aim of this study was to examine the possibility of prediction of job satisfaction based on the style of attachment (avoiding/anxious), with the mediating role of social comparison. 325 employees participated in the study, of which 125 female and 200 male. The data from the study shows statistically significant correlations between all variables. As for prediction, the obtained results suggest that based on the avoiding style of affective attachment, it is possible to directly predict a person's job satisfaction level, and that social comparison has a significant, albeit a partial mediation role in that relation. The anxious style of affective attachment did not achieve a statistically significant direct effect on the predictor, but, in combination with social comparison, a total effect that is statistically significant was found, which confirms that social comparison has the role of a complete mediator in the relation. The results were discussed in terms of set theoretical assumptions, the limitations of the study were brought up, as well as guidelines for future research.

Introduction

Attachment style. Bowlby (1969) in his attachment theory states that experiences in early childhood that a person has, which are linked to primary guardians (mainly parents), act as a basis for the formation of internal work models that, in the further parts of life, serve as guides for forming new connections/relationships (Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969). There are two models that characterize relationships, first is the model of themselves and second is the model of others which is internalized. People characterized by a positive model of themselves, consider themselves as worthy of love and support. In contrast, people characterized by a negative model of themselves, form their evaluations based on the degree of anxiety which they experience, which is linked with abandonment and rejection from other people (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Equally how the model of themselves can be positive or negative, the model of others can be positive or negative as well. Those who have a positive model of others actively seek support from other people in their relations with them, which is reflected in having a greater need for intimate connection (Kachadourian, Fincham, Davila, 2004). Hazan and Shaver (1987), revealed that the style of attachment is relatively stable from childhood to adulthood and that it has a significant impact on interpersonal relationships, with several studies indicating that the dimensions of affective attachment are also relatively stable, meaning that a person which is characterized by a positive or negative attachment style, will remain positively or negatively attached for the rest of their life. However, an interesting study that focuses on the dimensions of affective attachment in terms of their stability during life has demonstrated conflicting results. The study in question (Davila, Burge, Hammen, 1997) reveals that as many as 30% of women changed their attachment style from positive to negative and vice versa. The reason for this change were subsequent social relations, which was reflected in their behaviour in romantic relationships. Though, the sample in the study was constituted of females only and changes were related to some individual differences between respondents, which posts several methodological questions about the generalizability of the results. Therefore, the general consensus about the stability

of the attachment style remains, which were re-confirmed in later empirical research (Berlin & Cassidy, 2002). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that positively attached individuals are more successful and possess better emotional regulation in interpersonal relationships in relation to negatively attached individuals, which indicates that attachment style has an impact in the way a person manages their social conflicts and the way in which a person manages social conflicts (Bohlin, Hagehull, Rydell, 2000; Waters, Hamilton, Weinfield, 2000; Simpson, Rholes, Phillips, 1996). In general, according Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) there are two different dimensions of affective attachment, anxious and avoiding. The anxious dimension relates to the degree of which the individual worries that nobody will be available to him in time of need. The avoidance dimension relates to the degree of which a individual tries to maintain independence in behaviour and emotional distance in interpersonal relationships. Research suggests that these two dimensions are associated with the aspect of psychological well-being, which is linked to a higher level of self-esteem, as well as lower levels of anxiety. These findings were confirmed in adults and in teenagers (Cooper, Shaver, Collins, 1998; Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002; Feeney, Noller, Roberts, 1996). Research that focuses on the influence of the dimensions of affective attachment in the relation of an organization's life (Richards & Schat, 2011; Scrima, Rioux, Lorito, 2014) demonstrate a correlation between the dimensions of attachment and relevant organizational attitudes, such as organizational commitment and quality of relationships among colleagues. Hazan and Shaver (1990) claim that the positive attachment dimension is likely to promote effective workplace behaviour, a sense of self-confidence and positive relationships with colleagues; Therefore, this type of attachment may be linked to the affective dimension of organizational commitment, which refers to the emotional commitment of employees, identification with the organization and involvement in the organization. In contrast, an anxious attachment type is associated with the negative working models of others, meaning that co-workers are viewed as unavailable and distrustful. Individuals characterized by the avoidance dimension of attachment view their co-workers as unavailable, irresponsible, or punitive (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). In their study Geller and Bamberger (2009) reveal that both avoiding and anxiety attachment dimensions are associated with less instrumental behaviour in helping colleagues in the workplace. Confirmation of this can be found in the study of Erez and colleagues (2008) which reveals that individuals characterized by the avoiding dimension of attachment are less likely to participate in volunteer activities. This study examines the impact which attachment style (anxious/avoidant) has on job satisfaction of an individual who is characterized by one of the types described above. Earlier research has demonstrated that, in general, a person that is avoidantly attached has a higher sensitivity regarding factors that impact job satisfaction in comparison to an anxiously attached individual. However,

some of the studies have shown no relevant connection between the two described variables (Reizer, 2014), therefore we assumed that there could be an indirect link which is mediated by another variable which can explain these contradictions. After reviewing the literature and studies which are based on this topic, and with knowledge of the subjective nature that job satisfaction has, we came to the idea that the variable of social comparison might be the missing link that connects these two concepts. This is something that has not been explored before, therefore it serves as the purpose and goal of this study.

Social comparison. Festinger (1954) in his theory of social comparison states that people tend to seek external references to assess their opinions or abilities. This occurs in situations in which people consider that the available information about a object or existing standards are insufficient to reduce uncertainty. The act of doing so is named social comparison. Social comparisons have been theorized as an important predictor outcome expectation and job satisfaction (Oldham et al., 1986). They are deeply rooted in the organization's life—supervisors compare the performance of employees in relation to other workers when implementing job performance assessments, employees often compare their salaries and work-related rewards with those of their colleagues (Greenberg, Ashton-James, Ashkanasy, 2007), etc. Also, it has been discovered that social comparisons have been shown to influence employee attitudes and adjustments to the organization (Brown, Ferris, Heller, Keeping, 2007). Social comparison can be twofold, upwards and downwards, which serves as a basis for evaluating their own performance (Major, Testa, Bylsma, 1991; Sheppard, Lewicki, Minton, 1992). Performance is not the only thing that social comparison is used for, as it has been shown that many workers use social comparisons in order to get and process information in an effective way and to understand the current situation (Dunn, Ruedy, Schweitzer, 2012). With this in mind, people are considered likely to be involved in social comparison when they are motivated to obtain an accurate and objective assessment about themselves and improve their self-image. Therefore, those who believe to understand themselves well and who have a positive self-idea are usually less interested in comparison with others (Dunn, Ruedy, Schweitzer, 2012). Furthermore, employees will, relying on the aspect of social comparison, learn important information of the characteristics of their job, such as working conditions or organizational incentives. These employees will therefore be involved in social comparison which is connected to job-related dimensions that are directly relevant to job characteristics, as well as dimensions which are not related to their job. Serpil Kılıç and colleagues (2013) have found that there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and the level of social comparison. Eddleston (2009) also confirms these findings, showing that social comparison influences managers job satisfaction. A correlation between the dimensions of affective attachment and social comparisons has also been demonstrated in various research. It is

speculated that the relationship is created by engaging in a social comparison, which activates the comparator's working model, which can change his feelings about the environment he is in and about himself (Baldwin, 1994; Cohen, Towbes, Flocco, 1988; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001). In a study performed by Mikulincer and colleagues (1998) it has been discovered that different self-regulatory styles related to attachment dimensions lead to differences in perceptions of self-other similarity. Specifically, the strategy of avoidantly attached people leads to an underestimation of their similarity to others, while the strategy of anxiously attached people leads to an overestimation of their similarity to others, which in terms of work-related aspects, can affect the job satisfaction of people characterized by these dimensions. Schwartz and colleagues (2007) confirm these findings. In their study, the anxious attachment dimension was found to be positively related to attention-seeking from others, social comparison, and positive stimulation as affiliation motivation. In contrast, the dimension of avoidant attachment was negatively related to emotional support and positive stimulation as a motivation for affiliation. These findings indicate that there could be a possible indirect link between the dimensions of affective attachment and job satisfaction, which is mediated by the aspect of social comparison.

Job satisfaction. The definition of job satisfaction represents the construct of satisfaction as a specific attitude towards work, which consists of affective and cognitive components (Brief, 1998; Ilies & Judge, 2002). The affective aspect of job satisfaction represents the feelings that the employee has towards his job, while the cognitive aspect represents all the thoughts and beliefs of the employee in relation to the work he performs. Locke (1976) gives a further explanation of the cognitive aspect of job satisfaction, by defining it as "a pleasant emotional state" that arose from the subjective assessment of one's job satisfaction, based on the achievement or fulfilment of work-related tasks. According to this, we can come to the conclusion that job satisfaction among employees is not a stable dimension, but can increase over time if there is a positive experience related to some aspect of the job. Those aspects come from several different sources such as; supervisors (or bosses), work colleagues, the possibility of advancement (or promotion), the relationship of the organization towards the employee (in terms of organizational support) as well as the characteristics of the job itself. Easterlin (1974) comes to the conclusion that the whole field of job satisfaction studies is based on subjective experience, which is formed on the basis of feelings about the job or evaluation of its details, which only further strengthens the assumption about the subjectivity of the assessment of job satisfaction. The impact of dimensions of affective attachment on job satisfaction, which is based on the results of conducted studies, shows that securely attached adults are more capable to master their work environment, which results in a higher level of job satisfaction (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Krausz, Bizman, Braslavsky, 2001). In contrast, individuals characterized by an anxious attachment type

demonstrate a higher level of preoccupation and concern with attachment to others at work that may lead them to underestimate their achievements and the actual results of their work. In addition, they tend to express pessimistic self-evaluations at work (Hazan & Shaver, 1990), are more likely to quit their jobs (Richards & Schat, 2011), and express feelings of job dissatisfaction (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Krausz, Bizman, Braslavsky, 2001). Workers characterized by the avoidant attachment dimension may use work as a means of occupation, as a chance to avoid unpleasant interactions with others and to avoid the build-up of anxiety which is associated with unmet attachment needs. This strategy can lead avoidant individuals to become more engaged in their work. For example, avoidantly attached people may hesitate to stop working or go on vacation and feel nervous when they are not working (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Krausz, Bizman, Braslavsky, 2001). However, this type of approach to work can sometimes influence avoidantly attached individuals to be dissatisfied with their work in general, and working conditions in particular. Moreover, the failure to avoid difficulties in intrapersonal relationships can lead to conflict and dissatisfaction with colleagues and managers (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Krausz, Bizman, Braslavsky, 2001) which increases the level of job dissatisfaction of the avoidantly attached individual. In order to test the relationship between the dimensions of affective attachment and job satisfaction Reizer (2014) conducted a study in which he assumed that both styles of affective attachment (avoidant and anxious) affect, i.e., contribute to job dissatisfaction, the results of the study do not confirm these assumptions. Other studies which have focused on the relationship between these constructs have found that avoidantly attached workers are, on average, more dissatisfied with their jobs than anxiously attached workers (Hardy & Barkham, 1994; Krausz, Bizman, Braslavsky, 2001). From these studies we can conclude that an avoidantly attached individual is more sensitive to the influence of job satisfaction. This sensitivity to job satisfaction stems from the fact that the avoidant individual is rooted in the belief that no one will be available in situations of distress, leaving him to fend for himself and alone (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Methodology

The problem of this study. The theory of affective attachment is a theory that is increasingly referred to and paid attention to in studies of organizational behaviour, the reason for this are empirical suggestions that confirm that the dimensions of affective attachment are a relatively stable determinant of an individual's behaviour from childhood to adulthood. This long-term behaviour is reflected in the individual's relationship with others at the workplace, as well as in the relation to work in general (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Krausz, Bizman, Braslavsky, 2001). Research that focuses on the theory of affective attachment in which the influence of attachment

dimensions on organizational life is investigated (Richards & Schat, 2011; Scrima, Rioux, Lorito, 2014) demonstrate the connection between the dimensions of affective attachment and job aspects that affect job satisfaction. An additional contribution to this problem is made by Reizer (2014) in his study on the relationship between the dimensions of affective attachment and job satisfaction, where he hypothesized that both dimensions of affective attachment would be related to job dissatisfaction. As the results of the study showed, those assumptions were not confirmed. These studies suggest that there is a relationship between the dimensions of affective attachment and job satisfaction. Therefore, based on these findings, it is assumed that one's job satisfaction can be predicted based on the dimensions of affective attachment. However, the relationship between the dimensions of affective attachment and job satisfaction may not necessarily be direct. Some studies (Schwartz, Lindley, Buboltz Jr., 2007; Baldwin, 1994; Cohen, Towbes, Flocco, 1988; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001) revealed the existence of a relationship between social comparison and dimensions of affective attachment. This connection is based on the aspect where social comparison with others at work activates a person's work model, which can change the person's perception of the situation, which can ultimately affect job satisfaction. Further strengthening of this assumption is provided by findings demonstrating the connection between social comparison and job satisfaction (Kılıç, Tanrıku, Uğur, 2013; Eddleston, 2009). Based on the aforementioned findings and assumptions derived from the theories of affective attachment and social comparison, we hypothesized that social comparison is a mediator in the relationship between the dimensions of affective attachment and job satisfaction. This relationship has been unexplored so far, and therein lies the interest and contribution of this study.

Hypothesis of the study. It is expected that there is a mediating effect of social comparison in the relationship between dimensions of attachment (avoidant and anxious) and job satisfaction. We came to this hypothesis in view of the contradictions that have been noted in earlier research which focused on finding a direct link between the style of attachment (avoidant/anxious) and job satisfaction. Social comparison activates an individual's work model, which can change their perception of a situation, given that the study is focused on a work environment and the subjective nature of job satisfaction, we thought that there could be a possibility of a mediating role of social comparison.

It is expected that there is a statistically significant correlation between the dimensions of attachment (avoidant and anxious) and job satisfaction. This hypothesis was birthed from the findings of earlier research (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Richards & Schat, 2011; Scrima, Rioux, Lorito, 2014) that managed to successfully link these two concepts. The examination of this link in this study serves as further confirmation of the possible relation. Some previous studies have demonstrated that these variables are not statistically significantly correlated, therefore an added contribution of this study is to further explore the nature

of the correlation and test it in an environment that it has not been tested before (referring to the Balkan area, specifically Serbia, where the study was conducted).

It is expected that there is a statistically significant correlation between the dimensions of attachment (avoidant and anxious) and social comparison. Previous studies have managed to find a correlation between these concepts (Schwartz, Lindley, Buboltz Jr., 2007; Baldwin, 1994; Cohen, Towbes, Flocco, 1988; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001). Accordingly, this study serves as a further confirmation of that link. Also, for the mediating role of social comparison to take place a statistically significant correlation between it and the different types of attachment needs to be found.

It is expected that there is a statistically significant correlation between social comparison and job satisfaction. Studies that have explored the nature of this link have confirmed the existence of it (Kılıç, Tanrikulu, Uğur, 2013; Eddleston, 2009), showing that the act of comparing oneself with someone else (in this case, based on work related aspects such as success, earnings, etc.) can give more information about oneself, which can lead to either an increase or a decrease in self-evaluation levels. We set out to reconfirm this link in order to further prove its validity and to explore the possible mediating role that social comparison has in the relationship between attachment styles and job satisfaction, for which a statistically significant correlation in the relation with job satisfaction is necessary.

Sample. The sample consists of 325 respondents, all of which are office workers. Gender-wise 125 of respondents are female and are 200 male, aged from 21 to 51 years old ($M=29.18$, $Sd=4.6$). All the respondents are employed, with 12 of them in managerial positions. As far as education is concerned, the respondents with completed high school lead the sample with 228 respondents, followed by respondents with a university degree with 74, with completed higher education with 20 respondents and with a completed doctorate/master's degree with 3 respondents. A post-hoc power test for the size of the sample was done, the p level was set at 0.05. whilst the observed effect size (Cohen's d) was set at 0.5. The results show that the observed power (one tailed) equalled .997 while the observed power for the two tailed test equalled .994, confirming that the size of the sample is usable for statistical analysis of the studies goal.

Instruments. *Questionnaire for Assessing the Affective Attachment of Adults (SM-ECR-R;* Hanak & Dimitrijević, 2013). To assess the dimensions of anxiously and avoidantly attached individuals, a revised version of the *Inventory for the Assessment of Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR-R;* Fraley, Waller, Brennan, 2000) questionnaire was used. In its original version, the instrument measured the dimensions of partner affective attachment, i.e., attachment in close partner relationships, while with the revision of the instrument (Hanak & Dimitrijević, 2013), it takes on a new form and measures attachment to any person we perceive as close. The instrument consists of two dimensions which

measure whether subject is characterized by the anxious or avoiding type of attachment. An example of an item of the instrument from the anxious dimension: *Some close people make me insecure/unsure of myself*. An example of an item of the instrument from the avoidance dimension: *I prefer not to show how I feel deep down*. The questionnaire consists of 36 items, where the answer to the item is given on a seven-point Likert-type scale. Half of the questions, more precisely 18 of them, refer to the avoidant type of attachment, while the other half refers to the anxious type of attachment. The score for each subject is created based on the linear combination of answers on each of the dimension of the scale, resulting in two scores per respondent, one for the anxious and one for the avoiding type of attachment. In previous research, the scale has shown satisfactory psychometric characteristics. The dimension that measures the avoidant affective attachment style has an internal consistency of $\alpha = .83$, the dimension that measures the anxious attachment style has an internal consistency of $\alpha = .91$ (Hanak & Dimitrijević, 2013). This study has reported scores of $\alpha = .92$ for the avoidant dimension of the scale and $\alpha = .92$ for the anxious dimension of the scale.

Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; Weiss, Dawis, England, Lofquist, 1967). A shortened version of the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire was used to assess the job satisfaction dimension. The scale contains 20 items, where the answer to the item is given on a five-point Likert-type scale. The instructions for filling out the questionnaire require respondents to state their level of satisfaction with a certain aspect of the job. An example of an instrument item: *I get a sense of fulfilment from work*. The scale contains three dimensions: intrinsic job satisfaction; extrinsic job satisfaction; and general job satisfaction. For the purposes of this research, the respondents' score was formed based on the dimension of general job satisfaction. The dimension measuring intrinsic satisfaction has an internal consistency of $\alpha = .84$ to $\alpha = .91$, the dimension measuring extrinsic job satisfaction has an internal consistency of $\alpha = .77$ to $\alpha = .82$, the dimension measuring general job satisfaction has an internal consistency of $\alpha = .87$ to $\alpha = .92$ (Weiss, Dawis, England, Lofquist, 1967). This study has reported the score of $\alpha = .90$ which places this instrument in the range of high reliability (keeping in mind that this is for office workers).

Scale of Tendency to Compare with Others (SSUD; Čubela Adorić, Proroković, Lacković-Grgin, Penezić, 2004). This instrument was used to assess the dimension of social comparison. The scale contains 9 items, where the answer to the item is given on a five-point Likert-type scale. Example of an item of the instrument: *I often compare what I have achieved in life with the achievements of other people*. In previous research, the scale has shown satisfactory psychometric characteristics. The internal consistency indicator of the scale ranges from $\alpha = .73$ to $\alpha = .83$ (Čubela Adorić, Proroković, Lacković-Grgin, Penezić, 2004). This study has reported the score of $\alpha = .74$ for the internal consistency of the instrument.

Research procedure. The content of all instruments was uploaded to Google Forms, then the link leading to the questionnaire was distributed to the sample. Along with the link that leads to the questionnaire, the purpose of the research, the rights of the respondents as well as the method of data processing are briefly described. It was also explained that the data is collected for scientific research purposes, and that the research is anonymous and that they can quit out of filling out the questionnaire at any time. The procedure has been carried out in line with relevant ethical recommendations of working in the field of psychology and with human subjects. Data collection was carried out in December 2022 and January 2023.

Data processing procedure. The obtained data was processed in IBM's Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). During the analysis, descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics were used. The descriptive statistics which were used are: frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, indicators of distribution asymmetry - skewness and kurtosis and finally the Cronbach alpha coefficient, which is an indicator of the internal consistency of the instruments used. Mediation analysis macro-PROCESS for SPSS (Hayes, 2013) was used for inference statistics.

Results

Table 1. Descriptive and statistical indicators of the used variables

Variables	Min	Max	M	SD	Sk	Ku	α
Social comparison	1.89	4.89	3.8	.42	-1.4	3.34	.74
Job satisfaction	2.10	4.80	3.6	.50	-.76	.40	.90
Avoidant	3.33	6.67	4.8	.68	-.31	.23	.92
Anxious	1.61	6.67	4.3	.83	-.60	1.17	.92

Note. M – arithmetic mean; SD – standard deviation; Sk – Skewness (distribution asymmetry coefficient); Ku – Kurtosis (distribution asymmetry coefficient); α – Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of internal consistency.

From Table 1, we can conclude that the variables of social comparison, job satisfaction, as well as both dimensions of affective attachment (avoidant and anxious) show a satisfactory level of internal consistency of the scale (type Alpha) which in all cases exceeds .70. Social comparison shows the lowest level of internal consistency ($\alpha=.74$), which is in line with the range of internal validity of this scale obtained by the original authors. Job satisfaction scales ($\alpha=.90$), avoidant dimensions of affective attachment ($\alpha=.92$) and anxious dimensions of affective attachment ($\alpha=.92$) show a very high coefficient of internal consistency, which places them in the group of highly reliable instruments. These results are consistent with the statements about this type of consistency presented by the original authors of the instruments.

Table 2. Presentation of correlations of variables used in the research

		1.	2.	3.
1. Job satisfaction				
2. Social comparison	<i>r</i>	.675		
	<i>p</i>	.000		
3. Avoidant	<i>r</i>	.255	.195	
	<i>p</i>	.000	.000	
4. Anxious	<i>r</i>	.168	.231	-.570
	<i>p</i>	.002	.000	.000

Note. *r* – Pearson's correlation coefficient; *p* – statistical significance of the correlation.

The dimensions of affective attachment represent the main predictors of this study. From Table 2, we can conclude that the avoidant dimension of affective attachment negatively and statistically significantly correlates with the dimension of anxious affective attachment ($r = -.570$; $p = .000$), positively and statistically significantly correlates with the criterion variable job satisfaction ($r = .255$; $p = .000$) and that it positively and statistically significantly correlates with the mediator variable of social comparison ($r = .195$; $p = .000$). The anxiety dimension of affective attachment is positively and statistically significantly related to the mediator variable social comparison ($r = .231$; $p = .000$) and to the criterion variable job satisfaction ($r = .168$; $p = .002$). Finally, a positive and statistically significant correlation was obtained between the mediator - social comparison - and the criterion - job satisfaction ($r = .675$; $p = .000$). Based on these findings, the conditions required for conducting a mediation analysis are met.

Table 3. Results of the mediation analysis when the predictor is the anxiety dimension of affective attachment

Mediator	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>ab</i>	Confidence interval	
Social comparison	.231	.672	.155	.086	.219
<i>c'</i>	.013				
<i>c</i>	.102***				

Note: *a* – effect of the predictor on the mediator; *b* – the effect of the mediator on the criterion; *ab* – indirect effect of the mediator in the relationship between predictor and criterion; *c'* – direct effect of the predictor on the criterion when the effect of the mediator is controlled; *c* – total effect; *** $p < .001$. *fully standardized effects were used.

Table 3 presents the results of the mediation analysis when the predictor is the anxious dimension of affective attachment and the mediator is social comparison. The data show that the effect of the predictor on the mediator ($a = .231$;

$p=.000$) and the effect of the mediator on the criterion ($b=.672$; $p=.000$) exist and are statistically significant. The direct effect achieved by the anxious dimension of affective attachment when the mediator is controlled ($c'=.013$; $p=.767$) does not exist. The total mediation effect ($c=.102$; $p=.002$) exists and is statistically significant, indicating a complete mediation role of social comparison in the relationship between the anxiety dimension of affective attachment and job satisfaction.

Table 4. Results of the mediation analysis when the predictor is the avoidant dimension of affective attachment

Mediator	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>ab</i>	Confidence interval	
Social comparison	.195	.650	.126	.061	.188
<i>c'</i>	.129***				
<i>c</i>	.190***				

Note: *a* – effect of the predictor on the mediator; *b* – the effect of the mediator on the criterion; *ab* – indirect effect of the mediator in the relationship between predictor and criterion; *c'* – direct effect of the predictor on the criterion when the effect of the mediator is controlled; *c* – total effect; *** $p<.001$. *fully standardized effects were used.

Table 4 presents the results of the mediation analysis when the predictor is the avoidant dimension of affective attachment and the mediator is social comparison. The data show that the effect of the predictor on the mediator ($a=.195$; $p=.000$) and the effect of the mediator on the criterion ($b=.650$; $p=.000$) exist and are statistically significant. The direct effect achieved by the avoidant dimension of affective attachment when the mediator is controlled ($c'=.129$; $p=.002$) exists and is statistically significant. The total mediation effect ($c=.190$; $p=.000$) exists and is statistically significant, indicating a partial mediation role of social comparison in the relationship between the avoidant dimension of affective attachment and job satisfaction.

Discussion

The focus of this study was to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and dimensions of affective attachment (anxious and avoidant) and, in the event that this relationship is realized, to examine whether it is direct or mediated by social comparison.

First, the existence of a connection between the avoidant dimension of attachment and job satisfaction was examined. The results show us that there is a statistically significant positive correlation which indicates that respondents

that achieved higher scores on the scale of avoidant affective attachment also record higher scores on the scale of job satisfaction. This association is consistent with that found in several studies (Richards & Schat, 2011; Scrima, Rioux, Lorito, 2014). We believe that the reason for this connection is that avoidantly attached people believe that no one will be available to them in times of trouble, i.e., that they cannot rely on anyone but themselves, which leaves its roots in the avoidance of emotional interpersonal relationships. Engagement at work can help that aspect, and it can strengthen, i.e., increase the satisfaction that an avoidantly attached person derives from it. A positive and statistically significant correlation with social comparison was also found. This finding is not surprising and confirms the findings of other authors (Schwartz, Lindley, Buboltz Jr., 2007; Baldwin, 1994; Cohen, Towbes, Flocco, 1988; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001). Finally, a statistically significant negative correlation between the avoidant and anxious attachment style, which tells us that individuals who score higher on the avoidant dimension of affective attachment scored lower on the anxious dimension of affective attachment. These findings are in line with expectations and only give additional confirmation to the theory of affective attachment about the diversity of these dimensions (meaning that a person can be attached either anxiously or avoidantly).

Then, the relationship between the anxiety dimension of attachment and job satisfaction was examined. A positive and statistically significant correlation was found, indicating that higher scores on the anxiety dimension scale achieve higher scores on the job satisfaction scale. These findings confirmed the hypothesis about the connection between these constructs. Anxiously attached individuals are greatly influenced by their relationships with people, in this case colleagues at work. If these experiences are positive, they can be reflected in an increased level of job satisfaction and vice versa. We assume that this association arose from the mediating role of social comparison, given how we have found a positive and statistically significant correlation between the variables. This association is consistent with the assumptions made by other authors (Schwartz, Lindley, Buboltz Jr., 2007; Baldwin, 1994; Cohen, Towbes, Flocco, 1988; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001), where the connection between these aspects was based on the activation of the individual's work scheme, which is created by his social comparison with others (in this case, employees) and which can change the way a person perceives the situation, which includes the aspect of job satisfaction.

Finally, the relationship between social comparison and job satisfaction was examined, which was found to be positive and statistically significant. These findings are consistent with the findings of other authors (Kılıç, Tanrıku, Uğur, 2013; Eddleston, 2009) and this association is further confirmed in this study. On the basis of all connections, it was possible to apply mediation analysis, in order to find out whether the relationship between all variables is direct or mediated.

The results of the mediation analysis in which the predictor is the anxious dimension of affective attachment, the mediator is social comparison and the criterion is job satisfaction tell us that there is a statistically significant effect in the relationship between social comparison and the anxiety dimension, as well as a statistically significant effect in the relationship between social comparison and job satisfaction. This confirmed the mediating role of social comparison in the relationship between the anxious dimension of attachment and job satisfaction, which in the study was complete given that the direct influence of the predictor was statistically insignificant, while the total (with the mediation of social comparison) was statistically significant. Therefore, we can conclude that based on the anxious dimension of attachment, one's job satisfaction cannot be directly predicted, but that social comparison plays a mediating role in the relationship, thus confirming the hypothesis that we proposed.

The results of the mediation analysis where the predictor is the avoidant dimension of affective attachment, the mediator is social comparison and the criterion is job satisfaction tell us that there is a statistically significant effect in the relationship between social comparison and the avoidant dimension as well as a statistically significant effect in the relationship between social comparison and job satisfaction. This confirms the mediating role of social comparison in the relationship between the avoidant dimension of attachment and job satisfaction, which was found to be partial considering that both the direct, and total influence is statistically significant. Therefore, we can conclude that on the basis of the avoidant dimension of affective attachment, one's job satisfaction can be directly predicted, as well as that the level of prediction can be increased through social comparison, thus confirming the hypothesis that we proposed.

Conclusion

The findings of this research fully confirm the set assumptions, which has clear implications in the direction of the utilization of the obtained data. Theoretically, the findings of this study support the findings presented by previous studies regarding the influence of affective attachment dimensions on job satisfaction. An additional contribution of this study is reflected in the confirmation of the mediating role of social comparison in the relationship between affective attachment and job satisfaction, which has been an unexplored problem until now. On a practical level, organizations and employment agencies can benefit from this study, using the findings as additional guidance in designing and implementing employment policies. First of all, it refers to positions in which a person characterized by an avoidant or anxious attachment dimension would find himself and for companies that offer different contractual relations between employers and employees. In terms of coaching, these findings may help coaches to use

different methods in eliciting and promoting work and life performance and satisfaction with avoidantly and anxiously attached individuals. With avoidantly attached individuals, attention can be focused on the aspect related to work overload and the insecurity they experience because they believe that no one will help them in their work. The guidelines would concern the importance of rest (in the sense of avoiding burnout) and finding additional hobbies outside of work that would be of an individual type, with which one could compensate for the negative aspect of the relationship with colleagues at work that can lead to a greater degree of dissatisfaction. As for the anxiously attached individuals, the focus is on increasing the direct feeling of job satisfaction by reducing the importance of relations with colleagues, which are unimportant in the broader sense of life. This would reduce the stress caused by possible bad relationships with colleagues and the stress related to the aspect of comparison in general, which would give such individuals a greater sense of control.

The contribution of the study in a practical sense can also affect psychotherapists, who, by understanding these aspects of the connection between the dimensions of affective attachment and job satisfaction, can establish a more effective way of dealing with problems that burden clients in the professional environment and which spill over into the private environment, thus contributing to general dissatisfaction in all aspects of life. Of course, it is understandable that based on one study, one cannot be 100% sure of the obtained results, and by replicating this study, with the control of possible shortcomings, these findings would gain strength and sustainability. Regarding the limitations of this study, the social comparison scale is singled out, which, although it displayed satisfactory level of reliability, belongs to instruments of low reliability, so we propose that future researchers use instruments of higher reliability metrics which would give them more accurate scores.

This study was conducted on office workers, which begs the question of whether the results can be generalized to fit a broader spectrum of public. Additionally, the results have been shown to be statistically significant (in both correlation and moderation) but there is a possibility that some of the respondents are not avoidantly or anxiously attached (they could be securely attached etc) which may explain the lower values of the correlation and mediation scores. Therefore, as a heads up for future researchers, we advise that the dimensions that we did not take into consideration and that limit this study be included in the efforts of confirming or denying the results that we have gotten. Also, certain findings state that the amount of monthly income can affect job satisfaction, which is a variable whose contribution was not examined in this study, and future researchers are advised to include this variable in their work. Lastly, this study has been performed via online questionnaires which poses the question of the sincerity and earnestness of the respondents which participated in the research, for success in future endeavours we propose a pen and paper (live) approach be upheld in order to make up for this potential short-coming.

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Никола З. ЦОЦИЋ

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Афективна везаност као предиктор задовољства послом: медијаторска улога социјалног поређења

Резиме

Циљ ове студије био је испитати могућност предикције задовољства послом на основу димензија афективне везаности (избегавајући анксиозну), при којој социјално поређење има медијаторску улогу. У студији је учествовало 325 запосленика, од којих је 125 женског и 200 мушког пола. Подаци из студије показују статистички значајне корелације између свих варијабли. Што се могућности предикције тиче, добијени резултати сугеришу да је на основу избегавајуће димензије афективне везаности могуће директно предвидети задовољство послом, као и да социјално поређење има значајну, иако делимичну медијаторску улогу. Анксиозна димензија афективне везаности није остварила статистички значајан директан ефекат на предиктор, али у комбинацији са социјалним поређењем остварује тотални ефекат који је статистички значајан, што потврђује да социјално поређење има улогу потпуног медијатора у односу. Резултати су дискутовани у смислу постављених теоријских претпоставки, а наведене су лимитације студије као и смернице за будућа истраживања.

Кључне речи: афективна везаност; социјално поређење; задовољство послом.



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